



Press Release

Venice, 11 September 2026

**Omenaa Mensah takes TOP CHARITY to the international stage. The initiative's first edition outside Poland, held in Venice, brought together the worlds of business and art, raising EUR 3.034 million for social impact initiatives. The result places TOP CHARITY among Europe's most effective philanthropic initiatives, while demonstrating that Polish business has not only global ambitions, but also the strength, sophistication and commitment to make a meaningful difference in the world.**

The first international edition of TOP CHARITY Venice Experience, initiated by Polish-Ghanaian philanthropist Omenaa Mensah, brought together leading figures from the worlds of business, art and culture in Venice. Over the course of a single evening, Polish entrepreneurs demonstrated both the scale of their ambitions and their ability to drive meaningful change. The auction raised more than EUR 3 million, dedicated to social impact initiatives. This means that approximately EUR 34,000 was raised every minute during the auction. With this result, TOP CHARITY has established itself as one of Europe's most effective philanthropic initiatives, surpassing the fundraising results of many comparable events across the continent.

One of the most significant works offered at auction, Andy Warhol's "Katie Jones", sold for a record EUR 1,15 million. This marks the highest publicly recorded price achieved by a single artwork at a charity auction in Venice. The event took place at the legendary Hotel Cipriani, at a time when the city was alive with the 83rd Venice International Film Festival, the 61st Biennale Arte and Homo Faber 2026. Guests included Kasia Smutniak, Jakub Józef Orliński, Mariam Battistelli, Carmen Giannattasio, DJ Cuppy, Georgette Mosbacher, Noëlla Coursaris Musunka, Ewa Chodakowska, Małgorzata Rozenek-Majdan and Radosław Majdan, Dr Emma Kiworkowa, as well as representatives of the Ethiopian Imperial Family: Asfaw Shiferaw Sahle and his daughter, Princess Kelmwork Asfaw Shiferaw. Among the guests and bidders were also representatives of leading Polish businesses, including Iwona Büchner-Grzesiak, Dr Emma Kiworkowa, Piotr and Marta Dejneka, Michał

Sołowow, Martin Kaczmarowski, Michał Skotnicki, Mateusz Rzymowski and Kamila Sienkiewicz, Żaneta Gortat, Dariusz Gałęzowski, and Patrycja and Jakub Swadźba.

The choice of Venice was deeply symbolic. Built on water, the city grew from challenging conditions into a foundation for future power and prosperity, becoming over the centuries a unique meeting place for cultures, ideas, trade and art. In a similar spirit, TOP CHARITY was born from the belief that bold vision and determination can make possible what may initially seem impossible. This symbolism is further strengthened by the fact that Venice and its lagoon are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, with UNESCO supporting the preservation of this extraordinary place for future generations. TOP CHARITY Venice Experience took place immediately after the signing in Paris of a three-year strategic agreement between the Omenaa Foundation and UNESCO. The partnership covers, among other areas, the protection and activation of cultural heritage, education, contemporary African art, support for artists, the development of the creative industries, and strengthening cooperation between Poland and Africa. As part of the agreement, the Omenaa Foundation has committed EUR 1 million to initiatives implemented jointly with UNESCO.

“I have always carried two worlds within me: Europe and Africa. Poland gave me education, opportunities and the tools to grow, while Africa is my heart, my soul and my DNA. This dual perspective taught me how to build bridges: between Europe and Africa, business and philanthropy, art and tangible impact, and above all, between people. TOP CHARITY was founded on this very idea. I believe that true success is not only about what we achieve or possess, but about what we are able to do with it for others. Venice has more than 400 bridges. During the TOP CHARITY Venice Experience, we built another one, because the future belongs to those who know how to build bridges between worlds” - says **Omenaa Mensah**, creator and initiator of TOP CHARITY.

