In the spring of 2005, the Office of University Special Events and Ceremonies began a collaboration with USF Institute for Research in Art (Contemporary Art Museum & Graphicstudio) to commission an original work of art as part of the USF's 50th anniversary celebration. Margret Miller, Director of the Institute for Research in Art, suggested that Robert Stackhouse be contacted as the artist to create the work.

What makes Robert Stackhouse a natural choice for this project is that he is not only an artist of national and international reputation, but he is also a charter class graduate of the University of South Florida Art Department, which graduated its first class in 1965. As a prolific artist and teacher, his paintings, prints, and sculptures have been shown in over 70 solo exhibitions and numerous group exhibitions worldwide, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; and the Australia National Gallery, Canberra. He has created over thirty temporary and permanent sculpture installations in outdoor and indoor venues in the United States and Australia. As his career has developed, Robert Stackhouse has continued to maintain significant connections with his alma mater. He has returned to campus on many occasions to lecture on his work, teach, produce new work at Graphicstudio, show his work at the USF Contemporary Art Museum (1981 and 1991) and serve as the juror for the annual student exhibition. He works in several media including sculpture, drawing, painting and printmaking. As a prolific artist and teacher, with exhibitions and commissions in important venues, Robert Stackhouse has brought recognition and prestige to the University of South Florida.

The 50th anniversary print marks a new launching point in his career. Robert wanted to depict something very personal from his own history of imagery while incorporating a specific feature from the University's landscape. He visited the campus prior to starting this work and began to walk the familiar pathways from when he was a student here and noticed how lush the environment has become. He wanted to incorporate this feeling of growth, discovery, and journey into the future with this work. The title of the original watercolor is Blue 5606, which refers to the dates of the 50th anniversary: 1956–2006.

The original work was reproduced as both a poster, and a limited edition offset lithograph signed by the artist. Both are available for purchase through the USF Contemporary Art Museum gift shop on campus (813-974-4133), and CAM’s online store at shop.usf.edu. For more information on this project please contact Kristin Soderqvist at 813-974-5871.