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Getting Artsy for Miuccia Prada and Germano Celant

By Tara Dalbow



Center548 got in touch with its artsier side last night at ICI's Annual Benefit and Auction. Candles flickered in mirrored boxes as animated colors were projected along the walls. The room was buzzing with that particular energy that only a roomful of passionate people can provide. Patrons browsed an impressive curation of art up for auction as members of Artsy walked the crowd, providing iPads for easy bidding. Large projections of the featured artwork and their respective current bids flashed across the walls – it all was very high-tech.

After some boozing and bidding, Dasha Zhukova, Sophia Coppola, Marina Abramovic, and other attendees venture upstairs for dinner. Somewhere between the pear salad and the apple-filled donuts another live auction took place led by Sotheby's Alexander Rotter. Guests held up their programs illustrated with bidding paddles as the auctioneer called out prices for lots that didn't offer physical prizes. The resulting outpouring of generosity from the paddle-waving attendees stunned onlookers.

The Leo Award and The Agnes Gund Curatorial Award were bestowed upon Miuccia Prada and Germano Celant, respectively, for all their contributions to the world of contemporary art, the work of the Prada Foundation and for the exhibit *When Attitudes Become Form: Bern 1969/Venice 2013*. Celant graciously accepted his and Prada's awards, tearfully reading a letter

on her behalf, as she was unfortunately unable to attend. His gratitude and appreciation was palpable through a heavy Italian accent.

I had the absolute pleasure of sitting beside one of the artists whose work was featured in the silent auction. Halfway through our second course we found ourselves discussing the struggles of being an artist and he imparted upon me some wonderful advice in the way of artists being like gardeners, albeit pretty poor gardeners at times, who only reap a few crops despite the amount of seeds tossed. He stressed the importance of not getting too caught up in the weeds or discouraged by what didn't grow but rather to really focus on cultivating what did break the surface and bloom. As he finished his story his work of art flashed across the projector screen, he nodded, that grew.

After dinner, guests headed back downstairs for the after party, kicked off by a stunning performance by Amadéus Leopold. From the far corner, dressed in flowing robes and with his face painted chalk white, he made his way through the crowd, playing his violin and occasionally singing a haunting line or two from "Silent Night" and "Amazing Grace". There was an innate theatrics to his performance that was only emphasized by the extravagant costume and the exaggerated movements of his bow arm as he made his way through the crowd and up to the stage. His performance ended abruptly as he raced out of the room, a roar of applause chasing him out. To say he made the night would be an understatement.

The evening raised over \$600,000 in funds that will directly contribute to ICI's public programs, educational initiatives, and international networks of curatorial exchange.



