

gallery reviews



LEFT: Gilad Efrat, *Yellow Swamp*.
NEAR RIGHT: Christy Ortiz, *untitled*, 2006.
FAR RIGHT: Anila Quayyum Agha, *Illuminated Inner Spaces, Black 2*, 2005
mixed media on paper
30 x 22 inches.



INMAN GALLERY:

Gilad Efrat, Carl Suddath, and Dario Robleto

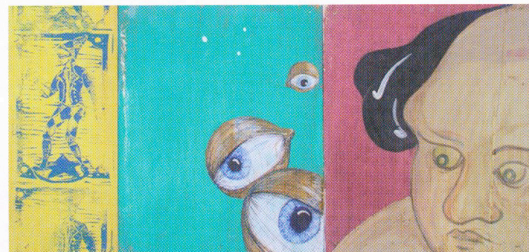
The artists participating in the current show at Inman Gallery have been working with an odd juxtaposition of media—everything from oil on canvas to human hair patiently braided into flowers. The main gallery boasts large-scale, haunting landscapes by Israeli-born artist Gilad Efrat. The paintings are based on photographs of excavations and terrain, both the photographers' names and the locations are anonymous, lending the art a mysterious aura. The earthy pumice-colored palette is starkly contrasted against black oil paint, which intensifies the feeling that you are looking at an enlarged photograph or some cartographical document. An unlikely group of sculptures and paintings are all executed by a single ex-Chicago based artist, Carl Suddath. His repetitive colored pencil drawings are an engineer's exercise in patience. The meaning just below the carefully drawn parallel lines seems to be suspended on a pretense as blank as the white canvas behind the robotic grid. Strangely, his sculpture is a basket-like curve of wood named simply, *untitled*, but very obviously hewn with great care. The same goes for his steel and acrylic paint piece which resembles nothing so much as a wind vane—always precise in form, although the end result is just a bit underwhelming.

The real treat in the current exhibit are the intricately and meaningful antiquities molded, plied and changed into a completely new something by Dario Robleto. Robleto found a singularly extraordinary story—that of May-December romances between Confederate and Union soldiers and their young (twenty-one being the oldest) wives and consequently, young widows. Not only were the veterans the oldest of the wars (they were actually old enough to record their tales of the Civil War on audio tape) their wives were young enough to bear them children and still live 70 years—these women told scholars much of what they know about this period in American history. From a few feet away, one would believe he was looking at a funerary memorial. The artist based the pieces on grotto-like ornaments, usually which depict a saint in its center. The place of

honor in these *retablos* are given to a beautifully sewn widow's dress, a clump of flowers at the neck. What appears to be a virtual parade float's-worth of paper flowers cover the piece in a pleasing peach, black and gray color scheme. A glance at the materials, however, and Robleto's attention to detail and authenticity becomes almost obsessive in nature—human hair and audio tape from inside cassettes—bearing the last known voices of Confederate veterans talking about the war—are what make up the beautifully constructed petals. The paper used is homemade from a pulp of soldiers' letters home, excavated and melted shrapnel from various wars are used as pins, and the widow's dress is made out of scraps of clothing from actual soldier's wives. *Obsequies in Albany* and *The Pause Became Permanence* are unique love stories and, from a historical standpoint, a touching anomaly. The quotations that swirl around the flowers, ribbons and bits of clothing are quotations from the women, claiming that their husbands, over seventy years their senior in some cases, were the only man they'd ever love; that when they died a little bit of them went "underground with him."

— Sarah Gajkowski-Hill

Through August 26th, 3901 Main, 713.526.7800
www.inmangallery.com.



LAWNDALE ART CENTER

The Big Show 2006

Lawndale Art Center is a non-profit alternative exhibition space that focuses on contemporary works in all media. The Big Show is Lawndale Art Center's annual open-call, juried exhibition for Houston area artists. The lone guest juror, Dominic Molon, is the Pamela Alper Associate Curator for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Molon had the daunting task of selecting 106 pieces out of the 889 entries submitted. Only ninety of the 375 Houston area artists that submitted entries were included in the exhibition. Lawndale Assistant Director of Exhibitions and Programming Jimmy Castillo commented that he was very impressed with Molon's method of reviewing all the entries and with his ability to curate such a cohesive exhibition.

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