

Art lover Elaine Carley contemplates an evocative world at the annual Arts For Act held at Harborside Saturday night. The fundraiser, to benefit Abuse Counseling and Treatment, Inc., brought in an estimated \$225,000.

ACT auction provides needed support

By MARK RANDALL
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Southwest Florida's movers and shakers came out in force and opened their wallets in generous fashion over the weekend to help raise money for a local charity to prevent domestic violence.

A record 1,700 people turned out at the Harborside Convention Center Saturday night dressed to the nines to lend their support to Abuse Counseling and Treatment's (ACT) annual Arts for ACT fund-raiser, one of the area's swankiest charity events.

"Another record breaker," said Marshall Bower, president of ACT board of directors. "We're going to outgrow this place."

The non-profit ACT provides shelter and support to victims and their families of sexual and domestic abuse.

People were able to bid on more than 100 works of art in a silent and voice auction, everything from jewelry, pottery, oil paintings, water colors, and acrylics, all of which were donated by local, national, and international artists.

The highlight of the voice auction was an original work by renowned artist and Southwest Florida resident Robert Rauschenberg, who was also on hand to lend his support.

"This is the man responsible for bringing all this," said master of ceremonies Kellie Burns, television news anchor of NBC-2 in Fort Myers. "This is one of the most generous men in our community. He gives everything. Nothing is closer to his heart than ACT."

The auction helped raise nearly \$227,000, not including ticket sales, pro-



ceeds from the raffle, and sales from signed artwork prints. Total figures from the fund-raiser were not available, but according to Jennifer Benton, executive director for ACT, the group expected to easily surpass their \$250,000 goal.

Guest auctioneer Lily Tomlin successfully bid for a painting by Cape Coral artist Pat Cleveland at Arts For Act at Harborside Saturday night. Entitled "Lilies of the Pond," the oil painting was one of two works purchased by the movie star in the annual fundraising event.

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