

# POINTLESS. NOT PRICELESS



I write to you regarding your advertised auction of a worked rhinoceros horn specimen and urge you to reconsider the position your company adopts regarding future sales of similar items.

You may not be aware there are now less than 24,000 wild rhinos across Africa and Asia. Our five rhino species (black, white, Javan, Sumatran and Indian) have declined by a combined 96% during the last century. Six of our eight sub-species have a conservation status, defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as critically endangered. One African sub-species is functionally extinct with just two female adults and three sub-species were declared extinct during the last decade. More than one thousand rhinos are slaughtered annually across Africa for their horns which are trafficked to Asia to sustain demand for an illegal trade that is driving these animals to extinction.

Rhino horns are used for medicinal, status symbol and practical purposes, but also traded as investment pieces. Speculative buyers acquire newly sourced horns (from poached rhinos) as long-term investments, banking on rarity and/or extinction to increase financial return. Each time you agree to sell a rhinoceros horn specimen you legitimise the use of a product sourced from these endangered species. Sales of historical artefacts also perpetuate current demand by providing a financial value which helps sustain the market.

Global efforts to disarm criminal gangs, stigmatise horn consumption and shut down passages which provide access to launder horns requires a global effort from all sectors of society, in particular, the antique industry, which is an important stakeholder in the trade of antique horn specimens. I urge you to look beyond the age, antiquity, cultural significance, perceived decorative beauty and immediate profit and prioritise the long-term conservation of these ecologically important and irreplaceable animals.

I urge you to acknowledge as long as you provide a point of sale for these specimens; you are a contributor to the current poaching epidemic because every sale piece always originates from a slaughtered animal.

I respectfully ask you to consider enacting a voluntary ban of any consignments of items fully sourced from rhinoceros horns as well as specimens which contain rhinoceros horn components. Any positive steps you implement will demonstrate your commitment to international conservation, highlight the severity of this crisis, set a precedent within your industry, but ultimately contribute towards the long-term preservation of these animals.

**"Now is the time for the antique industry to demonstrate ethical integrity and place the long term welfare of endangered species ahead of short term profits"**