



PHOTOS BY KATE RUSSELL

SANTA FE'S OWN WONDERLAND

Created by local artists, the 'House of Eternal Return' is mind-blowing in all the best ways

Santa Fe has long been a mecca for artists and art lovers. From the many galleries lining Canyon Road to the legacy of Georgia O'Keeffe and artisanship of the Northern Pueblo Indian tribes, New Mexico's capital city has offered world travelers a wide and colorful artistic palette from which to choose.

With the opening in 2016 of "House of Eternal Return," a multimedia, interactive art installation designed and built by the Meow Wolf artists' collective, it now has something to offer otherworldly travelers, too.

What is "House of Eternal Return?" Not easy to say.

Imagine if Red Grooms, Tim Burton, and George Lucas designed a Pee-wee's Playhouse for Planet Naboo. Or, more specifically, if "Game of Thrones" creator and Santa Fe resident George

BY JOSEPH P. KAHN
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

R.R. Martin bought an abandoned bowling alley, then leased it to a consortium of local artists and techies. And that they in turn constructed a full-immersion theme park that is part mystery story, part self-guided journey through time, space, and alternative realities.

Also, one totally trippy walk-in refrigerator.

Meow Wolf's installation is certainly unlike anything I have experienced before. Ditto for my wife and our two children, aged 22 and 18, on a recent family stay in Santa Fe, as we compared notes following our two-hour, 3-D-aided, sensory-overloaded exploration of the 20,000-square-foot exhibit.

Consensus? Mind-blowing. And we meant that in the best possible sense.

"House of Eternal Return" combines a variety of storytelling elements — written notes, painting, sculpture, music, video, lighting, set design, fabrics, and more — into a kind of walk-in science-fiction novel whose narrative framework is anchored inside a two-story Victorian house.

Visitors are invited to explore each room in the house, whose occupants, the Selig family, have apparently vanished, their previous existence shrouded in mystery. What happened and why is hinted at in clues scattered throughout. A garden-variety scavenger hunt this is not,



however.

More like Alice slipping through the looking glass and dropping into a psychedelic Wonderland.

The rooms themselves contain not-so-hidden passageways — wormholes opening into other dimensions, as it's revealed — located within seemingly ordinary objects like a clothes dryer or fireplace.

Each X-dimension is unique, a world unto itself. In one looms a mastodon skeleton whose glowing ribs can be played like a xylophone. Another contains a bioluminescent, walk-through aquarium, another an enchanted treehouse forest. Yet another houses a retro video-game arcade.

Most incorporate interactive design elements that pull visitors ever deeper into the underlying story. Some may elect to follow the clue trail closely and attempt to "solve" the mystery (we did not). Others might choose to wander more or less aimlessly from one space to the next. For families with young children especially, it may be enough to delight in the exhibit's multisensory nature and

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At the "House of Eternal Return," a multimedia, interactive art installation, visitors are invited to explore each room. Most incorporate interactive elements that pull visitors deeper into the underlying story.



Which travel pillow is just right?

By Karen Campbell
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

When my husband told me the flights to Vietnam spanned roughly 24 hours — even longer on the return — I went into brief panic mode. Never being one to easily sleep in transit, I feared I'd be a grisly companion on the way with murderous jet lag once we landed. So I set out to find some coping mechanisms to maximize the possibility of getting at least a little shut-eye en route and decided it was time to finally invest in some kind of travel pillow.

Mindful of packing light and easy, since our two-week trip had us on the

move nearly every day, I thought I'd look into what's out there besides the ubiquitous U-shaped memory foam and bead-filled pillows. Turns out, there are some really comfortable, versatile, and cleverly designed options, from inflatables to bendables to fiberfill loops.



Therm-a-Rest Air Neck Pillow — For the truly space-conscious traveler, this one is tops. A high-quality U-shaped inflatable, it is ultralight, packing down into a sack that can slide into a pocket. Yet its soft and stretchy brushed polyester cover allows it to plump up easily for customizable support, with an air valve that lets you adjust while you're wearing. This one got passed around our travel group, even in the car. \$29.95, www.thermarest.com (If you have the space, the company also makes a surprisingly plush and comfy compressible compact pillow that can service serious bedtime needs as well, yet it mashes down and rolls up to the size of a canteen.)

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Voodoo Doughnut creates flavors that will lift your spirits

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Handy, comfy travel pillows

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Infinity Pillow — This one turned out to be my favorite for its versatility. The roughly yard-long continuous loop is bulkier than a simple neck pillow, but it can be used in so many configurations, not only behind the neck, but also as lumbar support, depending on individual needs — the difference between body shapes and airplane seats can be marked. You can twist, wrap, or bunch, but I found myself wearing it looped around both arms, part of it supporting behind the neck and part across the lower back. (Some people even figure it to also mask noise and light.) For transport, it compacts easily into a smallish stuff sack, banded bundle, or simply loop it around your neck and waltz on board. Washes beautifully in the machine. \$39.00, www.infinitypillow.co



Infinity Pillow

trtl — The Scottish-made trtl “pillow” feels more like a lightweight scarf with built in neck support. You can position it with support on either side or under the chin, and, according to an independent study by the University of Dundee, it is scientifically proven to hold the head in a better ergonomic position than the standard U-shaped pillow. Made of soft washable fleece, it’s unusual, but quite comfy, very portable, and easy to use, with Velcro fastening tape for secure positioning. \$29.99, www.trtltravel.com (And by the way, the company makes fabulous compression socks, especially recommended for long flights.)



trtl

KIRSTY MCLACHLAN

Dot&Dot Twist Memory Foam Travel Pillow — This versatile pillow is a long bendable foam tube that can be formed into the standard U shape, or whatever suits your needs, including an S shape to support both neck and face. Or you can pop it behind your back, under the legs, etc. The company even claims it can be curved to help cradle a baby, and I found it a terrific support for reading a book in bed. It’s bigger and heavier than the usual foam pillows, but bent in half, it snaps together for easy connection to the handle of a suitcase. \$23.99, www.shop.dotdottravel.com



Dot&Dot Twist Memory Foam Travel Pillow

AirComfy Multipurpose Travel Pillow — With its unusual butterfly shape and easy fill valve, this lightweight portable pillow fully inflates to provide excellent support cradling the arch of the neck (though the side wings might not offer enough structure if your neck tends to flop in sleep). Lightly inflated for a lower profile, it provides great lumbar cushioning to slip behind the back. It has a light

inner layer of foam, yet compresses into a small package — packsack and luggage clip included. The velvety soft velour cover zips off for easy cleaning, and an adjustable elastic strap lets you secure it to your seat wherever you need it. \$19.99, www.aircomfytravel.com

it like a crossbody messenger bag. Rolls up for easy packing. \$29.95, www.travelrest.net

TUMI Patrol Packable Travel Puffer Jacket — Though I didn’t have an opportunity to try this one out, I thought the concept was genius. This water-resistant down jacket compresses to fit into a hidden pouch in the collar that effectively converts it into a U-shaped neck pillow. Going from frigid Boston to warmer climes, you can wear it to the airport, then take it off and sleep on it. Love it! \$195, www.tumi.com

Karen Campbell can be reached at karencampbell4@rcn.com.

Travelrest Ultimate Travel Pillow — This inflatable cushion may not be for everyone, but it is notable not just for comfortable support but also for innovative design. Ergonomically shaped like a long comma, it cradles the neck and gives the arms a little something to hug. The sling strap lets you attach it to your seat or wear



AirComfy Multipurpose Travel Pillow

World's End HINGHAM

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