

GorillaTalk



THE GORILLA FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER / SUMMER 2006

APE ART

On June 20, 2005, at prestigious Bonhams auction house in London, paintings by Renoir, Warhol and Congo were offered to the public. Neither the Renoir nor the Warhol sold. The Congo, however, which had been expected to bring between \$1000 and \$1500, sold for a surprising \$26,352 (including a buyer's premium).

Congo was a chimpanzee.

So is this all some sort of a joke?

At one time it was thought man was separated from the apes by his ability to make and use tools. This has been proven to be an incorrect assumption. Surely art must be that separation then. Art after all is the highest expression of the human psyche. Are the apes expressing themselves through the medium of paint or are they simply making a mess? There's no way to know.

No way unless, of course, you asked them.

And that brings us to the Gorilla Foundation, where the apes are more than happy to tell you what they are thinking.

We find that a great deal of the art Koko and Michael have produced is expressionism and reflects the emotions that they feel. The wild red and green strokes of *Anger* portray the essence of a gorilla's display. This contrasts dramatically with the large dark and light brown plays of paint depicting the *Earthquake*. Michael was asked to paint how the earthquake felt. In creating the painting Michael forcefully and repeatedly pounded dark brown paint onto the canvas with the brush. This

WORK IN PROGRESS

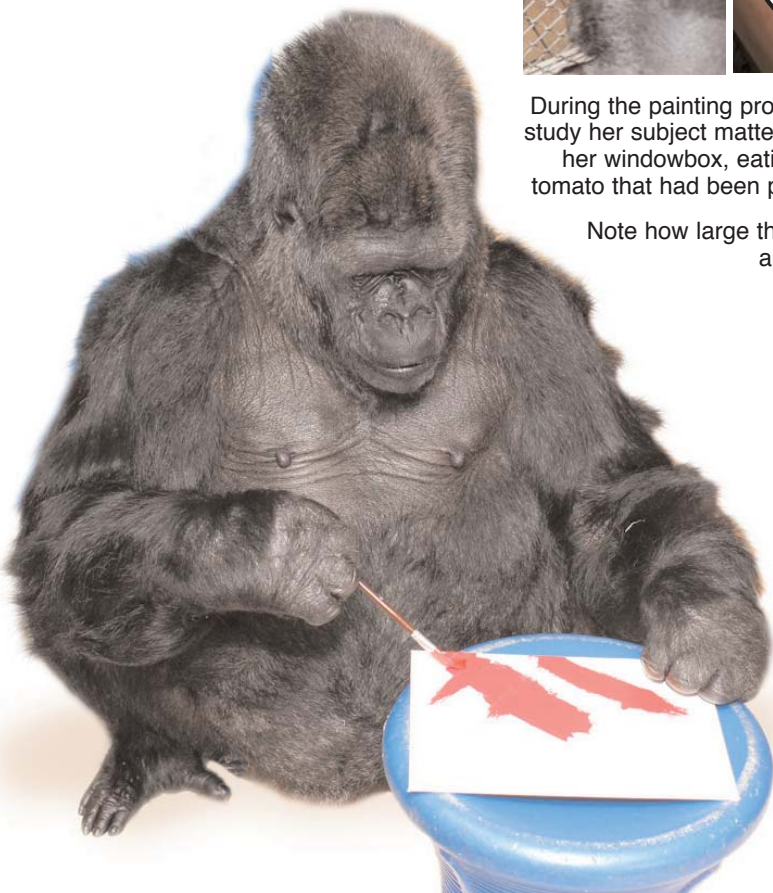


During the painting process Koko returned to study her subject matter: two banana slugs in her windowbox, eating a strawberry and a tomato that had been put out to attract them.

Note how large the delicious strawberry appears in the painting.



Koko indicated to Penny, her art assistant, that she would like to use some yellow acrylic paint next. She then proceeded to paint the bright yellow banana slug.



"Polite Lip (girl) Koko Love, Gorilla Love"



Bird , by Koko depicts a fledgling Steller's jay perched upon Koko's back.



Tree lettuce , by Michael bamboo stalks were the model for this still life.



