



# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## SOS: Urban Art by Award-Winning Artist SOS, Shines Light on Wildlife Conservation and Remarkable Bat Colony Discovery in Sussex

ART FOR SOCIAL IMPACT AND CHANGE

East Sussex, 21st August 2023 — SOS, East Sussex's female Banksy, is on the cusp of revealing a stunning work that seamlessly weaves together urban street art with the natural world of British wildlife.

Adorning stacked hay bales, this extraordinary piece is a testament to SOS's creative talent and carries a dual message: emphasising the urgency of local wildlife habitat conservation and spotlighting a rare discovery in 2022—a Greater Horseshoe bat colony, as highlighted by the BBC. This species of bat has not been seen in Sussex for over 100 years, and the location of the colony is near Chichester. The Vincent Wildlife Trust were responsible for raising funds to repair the roof where the bats have been discovered and the works are now complete.

The choice of hay bales as a canvas amplifies SOS's message, artfully portraying the delicate equilibrium between urban expansion and rural spaces. The artwork serves as a testament to the often-unseen beauty of wildlife flourishing amidst bustling surroundings. SOS's dedication to raising awareness takes on a unique resonance as she highlights the connection between British wildlife and materials such as hay bales. This artistic intervention adds a layer of relevance to the conversation around declining bat habitats and environmental preservation.

SOS remarks, “Wildlife habitats are being encroached upon and destroyed by developers regularly. My Greater Horseshoe bat installation is temporary and fragile; reflecting the sad reality of our declining habitats for rare and endangered species. Their food and ecosystems of bugs and insects are also being destroyed by farming methods and chemicals.”

SOS's commitment to impactful art is evident in her decision to address both British wildlife conservation through her work with various local initiatives, such as “HELP OUR KELP” in Worthing, The Saltdean Tunnel, and Cranbrook goes Nuts in May, part of Chelsea Flower show Fringe. Her artwork serves as a call for society to reflect on the work organisations do in preserving the local environment, and to show the beauty of nature in large scale artworks.

SOS's creations urge viewers to rally around the protection of endangered species that inhabit East Sussex. The lively depictions of foxes, hares, and sea-life set within their native habitats are a poignant reminder of the need to safeguard these fragile creatures in our midst. Her September show will be unusual because it will be giving visitors the opportunity to donate to local charities as well as education about ART for SOCIAL CHANGE. Sarah graduated in 2015 from Brighton University with a first class honours with distinction for her Masters in Inclusive Arts Practice, and since then has been making measurable impact and research across East and West Sussex.

The artwork's debut and **SOS private view** will occur as part of ART WAVE at KIND Supplies, 32 North St, Lewes on September 1st at 7pm-11.30 with FREE tickets to attend on Eventbrite. However the show will be open to the wider public from the 2nd-17th September. The SOS show is venue 131 on the ART WAVE district-wide arts trail, which celebrates 30 years in 2023. The event welcomes press representatives, art enthusiasts, and the community at large to engage with SOS's powerful message and delve into the significance of street art for social change. Please check Sarah's website [www.iamsos.com](http://www.iamsos.com) for more details and links.

Generous support for SOS's exhibition is provided by Kind Supply in Lewes, who's ethos is all about finding sustainable ways forward in the supply of eco conscious building materials and education programs. Kind Supply Director, Andrew Murdock says, “We are really happy to be supporting a female artist and enabling her to show her work in our warehouse.”

**For media inquiries, interview requests, or more information about SOS's artwork and forthcoming show, please contact:**

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### **About SOS:**

SOS, the moniker for multi-award-winning artist and practitioner Sarah Gillings, a multi-award-winning artist and inclusive arts practitioner infuses urban creativity with environmental advocacy. Her work sparks discussions on local concerns, catalysing conversations and inspiring change. Sarah has a trail of accolades, including an award from number 10 Downing St, The Points of Light Award. SOS is known for her dedication to art with a purpose. She is the founder of the UK's first street art charity U CAN Spray, who are heavily involved with more marginalised young people the Sussex community, providing confidence building workshops through the power of the spray-can.

### **About Kind Supply:**

As the perfect host and partner for the SOS show; Kind Supply offer sustainable and natural building solutions and systems. They have a focus on training, education and consultancy. They are passionate about the protection of the planet and being involved with the local community.

### **Other info about Greater Horseshoe Bats:**

So far the Vincent Wildlife Trust has raised around £120,000 towards the purchase of the site where the bats were discovered. They secured a further £150,000 to refurbish the stables and to turn it into a maternity unit for the species in Sussex in future years. <https://www.vwt.org.uk/species/greater-horseshoe-bat/>

Dr. Stephanie Murphy from the Sussex Bat Group explained "Bats from the Dorset colony have migrated to West Sussex for hibernation. We initially thought that the bats we found were South West migrants seeking hibernation here, but they turned out to be a founder colony at this site—five adults and three babies."

Facts about Greater Horseshoe Bats underscore the discovery's significance:

- Approximately 13,000 Greater Horseshoe bats inhabit the UK.
- Greater Horseshoe bats roost by hanging from rafters and consume large insects.
- Female bats give birth to single offspring, usually during late June to early July.

*Source: Vincent Wildlife Trust*

*High-resolution images and artist portfolio available upon request.*