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Where in the world is Torrance York? GPS anchors photographer's Silvermine show

Road Works," an exhibit of new works by New Canaan resident Torrance York, is a Director's Choice exhibit at the Silvermine Guild Arts Center through February 3.

Ms. York uses a Global Positioning System (GPS) device to record the longitude and latitude of the points from which she shoots, using the coordinates as image titles.

"This impersonal technology has a more intimate application for the artist — it allows her to know exactly where she stands on the planet," according to a release from Silvermine.

Manipulating the picture plane using a shallow depth of field, Ms. York focuses on the details of different marks on the road and all else is a blur. The marks pictured range from the functional to the accidental to the intentional gesture.

"When I see a skid mark, I wonder what circumstances created it," the artist said in a press release. "This curiosity is no doubt linked to the death of my father, who fell asleep at the wheel of his car when I was a child. Recognizing my fantasy that I would find a trace possibly marking my father's exit from this world has led me to look at roads in a different way — to see roads themselves as road signs."

Since moving from New York City to Connecticut, that artist notes one essential difference; she spends much of her time driving instead of walking. Instead of watching people she has become an interpreter of road works. Images in the exhibit picture skid marks, surface cracks repaired with tar, lines that guide traffic but end suddenly, borderlines and utility spray paint markings — all findings that cause the artist to question or invent stories. All but three of the images in "Road Works" were shot locally.

A native New Yorker, Ms. York earned a master of fine arts degree in photography from Rhode Island School of Design and a bachelor of arts degree from Yale.

She was recently awarded second prize at the Silvermine Guild Arts Center's "SPECTRA '07" national photography triennial, judged by Peter MacGill, in addition to being selected for "Radius: Emerging Artists from Connecticut and Southeastern New York," co-organized by the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum and the Ridgefield Guild of Artists.

A Silvermine Guild artist since 2006, she has shown in many galleries throughout the New York area. In 1995, she was awarded a year-long residency at the Anderson Ranch Arts Center in Snowmass Village, Colo., where she created and exhibited a video installation project, "Seeing Through Memory."

Ms. York's current still photography work includes three series of landscape images: "Selections," "Functional Ground" and the new "Urban Coordinates" series. She is also developing a series documenting children, "Caution: Children at Play," and has taught documentary video at the Education Video Center in New York City where she serves as president of the Board of Directors.

Ms. York will discuss her work in Silvermine's "Walk & Talk" series at 12:30 p.m. Friday, February 1.

Images can be viewed online at Silvermine's Upcoming Exhibitions Web page at www.silvermineart.org or at torranceyorkstudio.com.

Silvermine Galleries are open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. More information is available at 966-9700.



Using GPS to plot her exact location on the globe, New Canaan photographer Torrance York then zooms in on the minute details at those spots, such as "Symbol Z" (left) and "Red Circle" (above). Her photographs will be on display at the Silvermine Guild Arts Center through February 3. Using GPS to plot her exact location on the globe, New Canaan photographer Torrance York then zooms in on the minute details at those spots, such as "Symbol Z" (left) and "Red Circle" (above). Her photographs will be on display at the Silvermine Guild Arts Center through February 3.