

Inspired Conservation

Asher Jay is saving the world's threatened wildlife—with creativity. Her cause-driven art, sculpture, design installations, films, and advocacy campaigns bring attention to everything from oil spills to dolphin slaughters to shrinking lion populations. "The unique power of art is that it can transcend differences, connect with people on a visceral level, and compel action," she says.

Much of her best-known work spotlights the illegal ivory trade. In 2013 the grassroots group March for Elephants asked Jay to visualize the ivory issue on an animated billboard in New York's Times Square. Her graphics depicted elephants shot and tusks poached. Viewed by 1.5 million people, the internationally crowd-funded initiative aimed to provoke public pressure for revising laws that permit ivory to be imported, traded, and sold.

She also took the message directly to China's ivory-hungry rising middle class. She created artwork of an elephant with panda coloration and markings, and Chinese text reading, "Protect the Pandas of Africa—Elephants." "I wanted to evoke a sense of pride in China's panda conservation achievements and inspire them to extend the same empathy to African wildlife," she says.

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