



## **60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATOMIC BOMBING OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI MARKED BY GLOBAL ARTS INITIATIVE**

*Mayor Akiba of Hiroshima and President of the Mayors for Peace, who consist of 730 Mayors from 110 countries representing half a billion people, announce landmark arts initiative to eliminate Nuclear weapons by the year 2020.*

**NEW YORK, March 24, 2005** – David Clark and Mayor Akiba of Hiroshima, the President of the Mayors for Peace, announce the *Back to the Garden Arts Initiative* designed to support the Mayors for Peace “2020 Vision” campaign, which seeks the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2020 and the immediate commencement of negotiations to that end.

Launching this initiative will be a benefit art auction held in New York City on May 3, 2005 at Ruby Falls. Christie's Auction House is supporting the event and conducting the auction, with participating artists such as Yoko Ono, Jerry Kearns, Julian LeVerdiere and Tom Otterness participating. Yoko Ono will announce the Back to the Garden initiative earlier in the day at the United Nations, during the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review.

All proceeds of the art initiative will go to the Nihon Hidankyo, the largest organization of A-bomb survivors and a nominee for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. This organization, based in Japan, represents the 300,000 living survivors of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki – the Hibakusha. The members of Nihon Hidankyo have dedicated their lives to ensuring that no one should have to endure that hellish experience ever again.

The auction will also serve as a reception for the one hundred strong delegation of Mayors who will be in New York City to attend the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference at the United Nations.

EPOP International, a New York based cause related development company is representing Mayors for Peace in coordinating this landmark arts initiative. “We are very honored to work with Mayor Akiba, Mayors for Peace and the Nihon Hidankyo ” said David Clark, the CEO of EPOP. New York artist, Elliott Arkin will direct the visual arts components for the initiative. “EPOP is delighted to have Elliott Arkin coordinating this art initiative. Elliott's past work with us has included spearheading arts initiatives with President Nelson Mandela, Muhammad Ali, and most recently Amnesty International.”

“The visual arts have provided some of the most poignant, powerful and universal expressions of the dangers, dilemmas and fears surrounding the issues of Nuclear Weapons. Mayors for Peace recognizes the universal ability and power that art has to

convey the concerns of people around the world regarding nuclear threats, and the ability art has to inspire people to take action,” said Elliott Arkin.

### **MAYORS FOR PEACE**

The Mayors for Peace, which is represented by 730 Mayors from 110 countries representing half a billion people, builds solidarity and facilitates coordination among the cities that support the Program to Promote the Solidarity of Cities toward the Total Abolition of Nuclear Weapons. The 2020 Vision Campaign is providing renew inspiration to peace activists everywhere and is reaching out to involve new constituencies in this non-partisan effort.

### **NIHON HIDANKYO**

The Nihon Hidankyo is nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. They represent the 300,000 living witness/survivors (or hibakusha). Its officers and members are all atomic bomb survivors. Founded in 1956, Nihon Hidankyo have helped build the worldwide nuclear abolition movement and have testified at numerous United Nations sessions on nuclear test bans, nuclear non-proliferation, and disarmament. In recent years, Nihon Hidankyo has worked with a range of Japanese and other nongovernmental organizations to organize citizens' conferences focusing attention on the consequences of nuclear war and advocating the abolition of nuclear weapons.

### **EPOP INTERNATIONAL**

Founded in 2000, EPOP creates and produces unique cause-related events. In addition to creating the Back to the Garden initiative, EPOP most recently originated The Anne Frank 75th Birthday Tribute, and “46664,” the landmark AIDS initiative in South Africa hosted by Nelson Mandela and supported by Oprah Winfrey, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, President Bill Clinton, Sir Richard Branson and others. The event was globally broadcast on United Nations World AIDS Day on MTV and BCC, and included performances by Bono and The Edge of U2, Beyonce, The Corrs, Queen, Peter Gabriel, and many others.

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