

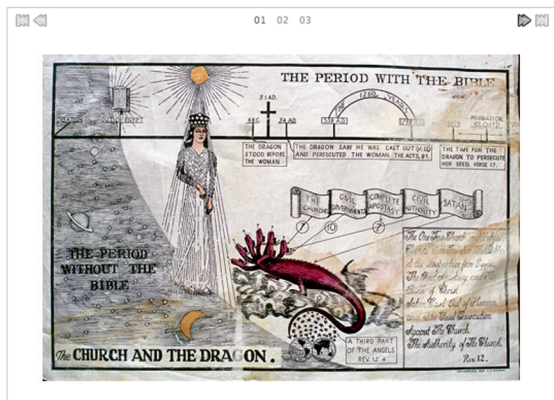
Art

★★★★☆ | RATE THIS
Critic's Rating

Art review

“Victor Houteff: At the Eleventh Hour”

Cabinet, through Sept 16



A Bulgarian immigrant who landed in America in 1907, Victor Houteff was a religious crusader who believed the end of the world was near. The founder of the Davidians, a group that followed and reformed the doctrines of the Seventh-Day Adventists, Houteff published numerous volumes of religious prophecy from 1929 until his death in 1955. He illustrated his writings with elaborate pen-and-ink drawings of historical timelines and biblical scenes, printed on canvas and hand-colored. The eight images on view in this strange yet fascinating show were discovered by artist Jim Shaw, who has collected and exhibited found artwork for more than 20 years, at a Pasadena flea market in 1994.

The Church and the Dragon, which is crumpled and stained by water and insects, illustrates the periods before and after the Bible was written. A crowned woman is caught between the rays of the sun and the moon and confronted by a six-headed dragon, which represents churches, civil authority, government, apostasy and Satan. *The Great Image* depicts a timeline from Babylon to the present day, represented at both ends by identical figures of the prophet Daniel on a pedestal. The left figure stands forthright while the right one has been fractured by a boulder cast from Mount Carmel, which looms large in the background, as another prophet sleeps in the valley below. Ironically, the work brings to mind a later Davidian leader, David Koresh, who took over Houteff's Texas flock in 1987 and brought it to a fiery end near Waco a year before Shaw's remarkable find.—Paul Laster