

Patrick Turk takes viewers back to the future

One of the best things to come out of ArtStorm, a local artist-run collaborative that enjoyed a brief heyday before falling victim to the recession, was *Kaleidoscopic Super Revolution!*, an exhibit of collages on card stock by self-taught Patrick Turk.

Turk's current show at Art League Houston, *The Time Travel Research Institute Presents:*, affirms the collective backed a winner. Using cut-outs from children's comics, sci-fi novels, encyclopedias, history books and scientific diagrams relating to various points in history from the formation of the universe to the dinosaur era to the Wild West to the distant future, Turk created 3-D collages in six light boxes, some with motorized elements.



The lids contain portal-like openings with lenses of varying sizes and magnification strengths.

In addition to hiding parts of the collages, the lids distort the distances between collage components and viewers' eyes while still retaining coherence in the overall image.

Each light box is installed on a hexagonal structure in the darkness of the Art League’s main gallery. Befitting the show’s theme, “Dr. Turk” — whose job at the fictitious Time Travel Research Institute is “time space manipulator” — doesn’t move chronologically from one epoch to another.

We start at the turn of the 22nd century, zip back to the 19th, then move way back to a period starting about 360 million years ago and ending with the Ice Age before heading back to the future, when a “chronic abuse of technology leads to a near global apocalypse” — but not until 2378, according to Turk’s sunny calculations.

Spoiler alert: “In an effort to repair and ensure the balance of all life on earth, the remaining humans collectively decide to use the last vestibles of their technological knowledge to genetically fuse all remaining flora and fauna into one symbolic organism,” Turk writes. “The entire organism (attains) equilibrium, enabling it to have a planet-wide psychic bridge capable of maintaining and regulating each of its parts.” Then we’re back to the emergence of humans’ distant relatives, which leads to the dawn of Homo sapiens, before wrapping up at the Big Bang, which Turk depicts mostly with light and glitter.

As viewers step away from one collage to move on to the next, all the imagery in the previous lightbox moves out of focus, causing it to take on the appearance of an abstract stained-glass pattern.

That quality made Turk’s installation the perfect site for a recent action — or lack thereof — by Houston artist Emily Sloan’s Napping Affects Performance Church, whose stated goal is to provide “community naps in collaboration with various performances.”

