

SALVATORE OF LUCAN

"It's the best work space I've ever had," says Salvatore of Lucan of his studio on Chatham Row, afforded to him as part of a collaboration between IMMA and The Dean Art Studios. "The size and the light are perfectly suited to me." It took a while to settle in. "It's extremely central which was a bit distracting." He doesn't mind the noise. "When I focus on something I usually can't hear my surroundings. I think all artists just need an affordable space and the time to work to progress themselves and I'm no different." He likens a studio to a playroom. "It should be a space to play in, like when you were a kid. Somewhere to throw paint around, and then on other days, to be more serious."

A graduate of NCAD, Salvatore of Lucan, as his name might suggest, grew up in Lucan with his mother, his grandmother and his sister. "My identity my whole life has been put into question. I'm half Irish and half Bangladeshi but I never really knew my Bangladeshi father. Also my ma gave me an random Italian name so I've always had the question of where I'm from. I'm a fake Italian who's Irish/Asian and of Lucan." Changing his name to Salvatore of Lucan, has relieved some of the confusion. "A lot of the old masters took their placenames."

Drawing mainly from his own life for his subject matter, he paints large domestic scenes that capture all the awkward confusion of youth and both the banality and inanity of family life. Inspired by the surrealist artist Leonora Carrington, he revels in a topsy turvy world of emotions and jarring perceptions. Last year he won the Zurich Portrait Prize for 2021, for *Me Ma Healing Me*, a richly coloured portrait of his mother giving him reiki.

The creative process is an agonising act of faith. "Monday, Tuesday everything is going well," he tells me. "Wednesday onwards, I'm thinking I'll give up painting entirely. So the pattern is hope, despair." It helps that there are other artists in the building. "I have studio buddies I can have lunch with. It's not every day that you go in and get a full day's work done or are even happy with what you've done, so good chats can be important." Do other artists give good feedback? "It's more consolation. It's nice being understood." Recent weeks have seen a greater influx of artists into the building. "Being a painter is quite a lonely experience so it's nice that the whole building is full now." He can't imagine working anywhere but the city. "I like the city. My subject matter is here."

The dream? "To own my own studio and never have to leave."

Instagram @salvatoreoflucan

"The STUDIO SHOULD be a PLACE to PLAY IN, like when YOU were a KID"

Salvatore of Lucan wears his own clothes.

