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Upping ante for art, AIDS

Surprisingly, the voyeuristic apex of Saturday night's Two by Two for AIDS and Art gala was not watching burlesque queen **Dita Von Teese** strip down to her bejeweled intimates. It occurred when the live-auction bidding for a painting by **Elizabeth Peyton** began to soar like Google stock on amphetamines.

Even the auctioneer, Sotheby's vice chairman **Jamie Niven** (son of actor David Niven and a jaded veteran if ever there was one), was incredulous as the bidding galloped into the hundreds of thousands. The instant he barked out one bid, another would follow: "\$125,000, 130,000 ... 140, 150, 160," and on and on it went.

This was no doubt pleasing to Ms. Peyton, who was Two by Two's featured artist and watched the bidding of black-tie moguls in the pasha-worthy tent on the lawn of **Cindy and Howard Rachofsky's** Preston Hollow estate.

In the end, **John Eagle**, husband of Two by Two co-chair **Jennifer Eagle**, would not be denied. He bought the 12-inch-by-9-inch oil portrait for a staggering \$450,000.

Eagles' big hang-up

Sunday morning, the Eagles hosted the traditional morning-after brunch where Ms. Peyton was presented the eighth amfAR (the Foundation for AIDS Research) Award of Excellence for Artistic Contributions to the Fight Against AIDS.

In the artists' honor, Jennifer and John had already hung their new \$450,000 painting.

The small portrait should feel right at home in the Eagles' Park Lane house, which was designed by Edward Durell Stone, architect of the original Museum of Modern Art building in Manhattan and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Dita under glass

After the Two by Two live auction, the tent was cleared and refurnished as an all-white cabaret filled with white leather Barcelona chairs and settees.

Ms. Von Teese performed a riveting homage to fan dancer Sally Rand and other burlesque queens while "You Made Me Love You" blasted from speakers.

She made her second performance conditional. If enough people offered \$5,000 each to have their pictures made with her, she would return. Once \$70,000 had been raised, the curtain opened for her signature show where she splashed around inside a giant martini glass.

The Dita act and the Elizabeth Peyton painting were two major accelerators that sent this year's Two by Two take into the stratosphere.

As dawn approached, the adding-machine tapes were still sputtering, but it was clear that the event had brought in an all-time record—more than \$3.2 million to be divided between the Dallas Museum of Art and amFAR.