

The Children Sketching a Future for Vanishing Species

Tuesday 25 August, 2020

Children from across the globe have come together to help secure a future for endangered species by donating wildlife artworks to a special charity collection.

Sketch for Survival is the idea of UK based conservation charity [Explorers Against Extinction](#). Last year this special art exhibition attracted more than 10,000 visitors and the artworks sold for over £50,000 funding nominated frontline conservation projects in Indonesia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

The aim of the exhibition is to raise funds as well as awareness about a range of issues including the illegal wildlife trade and habitat loss.

Sketch for Survival comprises two collections: the **Invitational collection** includes artworks donated by professional and celebrity supporters including **Dame Judi Dench, Joanna Lumley, Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Stephen Fry**.

The **Introducing collection** features just 100 artworks selected from all those received to a free-to-enter competition.

For the first time this year, the competition was opened up to under 16s.

Children entering the competition ranged in age from six to 15 years old and came from across the globe, including the UK, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, China, Qatar, Australia and Iran.

Amber May from Hereford, UK struggles with learning, especially reading, but she loves art, dance and all things wild. Her parents, who come from Zimbabwe encourage her passion for the natural world.

Amber's 'Cute Red Panda' in watercolour was submitted to the competition during lockdown shortly before she celebrated her seventh birthday.

Amber said: "I like the red pandas because they're cute. I also like the red stripes on the tail and how they look really friendly. When my mum told me about them being almost extinct, it made me really sad and that's why I drew a picture of one."

Amber's was one of 677 artworks submitted to the art competition.

Explorers Against Extinction Trustee Sara White said: "This year has seen a record number of entries. The standard has been exceptionally high, so although none of the children's artworks have been selected in the final 100 we were keen to recognise their contribution.

"We have been so impressed by the children's artwork that we have decided to launch a dedicated **Sketch for Survival Junior Introducing** competition next year."

Among the children's entries was a painting from **seven-year-old Momo** from Shanghai in China. Momo loves to watch wildlife at Shanghai Wildlife Park and hopes to capture the beauty of the world through painting.

Momo wrote on his submission form: "In 2020, a virus is sweeping the world. According to scientists, the virus comes from wild animals. We have lost a lot of lovely people and we are sad. Animals are my friends - they say to everyone: I do not taste good, let's be friends!"

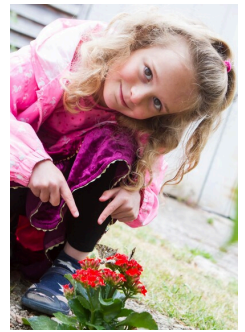
The organisers were struck by Momo's words.

White said: "Here's a seven-year-old in China creating a proverb for the 21st Century: the consumption of wild animals needs to stop.

"Pangolins, turtles, sharks, saolas – these are just some of the hundreds of species we are eating into extinction."

Contributor **Millie Sims age ten** from London painted a chameleon and said: "I'm a keen follower of what's going on in the world regarding climate change and animal welfare. My inspiration for this art

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work was my love of chameleons . I first saw one in a zoo which on one hand made me so happy to see this beautiful creature, but also made me very sad to think it wasn't home in the wild. I since found out that many chameleons are listed as endangered which broke my heart."

Millie painted a Lesser Chameleon, endemic to Madagascar. These were exploited in the 90s by the exotic pet market in the West. Today, habitat loss due to mining, logging and slash-and-burn farming techniques are among the threats to the Lesser Chameleon.

Ten-year-old Joshua Strong dreams of being an illustrator and says that art is relaxing, especially during lockdown and that it allows his "imagination to fly".

He wanted his portrait of a mother and baby elephant to show the "special bond" elephants have and that they are "gentle but also powerful and intelligent."

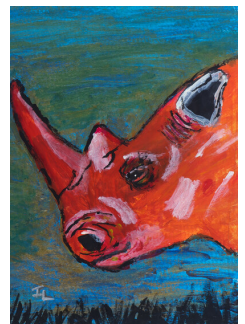
White said: "Joshua's right, these gentle giants are strong and smart, but they are also listed Vulnerable on The International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List. On average an African Elephant is lost in the wild every 26 minutes due to poaching."

One project being supported by funds raised through the artwork exhibition involves the collection of data and its genomic analysis. Target species include elephant, giraffe, big cats and chimpanzees in Central Africa.

Naftali Honig, Director of Research and Development in Garamba National Park in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) explained: "Genomics has the potential to add a whole new dimension to our understanding of wildlife and how best to manage, and protect it. In the near future, even in the most remote parts of the Congo, a single sample of dung or tissue will be able to contribute to big data sets, help us better understand demographics, contribute to population viability assessments and produce other conservation tools. One of the most exciting uses will be in employing this for the more cryptic species of wildlife, whose natural history places them beyond the reach of more traditional methods of learning."

The Sketch for Survival collections, including some of the children's artworks can be viewed at explorersagainstextinction.co.uk from Friday 28 August until Sunday 22 November 2020.

The Sketch for Survival exhibition opens at gallery@oxo, South Bank, London from Wednesday 11 November to Sunday 22 November 2020 (free entry).



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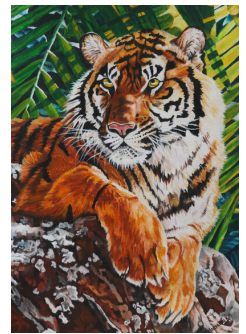
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<https://explorersagainstextinction.co.uk/initiatives/sketch-for-survival/sfs-junior-introducing/>

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