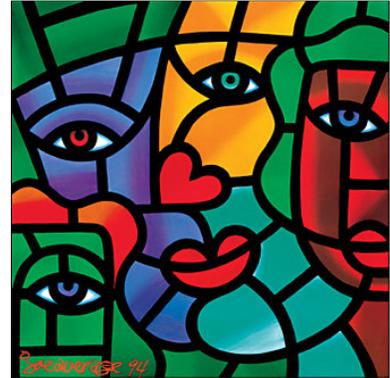


MEDIA RELEASE

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July 24, 2006

JOE AVERAGE 1996 AIDS QUILT READYED FOR RE-EXHIBIT



Goal to take giant AIDS quilt to Toronto 2006 International AIDS Conference

Vancouver, BC – Ten years after its dramatic unveiling at Vancouver’s historic 1996 International AIDS Conference, the giant ‘One World-One Hope’ quilt is being cleaned and readied with the goal of re-exhibiting at the upcoming Toronto 2006 International AIDS Conference, August 13 to 18. It’s the first time since Vancouver’s landmark conference that the annual AIDS conference is back on Canadian soil, and organizers are working furiously to raise sufficient funds in time to exhibit the symbolic quilt at the conference.

The painting, ‘One World - One Hope’, by renowned Vancouver artist Joe Average, was the 1996 Vancouver conference image. Conference organizers commissioned a Fraser Valley Mennonite women’s group to make the quilt. Measuring 29 by 32 feet and weighing approximately 350 pounds, the giant quilt provided a magnificent backdrop to the conference stage at BC Place Stadium. The image also appeared on the first AIDS awareness Canadian postage stamp that same year.

“The Vancouver AIDS conference, ten years ago, was the location of the groundbreaking announcement of new HIV/AIDS treatments...highly active antiretroviral treatment (HAART),” states Maxine Davis, Executive Director of the Dr. Peter Centre, a care facility for people living with HIV/AIDS. “That announcement and the ‘One World - One Hope’ quilt symbolized hope for millions. And since then, while there’s still no cure, those new HIV/AIDS treatments have been extending peoples’ lives.”

Davis goes on to say, “Joe Average is an icon of the international HIV/AIDS community. Through the years, his artistic images have come to symbolize the HIV/AIDS struggle. The ‘One World - One Hope’ quilt is a significant piece of Vancouver and Canadian art. It is fitting that this ten year milestone is be marked by re-exhibiting the quilt at Toronto’s AIDS Conference and we’re working really hard to make that happen. Ultimately, we’re working on long-range plans for a permanent exhibit location in Vancouver, but getting the quilt cleaned and shipped to Toronto is our key focus right now.”

A decade later, the quilt has been removed from storage and moved to the St. Paul’s Anglican Church of the West End. A fine art conservator is overseeing the quilt cleaning during the week of July 24th. A total of \$23,000 is required for the quilt cleaning, transport to Toronto, and exhibit mounting at the Toronto conference.

Diagnosed HIV positive in 1985, Joe Average considered it a wake-up call that gave him a sense of purpose and drive. Now 48, Joe has spent the past 21 years raising AIDS awareness through his distinctly colourful artwork, donating twice as much to local and national charities

than he's sold. Joe proudly states the 'One World – One Hope' image got him a lunch date with Princess Diana when in 1991, he was invited to be one of 50 Canadians to dine with the royal couple at Rideau Hall. The invitation did not include a plane ticket, but by the time friends threw a fundraiser for him to get to Ottawa, it had made international news. After the royal luncheon, the late Princess asked to speak with him and he reflects on their meeting as one of the best moments of his life.

Joe has received many honours and awards including R.C.A. designation with the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts that was presented to him by Governor General, Adrienne Clarkson in May 2004.

Joe Average's original painting, 'One World – One Hope', will be part of the 'Mediations on Compassion' HIV/AIDS art exhibit at Vancouver's Buschlen Mowatt Gallery, August 4 to 10.

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