

ART KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES

BY SOPHIA LOUISA LEE

Tommy Hollenstein is a contemporary artist who lives in Canoga Park with his dog, Hiley. Mr. Hollenstein is a man who makes things happen. He begins by transcending boundaries.

Using his wheelchair, Tommy channels his creative energies onto a Masonite board, creating fabulous pieces of art, inspired by life (www.TommyHollenstein.com). His garage is his studio, and four to five hours a day his body and his wheelchair become one artist. The result is amazing. He creates paintings that are filled with vibrancy and life. They are beautiful and sublime. His work reflects the person he is: strong, colorful, and full of positive energy.

Mr. Hollenstein is a newcomer to the Los Angeles art scene. In spite of being a relatively new artist, he has had great success, most recently at the Bernard Gallery in Calabasas. He creates his work so that, "everyone can enjoy it." He is very clear when he says he doesn't want someone to interpret something in his work that may or may not be there. Yet, each piece he creates is different ... some with many layers (which take days to finish), others with minimal paint. Still, each piece captures an uplifting spirit that can be felt from across the room.

Tommy Hollenstein gives back as well. He volunteers his time to the Dream Center, a Christian ministry based at the former Queen of Angels Hospital near Echo Park. (Dream Center is currently assisting victims of Hurricane Katrina to re-settle in Los Angeles.) He also contributes to Canine Companions for Independence. His dog, Hiley, was vital in helping him regain his independence, which gave him the will and desire to become an artist.

Mr. Hollenstein provided the t-shirt design for Kids on Wheels, as well as



Photo courtesy of Tommy Hollenstein.

Tommy Hollenstein creates a new piece of art.

being part of The Tommy Hollenstein Golf Classic Tournament at the Calabasas Country Club. (The 19th annual tournament took place on October 10th raising money to benefit the Paralysis Project.) (www.ParalysisProject.org)

For the month of October, he is exhibiting his work at Infusion Gallery (www.InfusionGallery.com) in Downtown L.A. (828 S. Main St.) with his show "Wheels of Wonder." (213-683-8827) Proceeds from the sales of his work at Infusion Gallery will be donated to Canine Companions for Independence, The Dream Center, and the American Red Cross.

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Photo courtesy of Tommy Hollenstein.

Tommy Hollenstein

This November, his work will be presented at The Joseph Wahl Gallery in Woodland Hills (5305 Topanga Canyon Blvd.).

Mr. Hollenstein has strong convictions and follows his dreams. "Don't quit is my statement," he emphatically states. "Just chase what you believe in." That he does. Having spent hundreds of dollars a month on paints, Behr Paints has recently started donating cans of acrylic paint for Tommy's distinctive creations! "It was simply a matter of asking," he says.

Sophia Louisa Lee is an artist who reviews local galleries and interviews artists living in the Valley. Every artist has a statement to make with his or her work, even if that statement is no actual statement at all. Her work will be part of the October group show at Infusion Gallery that is featuring Tommy Hollenstein. To contact Sophia, go to www.DessaGallery.com.