The most electrifying moment of the evening was the bidding for **Andy Warhol's 1973 portrait "Katie Jones"**. The work sold for **EUR 1,15 million**, setting the highest publicly recorded price for a single artwork at a charity auction in Venice. The presence of "Katie Jones" at Hotel Cipriani was no coincidence. The hotel was one of the favourite places of **São Schlumberger**, a prominent art collector and the subject of one of Warhol's portraits. More than fifty years after its creation, the work thus returned to a world connected with the Schlumberger family, this time in support of the philanthropic mission of OmenaArt Foundation.

The charity auction featured nine exceptional works, reflecting a diversity of generations, cultures, perspectives and forms of artistic expression:

1. Andy Warhol (US), „Katie Jones”, 1973 , 1 150 000 euro,
2. Cornelius Annor (GH), „Nkrumah Pencil”, 2026, 160 000 euro,
3. Xawery Wolski (PL), „ Links of Infinity”, 2018, ed. 1/8, 70 000 euro,
4. Antoine Farrugia (MT), „Untitled”, 2008 – 70 000 euro,
5. Raphael Adjetei Adjei Mayne (GH), „One Corner”, 2026, 70 000 euro,
6. Ewa Czwartos (PL), „Charyty”, 2026, 65 000 euro,
7. Tegene Kunbi (ET), „Imperial Garden”, 2026, 60 000 euro,
8. Nikol Andonova – NIKYOTO (BG), „Molten Marble”, 2026, 50 000 euro,
9. LR Vandy (GB/SL), „Linked”, 2023, 45 000 euro.

One of the event's key artistic voices was Tegene Kunbi, a contemporary Ethiopian artist representing Ethiopia at the 61st Venice Biennale. His work, „Imperial Garden”, was also included in the TOP CHARITY Venice Experience auction, linking Ethiopia's presence at the Biennale with the event's philanthropic dimension.

The second part of the auction featured **Great Emotions**, a collection of exceptional experiences created for the TOP CHARITY community, which raised a total of **EUR 1,294 million**. The highest bid was achieved by **TITANIA**, a Caribbean or Asian cruise for 12 guests aboard a 73-metre superyacht with Omenaa Mensah and Rafał Brzoska. The experience sold for **EUR 500,000**. Strong interest also surrounded the **“At the Cradle of Civilization: Ethiopia and Eritrea”** expedition, an eight-day private journey with Johan Ernst Nilson, Omenaa Mensah and Rafał Brzoska, which reached **EUR 390,000**. **Exclusive Dolce&Gabbana Experience during Milan Fashion Week** was auctioned for **EUR 144,000**. Other experiences included a stay in Botswana's Okavango Delta, the opportunity to create a bespoke family champagne with HATT et SÖNER, a collector's jewellery set featuring emeralds from Ethiopia, the creation of a bespoke family rum with Dictador, and a journey aboard the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express by Belmond from Venice to Paris.

The fifth season of TOP CHARITY is built around dialogue between Europe and Africa. Following the Warsaw edition, which focused on Ghana, Asante culture and the historic ties between Poland and Africa, **Ethiopia** took centre stage in Venice. The evening's central theme drew on the legend of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, reinterpreted as a contemporary metaphor for wisdom, curiosity, dialogue and responsible leadership. Special guests included Asfaw Shiferaw Sahle and his daughter, Princess Kelmwork Asfaw Shiferaw, representatives of the Ethiopian Imperial Family. The Venice edition also marked the beginning of a partnership with The Order of the Queen of Sheba Foundation, which supports research, education and the preservation of the cultural heritage of African civilizations.

The evening was hosted by Jo-Ann Strauss, South African presenter and philanthropist, and Radosław Mróz, a Warner Bros. Discovery journalist. The auction was conducted by Alex Branczik of Sotheby's.

"I would like to thank Venice for the exceptionally warm welcome extended to TOP CHARITY. My special thanks go to the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland in Venice, Marco Ferruzzi Balbi, whose support and personal involvement played an important role in making our first international edition possible. The openness we encountered in the city confirmed that art and philanthropy can successfully bring people together across borders" - says **Omenaa Mensah**, initiator of TOP CHARITY.

