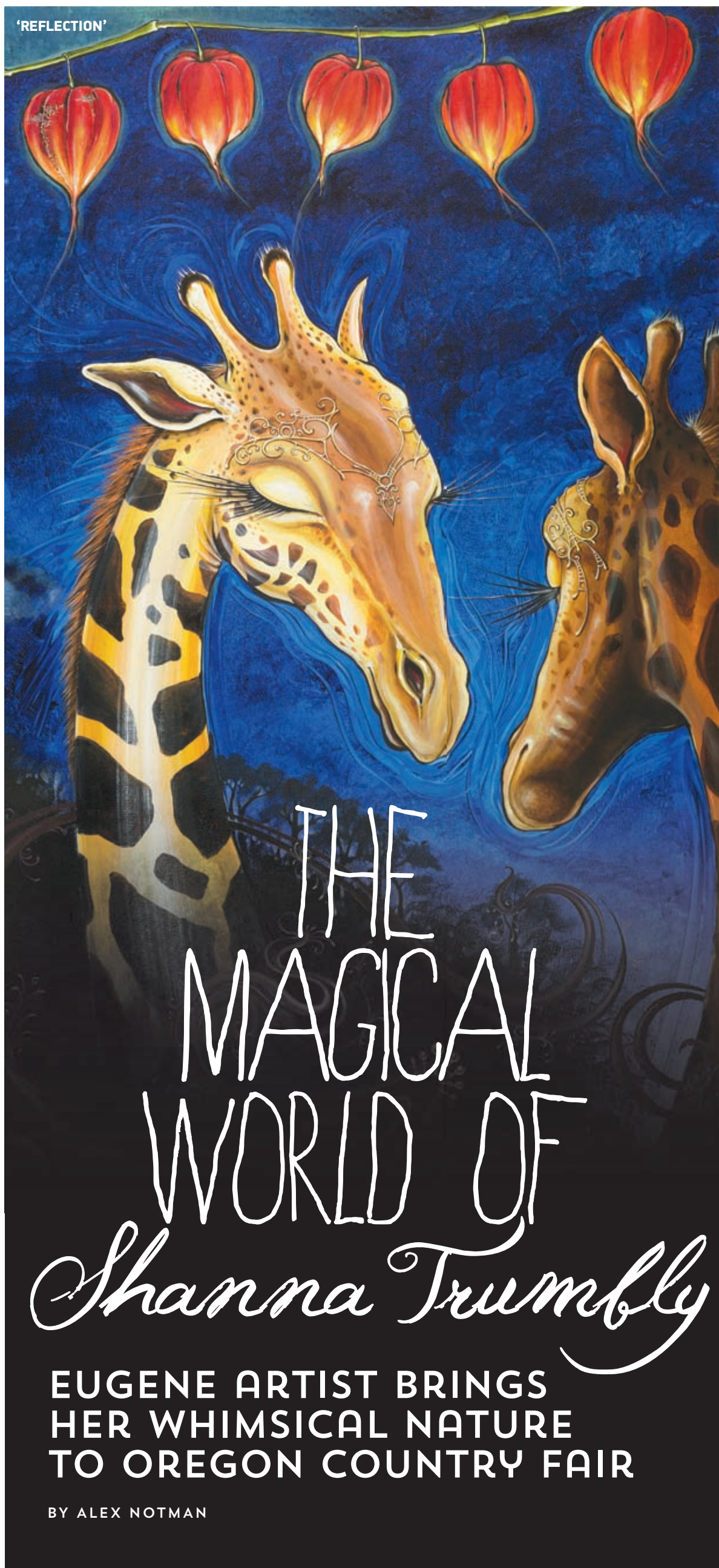


'REFLECTION'



EUGENE ARTIST BRINGS HER WHIMSICAL NATURE TO OREGON COUNTRY FAIR

BY ALEX NOTMAN



'THE POMEGRANATE PRINCE'

Shanna Trumbly was lying on the sand with her eyes closed, the water lapping at her legs. She could hear her girlfriends splashing and laughing in the “sweet little lake” in southern Oregon where they had been coming every summer as teenagers. The soft patter of footsteps in the sand caught her attention and she opened her eyes, expecting to see one of the girls. The footsteps, however, belonged to a tiny fawn. The fawn tottered right up to Trumbly. She looked out at the water where her friends had gone silent as they watched the scene unfold: The young deer pushed its little snout into her face, gently circling it with its black nose, and then tottered away.

“The deer has always been my animal,” Trumbly explains, remembering the scene at the shore. “It was such a magical experience.”

These kinds of magical experiences with nature were what inspired Trumbly’s poster for the 44th annual Oregon Country Fair. Blushing deer, foxes and giraffes with long lashes, proud pigs, crowned corvids, heart-shaped beets and a smattering of other forest critters and vegetation are central to her work: acrylic painting. If you live in Eugene, you’ve probably seen her art, whether it’s canvases hanging at Sweet Cheeks Winery or prints in her booth at the Saturday Market. If those haven’t penetrated your field of vision, just look for the 2013 OCF poster, by now hanging in every shop window and tacked to every bulletin board within a 50-mile radius.

The poster is pure Trumbly, featuring the iconic OCF peach, juicy and blazing orange topped with a teal dragonfly. Above the floating fruit is her sinuous, golden custom lettering announcing the event, framed by a slew of whimsical flora and fauna: An accordion-wielding turtle plays next to a tiger lily, a mustachioed frog sits on a red-capped mushroom and a peach-juggling hare proudly displays his finest Fair attire (purple stockings on his feet and ears). The piece took six weeks to complete, but, like all her work, it’s steeped in a lifetime of stories lovingly woven with nature and nostalgia.

Trumbly sits in her Eugene kitchen, hands wrapped around a mug filled with murky mate tea, telling a story about carrier pigeons — recurring characters in her paintings. She has the appearance of a bohemian Amy Poehler accompanied by a tinkling laugh. Trumbly has only been painting for five and a half years, she explains, eyeing her wooden easel standing in a sunny corner. She grew up with a creative family — her mother worked in stained glass, and her father dabbled in leatherwork; Trumbly focused on her hyper-detailed color pencil drawings.

“I’ve always had the encouragement 100 percent from my family when I was little,” she says. “They would never even have dreamt of trying to make me do something different than this.” And so, before she traded her pencils for paintbrushes, she was busy studying at the Art Institute of Seattle, starting her own business at 19 (clay beads which led to leather head-dresses and other goods that she would sell at OCF) and raising her now 12-year-old son Asher. Talk of her family leads her back to the pigeons.