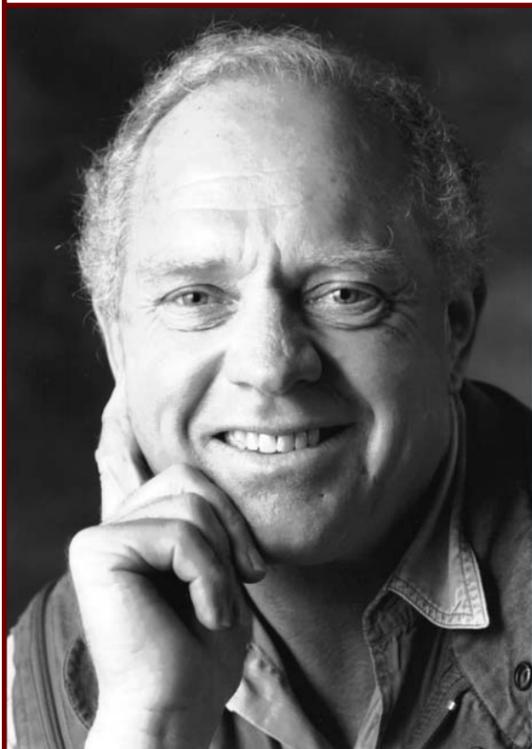


Simon Combes



[1 9 4 0 - 2 0 0 4]

Growing up in close communion with African animals taught me priceless lessons about their anatomy, their behavior and their habitats. As a child, hunting for food was considered a natural way of life. This childhood gave me valuable grounding for my eventual career as a painter of wildlife.

—SC

In 1940, Simon Combes was born in “Wilderness Cottage,” in Shaftsbury, England, and from that day in June, the wilderness always attracted him. His first adventures began early when, in 1946, his parents immigrated to farm in Kenya’s Great Rift Valley, a magical place for a young boy.

Simon loathed his years at boarding school in Nakuru and at Duke of York in Nairobi, always longing for the freedom of the bush. While managing a 2,000 acre farm when he was seventeen, he was drafted into six months compulsory military training after already applying for appointment in the Kings African Rifles. He was accepted into 4 KAR but having just finished his training was sent to Uganda where one of his duties was to teach basic etiquette and rugby to a young Idi Amin. He attended Sandhurst Military Academy and returned to Kenya to join the 3rd Kings African Rifles in time for Kenya’s Independence. In 1964, Simon was chosen to form and command Kenya’s elite Parachute Regiment. This involved training the first 250 paratroopers in England, and translating all the instruction books into Swahili. Their first posting back in Kenya was fighting the Shifta war in the North Eastern province. It was during this time Simon started to draw and paint as a hobby to occupy his spare time. His subjects were the Somali and Boran people and the landscapes of the North. In 1969, he held his first exhibition in Nairobi which was a sell-out on the opening night. It was then that the idea of painting full-time started. However, he was refused release from the army and was moved to army HQ as staff officer in charge of all operations and training. He was also captain of the army shooting team and vice chairman to the Kenya Rifle Association. A Major at 28 and performing the duties of a Lieutenant Colonel, his military peers remember him fondly as a “True Kenyan.” Finally, in 1974, he was released from the army and started life as a professional artist. Best known for his stunning images wildlife in the African bush, he achieved worldwide success and acclamation through many prestigious awards. His paintings hang in private and museum collections around the globe.

Simon’s life was rich with great adventures and wildlife encounters. From being lost in a blizzard while crossing the Altai Mountains in Mongolia and flying into the jungles of Venezuela to sketching Bengal Tigers atop a *howdah* on a swaying elephant in India, his experiences and observations led him to develop his exacting artistic style, rendering his subjects with such depth and exquisite detail. *Africa & Beyond: The Art and Adventures of Simon Combes*, a retrospective exhibition of Simon’s major works, was held at The Wildlife Experience Museum in 2004 to celebrate his great artistic achievements.

Since 1979, The Greenwich Workshop, Inc., has published his works as Fine Art Reproductions on paper and canvas. He always said, if given the time, he would rather write than paint. This talent is apparent in his books *An African Experience*, distributed by The Greenwich Workshop and *Great Cats*, published by The Greenwich Workshop, Inc. Simon was also working on a book of Limericks about life in Kenya which reveals his ability to entertain us with his wit and humor.

Simon had a wonderful talent for communication, whether in speech, writing or painting. Never self assuming, he gave talks in Kiswahili to the farm staff, through a translator to school children in Russia and to many interested groups around the world.

Not only a man of the arts, but an avid conservationist as well, Simon had recently appointed Kenya Representative and Project Director for Rhino Rescue Trust. He sat on the boards of several wildlife conservation organizations and raised, through his art, many thousands of dollars for their causes.

On Sunday, December 12, 2004, atop a beautiful ancient volcano near his home in Africa’s Great Rift Valley, Simon’s life was tragically taken by one of the wild animals he so lovingly portrayed in his paintings. He never “gathered moss” and now he has come home. He is survived by his wife Kat, his children, Cindy and Guy, his sister, Jenny all of Kenya and his former wife Susie of England. We shall remember Simon well.

The Greenwich Workshop 

