



September Spotlight: Judith Shaw

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Fault lines is a print and photographic series that captures intricate tire patterns created by construction machinery and heavy-duty vehicles. It explores the impact of a constantly shifting world on a forever changing landscape.

Judith Shaw, a St. Louis based artist, is the focus of our Members Spotlight at the St. Louis Artists' Guild for the month of September. Judith's artistic practice engages with the heavy-duty machinery and vehicles that are dominating her neighborhood in Clayton, Missouri. Shaw's condominium in Clayton overlooks the Centene Campus Development Project, underway since early 2016, the project has been an ongoing source of angst and anguish not only for her but also for other residents and businesses in the neighborhood. Shaw's unit faces the building site of the 30-story office tower which is looming over her living space. Once demolition and construction got rolling, relentless noise and layer upon layer of dust and debris transformed her home from a sanctuary into a battle zone. From dusk to dawn, Shaw and her neighbors are bombarded with the rumble and vibration of jack-hammers, the pounding of pile drivers and the racket of drills, saws, hammers and grinders. Clamoring trucks caused a constant commotion. Armies of uniformed workers, in high-visibility gear, invaded the area six days a week. Traffic detours and delays were rampant. Disgusted and distraught, Shaw considered selling her luxury condo and moving - to a different neighborhood, maybe to another city, maybe to the countryside. But after a surprising turnaround, she did none of those. It happened one day when Shaw spotted an array of intricate tire patterns created by the massive machinery moving about the construction site.



Awed by the in-ground sketches left by the tires, she stopped to admire the tracks and has been doing so ever since. Shaw saw artistry in the rhythmic designs and textured motifs of the repetitive dips, dents and dimples formed by the trucks as they went through gravel, tar, mud, oil, dirt, ice, snow or water. Some compositions lingered while others disappeared quickly, mirroring the impermanence and the fragility of our environment. She has made several friends at the construction site, who help with rolling out the tar paper and even clearing debris from the road to achieve better impressions of the tracks. Now on a first-name basis with many of the workers who assist in her art, Shaw greets them daily and they often exchange stories with one another. Many also stop in amazement to look at the tire markings, artwork they admittedly never noticed before.



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