

# ART

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## Spaced Out

Temple Gallery's new show goes where no artist has gone before.

BY ROBERTA FALLON

At Temple Gallery, artists are mining outer space and the failure of the NASA space program for inspiration. Odd as it may seem, the promise of space exploration in "Dreams in the Void: Post-Heroic Visions of Space" works well as a visual subject. The work is a mix of sweet and cynical, questioning and bittersweet, all in keeping with the theme of lost dreams.

All the artists deal with technology in one way or another, and the feeling's more con than pro.

Louise K. Wilson, whose audio work greets you in the lobby, uses the clipped accents of British actors to translate the 1969 dialogue between the Apollo 11 astronauts and Houston Mission Control into a disembodied language of coded engineer-speak.

The half-sentences and strings of letters and numbers defy meaning. It's an image of thought and language devolving into machine code as technology leads and humans follow into the future.

Kara Hammond, a Tyler School of Art graduate, paints and draws crisp renditions of spacecraft like Sputnik 3 and Skylab. Hammond's creamy orange-and-blue painting of the interior of the Russian Voskhod capsule and her detailed graphite drawing of the International Space Station's toilet are compelling depictions of engineered, uninhabitable spaces and contraptions.

Steven Brower's sculptural model *50% AZL*, a half-sized Apollo spacesuit standing on the gallery floor, is an iconoclastic, dirty little half-pint—and it's the best work in the show. The model's scuffed moon boots, well-used gray gloves and rumpled look speak poignantly of spoiled dreams, hard labor and the half-

accomplishments of those who tried to engineer the dream into reality.

Moving beyond NASA's past, several artists prefer to play with thoughts of the future. Yoshio Itagaki's digital color photographs, for example, merge images of tourists and wedding couples with a gerry-rigged moonscape to imply that humans are vacationing or honeymooning on the moon. Juxtaposing human faces and bodies with the forbidding moonscape makes for beautiful, surreal and sweetly funny couplings. Not even Disney could turn the moon into a theme park, but Itagaki's idea is a wry commentary on the commercial possibilities of space.

Stephen Antonson's video projection *Project Armstrong*—perhaps the sneakiest and most cynical work in the show—resembles a pocked and cratered virtual rug. It's a surface that invites you to walk like astronaut Neil Armstrong. But it's not the moon's

surface you're on, just a grossly magnified video image of an Armstrong ceiling tile. Better you should attempt to walk on the ceiling. Antonson seems to be saying, you'll never walk on the moon.

And for a *Romeo and Juliet*-themed walk in space, Karen Yasinsky's animated video, *Research of Time's Loss*, is grounded in the subject of relationships,

### "Dreams in the Void: Post-Heroic Visions of Space"

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Temple Gallery,  
45 N. Second St.  
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though it's set on a lunar surface. With a soundtrack that includes a Beach Boys-like a cappella passage that'll stop you cold, Yasinsky's video piece is a thing of beauty and sorrow.

Finally, Alexis Rockman's painting *Biosphere: Laboratory* is the show's outlier. While the

other work is nuanced and measured, this strident, anti-technology harangue attacks you like a PETA art warrior: all scare, little thought.

Organized by Anne Collins Goodyear and Kevin Melchionne, "Dreams in the Void" is, all told, a lamentation of a show and a fearful look forward by some artists fixated on technology's mistakes. ●

Gran turismo: Yoshio Itagaki's *Tourists on the Moon* depicts one possibility for space travel.

