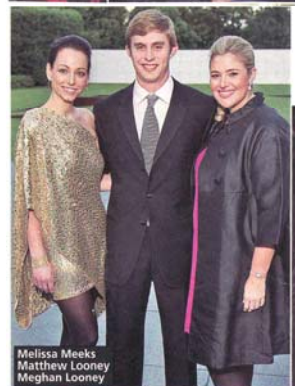




TWO X TWO X 11 REASONS WHY IT WAS ONE OF THE DAZZLERS OF THE YEAR

It's almost impossible to raise the bar on Two x Two for AIDS and Art, the always spectacular annual auction benefitting amfAR and the Dallas Museum of Art — but somehow, in its 11th year, it happened. Here are 11 ways it got there.

BY ROB BRINKLEY. PHOTOGRAPHY BRUNO, JOHN STRANGE.



11. The star power of the artists whose work was on the block: Matthew Barney, Brice Marden, Diane Arbus, Francesco Clemente, Joseph Cornell, Olafur Eliasson, Wolfgang Tillmans — more than 100 in all.

10. The standing ovation for the unbelievably charming **Harry Belafonte**, the keynote speaker, who demurely thanked the sold-out house. Said he, overwhelmed: "I should've come last year." (Which garnered more applause.)

9. Glamour gal **Jan Showers**, co-chair of the evening (with daughter **Elizabeth Showers**), who cooed into the microphone, "When **Todd Fiscus** told me he had 12,000 butterfly orchids, I cannot tell you what I did." The yellow beauties hovered over the proceedings, dripping from a whirling helix of what looked like giant Pick-Up Sticks hitched to the tent's ceiling. Modern, fresh, stunning. Event-design maestro Fiscus told us the assemblage took 300 hours to produce and install.

8. Because the biggest cheer of the night, from a cheer-happy crowd, went to **Cindy and Howard Rachofsky**, who, year after year, define "gracious hosts." (We're nominating them for a picture in *Merriam-Webster*.)

7. **Alan Cumming**, the headline entertainer, rocking out "Mein Herr," from *Cabaret*, as his opening number — followed promptly by songs from *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, his own album *I Bought A Blue Car Today*, even Dolly Parton. Cumming was mesmerizing — the standing ovations proved it. His big finish? La Parton's "Here You Come Again," done in his own erudite, energetic way.

6. The glee expressed by myriad out-of-towners, who traveled for the event. "Dallas is very fun. I'm impressed!" said New Yorker **Judy Taylor**, Equinox's vice president of public relations.

5. Sotheby's chairman — and star auctioneer — **Jamie Niven** and his hard-to-resist sales pitches. He facetiously embellished the Dallas Cowboys Ultimate Luxury Suite package with a perk: "Cheerleaders will drop by for a lap dance ... it's everything you want in life."

4. **Lucy Wrubel's** hair. Her instruction to her hairdresser? "Let's do *Dynasty*."

3. The price tags. A painting by Peter Doig, the night's honored artist, fetched \$300,000. A Marlene Dumas pulled \$450,000.

2. The nonstop — and we mean nonstop — Dom Pérignon.

1. The record-breaking \$4 million plus — in a downed economy — raised for AIDS research and for the DMA. Bravo, Dallas. The total raised at Two x Two over 11 years? More than \$25 million. Now we're impressed.

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