

## TOM DAY, Artist

Tom Day suffered a stroke in 2009 that left him with aphasia—a communication disorder that left him with limited to no verbal speech. He understands as well as he ever did and his intellect remains intact, but he could not express himself. He also suffers from weakness to the right side of his body. For a right-handed person, it meant learning to do everything with his non-dominant hand. For nearly 5 years, Tom has been working with Cheryl A. Paul, at the USF Speech and Hearing Center. He is encouraged to communicate in any way possible. For him, that means drawing. Tom had never drawn or painted before his stroke. He is now painting beautiful pieces with his left hand. He has been working with the USF Art-in-Health program and Dolores Coe. Tom Day's art will be featured in an exhibit at Southshore Regional Library in Ruskin, Florida for the month of July with an opening reception on July 2<sup>nd</sup> from 6:00-7:30pm.

*This exhibition chronicles the remarkable development of an artist.*

On Christmas Eve in 2009, Tom Day – an Air Force veteran of 23 years, who served as a test flight engineer – suffered a stroke, leading to a diagnosis of Broca's Aphasia and Apraxia; damage to the area of the brain involved in forming sentences, which made it profoundly difficult to speak. Additionally, the stroke resulted in right-side hemiparesis, a condition that causes him to use his non-dominant left hand for daily activities.

Prior to his stroke, Tom had little interest in drawing or painting (in the words of his family “he never drew anything but a paycheck”). To help supplement his speech, his clinician gave him pad and pencils and asked him to go home and draw anything. He began to draw in order to communicate, drawings unusually detailed and spatially aware. On Father's Day of 2012, his adult children gave him art supplies. Slowly, he began to explore the process of oil painting using his non-dominant left-hand. In the process, he discovered an ability and passion for painting.

The paintings in the exhibition span a range from his first works to current paintings that are primarily focused on landscape and the natural world he enjoys. He often creates paintings based on the photographs that he and his wife take together. Tom also participates in Art-in-Health's Arts Studio for Aphasia project at the University of South Florida. USF Art in Health is a program of the USF Contemporary Art Museum.

Tom lives in Tampa with his wife, Hatsumi. They have three adult children: Yukiko, Minako, and Tommy, all very supportive of his artwork.

Tom maintains an art blog called “Artist by Day” located at <http://tartistday.blogspot.com>