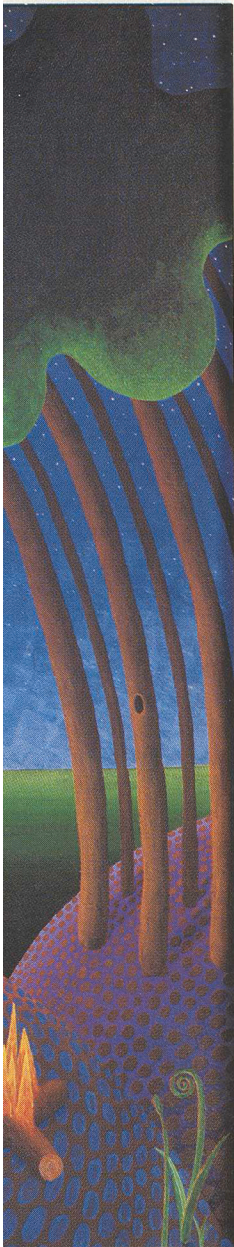
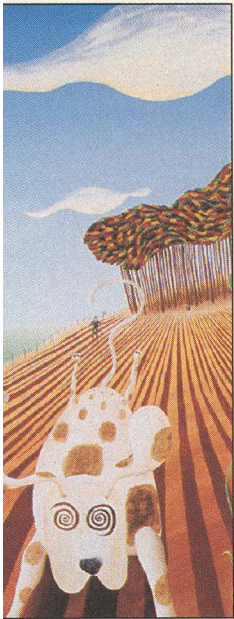


**Worthy
Both
of the
Highest**

Left: "La Chasse",
57"x69", \$7,500

Below: "Creation
Story", 1994,
38"x31", \$3,000



"Fun-ism" in Art

Norm Magnuson, *Southern Methodist '82*, was born 20 years too late. A self-taught artist who paints with a smile, he is rightly a son of the sixties. He refers to his art as "Fun-ism" because he believes his art is both "enjoyable and accessible."

The Cincinnati native insists that art often is "intellectually elitist. To understand," he explains, "you need to study art history. Most of it isn't esthetically pleasing. Fun-ism is a backlash against that kind of art. My art is not anti-intellectual, it's anti-intellectually elitist. It's for everyone to enjoy."

Norm wasn't always so light-hearted. After graduation from SMU in English and Economics, he went to New York City to pursue a career in advertising, initially as a media planner with Ted Bates Advertising Agency. In 1983, at the age of 23, he found himself living modestly, in a one-room apartment on 31st Street, on \$10,000 a year.

"On weekends my roommate and I would stretch a six-pack of Colt 45 and paint because it was cheap," he said. "It was exciting to have an idea, work on it and have it turn out."

Three years later, he shifted to the Saatchi & Saatchi agency, which ultimately sent him to its London office. He traveled throughout Europe, and the experience sharpened his desire to paint full time.

Today, he has a studio in the West Village where his work portrays stories of love, life, dreams and fantasies, generally using animals as imagery.

"I work hard to make my paintings intellectually engaging. To give them a point of view, a story. To create a symbol or a metaphor that's interesting. To that end, I use animals.

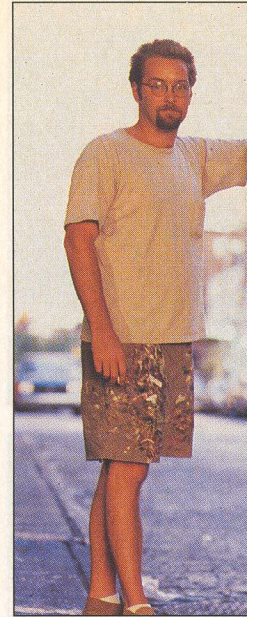
"Most of my paintings both contemplate mankind's relationship with animals and draw parallels between our lives and theirs. Other paintings are simply ruminations on the world."

His first exhibit, with several fellow artists in 1988, was titled, "Hello! My Name Is." In 1991, he quit advertising to concentrate on art. In 1992-93, he lived a year in Normandy, France, later showing his "Normandy Paintings" at a New York gallery, Bridgewater/Lustberg.

"I work more than most anyone I

Right: Norm Magnuson and "American
Bison", 1995, 78"x93", \$20,000

Below: "Un Coq à Deux Têtes", 1993,
32"x27", acrylic on canvas, \$3,500,
from the collection of Bill Solfisburg



know," he said, "and paint at all hours.

"I love to cook and to eat, too." He does advertising for a friend's restaurant. "We eat there about once a week for free. It's nice to have a big meal with all the trimmings and wine; and when the check for \$200 comes, simply sign it, leave a tip and walk out."

Applauded by *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New Yorker*, *The Villager* and *Art in America*, Norm confides that he wants to "create paintings of incredible beauty.

"Colors thrill me, beauty excites me, the pursuit of my goal both enervates and innervates."

Reported *Cover*, an, underground national art magazine, "Magnusson's paintings have plots that range from hilarious to sublime."

The New Yorker concurred: "Despite the humor, some of (Magnusson's) images are oddly moving." Added *The Villager*: "A self-taught artist, Magnusson's new works are brightly colored and humorous, reflecting his excitement and appreciation of the country."

At SMU, Norm served on a student council committee and coordinated the chapter's big fund-raising event, the two-man basketball competition.

"It was an incredible time in my life. For a nerdy youngster from Ohio, it was great to be a member of what then was the best fraternity on campus. The bond that comes from being a member of a caring fraternity is a wonderful thing, not easily duplicated in any other situation.

"I admired Billy Oates, (SMU '80) the chapter artist, a skilled draftsman and very cool guy. We all learned that you can't let your brothers down. Now, 13 years later, my definition of *brother* has simply broadened to include anyone I deal with in my life."

In November, Norm and his bride-to-be Andrea escaped to New Zealand for six months. A lawyer for New York City, she is described by Norm as "the smartest, sexiest human being I've ever met. She's writing a book while I paint.

"One other thing," he hastened to point out. "I love being a member of the "Singing Fraternity" and even have the album *Beta Songs*."

"In nature, we find ourselves," Thoreau said. "Hopefully, too, in my paintings," Norm declared. *EJ*

