

MYSTERY INFUSED WITH WHIMSY

BY LUKE OSTEEN

The arrival of six-and-a-half of artist O.M. Norling's paintings at The Bascom delivers a touch of strange to the gallery.

When you encounter artist O.M. Norling's 6.5 paintings at The Bascom, you've obtained a passport to a vision that's just slightly left of reality. Each is crafted with a dream logic that beguiles in its healthy dose of mystery infused with a dash of whimsy.

Gaze carefully and you may even detect the notes of a half-remembered fragment of music.

"Think of this series of paintings as sort of an album of music," he says. "I have a nerdish curiosity and interest in looking for a narrative arc in the list of song titles that make up an album's track list. So this collection of paintings is a music album or whatever the kids call albums these days.



"'What's this album about,' you ask? Eclectic in a word. Conceptually, think big and small, faraway and near, deep and silly. Some of the pieces lean toward experimental jazz, one is most definitely a ballad, Think 'Every Rose Has It's Thorn' by Poison or maybe the opera piece, 'Nessun Dorma'...the José Carreras' version, if that's your flavor. I'm not sure I've done one like this before, but it's been an incredible space to spend time in.

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...the quiet details
of the in-between...

"With pencil, brush and oil paint, I construct eccentric compositions made up of animals, objects and furniture that all echo another time. They are beautiful, dark and humorous stories about the human experience.

"For a while I've been very interested in what lies beyond the passing glance, It's so easy to get caught up in the noise and the pace of everyday life that the quiet details of the in-between often get overlooked. I think we've become satisfied with a Venetian-blind view of people and our surroundings. But, what does the world look like when you slow down, look?"

Find out for yourself upon the walls of The Bascom, located at 323 Franklin Road (The Gorge Road) in Highlands. For more information, call (828) 526-4949.