

DANCING FOR NATURE

Vildwerk Foundation unites artists with environmentalists for the greater good

By Leah Kogen-Elimeliah

In New York City's creative melting pot, it is rare for something truly groundbreaking to emerge. Yet vildwerk, the first and only organization of its kind, aspires to revolutionize and reshape artistic creativity, striking compelling collaborations with environmentalists, conservationists, and those devoted to the protection of our wilderness and its inhabitants. "I founded vildwerk in order for artists to collaborate with conservation organizations," said Chiara Gorodesky, who is also a team member of the Turtle Conservancy.

Vildwerk's inaugural gala dinner was held at the Bowery Hotel on May 1. Award-winning choreographer Christopher Wheeldon OBE, the dinner chairman, welcomed guests and the evening's entertainment: the world premiere of choreographer Joshua Beamish's new work titled *The Golden Tortoise*, performed by principal dancer Mara Galeazzi, with music by Felipe Perez Santiago. "There is no other organization like vildwerk," Beamish said. "Our collaboration affords me an opportunity to connect my creative passion with an underrepresented cause. Most of us are completely unaware of the dire realities that many species face."

The evening also included a poignant video presentation by Turtle Conservancy founder Eric Goode introducing a Ploughshare Tortoise (*Astrochelys yniphora*). TC senior conservation scientist Jim Juvik highlighted for guests how the species is Critically Endangered, near extinct in the wild, and only through efforts of partnerships such as TC's with the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust can provide hope for its survival (see page 36). What is conservation, really? It is an act—a concerted and tangible effort to protect our home, the very land we inhabit and the air we breathe. Conservation safeguards the delicate ballet of life, in which every organism, landscape, and geographic feature contributes to a symphony of existence—one that should be nurtured by human hands rather than being torn apart.

With Earth's biodiversity hanging in the balance, vildwerk wants humanity to fully grasp the enormity of our impact. The goal? To preserve what we already have, ensuring it's safeguarded for the generations to come.

Vildwerk cultivates a sense of unity: a community comprising artists, creatives, scientists, and environmentalists, all united in their dedication to this urgent mission. To find out more and get involved, visit vildwerk.org. 🐢



Vildwerk presented an evening celebrating connections, with performances by Mara Galeazzi (dancing in *Golden Tortoise*), music by Dorothea and Rafael Figueroa, a chorus singing *Grow Little Tree*, and a discussion of the plight of the Ploughshare Tortoise by TC's Eric Goode and Jim Juvik.