

Urban Renaissance art auction brings the beats, breaks and big bucks



Danny Simmons and the Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation are recognized for their good work by Dinna Alexanyan, founder of Sybarite Productions Artist Development Center, at the Urban Renaissance art auction. (Human Photography photo)

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There was beauty inside and outside of the RamScale Art Gallery when it served as the location for the Urban Renaissance Charity Art Auction on a crisp October night. The expansive view from the floor-to-ceiling windows and terrace of the penthouse-turned-art-gallery included a sparkling Hudson River shimmering under the moonlight and landmark buildings glowing in the distance. But the beauties created by architects and nature were not the stars of the show on that night. Seventeen urban artists, ranging from those just starting to create a buzz to the well-established,

offered up their work for a charity auction honoring Danny Simmons of Rush Philanthropic Foundation and benefiting the Sybarite Productions Artist Development Center, a two-year-old non-profit.

A diverse range of art was on display, including photographs, woodcuts, paintings and even woven paintings. The wine flowed, and the beats were bumping (thanks to DJs Rich Medina and Tommy Bones) as the eclectic crowd participated in a silent auction co-sponsored by Scion that asked for minimum bids as low as a few hundred dollars and as high as a few thousand. Proceeds from the packed event will go toward finding,

purchasing and building a 5,000-square-foot location for the Sybarite Productions Artist Development Center, which has outgrown its current practice of studio and performance space hopping.

Sybarite's director, Dinna Alexanyan, is proud of her organization. "We are one of the few organizations that focuses on such a wide array of arts including dance, music performance/production, photography, visual arts, theater and video. We are very excited for this event, especially because it coincides with our two-year anniversary." Alexanyan said the new space will not only be a haven for
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blossoming artists, but it will also be eco-friendly by using environmentally sustainable materials and she hopes to have a garden as well.

Danny Simmons—man of the hour, abstract painter and brother of Russell and Run—thoroughly enjoyed the event held in his honor. "Really, I'm just honored to be honored. The artwork on display tonight is fantastic. I've met some new artists and I've seen a lot of old friends here, too. I cut my dreads five years ago

and some people were surprised to see me now," said Simmons, who was sporting a baldie. "This is important work here because we in the art community have to take care of ourselves."

Among the crowd of artists and art enthusiasts were a few familiar faces, including actor Taimak Guarriello (best known as Bruce Leroy in "The Last Dragon") and legendary DJ Bobbito Garcia, who knew most of the artists. From Adidas shoes with painted laces to elegant paintings of ancient Japanese practices to poignant photographs from 1980s New York,

the charity auction had a little something for any taste. Two dance performances (modern and hip-hop) wowed the crowd with bends, flips, ticks and spins.

Curator for the event, Alaric Campbell (whose sensual black-and-white photography was featured in the auction), summed up what many artists must feel. "My goal is to create something beautiful."

For more information on Sybarite, visit <http://sybariteproductions.net>. For more information on the Rush Philanthropic Organization, visit <http://www.rushphilanthropic.org>.

