Art with Heart: Finalists announced in New SFS Introducing Art Conservation Initiative

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Norfolk based wildlife conservation charity **Explorers against Extinction** has announced the 100 finalists in its innovative **SFS Introducing**
free-to-enter art competition. Finalists come from over all over the United Kingdom with dozens of endangered species celebrated.

SFS Introducing is a new initiative for 2019, which aims to showcase up and coming artistic talent while also raising awareness about endangered species and funds for nominated projects.

The SFS Introducing artworks will be exhibited in the UK this autumn alongside the charity's core invitational Sketch for Survival collection, which has successfully toured for the last three years, attracting over 10,000 visitors last autumn.

Anyone over the age of 16 years old can submit an original work featuring an endangered species to SFS Introducing.

This year, over 450 entries were received from five continents. Trustees were joined by an international panel of award-winning artists led by **Gary Hodges**, the UK's best-selling wildlife pencil artist, and were tasked with narrowing the selection down to just 100 finalists.

Finalists have their artwork exhibited alongside the core Sketch for Survival collection, comprising work by established professional artists and celebrity supporters and patrons, including **Sir Ranulph Fiennes**. The exhibition tour starts in October and venues include Bristol, Harrogate, Norwich and London.

Finalists also have the chance to win three awards, including **SFS Introducing Artist of the Year** which will be presented at the charity's '**On the Edge' event at London's Royal Geographical Society** in London on 14 November 2019.

Trustee, Sara White explains the thinking behind the initiative: "Our annual Sketch for Survival exhibition and auction has gone from strength to strength and has proved to be a hugely effective vehicle in raising awareness about endangered species. It all started with an exhibition of 26-minute sketches, because an elephant is poached for its ivory every 26 minutes. This new initiative gives aspiring or fledgling artists a chance for their work to be seen on a wider stage, while also contributing to wildlife conservation."

Lauren Asquith, 22, from Wakefield in Yorkshire graduated in illustration from the University of Leeds this summer and hopes to set up a freelance illustration business. Her digital depiction of an orangutan is one of the artworks selected by the panel. Asquith said: "I wanted to choose a species with character for my artwork and the orangutan has a good face for drawing. The campaign by Explorers Against Extinction is very close to home given my interest in nature and science and wanting to learn from the subjects I illustrate."

All artworks are sold either by auction or in the charity's online gallery in aid of Explorers against Extinction wildlife conservation projects which range from a Nubian giraffe translocation in Uganda, support for anti-poaching teams in Hwange, Zimbabwe protecting critically endangered painted dogs, a community project in Bandipur India aimed at safeguarding tigers and field study in Batang Toru, Sumatra where the world's rarest great ape, the Tapanuli Orangutan is under threat.

More information at explorersagainstextinction.co.uk

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