

Who Is Sam Ezell?

Sam Ezell was born in 1953 in Mebane, NC and raised in Durham, NC. Sam has 4 sisters. At the age of 16 Sam dropped out of school to start working to help his mother with family finances. He has worked in property maintenance at the Daniel Boone Company, in Hillshorough , for the past 47 years. In the first grade Sam didn't pass any of his subjects except for art. He has never had an art class or lesson in his life. His talent is God given.

In 2008 he was asked by a folk artist friend, Bernice Sims to paint a picture to honor her recently deceased son. Sam told her that all he could paint was a wall. He tried to paint a sunflower for Bernice (her favorite flower) but couldn't get one to look right. He finally decided to paint a vase of tulips for Bernice. When Sam gave her the painting, she put it on her wall. It sold almost immediately. Sam painted 15 more tulip paintings which Bernice sold just as quickly. As the saying goes the rest is history. Since the first vase of tulips Sam has painted memory paintings, church scenes, city & country scenes, taxis, chickens, Duke's mayonnaise jars, Mt. Olive pickle jars, Indian chiefs, historic Hillshorough homes & buildings and you name it.

In 2015 Sam woke up with cloudy vision in his right eye. He immediately went to an urgent-care clinic where he was told he had passed a blood clot. They sent him to Duke University Hospital emergency room. After waiting 10 hours he was told he was blind in that eye. There was nothing they could do for him. Before this happened, he was painting up to 50 paintings per week. After this he was not able to paint his normal folk art type paintings.

One day in frustration he threw different color paints on a canvas and then turned his leaf blower on the abstract splashes and spatters of paint. When doing this he began using large canvases, as large as 7' x 11'. This experiment progressed to geometric shapes in bright colors moving across the surface of the canvas. Now he has progressed to steel sculpture. He draws a pattern for each piece of the sculpture. He has a friend who is a welder who assembles the pieces under Sam's direction. The first sculpture like this sold for a considerable amount of money. He is now planning others. It seems there is no obstacle big enough to stop Sam from creating.