

# Glasstire

{ TEXAS VISUAL ART ONLINE }

Search Glasstire...



## Review

### Ripped from the Pages

by Bill Davenport

May 2006

*Ripped From the Pages* is one of a series of shows at CACHH's gallery 125 showcasing the work of the latest crop of individual artist grant recipients. CACHH bundles an odd lot of artists together under a loose heading, often producing cacophony, but the current installation is surprisingly clean.

#### Matthew Sontheimer's

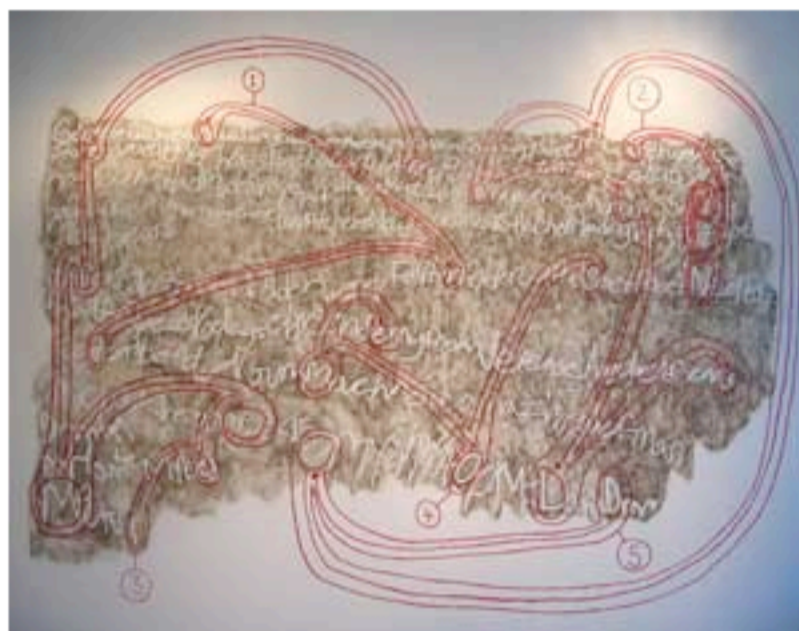
#### *The Carrier's*

*Memorandum*, 2006 is a mud-smeared wall scrawled with semi-legible handwriting. Fragments of childhood diaries emerge in disjointed words and phrases:

"momgavemebaby . . .  
pillows . . . lookslikea . . .  
cheerleadingtrophy . . .  
.jokebook . . .

collections offolders . . ." Selected letters are circled in red paint, and connected along curved pathways to form words that, when decoded, read "TRY AND REMEMBER SOME DETAILS." It elicits a mild word-puzzle appeal; but suppose you were told the mud was collected from the breach point at the 17th St. Canal in New Orleans? Every remembered banal detail becomes coated with a saccharine pathos. It's sentimental schmaltz, the familiar formula of every disaster movie; contrasting the minutiae of normal life against the looming terrible event. The disaster may be real, the recollections may be real, the mud may even be real, but the emotion they conjure is a cardboard simulation, an enjoyably mild dose of grief, like a vaccination against the real thing. In B movies, that's fine: it's fiction; but prodding at other people's real-life misfortune for catharsis is tacky.

*Ripped from the Pages* includes two artists using text, a video, a painter, one sculpture, two wall paintings. The broad summing up that's often placed here at the end of the review would be artificial, so I'll skip it.



Matthew Sontheimer  
*The Carrier's Memorandum*  
mud and ink on wall  
dimensions variable