

**South African painter, Lionel Smit, has been invited to contribute a painting to be auctioned at a charity event at Christie's during London's Frieze Week – October 2009**



Cover of Christies Catalogue

**Lionel Smit's painting sold for £26 000.00**  
**painting was estimated at £6 000.00 - £8 000.00**  
**view action results:** <http://www.facet-foundation.org/news-events/>

The charity, For Africa's Children Every Time (F. A. C. E. T.), was set up by Laurence Graff, Chairman of Graff Diamonds and world-renowned art collector, in an effort to give back to the countries from whence many of Graff Diamonds' most coveted stones emerge. Set up in 2008 in memory of Graff's late mother, Rebecca, the charity aims to raise funds towards the education and support of children who are left orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has swept across Africa.

To this end, F. A. C. E. T. will be holding its first major charity fund raiser – an art auction during London's Frieze week in October this year at a reception at Christie's. Set to be a prestigious event, the supporting committee includes high-profile personalities, among them actors Hugh Grant and Uma Thurman, supermodel Naomi Campbell and Christie's President Jussi Pylkannen who will serve as the auctioneer. On the art front, among glittering internationals – such as Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons and Banksy – will be found South Africa's own Lionel Smit.

Smit first encountered Laurence Graff when Graff purchased a painting from him for his Delaire Graff Wine Estate. Off the back of this purchase and the ensuing artist/collector relationship, Graff requested that Smit donate a work to the F. A. C. E. T. event. Smit chose to paint a portrait specifically for the auction. The piece, entitled *African Girl*, will be delivered by Smit in person to London for the event in October.

True to form, *African Girl* is an oil painting of a scale larger than Smit himself. Rendered in Smit's distinctive gestural technique, *African Girl* portrays Smit's sensitivity to the details of the living human face. As one of only three South African artists chosen to be a part of an international charity auction, Smit's choice of subject is apt – it would be surprising if the significance of the *African Girl*, as artistic embodiment of those to whom F. A. C. E. T. is reaching out, went unnoticed in this context.



African Girl, 2300mm X 1650mm, Oil on Canvas

The actual auctioneer was **Jussi Pykkänen**, president of Christie's Europe. At the afterparty at ,Sketch Jussi told Spear's:

'The crowd here is a testament to the pulling power of Laurence Graff, not just with serious collectors but more importantly with artists, who he's been a big supporter of, hence all their donations.'

Jussi also broke one of his rules when Spear's asked what his favourite picture of the sale was: 'Anyone who knows me knows that I very rarely announce any sort of personal preference for a picture when it comes up for sale, however I did come out and say I really liked the **Lionel Smit**.'

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**Lionel Smit's painting “Residue” wins merit award  
at Sanlam's Vuleka art competition.**



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