How do we define local art? It seems like
a simple question, but immediately you
start asking: Must it be made here? By artists
who live here? Do you include art made by
folks who live in, say, New York but teach
at RISD? Or art made by people who grew up
here? Or once lived here?

As a person who coined the term “yo-
kelism” to talk about and support locally-
made art, I find myself getting tripped up at
times by the definitions. Different answers
can have different effects. Do you define
it narrowly, trying to support people who
live here making art now? Are you trying to
acknowledge a long legacy? Do you define
it broadly to lay claim to and build off of all
that energy?

“Locally Sourced” at Craftland (235 West-
minster St, Providence, through October
19), which arrives as a complement and
cheeky answer to “Locally Made,” the RISD
Museum’s Rhode Island art extravaganza,
tries out defining locally made as narrowly
as possible by rounding up 14 local artists
who make art from materials they find lo-
cally — a definition that for these smart alecs includes
discovering them at their local art supply shop.

“Through their actions, these artists further strength-
en the contemporary art landscape by supporting the local
economy and establishing pride in the ‘Made In Rhode Is-
land’ brand,” writes curator Robert Stack of Providence’s
Yellow Peril Gallery.

Of course, the organizers note, the show is “a sort of
pun, lovingly poking fun not only at shows like the current
one at the RISD Museum, but also restaurants that use the
farm-to-table movement almost to overkill in their PR.”

So Babs Owen cuts out rings of
paper and affixes them, floating like
happy bubbles, atop photos of a jump-
ing boy. “Photographs are printed on
paper from Utrecht and collaged with
cut pieces from the artist’s Pawtucket-
based mill studio,” the exhibit check-
list explains. “Model is artist’s son,
who was born at Women & Infants
Hospital of Rhode Island.”

And Brooke Goldstein’s Washed Up
Collection is described as “10 vintage
bottles, pencils from Jerry’s Artarama,
bottles from Savers, Seekonk Speedway
Flea Market, AS220 Black Box Flea Mar-
ket (Foo Fest), and assortment from
artist + friends.” Which means fun,
folksy colored pencil drawings of ships
— a paddlewheeler, a battleship, a sub-
marine, a Viking ship, and a square-
rigger of broken hearts — cut out and
displayed in handsome glass bottles.

"Locally Sourced" is really an occasion for a frolic. Philippe Lejeune's Images Happening is tall phone booth-like wood-framed box. It seems like you should be able to look straight through, but with the simple magic trick of a mirror placed diagonally inside, you get the amusing feeling of looking into another dimension close to but slightly staggered from this one.

Tom West's The End of American Pop Art sculpture is a generic diet soda bottle that has spilled a big bronze foamy puddle across the floor — happily in the shape of a stretched out United States.

Johnny Adimando's Structural Study I-VI are black-and-white prints cut out and layered so that they look like architectural plans for starfighters assembled from recycled and X-rayed rocket engines, gears, columned buildings, and microscope eyepieces.

There's nothing too ambitious in "Locally Sourced." The general tone is light, with the best pieces aiming for ingratiating fun. The show is too much a gag to reveal much about what's going on here — except maybe Rhode Island shenanigans.

The recent NecronomicOn fest in honor of the late locally-sourced horror, fantasy, and scifi author H.P. Lovecraft has wrapped up, but a lingering echo is "Ars Necronomica," at Brown University's Granoff Center (154 Angell St, Providence, through September 13).

It showcases deliciously creepy paintings and drawings of a severed horse head; an Edwardian fellow with his face skinned down to the meaty muscles; a man befriending a zebra in the mountains; and drooling feral demons in a cemetery. Styles tend toward cartooning or, ahem, realism.

Don't miss Nick Blinko's pen drawings, particularly Sightings of Brown Jenkin, the Furry Blasphemy. It depicts a feral thing with a bald, bearded man's head — a reference to Lovecraft's tale The Dreams in the Witch House — among rats and a skeleton wearing a pointy witch's head. The creatures are cool, but it's the background that makes the drawing — a vibrating, crazy quilt pattern of obsessive pen hatching that fills the entire paper horror-vacui-style, wanting to take over everything. 😊