

Photos with powers

Nostalgia is a powerful component in Kathy Kissik's mixed-media collages at Alpha Gallery. Kissik starts with photographs she takes herself, but she manipulates them so they appear old. The effect, ultimately, is dream-like and fractured.

"London," for instance, features a sepia-toned view of Regent Street. But even the photo is a collage: The buildings slant and buckle into one another, all shot from different points of view. The street itself is a rush into one-point perspective, with ribbons of metal and red paint streaming toward the center like a mad river, as if time's onslaught is throwing a quaint picture of the past into disarray.

Kissik made "She Loves Her Horse" on what looks like a slatted wooden blind. It depicts a photo of a woman on a horse, but the horse has been extended at the midriff, with paint and leather, like part of a saddle. The realism of the materials pulls us deeper into the dream.

Deft, detailed, apocalyptic

LaMontagne Gallery has a show of four young Boston artists: Corey Corcoran, Paul Endres Jr., Sean Downey, and Kris Mortensen. All are deft painters. Corcoran's thematic approach, in which he blends human forms with nature scenes, is trite, but his technique carries the work. In "Swarm Behavior," three figures recline. One comprises wasps, the next plants, the last earth, tunnels, and ants. Each is so detailed you want to sink into it.

Downey makes layered frontier narratives that imply a connection between painting and pioneer life. "For Every Field There's a Mole" shows a forest littered with canvases, with two gray men collapsed along the ground and one painting at the edge. Striped with trees, it's an unsentimental, almost abstracted scene of creation and destruction.

Endres flirts with apocalypse in his ongoing series of crisp, realist paintings that take place



Above: Kathy Kissik's mixed-media work "London." **Below:** Sean Downey's painting "For Every Field There's a Mole."



in the near future after a fictional disaster. "Mr. and Mrs. Daedalus" shows a defiant survivalist couple at home. She holds a chainsaw in her lap.

Mortensen's Gothic, sickly green hospital scene, "Project 2010: Neuroscience and Ethics Searching for Consciousness,"

shares that horror about the future. A forbidding nurse sits beside a pig splayed on an operating table. It's a gorgeous painting that crystallizes disturbing images, then drops back into a blur.

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