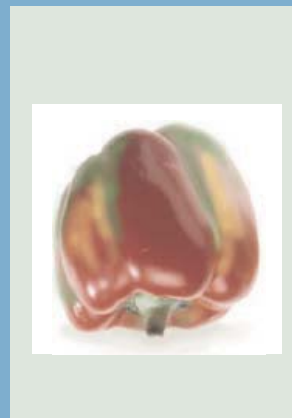
Apple Chase , by Michael Michael's beloved dog "Apple."



Love , by Koko painted at the request of Ron and Penny, a depiction of the emotion.



Earthquake , by Michael following the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989, Michael produced this imagery to express his reaction to the event.



Pepper , by Michael a favorite treat, a variegated pepper was the model.



Museum quality prints of Koko's and Michael's art are available for purchase at *Kokomart*, online at www.koko.org

seemed to represent the banging force of the quake. Then he took the light brown and gently painted over the dark, apparently representing the calm after the earthquake was over.

More remarkable, on many levels, are Koko and Michael's forays into impressionism. It is almost beyond comprehension that a nonhuman would possess the ability

to depict the world they live in on canvas. Yet, there they are, titled by the gorillas themselves to leave no doubt as to what the subjects are.

Love, by Koko, acrylic on canvas. When a friend suggested that we ask the gorillas to paint emotions Koko selected

bright pink and orange to paint her interpretation of the emotion love.

Bird, by Koko, acrylic on canvas. Koko seems to have painted her pet fledgling Steller's jay from memory. We rescued the bird from the nearby highway after a storm. Koko named the bird *Tongue* because of its protuberant tongue - the scrawny bird was always hungry and Koko enjoyed feeding it.

Tree lettuce, by Michael, acrylic on canvas. Outside the windows of the gorillas' apartments grow elegant stands of bamboo that rustle in the evening breezes. Called "tree lettuce" by Michael, young bamboo stalks are a tasty treat for gorillas.

Me, myself, good, by Michael, acrylic on canvas. Some people assumed that Michael was referring to his handprint when he named this piece. But when a 16-year-old autistic boy, who was associated with the Jane Goodall Institute in Israel, sketched the gorilla he could clearly see to the left of the handprint, it became obvious that this was a self-portrait. Michael liked to paint gorillas in rainbow colors.

Apple chase, by Michael, acrylic on canvas. Apple the dog (named by Koko) was a herding dog of a different ilk. Apple herded gorillas rather than sheep, and did so much to the gorillas' delight. Michael painted Apple in the midst of such an exuberant "chase" as they would run back and forth on either side of the gorilla enclosure. While painting Apple, Michael had available to him a full range of colors but intentionally limited his palette to accurately portray his dear friend.

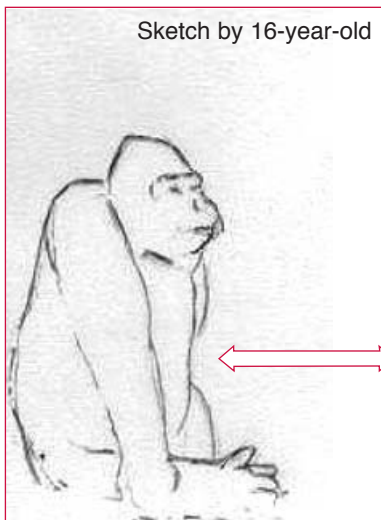
Pepper, by Michael, acrylic on canvas. Although no one would ever call them "starving artists" food has always been a "consuming" topic of interest for gorillas both in conversation and in art.

Toy dinosaur, by Michael, acrylic on canvas. A favorite toy, a plastic T Rex, this painting is of special interest in terms of technique because to add texture (the spikes on this toy were fascinating to him) Michael placed his fresh painting face down on the floor and then carefully pulled it off again. Michael never repeated this action.

