

Treading

With Peter Hiers & Jojo Whilden

Cherry Center for the Arts

9/24/11 - 10/28/11

Artist Statement: Peter Hiers

Seeing ubiquitous tire fragments by our highways reminds me that in our present way of life in the USA, individually we no longer work directly to provide ourselves with the basic survival necessities of food, clothing and shelter. Instead we give our lives to the endless cycles of consumption and production, earning and spending, all to provide indirectly for our basic survival by participation in a most intricate network of interdependence, supporting human existence by a vital but vulnerable web of transportation, electricity and money.

Every bag of groceries I bring home from the store represents thousands of miles of travel to get to my dinner table and fill my bloodstream with nutrients for another day of life. There are countless gallons of finite fuel sent down the drain every day in the ongoing swirl of keeping humanity alive another day, while their combustion leaves behind negative ecological impacts. Like the vehicles which abandon torn tire fragments alongside the highways, our materialist consuming society leaves behind a vast array of by-products of our ways (i.e. CO2 emissions)- evidence so common that we often don't even see what we have used up, what we leave behind, nor the implications of our lifestyle. Tire fragments are an ideal metaphor for our times and for the violent tension between human



forces and the natural forces within which we operate. As the Social Fabric that provides the necessities for human survival, these fragments show engineered textures made by our human industrial prowess and also the shredded and ripped textures created when the natural forces of heat, friction, centrifugal force and vapor pressure ultimately overpower our human technological creations. Which powers are greater here?

How do we reconcile our growing human population with our dependence on finite resources to support the delicate web of our survival? Has our primary gift as humans - our imagination and ability to create technology for our survival - led us down a materialist path that could ultimately take us away from survival as a species? Can our imagination as artists and problem-solvers help us change course? Can our interdependence be reassembled in a more sustainable fashion? What Ideology can we develop to replace the imbalanced Consumption = Fulfillment Myth? Clearly we need to find a more sustainable, balanced and less vulnerable way of life – while we still can.

Artist Statement: Jojo Whilden

The photographs in this series is an homage to drawing and driving. The photographs formally and aesthetically depict ubiquitous tire tracks left on pavement. The framing and formality of the compositions, as well as the richness of the medium of black-and-white photography, suggest images of beauty, and at the same time the marks on the road represent something potentially more fearful. The skid marks are temporary shadow-like traces on the ground, similar to photographic images, which are merely silver tracks left on celluloid. Both reference moments in time, trigger memory, and offer access to the trauma and desire of events past.



The aesthetic structure of this series looks back to the great Modernist photographers of the last century (Weston, Adams, etc.), who found images of beauty in nature's forms. These forms are found in the fleeting qualities of the new century: today one simply whips past nature in a speeding car. Inspiration for this project also derived from contemporary literature and cinema (most directly J.G. Ballard's novel, *Crash*, which was later translated to film by David Cronenberg) and from many hours spent driving the car on the highway



Carl Cheery for the Arts

Established in 1948, the mission of the Carl Cherry Center for the Arts is to enhance the quality and diversity of artistic, educational and cultural programs in Monterey County by encouraging public programs and interactions between artists and the community.

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