

Buggs and Carol: An Artistic Partnership

Buggs the horse came into my life in 2005. He is an incredibly smart, energetic, and willing horse who has a talent for making life “interesting” when he’s bored. He has always been handy with his mouth and it didn’t take long for him to learn to drop a ball through a hoop, open a mailbox and retrieve the mail, pound out notes on an electronic keyboard with his nose, and paint. He also smiles, nods, and bows when asked. This was all taught through positive reinforcement.

Being an artist, it seemed like a natural step for me to teach Buggs how to hold a paintbrush in his mouth and eventually move that brush around on a canvas. Our first painting turned out so well that I was hooked. Buggs really enjoys it, too. I pick out the colors and Buggs wields the brush. He chooses to participate or not but I have not yet hit a day that he doesn’t want to paint. Over four years we have created more than fifty paintings. Buggs’ paintings hang in ten US states and three foreign countries.

Buggs has been in the national news and Jay Leno played video and joked about him on The Tonight Show. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel produced a video about Buggs that can be seen on our webpage: www.ipaintwithhorses.com. Buggs even has his own Facebook page under Buggs Jensen.

Painting with Buggs has helped me grow as an artist and I like spending the time with him creating paintings as partners. We have recently branched out into textile designs with Buggs Bags because Buggs just loves to paint and I thought the bags would be more accessible to people. Not everyone has room for a large painting but would still like something that Buggs had a “hand” in creating. I design and sew up the bags from canvas Buggs painted on with acrylic textile paint. I also make pendants from small sections of drawings that Buggs creates with permanent markers on watercolor paper.

Being able to donate money or items for auction to horse related charities is a big reason for doing what I’m doing. I also hope to broaden peoples’ perceptions of what horses are capable of and that they have value beyond what we have traditionally used horses for. They are wonderfully intelligent, sensitive, intuitive, and sometimes creative beings who share our planet.

Carol Jensen