

JUNE 1-JUNE 7, 2005
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RECORD TIME

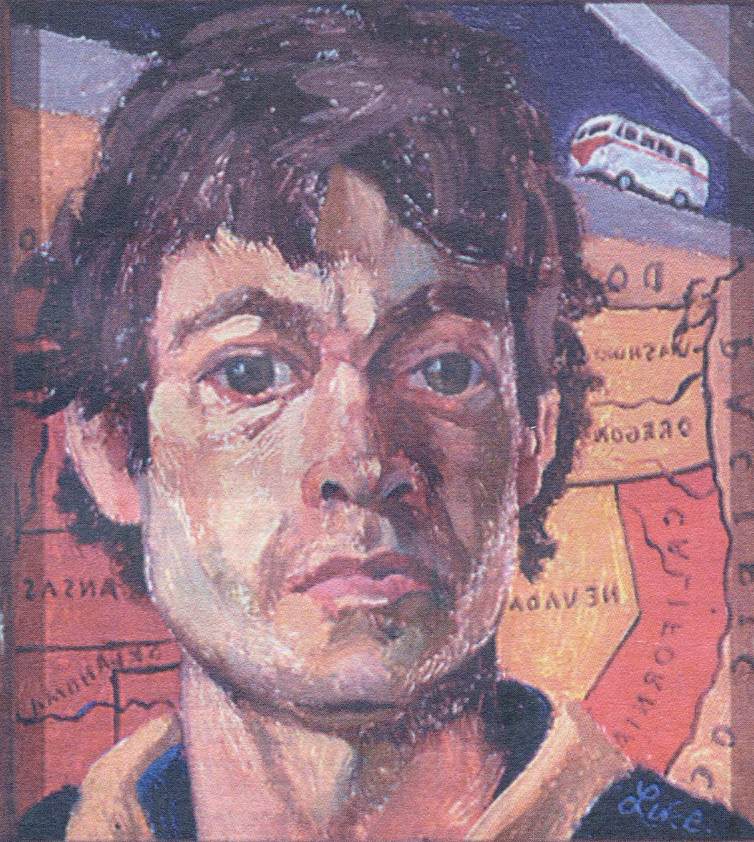
Fred Abong finally returns to the studio

CLAM CHATTER

How many clam cakes can she possibly eat?

'YUPPIE SCUM'

'Enron' film: Engaging profile of greed



OFF THE MAP

Six Rhode Island artists who push traditional boundaries

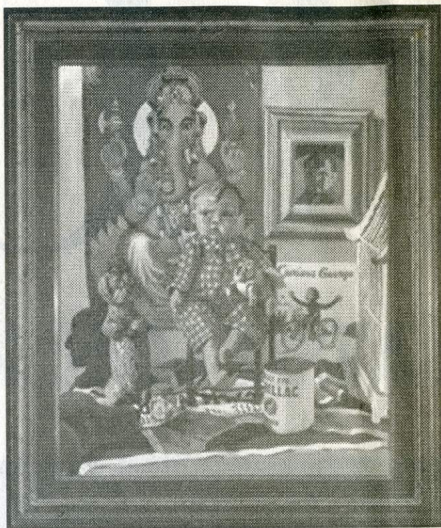
BEING LUKE

Luke Randall | Painter |
North Kingstown

Luke Randall's studio has the casual informality of a treehouse. Nestled in the top floor of a former staple factory in North Kingstown, the setting is truly bucolic, with a view of the tops of maples lining the millpond out back. Inside, the entryway wall is covered floor-to-vaulted ceiling with a topsyturvy mosaic of his oil paintings, transforming the attic room into a Crusoe-like chapel of Randall's personal imagery.

The overflow of canvases are stacked along the perimeter of the airy space with impromptu arrangements of curios and collectibles. Many interesting objects compete for attention. I've seen many of these things before in Randall's paintings, so it's a little spooky to see them out of context, in the "real world." I feel like I'm backstage in a storage room filled with props.

He began as a landscape painter, visiting and painting picturesque locations from Maine to Mexico. Randall describes the approach as traditional — "Look at 'em, paint 'em and be done with it." For a while he tried on different painting styles and color palettes, learning from painters whose work he admires; Pierre Bonnard's vibrant light filled scenes of warm domesticity, and the blazing landscapes of Fairfield Porter. Eventually, his paintings evolved from rapidly executed expressionistic landscapes to studied still life arrangements taking a month or more in his studio to complete.



Grumpy Baby, 2003, Luke Randall

"I decided to stop trying to have a 'style' and just be Luke," said Randall, 40. The result was the singular "Grumpy Baby," in which a grim baby doll plays the lead in a series of angsty still lifes, kept company by other, equally alienated knickknacks.

"As a whole they are my response to what is going on in my head or the world around me. For example, Grumpy Baby is grumpy because there is no utopia," Randall said. "I was going through a difficult period in my life when I made those paintings."

Randall also works as a painter of decorative architectural finishes, so he has the opportunity to spend time in the interiors of some grand old Rhode Island homes. "I see a lot of beautiful things with classical proportions. I think that by painting these objects I can represent some metaphysical ideal."