

Between Here and There

The landscape has been a reoccurring subject in my work for over 15 years. The word “landscape” often brings to mind a specific kind of imagery that depicts natural scenes in a beautiful way and conforms to certain conventions. In my work, the genre is more broad and fluid. I have examined the landscape through piles of plant detritus on a gallery floor, photographs of the construction of interstate highways in the Midwest, and currently, a series of images that focus on the pavement that make up many urban environments. There is no foreground or background in these pictures, at least not in a conventional sense, and you will not locate any horizon lines that divide the earth from the sky. *Between Here and There* is a document that selectively maps the surfaces beneath my feet—a hodgepodge of primarily petroleum-based substances used to pave cities—that I walk over on my daily commute to and from work in Washington, DC.

The Midwest is the place that I consider home. I was born and raised in Maryville, IL, a small town near St. Louis, MO. Like many places, people in this part of the country drive nearly everywhere they go, and my mode of transportation was no exception. I spent approximately an hour each day driving in a car, most of which was on the interstate highways. It was on these regular trips that I became enthralled by the panoramic scenes that existed outside of the windows of the car, and this became the subject of two bodies of work: *Construction/Destruction* in 1994 and *Interstate Landscapes* in 2002. The first of these two projects focused on the construction sites along a single interstate highway. I was especially interested in the immediate changes that were occurring to what had been farmland. In the second series, I went beyond the construction and photographed from the shoulders of completed interstate highways throughout the region. The actual pavement makes its way into the images on occasion, but it is the landscape that has been shaped by the roadways that is the main subject. Both bodies of work documented the effects that these narrow bands of asphalt and concrete have had on the landscape, albeit, in slightly different ways.

The majority of the images in *Between Here and There* focus on a variety of marks upon the pavement, primarily spray-painted lines that identify the locations where repairs will be done, and the cracks that are mended together with threads of tar. While I realize that the spray-painted symbols have meaning to the people who apply them to the roads and sidewalks, to me it is a language that I do not care to decipher. My interest is not in decoding and translating their exact meaning, but in revising the language by fragmenting its characters, rearranging the text, and coercing these otherwise straightforward documents to dissolve into abstraction. The intended meaning may have been erased, but the markings are not devoid of significance. Instead, these happened-upon urban collages have been translated into a new visual vernacular. Furthermore, by placing the finished prints within the context of a gallery, the messages transferred from the streets become open to multiple interpretations.

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