

# ted polomis

## PAINTER



BY ANDREW CUNNINGHAM

If Ted Polomis's paintings bear a resemblance to those of the Dutch Masters, it's no coincidence. The famous masters, with their realistic style and use of glaze, have had a significant influence on Polomis.

Like many artists, Polomis wanted to paint from an early age. He was introduced to oils while a student at Thayer Academy in Braintree, Mass., and went on to earn his B.F.A. at the Rhode Island School of Design. However, as often happens, life got in the way. He became a computer illustrator and designer, and while it was artistic, Polomis missed the feel of a brush in his hand. He began doing abstract landscapes as "sort of a reaction to the computer work," he says.

When Polomis and his wife moved to Marshfield, he had room for a studio and a great view of the marshes. But Polomis, who doesn't like to work from photographs, was stymied. He worked all day, and by the time he got home,

it was too late to catch the light. Since it's hard to paint a landscape at night, his focus eventually shifted to still life.

"It was still life or portraits, and it's hard to find someone who will pose for you at one in the morning, so still life it was," Polomis says. One day he painted an arrangement of garlic and onion, was pleased with the result, and with his wife's encouragement, he decided to do more.

"I was never really taken by still life in school," explains Polomis, "but if you like your subject, it comes alive." He has a fondness for the old toymakers of the 1930s, and visits antique shows to find the subjects for many of his paintings—toy cars, trucks, and boats, old scales, phones, and alphabet blocks—anything that catches his fancy. If they are a little beat up, he feels that it adds character and life to the object.

He uses oil paint on masonite, which gives him a clean hard surface to work with, without the texture of canvas. He then adds thin layers of glaze, achieving, like the Old Mas-



ters, a very realistic result. The glaze adds a luminous shine to the work that brings out the colors.

Polomis also works with more traditional still life subjects, such as vegetables and fruit, often taking many hours to achieve the depth he's searching for.

"Working from life is better than working from a photograph," he states. "A photo is a generation removed, whereas in real life, you can look closely and see the shadow and the shadow color."

His paintings are selling very well. While he only paints

part-time, each one takes more than 40 hours to create and it's hard to keep up with the demand. His paintings of toys generate reactions from viewers of all ages, which pleases him. He's heard words such as "haunting" and "luminous." If his work generates feelings of nostalgia, or makes the viewer curious, Polomis is happy. For him, that's what it's all about.

*Ted Polomis's work can be found locally at the Robert Wilson Gallery on Nantucket (6 Sheep Commons Lane; 508-228-2096), in galleries in New Mexico and Arizona, and on his Web site: [www.tedpolomis.com](http://www.tedpolomis.com).*

