

Artwork by Oscar winning animator sells for over £4,000 in aid of conservation

Tuesday 27 November, 2018

Original artworks by famous faces including Oscar winners Nick Park, Dames Helen Mirren and Judi Dench have helped a conservation charity in a bid to save elephants and other iconic species from extinction.

Sketch for Survival is the idea of Norfolk based charity **Explorers against Extinction**. The organisers ask wildlife artists and celebrities to help them raise awareness about the illegal wildlife trade and threat of species extinction by donating a **26-minute sketch** or other original artwork of an endangered species, because an elephant is poached for its tusks in the wild every **26 minutes**.

The charity **received over four hundred artworks** from professional artists in more than **30 different countries in support of their 2018 initiative**. Over **sixty rare and endangered species** around the globe, including elephant, rhino and tiger – the three species most at risk from the multi-billion-dollar illegal wildlife trade - were depicted.

The two-month exhibition ended Sunday in Norwich. Other venues on the tour included gallery@oxo on London's South Bank and the Salmagundi Club, Fifth Avenue, New York.

The whole collection went under the hammer via online auction on Sunday night, selling for over £50,000 - a new record for the charity.

Wallace & Gromit creator, Nick Park's artwork saw a fierce bidding battle late on Sunday with the hammer finally falling at £4,400. As Trustee Sara White says, "The starting bid on many pieces is just £50 so seeing Nick Park's exceed £4,000 was a very special moment for us as organisers. We've written many letters and emails over the past couple of years – it can take a long time to secure some of these artworks."

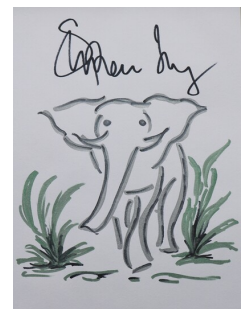
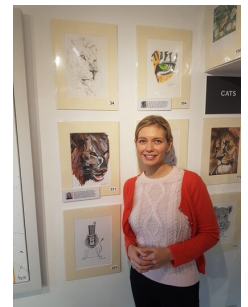
Stephen Fry's 26 minute elephant sketch sold for £2,400 with the star taking to Twitter on Saturday to pledge his support. Other celebrity artworks under the hammer included Dames Judi Dench and Helen Mirren, Sir Ranulph Fiennes, Frederick Forsyth, Richard E Grant, Sophie Thompson and Mary Berry.

Funds raised support frontline conservation. The headline project this year is an elephant anti-poaching initiative with non-profit African Parks in Garamba National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo. Garamba, a UNESCO World Heritage site used to be home to more than 22,000 elephants but today only 1200 remain. A new anti-poaching canine unit will better equip Garamba's teams to address threats.

The charity is also supporting Fauna & Flora International (FFI) by donating funds to Tiger Conservation and Protection Units in Sumatra. Just 4,000 tigers remain worldwide with the critically endangered Sumatran tiger the smallest sub-species.

To support the campaign, purchase the final few unsold lots or find out more please visit explorersagainstextinction.co.uk

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