

## **Judith Belzer: The Panama Project**

Bay Area painter Judith Belzer has long been concerned with “Landscapes of the Anthropocene,” which she defines as places where the natural and built worlds increasingly collide. Her series on the Panama Canal was prompted by an article in *The New York Times* that described the widening of the passage, begun in 2016, which was intended to expand the capacity for larger vessels.

Belzer’s paintings often verge on the abstract and adopt dizzying aerial perspectives. These techniques are well suited to the hills bordering the canal and the intense geometries created by the ships, their containers, and the highly industrialized landscape surrounding the canal.

Belzer received a Guggenheim Fellowship to support her travel to Panama in 2015, where she worked both on land and sea aboard a tugboat. In the field she made sketches, and took copious notes and photographs. Once back in her studio, Belzer created samples of the forms and colors she had seen, including the marks left on the hulls of the ships. The works arising from these typologies ranged from small watercolors to large oils on canvas.

The works that Belzer created, while documenting one of the largest engineering projects on the planet, are also reminders of how we modify the natural environment in order to facilitate an increasingly massive amount of goods to flow around the world.

The archive materials in this exhibition are drawn from the collections of the Center for Art + Environment.