

## Lucas Elliott – B.F.A. Thesis Report

When I was first accepted into the B.F.A. program, I honestly had no clue what I wanted my thesis to be about, Many people told me to just paint what I wanted, but the problem was that I did not know what I wanted. I spent so much of that first semester problem solving, thinking of anything that would work as a show. What I did know was that I wanted to do something personal; something that had to do with what made me who I am today. I wrestled with the ideas of religion, masculinity, and even my own childhood, but in the end nothing seemed right. Then one night, as I was watching *3:10 to Yuma* with my girlfriend, a light came on, “why not folktales?” Why not do something that not many people remembered, but enjoyed? With this epiphany *Retold* came into light.

It was not so much the fact that I wanted to explore folktales, but the idea of “



Occasionally I am asked who influenced me to become an artist, and many people





getting caught up in the action is what has always interested me in illustrations, whether that be through the work of Raphael, Bua, or Bellows. More importantly, it is this emotional connection and involvement of the viewer that is quintessential to telling a story. As my thesis revolves around the concept of retelling folktales, this dynamic, the painting to viewer relationship, is something I have been striving to achieve while attempting to pay appropriate homage to the story I am portraying.

Wheat also drew me to the folktales was the fact that they have survived for so long, men and women who endured the hardships of our newly formed nation. I grew up with these stories, reading them in elementary school and just reading their stories for fun. Most of these stories are exaggerations of people, many fictional, but others based on real people, who have been built up to the point of obscurity. I wanted to take these stories and make them my own, to create moments in time that were important to the characters. Some were easier than others, while some pieces aren't even scenes from their stories, but scenes of their legendary personas. Just as their stories are exaggerated, I wanted to recreate the characters as well, to make them as my own. I have always thought about what I wanted to paint, to form my ideas before I finalize them, but as I have become more of a painter I have learned to trust the paint more than my own ideas and have begun to let the paint do the talking. I have learned to mesh my drawing style with my painting style more, to create a work that is more complimentary. One the first paintings that I tried to be sketchier with was "where's Johnny?" beginning to work in this manner gave my art much more freedom and ideas, after only working on my Johnny Appleseed piece for two days, I finished it. Out of all the works that I have accomplished through the B.F.A. "Where's Johnny?" was the most successful for it

conveyed what I really wanted to show with my art. to be loose. to be strong in form. but

on.

When I took my first painting class I was taught on pre-made canvases, but as I gained more experience with the paint I also worked my way up knowing how to build my own canvases. Around the time of the President's show this last year I decided to try a few things differently by using masonite instead of traditional canvases. I found that by