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**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

**Art From an Unlikely Artist**

**By Andrea Campbell**

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Amanda makes good money for her art, hundreds of dollars on some pieces. Her particular style is strictly abstract and she exhibits some unorthodox mannerisms, but her work garners the attention of many.

Sometimes the artist sleeps late and only paints once a week. If the inspiration strikes and she does not have her supplies though, she shows her frustration by spitting and acting out! Well, what would you expect from a 100-pound orangutan?

Typically, her studio is littered with banana peels and other stuff lying around rotting, but she like to climbs up, up, up into a cargo net to greet visitors.

Amanda lives at the Como Zoo in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Her Como Zoo keeper, Mike Thell, says that the Sumatran/Bornean orangutan started painting in June as part of the zoo's enrichment program. Animals in this zoo and others across the country, experience different incentive enhancements as well: there are the gorillas who have to maneuver their treats out of plastic bottles, a polar bear who has to scratch his way through a block of ice to get his fish, and lions who get to roll around in their favorite herbs and spices. Animal behavior experts have discovered that by supplying work for animals, whether that means foraging for food, navigating their terrain, or simply doing unlikely projects like Amanda, the animals fare better and exhibit a "psychological well being."

The intelligent, antsy Amanda just kind of took to painting after only a few demonstrations about what to do with the brush and paints from the less-talented humans around her. Because she thrives as a result of her painting, every so often bottles of nontoxic poster paint and thick sheets of paper are pushed up to her chain-link fence. Part of Amanda's technique is to dip a fat paint brush into bright, primary colors and, after each thoughtful stroke on paper, she will cleanse the brush in her mouth! Blue is a favorite hue. Several minutes of inspired painting take place and then she hands her brush back to Thell, licks the excess paint with her pointed tongue, and its done. "She usually gives it the tongue signature," Thell says.

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It does take some coaxing to get Amanda to part with her work, but she will eventually push her creation under the cage door for retrieval. She is further rewarded for her efforts with either orange juice or a box of Kool-Aid, which she receives for every painting she completes.

Amanda's art debuted to the public at the zoo's Primate Exhibit building last February. The opening exhibition produced over 400 people who came to bid on 22 of Amanda's framed originals. The auction raised about \$4,800 for the zoo. A piece of Amanda's art entitled: "Like the Weather" took a hefty price, \$360.

And even though Amanda shares her cage with three other orangutans, she is, apparently, the only latent artist with drive and talent.

She is also not shy about demonstrating her skills to onlookers and likes the attention she gets as a

result. Zoo spokeswoman Jennifer Lauerman says, "She definitely knows what is going on." And even though Amanda the orangutan artist doesn't get the luxury of spending her funds, she would probably buy more bananas anyway.

Other animals too, have been taught to paint at various zoos around the country. Ruby, the elephant, has sold paintings for the Phoenix Zoo and one of her creations netted almost \$3,000. The Marine Science Center in Clearwater, Florida, has shown some dolphin art and in 1992, one of the originals went for as much as \$175.

\* \*

Ziggy, our soon-to-be twelve year old capuchin monkey loves artwork too, only she does not paint. I tried to introduce her to watercolor paints several times, but there was something about the brushes she could not get over. As a consequence, her favorite medium is chalk, with crayons taking a close second. She often decorates the sides of her cage, her toys, and a large, wooden hanging monkey with bright colors. In fact, I find chalk marks on almost any flat surface, including paper and unrequested mail.

If you would like to introduce your monkey to art, let them observe your actions more than a few times, supply non-toxic products, and as unobtrusively as possible, monitor their progress. For a reward, since boxed mixed drinks contain too much sugar, think about rewarding your budding artist with a tablespoon of low fat, low sugar yogurt in the lid or offer a couple of Jello cubes.

Andrea Campbell is the author of *Bringing Up Ziggy: What Raising a Helping Hands Monkey Taught Me About Love, Commitment, and Sacrifice*. See Andrea and Ziggy at their website at [www.andreacampbell.com](http://www.andreacampbell.com)

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Andrea Campbell is the author of eight books on a variety of topics. To find out more information about the author, check out her web site at: [www.andreacampbell.com](http://www.andreacampbell.com)

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Since I was about 8 or so I remember I started doodling and drawing. When ever I got bored in my clases I started drawing what ever came to my mind. Some times it was disining my name or drawing things, like cubes one on top of the other. In high school I was drawing, sketching and desinging all kinds of art. I finaly realized I had a talent because people kept telling me how nice and realistic my drawing where.



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