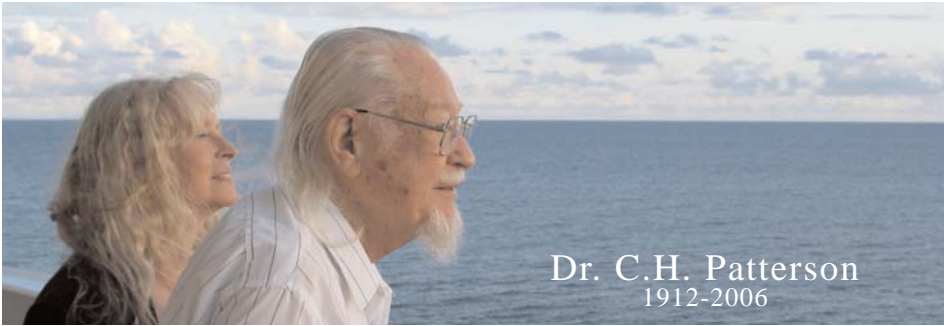


Stink gorilla more, by Michael, acrylic on canvas. Translated from gorilla speak to standard English the word "stink" means a flower and "more" is in reference to a large bouquet of wild flowers that Michael had been presented with.

Throughout the summer and into November of 2006 our friends at the Sternberg Museum of Natural History in Hays, Kansas will be hosting **Gorilla Art: Creative Works by Koko and Friends**. We hope to be able to share these beautiful works of art and interspecies communication with other natural history museums across the nation. We will keep you posted about up-coming shows at www.koko.org.



Me, myself, good a self-portrait by Michael with carefully placed handprint "signature."



With great sadness, we note the passing of a remarkable human being, Professor Cecil Holden "Pat" Patterson, father of Gorilla Foundation founder Dr. Penny Patterson.

He left his physical body on Friday, May 26, 2006, at his home in Asheville, NC, at the age of 93.

A resident of Asheville since 1978, he was married to the late Frances Spano Patterson who died in 1966. He was a professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois and at UNC-Greensboro. A veteran of WWII, he worked as a psychologist with the Veterans Administration during and following the war. The author of numerous books and articles, he developed groundbreaking theories of counseling and psychotherapy. The recipient of several prestigious awards, he became an icon of downtown Asheville as the maitre d' at a local cafe until the age of 90.

He is survived by his seven children, Joseph, Francine (Penny), Jenifer, Christopher, Thomas, Mary Victory and Charles as well as six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Among the tributes honoring Dr. Patterson was this touching reminiscence:

One evening, perhaps 10 years ago, I was in downtown Asheville having dinner....We noticed a gentleman having dinner alone, and invited him to share our table, which he cheerfully did... After a time, still clueless as to who was dining with us, my companion made a comment about a photo of Koko with a kitten, hanging next to our table. She said "that's Ball," and he quietly corrected her, and said "no, that was Koko's next kitten."

"Are you sure?" she asked.

"Pretty sure..." he said, and he introduced himself. What had been an already fascinating dinner became that much more special, and I've cherished the memory of having dinner with such an amazing person ever since....

As a lifelong mentor to his daughter, and fond "grandfather" to Koko, Michael and Ndume, Dr. C.H. Patterson made a profound impact on everyone at the Foundation. His life will continue to be a remarkable example and inspiration to all of us. To learn more about Dr. Patterson's life and achievements, visit our website www.koko.org.

Donations in memory of Dr. C.H. Patterson may be sent to The Gorilla Foundation, c/o Penny Patterson, P.O. Box 620530, Woodside, CA 94062 or may be made through the Gorilla Foundation website at <http://koko.org/foundation/chpatterson/>



THE GORILLA FOUNDATION

Conservation through Communication

The Gorilla Foundation's mission is to pioneer interspecies communication, save gorillas from extinction and inspire humanity to create a better future for all great apes.

To learn more, visit

www.koko.org

or email us at

koko@koko.org

AOL Keyword: KOKO

For membership and product information visit our website or call 1-800 ME GO APE

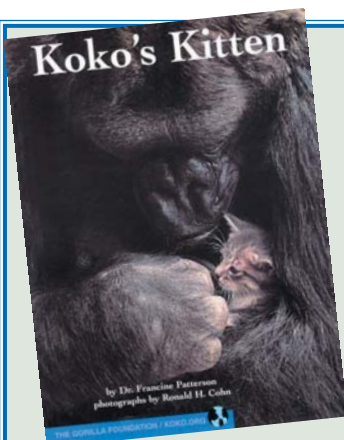
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