



T. Billings, *Revealed Wasp Drawings*, mixed media, 2006
 C. Lewis, *Insomnia, Migraine*, Untitled mixed media, 2009

When we approach works like *Reflection* and simply stand beneath the umbra of the purified, denuded and ultimately sacred tree-shape, it is quite rightly assumed that the artist is concerned with creating memory. If we then relate this concern back to Schama's notions of memory as our strongest mental weapon in our personal battles to foment lasting change (in ourselves and our relations with nature), then this work of art succeeds where scientific statistics and media hysterics will not. It succeeds by creating focused, yet subjective (to the viewer) memories that are made more indelible by virtue of the fact that, in this special space, all of the senses are registering unique information.

Within this heightened "space" of awareness then, *Psycho Organisms* presents its themes through the manipulation of many artistic media. The exhibit presents several loose narrative themes and messages offered up for translation by the viewer that blossom out from the works themselves. Clarissa Lewis is most interested in presenting a launching pad for ideas rather than a well-defined thesis in her artwork. To expand upon these thematic "suggestions" I want to mention several "trains of thought" that came to mind as I toured the exhibition.

The American artist, Charles Simmonds created intimate "interventions" into his community in the late sixties. His work began as a physical connecting of his body to the environment, to nature. With a series of tiny dwellings that he installed in ruins, vacant lots and back alleys of New York, Simmonds was re-connecting the world of art (and thus human expression) with the natural world. "Simmonds evoked the forgotten presence of the earth lying dormant beneath the city;" (Howard Smagula, *Currents: Contemporary Directions in Visual Art*, Prentice-Hall, 1989, p.286 In *Psycho Organisms* one can find this same will to "very quietly" assert these forgotten presences. In some senses then, these works have grown out of a movement called, "ephemeral art". In a world so over-crammed with images, advertisements and information, these artists believe that secret, mysterious, ephemeral statements stand out and affect us more than commercial grandiosity.