

SOVEREIGN BRINGS EUROPEAN ART TO WESTMINSTER

An exhibition of selected paintings from those short listed for the inaugural Sovereign European Art Prize opens at the City Inn, Westminster tomorrow, 11 May 2006. The exhibition features paintings by twelve artists and includes work by Susan Gunn – the winner of the 2005 Sovereign European Art Prize and a limited edition print (of 33) by Jeffery Aranita winner of first Sovereign Asian Art Prize in 2003.

Many of the paintings in the exhibition are for sale at prices that range from £1,500 to £14,000. The proceeds from the sale of paintings will go to support the charitable work of the Sovereign Art Foundation. The Foundation has recently made its first awards to the arts in Europe – supporting the work of Art and Kids and Create – and is currently canvassing proposals from other worthy projects in the arts across Europe.

The exhibition at the City Inn concludes the programme for the 2005 Sovereign European Art Prize and also acts as a curtain raiser for the launch of the 2006 Sovereign European Art Prize which will be formally launched at the City Gallery Prague at the end of June.

Speaking at the opening of the exhibition the Chairman and Founder of the Sovereign Art Foundation, Mr Howard Bilton, said 'We are extremely grateful to the City Inn for this further opportunity to raise funds for the charitable work of the Sovereign Art Foundation in Europe. We have developed an exciting set of plans for the 2006 Prize which will be unveiled in full when we launch in June. These plans will improve the Prize immeasurably as they seek to position artists at the heart of the activity and extend our range and influence by developing our network of advisers so that we are working with pivotal individuals in key centres throughout Europe. We are particularly delighted that Sir Peter Blake has once again agreed to act as Chairman of Judges and that we are able to number key art world figures such as Tim Marlow (White Cube), Tomas Pospinzyl (Writer, curator and critic, Prague), and Vanessa Quang (Galerie Quang, Paris) amongst our advisers.'

Ian Mackley, arts and events manager for City Inn hotels added

"I am delighted to host such a prestigious exhibition in our Westminster hotel. The hotel has always supported the arts and we are thrilled to be able to showcase these 12 paintings and to support the work of the Sovereign Art Foundation.'

Ends

Notes To Editors

1. A full list of judges, advisers and nominators for the 2006 Sovereign European Art Prize will be available at the launch in June

2. The exhibition of paintings short listed for the 2006 Sovereign Asian Art Prize will be held in Hong Kong between May 15th and June 10th and the auction will be held in Hong Kong on June 15th 2006.

3. The Sovereign Art Foundation was registered as a charity in Hong Kong in 2003. The Foundation was set up by Howard Bilton, a tax lawyer who turned his art-collecting hobby into what is now Asia's largest art prize. Howard is also the chairman of The Sovereign Group.

The first Sovereign office opened in Gibraltar in 1987 and now has offices or agents in all the major offshore and onshore financial centres. This global reach enables them to provide international access from a local point of delivery.

Sovereign's core business is setting up and managing tax-efficient structures to assist wealth management, foreign property ownership and cross-border business. In addition to high net worth individuals and their families, our clients include expatriates, entrepreneurs and businesses of all sizes. Sovereign also offers a wide range of services which are a natural adjunct to their main activity, including asset management, financing, specialist tax advice and credit cards.

3. City Inn Westminster is a keen supporter of the arts and not only sponsors various visual and performing arts events but also features contemporary art throughout the building. This includes *Side Street*, the capital's first ever street conceived as a work of art, created especially for City Inn by artist Susanna Heron and a year round programme of temporary exhibitions in the first floor Private Dining and Meetings area.

For further information contact Michael Benson on 0207 835 5515 or 07973 553939 or email: michael.benson@candlestar.co.uk or michael@SovereignArt Foundation.com