

# hand PAINTED

BY RACHEL KESSLER



**D**ressed in all black with the exception of a bright orange and turquoise Tibetan necklace around his neck, renowned painter Guido Daniele spoke to *South Florida Opulence* at his recent show at The Top of The Rock in New York City. It was the first time the Milan-based artist exhibited his eclectic artwork in the United States, and he was thrilled. With sunlight streaming through windows mid-day, and with the Manhattan skyline all around, Guido speaks passionately and openly about his work and his cause.

## SPECIAL CAUSE, SPECIAL CANVAS

A trained sculptor from the Brera School of the Arts in Milan, a world-class museum that houses works of great masters like Raffaello, Rubens and Caravaggio, Guido Daniele has made a unique name for himself painting exquisitely detailed, whimsical and realistic animal masterpieces. What's different about his art, compared to his famous contemporaries, however, is that he uses a unique canvas: the human hand.

In 1990, the hyper-realistic illustrator developed a body painting technique. His first human model? The hand of his very own son. And to this day, most of Guido's hand models are one of his children. As a painter, his medium brings unusual challenges. "I have to make sure knuckles aren't jutting out or clumsy





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looking and that hair doesn’t get in the way of my art,” he mused. “When not using my children’s hands, I look for a well-proportioned, hairless, unshaky hand on which to create.”

Years after his first creation, Guido was hired to create an international advertising campaign for AT&T. He painted the world’s city and country landmarks – from The Great Wall of China to Rialto Bridge in Venice – on the hands and arms of models. The campaign catapulted him into the global spotlight, attracting more commercial campaigns and rocketing success. Now, he not only creates art on human hands for ad campaigns, but also for fashion events, auctions and art exhibitions. In 2007, the Animal Planet television networks honored him as Hero of the Year.

**A CLOSER LOOK AT “HANDIMALS”**

Guido’s New York exhibition features 24 images of intricately painted animals – or Handimals, as he fervently refers to them. He dedicated the show to his close friend, famed primatologist and conservationist Jane Goodall and her institute, which is focused on pioneering research on chimpanzees. Guido supports her personal campaign to bring attention to animal and environmental preservation.

“You’ve got to hand it to the animals,” said Guido. “Without the animals, we die. This is not just about the animals surviving, but that animals are necessary for our survival, as well. The frogs, the bees, the animals, the ocean, the air – these all need to be protected.

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is our home. We aren’t respecting our home and we need to do that for all of our survival. Using my art and the Handimals, it is my goal to spread awareness about the chickens, the bees, the domestic animals, the wild animals. My goal is to speak about animals becoming near extinct – the elephant, the tiger and others. It’s impossible to make another tiger once they’re all gone. From domestic animals, which people give as gifts and then abandon, it is not right. We have a problem with the bees, the pollution. We need to show respect for animals and our home.”

Guido said he doesn’t have a favorite animal or a favorite image. “They are all different. You can’t choose. It’s like choosing a favorite child.” The elephant, he finds, is the easiest to paint and one of the first animals he ever painted on a hand. The swan, duck and penguin are all painted on his daughter’s hands. “I painted the flamingo for my pleasure. The parrot I did in London because it was something new.”

Each painting takes about 4-5 hours to create.

What’s ahead for the artist? “The puffin and chameleon,” Guido said. “And the animal I really want to do is the peacock. The peacock is very, very difficult. Of course, first I have to find the right hand...”

To see more of Guido Daniele’s Handimal Art, go to [www.guidodaniele.com](http://www.guidodaniele.com). For more information about the Jane Goodall Institute, visit [www.janegoodall.org](http://www.janegoodall.org).

