

## Hirst art, DiCaprio space trip help raise record AIDS funds

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A Damien Hirst work of art and a trip into space with Leonardo DiCaprio helped AIDS foundation amfAR raise a record \$35 million (28 million euros) on the sidelines of the Cannes Film Festival.

The Foundation for AIDS Research holds an exclusive bash annually during the festival, attracting a galaxy of stars to help raise funds, and this year was no exception.

Some 900 celebrities and members of the jet set turned up Thursday evening at the luxury Eden Roc hotel not far from Cannes for the 21st "Cinema Against AIDS" event, including amfAR fundraiser Sharon Stone, Marion Cotillard, Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, John Travolta, Kylie Minogue and Justin Bieber.

Festival jury members Sofia Coppola, Carole Bouquet and Gael Garcia Bernal and scores of top models including Eva Herzigova and Heidi Klum, were also present.

Stone auctioned off a work of art by British artist Hirst—the gilded skeleton of a woolly mammoth in a steel and glass vitrine—to a Russian billionaire for 11 million euros.

Just like last year, DiCaprio sold a trip with him into space with Virgin Galactic, the company founded by billionaire Richard Branson. He raised 700,000 euros.

Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli sang for the crowd before auctioning off a dinner at his home for 12 people that fetched 1.1 million euros.

Bruni-Sarkozy, who was not accompanied by her husband, former French president Nicolas Sarkozy, raised 400,000 euros for a snake-shaped necklace of diamonds and an aquamarine made by Bulgari, of which she is currently the ambassador.

Two tickets for the next Oscars ceremony were sold for 200,000 euros.

On Thursday, actresses Catherine Deneuve and Milla Jovovich, Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton, actor Adrien Brody and Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein were also of the party.

The amfAR foundation "is probably the NGO that manages to raise the most funds against AIDS, in a very glamorous event to be sure, but beyond that this event is very important to advance research, help patients and access to treatment for the most disadvantaged," Bruni-Sarkozy told AFP.

"There is no reason to think that AIDS is a declining epidemic. AIDS is still a pandemic, many young people get it. It has to be said. It's very important for me to be here this evening," added the former first lady, whose brother Virginio died of the illness.

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