

ANNIE KAMMERER BUTRUS



PEACH TREE TRAIL

The *Peach Tree Trail* project began in 2004 as two-part project. The primary part is a series of painting-based installations that are simulations of actual trails developed by an extension agent in Chilton County, Alabama. The trails are designed to highlight the disappearing natural beauty and threat to the local economy of peach farmers in Chilton County. The second component of the project involves interviewing the peach farmers about their response to the potential loss of their own land and also the changing use of the land around them.

A County Extension Agent introduced me to farmers at individual orchards and for five years I traveled to Chilton County every season tracing shadows of peach trees. I made serial groups of paintings that acted as simulated trails--each measuring 26 feet long and 28 inches high. The trails are comprised of 7 diptychs, each diptych representing an individual tree at an individual farmer's orchard. I arranged my hyper-exaggerated horizontal panels under the trees and traced the shadows moving overhead. The upper panel of each diptych is formally based on a single shadow tracing while the lower panel shows the same shadow traced multiple times over the course of an hour. In the studio, the two panels are joined into a diptych presenting an opportunity to make mirror images, with the upper and lower panels playing opposites, sky and ground, heaven and earth. I paint and repaint, oscillating between abstraction and realism to reflect my own emotional response to the places and their stories. The intersection of the farmer's point-of-view and my visual response to recording the path of the sun and its cast shadow was the root of this project.