

The Art of the Elephants

If your cat walked across something you were painting and left footprints behind, would you consider your cat an artist? What if your bird could **30** _____ a coloured pencil in its beak and make marks on a piece of paper? It may sound like a joke, but some people have been taking animal art seriously.

In 1995, two Russian-American artists, Vitaly Komar and Alex Melamid, heard about the troubled elephants of Thailand. Elephants were used for hundreds of years in Thailand's logging industry to haul timber from forests. When the forests in Thailand began to disappear, the government put a stop to logging. All of a sudden, there were many elephants who no longer had a way to **31** _____ a living. Some elephants were abused. Others couldn't find enough to eat. Komar and Melamid knew that something had to be done to help the elephants. Then, they came **32** _____ with an idea.

Komar and Melamid visited elephant camps in Thailand and began to show the *mahouts*, or elephant trainers, how to teach the elephants to paint. At first, the mahouts had to guide the elephants' trunks. Later the elephants became more **33** _____ doing this — with practice and lots of sweet snacks! Finally, the elephants started to paint **34** _____ their own. The strange idea that Komar and Melamid had to save the elephants began to work! Today, people buy elephants' artwork from galleries all around the world.

Some people compare the cheerful, brightly-coloured artwork to the paintings of Pollock and Kandinsky, and are **35** _____ to pay over \$2,000 for the work of the elephant artists. Others are just happy to buy art that is so unique and to support such a good **36** _____.

Вставьте пропущенное слово.

1. Case.
2. Cause.
3. Reason.
4. Beginning.