



Chelsea Hotel Doors of Famed Creatives Auctioned to Benefit City Harvest

April 11, 2018

by Pat Rogers

If you ever wanted to own a piece of Chelsea Hotel history, now is your chance. On Thursday, April 12, 2018, an unusual auction takes place at Ricco/Maresca Gallery and Flowers Galleries in Chelsea, courtesy of Guernsey's. Collectors have the chance to acquire wood or metal doors that opened into rooms where famed artists, authors, musicians, actors and activists made their home.

There are 55 doors in the auction with around half connected to specific creative stars who live there. With a few doors leading into rooms occupied by more than one star, the list includes Mark Twain, Thomas Wolfe, Jim Morrison, Bob Dylan, Madonna, Janis Joplin, Tennessee Williams, Janis Joplin, Humphrey Bogart, Jimi Hendrix, Jerry Garcia, Jackson Pollock, Andy Warhol, Bob Marley, Bon Jovi, Jack Kerouac, Dylan Thomas, Isabella Rossellini, Leonard Cohen, WEB Du Bois, Iggy Pop, Bette Davis, Brian Jones from the Rolling Stones, Liam Neeson, Quentin Crisp, Joni Mitchell, and Herbert Huncke.

"Chelsea Doors" auction takes place April 12, 2018 at 7 p.m. with previews held from April 5 to 12, 2018 at Ricco/Maresca & Flowers Gallery from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the gallery. The catalogue and information on how to place online bids can be viewed by clicking [here](#). Fifty percent of the consignee's proceeds will be donated to [City Harvest](#), a New York City non-profit who provides food to the hungry by picking up excess food from restaurants, supermarkets, farmer's markets and manufactures and dropping it at soup kitchens, food pantries and community organizations.



Chelsea Door belonging to Andy Warhol. Courtesy of Rubenstein Public Relations.

Connections for doors identified with those who used them as home entrances have either been verified through research or have been deemed credible through reliable sources, said Arlan Ettinger, a co-founder and president of [Guernsey's](#). Adding to the unusual aspect of the auction is the source of the doors: Jim Georgiou, a homeless man who was a former long-time Chelsea Hotel resident and who had set up camp not far from the place where he once lived.

Georgiou discovered the doors being discarded during a major renovation of the Chelsea Hotel in 2011, Ettinger said. To make money, Georgiou had been selling vintage vinyl records near the hotel

and noticed the doors of his former home being ferried to the curb for refuse pick up, Ettinger said.

“To a homeless person, there is nothing more poignant or meaningful than a door,” Ettinger said. “A door leads to a home that the homeless person doesn’t have.”

Georgiou contacted some friends who helped salvage the doors and carted them away in trucks. The doors have all been well-used, white-washed with many containing an “X” on the surface as a marker to indicate its removal during construction.



Chelsea Door belonging to Jackson Pollock. Courtesy of Rubenstein Public Relations.

Georgiou’s acquisition turned into a major research project and he set out to discover which residents had lived behind the doors now in his possession. By putting faces to the objects, it was also a way to preserve some of the utopian history, the creativity that resulted in major works, and madcap times when the Chelsea Hotel housed both long-term residents and overnight occupants, Ettinger said.

Georgiou reached out to Guernsey’s to arrange an auction. Wanting to have an artful location, he connected with Frank Maresca of [Ricco/Maresca Gallery](#) who agreed to host the auction at his gallery. With Flowers Gallery next door, they opened up the space to better accommodate the 55 doors which are now suspended from the ceiling.

“The doors are anything but beautiful,” Ettinger said. “Some of them have big X’s to indicate they were to be thrown out. They are iconic objects, but as with many objects, what’s important is not their physical presence but what they represented.”



Chelsea Door belonging to Mark Twain. Courtesy of Rubenstein Public Relations.



Chelsea Door belonging to Bette Davis and Iggy Pop. Courtesy of Rubenstein Public Relations.

Once the auction was set, the idea of having part of the proceeds from the sale benefit a New York City charity was discussed between Ettinger and Georgiou. Over the last few decades, Guernsey's has garnered success by adding a charity that's meaningful to the objects being auctioned. Ettinger said he thought Georgiou might be interested in donating a modest amount such as 1 or 2 percent and was surprised when the homeless man wanted to donate 50% of his proceeds. City Harvest directly benefits the homeless and others in need by providing donated food to organizations who provide services to the underserved.



Chelsea Doors Cosigner Jim Georgiou with his dog Teddy.
Courtesy of Jim Georgiou.

For the auction itself, it's not possible to place a price estimate on the doors as there is no precedent. There also will be no opening bid. The doors from the Chelsea Hotel take a significant that comes beyond their function as a barrier between an exterior and interior. When items that might be ordinary on its face—such as a baseball or an ocean liner or a car—they hold special value when part of significant histories or have roles as cultural icon or a beloved pastime, he said.

"These doors have a face only a mother can love and yet there's some kind of magical quality about them," Ettinger said. "If wood could tell a tale, these doors would have plenty to tell."



Chelsea Door. Courtesy of Rubenstein Public Relations.



Chelsea Door belonging to Tennessee Williams.
Courtesy of Rubenstein Public Relations.

BASIC FACTS: "Chelsea Doors" auction takes place April 12, 2018 at 7 p.m. with previews held from April 5 to 12, 2018 at Ricco/Maresca & Flowers Galleries from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The neighboring galleries are located at 529 West 20th Street, New York, NY. A catalogue and information on how to place online bids can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

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