"The day after the event, together with my husband, Rafał Brzoska, we met with Simone Venturini, Mayor of Venice. We discussed the city's plans and the key directions for the development of culture and the arts. From our very first conversation, a shared ambition emerged to build a new bridge between Poland, Italy and Africa, based on business, culture, art and philanthropy. It is the best proof that an idea born in Poland can now open the door to cooperation of international significance" - says **Omenaa Mensah**.

TOP CHARITY Venice Experience was conceived as a multi-day platform bringing together art, business, philanthropy and culture. On 9 September, guests visited Biennale Arte 2026, followed by an aperitivo and a private presentation of the Alta Moda, Alta Sartoria and Alta Gioielleria collections at the Dolce&Gabbana boutique on Calle Larga XXII Marzo. On 10 September, **TOP CHARITY ChangeMAKERS** also took place at the Orient Express Venezia hotel, with **UniCredit** as its partner. The gathering focused on business, responsible leadership, investment and long-term thinking.

In the TOP CHARITY model, the auction finale does not mark the end of the process. The funds raised are allocated to specific social, educational and cultural projects with clearly defined goals, budgets, beneficiary groups and measurable outcomes. One of the key elements of this system is the Philanthropic Consortium operating within TOP CHARITY. Through its grant programme, the organisation supports charitable initiatives in Poland, Africa and other parts of the world. The current call for applications for the **4th edition of the 2026/2027 Grant Programme** focuses on sport and health, physical activity, prevention and health-promoting initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life of children, young people and seniors. Funds mobilised around TOP CHARITY also support projects carried out by **Omenaa Foundation, OmenaArt Foundation and Rafał Brzoska Foundation**, including education for children in Poland and Africa, scholarship programmes, artist development and heritage preservation.

“Strong cities, much like strong companies, thrive when they are open to people, capital, new ideas and international cooperation. Venice understands this perfectly. Our meeting with Simone Venturini, Mayor of Venice, showed us a city with an extraordinary heritage and, at the same time, a modern vision for the future. I particularly appreciate the warm and generous welcome Venice extended to Polish entrepreneurs and to the TOP CHARITY initiative. Polish business is now ready not only to invest and expand globally, but also to bring its values and sense of social responsibility to the international stage. I believe this is the beginning of very tangible cooperation between Poland, Italy and Africa” - says **Rafał Brzoska**.

The event's partner and co-organiser was **HATT et SÖNER**. The group of companies supporting the event also included **UniCredit, Dolce&Gabbana, Sotheby's and InPost Italia**. **EY** served as the event auditor.

During the TOP CHARITY Venice Experience, the **TOP CHARITY Award** was presented to **Kristofer Ruscon, co-founder and owner of HATT et SÖNER, and Omenaa Mensah**, who was recognised for creating a model of systemic philanthropy that brings together business, social organisations, art, education and culture.

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Press Materials and Photographs: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GwmT-ASF4XzgMUSvyjoyxwdr4Dix8IRc>

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**ABOUT TOP CHARITY:**

TOP CHARITY is a philanthropic initiative bringing together the worlds of business, art, culture and social impact. Its originator and the creator of its vision, concept and creative architecture is Polish-Ghanaian philanthropist **Omenaa Mensah**. **Rafał Brzoska**, entrepreneur and philanthropist, is a co-creator of the initiative, supporting its business development, scale and the expansion of its network of private donors and partners.

Since 2022, TOP CHARITY has developed into an ecosystem of collaboration bringing together private donors, entrepreneurs, social organisations, experts, artists and cultural institutions. After five seasons, the total value of mobilised support has exceeded **EUR 57,2 million**, while the

ecosystem's activities have encompassed **238 projects**.

The initiative's international standing is further confirmed by, among others, three Gold Awards and one Bronze Award received at the Eventex Awards 2026, as well as the iLuxury Award 2026 in the Best Luxury Services - Luxury Charity Initiative category.