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## (ARTKC365) Piecework Memories : Tanya Hartman

By [Steve Brisendine](#) January 12, 2010



"Reliquary" (Detail), Stitching, Collage, Paint on Paper.

**Tanya Hartman**  
*Rhyming the Lines*

11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sherry Leedy Contemporary Art

2004 Baltimore  
Kansas City, MO  
816.221.2626

Hours: 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday  
Runs through: Feb. 27

Gallery site: <http://www.sherryleedy.com>

It's fairly common to speak of "reading into" a work of art.

In the case of Tanya Hartman's *Rhyming the Lines*, now on display at Sherry Leedy Contemporary Art, that phrase is far more than metaphor.

Hartman, an associate professor at the University of Kansas, stitches together (literally) two art forms, visual and literary. The former aspect draws in viewers from a distance; together, the images and text set the hook. The goal, Hartman writes, is to show *reverence for the power in language and image to illuminate experience within the imagination*.

She types. She stitches. She paints. She scores.

There are narratives of pain and joy, petitions for grace and strength, some works with finite storylines and others that will continue to develop so long as Hartman draws breath.

No, you get no excerpts here. The only way to truly appreciate the pieces is to see and read them yourself. You'll need to allot a decent-sized chunk of time; one work alone, *I Wrote a Short Story (Rhyming the Lines)* is twenty-seven feet long.

File *Reliquary*, one panel of which is shown above, under the "ongoing" category. Hartman creates each panel after a birthday, to sum up the previous year. Sort of gives new meaning to the term "life's work," doesn't it?

Hartman's chosen materials, media and techniques influence more than the purely visual parts of her art. They also reinforce the idea of life — and of the memories created over a lifetime — as fragile and alterable, things constructed and assembled bit by bit.

In her words: *Sewing into paper, writing, and recollecting upon paper, stippling paper, and agitating paper with ink and needle, creates an obsessive surface quality that acts as a metaphor for memory itself, and for memory's tendency to agitate, to poke and to be embellished.*

For example: On March 15, 1979, the Police stopped in Kansas City while touring in support of their first album, *Outlandos d'Amour*. They played at a club, no longer extant, called One Block West.

**According to Sting, seven people showed up.** But around here, in the early 1980s, you couldn't swing a stick at Parody Hall or Blayney's without hitting at least eight people claiming to have been at the One Block West show.

What does that have to do with Hartman's work? Only this: Don't read this post, look at the image up top and spend the next 20 years convincing yourself you saw *Rhyming the Lines*. Go make some honest memories with the real thing.