# Northern rockhopper penguin Marley wows TikTok with her paintings and tail wags



At Moody Gardens in Galveston, Texas, a northern rockhopper penguin named Marley has captured public attention through a unique artistic talent—painting. For nearly two decades, Marley has engaged in creating art by walking and jumping across canvases dipped in non-toxic paint, an activity which has recently gone viral on social media platforms like TikTok.

Every week, Marley enters a dedicated art room at Moody Gardens, choosing from colours such as green, yellow, bright blue, or purple for her feet to be painted with before stepping onto her canvas. Encouraged enthusiastically by Janie Konetski, a penguin biologist who acts as her "certified hype person," Marley puts on energetic performances as she stamps and twirls, expressing her creativity. Konetski explained that Marley is "truly a professional penguin artist at this point," describing her as a tiny but energetic penguin with a big personality who delights guests with her interaction.

The viral video posted by Moody Gardens shows Marley celebrating her completed artwork, shaking her tail and appearing to express excitement while viewing her painted feet on the canvas. Garnering over 60 million views and millions of likes, the video has captured widespread online appreciation. Comments included sentiments such as, “this is so cute, I love how they look back at what they made and gave a little tail wag of approval!”

Marley belongs to the Rockhopper penguin species (Eudyptes chrysocome), native to sub-Antarctic islands including the Falkland Islands and Tristan da Cunha. These penguins are about 50 cm in length, weigh roughly 2.5 kg, and typically feed on krill, small fish, squid, and mollusks. They are notable for their distinctive “punkish” crest of feathers on their heads and red eyes.

Konetski highlighted the enrichment value of this creative activity, noting that it took time for Marley to become comfortable with the painting process—from acclimatising to different textures to mixing colours. Unlike other animals who might be motivated by food rewards, Marley thrives on social interaction and positive feedback, reflecting the highly social nature of penguins.

Marley has not mated or laid eggs and appears to prefer socialising and the enrichment activities provided by her keepers over partnership. She particularly enjoys the involvement in painting and the interaction with guests at Moody Gardens.

The paint used in Marley’s artwork is water-based and safe for her to rinse off afterward in the water, combining artistic expression and animal welfare considerations. Marley’s passion for creating art and her exuberant celebrations have made her an internet sensation, attracting new interest and affection for this extraordinary penguin at Moody Gardens.

This story reportedly comes from TheTravel, reflecting the growing fascination with both wildlife and their unexpected talents showcased through social media.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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