Contemporary artists to make weapons for peace

So far 14 of the world’s leading contemporary artists have signed up to a major new project to turn decommissioned American assault rifles into cutting-edge works of art. The project is being co-ordinated by Peace One Day, a not-for-profit group which campaigns for global recognition of the International Day of Peace (Peace Day, 21 September).

Peter Doig, the Chapman Brothers and Turner Prize winner Jeremy Deller are among a host of famous names whose refashioned M16 weapons will be auctioned in aid of Peace One Day by Bonhams in London on October 16th as part of their prestigious Post-War & Contemporary Art sale. More names are expected to be added to the list shortly.

Jake Chapman – one of the artists involved – will also curate an exhibition of the works during London’s Freize week at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), starting on the 13th October.

The initiative will follow the annual Peace One Day Concert, which this year will be headlined by 5 times Grammy-nominated American-Senegalese hip-hop/RnB star Akon in Goma, DR Congo. There will be support from a host of local DRC talent: Lexxus Legal; Dety Darba; traditional drummers ensemble Sango’A; and a popular local comedian Mzee MbuKuli. This will take place on Peace Day itself (21 September), and will be presented by Ayden with contributions from British actor and Peace One Day ambassador Jude Law and Jeremy Gilley.

Peace One Day was founded by actor and film-maker Jeremy Gilley, who said:

"The M16 Art project is an incredible way to raise awareness of the campaign that we are presently running in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. I am incredibly honoured to be working with Jake Chapman again. He is a huge supporter of what we are doing in the region. I look forward to the manifestation of this project and the subsequent impact it will have."

Gareth Williams, Director of Post-War & Contemporary Art at Bonhams said:
“We are delighted to be working with Peace One Day and to be part of this hugely exciting initiative. It is always a privilege to see the motivating effect that art has on fundraising for good causes.”

The list of confirmed artists is:

Jeremy Deller and Stuart Hughes; Douglas Gordon; Mat Collishaw; Marc Quinn; Polly Morgan; Jake Chapman; Dinos Chapman; Harland Miller; Yinka Shonibare; Ryan Gander; Jonathan Meese; Peter Doig; Bjarne Melgaard; Kim Jones (Louis Vuitton).

ENDS

Notes for editors

1. This project follows a successful initiative in 2012 in which a different group of artists refashioned AK47 rifles to raise over £400,000 for Peace One Day.

2. Peace One Day was founded in 1999 by filmmaker Jeremy Gilley to establish an annual day of global ceasefire and non-violence with a fixed date and document the process. A biography of Jeremy Gilley is attached.

3. Peace One Day’s efforts brought about the unanimous adoption by UN Member States of the International Day of Peace, an annual day of global ceasefire and non-violence on 21 September (Peace Day).

4. Peace One Day’s aim is now to institutionalise the day around the world, engaging all sectors of society in observing the day worldwide.

5. Major successes include its 2007 campaign in Afghanistan which led to wide scale observance of the day, enabling health workers to vaccinate 1.4 million children as a result.

6. In 2013, Global consultancy firm McKinsey and Company reported that 470 million people were now aware of Peace Day.

7. Peace One Day has recently launched a comprehensive three-year campaign in Goma with the participation of Mary Robinson; Barbara Bentein, UNICEF Representative in the DRC; the DRC Education Minister; UNHCR; and local representatives from Faith, Youth & Sports. The campaign aims to help raise awareness of Peace Day throughout the Great Lakes region (GLR), working with all parties and sectors of society for a significant moment of peace on Peace Day, which POD hopes could be a catalyst for longer-lasting peace in the region. Peace One Day’s campaign
is made possible by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation and has been endorsed by the UN Secretary-General.

8. POD will hold its next annual Peace Day Concert in Goma, DRC on 21 September 2014, headlined by Akon, the internationally acclaimed, five-times Grammy-nominated Senegalese-American hip-hop star. This concert will act as a showcase for the incredible range of activities taking place across the DRC and wider Great Lakes region of Africa, and inspire people to come together in the celebration of peace.

9. For more information, contact Sallie Ryle or Tim Toulmin at Alder Media on 07768 476930 (Sallie) or 07803 597372 (Tim). Email:

sallie.ryle@aldermedia.co.uk or tim.toulmin@aldermedia.co.uk