Laurie Frick worked for years in the technology industry, so she's familiar with devices and applications that monitor people's activities. One day she wondered: If someone wanted to figure out what she was doing, where could they look?

She started a list. It got to more than 100 items. And it made her think.

"Maybe it's not a matter of turning off the computer, or turning off the cookies, or using cash instead of credit cards, or deleting your search history. No matter what you do, I don't think you're going to win," she says. "But what if I have as much data as they do about me? That gives me something to bargain with, something to bring to the table."

She started monitoring and measuring myriad elements of her life: heart rate, daily step count, sleep patterns, web-browsing activity, her every movement, etc. She's not alone in this growing trend. There's a nationwide network called "Quantified Self" where people gather to talk about how they measure their lives.

However, Frick takes it a step further, turning her measurements into art. "I think more and more, data will be presented in fantastical ways, more like art," she says. "It's not so
much any more about data visualized as graphics. It has to be more beautiful and experiential, something you want to look at."

Frick’s latest project, "Making Tracks," is on the walls now at Real Art Ways in Hartford.

To create the installation, Frick tracked her movements for a long time using the cellphone app Open Paths, which blips every time she moves and then places the blip on a map. "It drops bread crumbs wherever you've been," she says.

Then she transferred that data into an Excel spreadsheet and got rid of the underlying map. Then, using a wood background and colorful countertop samples, she created a billboard-sized record of her movements. "The little samples start to look like little pixels, like a computer screen," Frick says.

Frick has homes in Brooklyn, N.Y., and Austin, Texas, and spends a lot of time in the San Francisco Bay area. So "Making Tracks" has dark and color-varied clusters of activity in the center bottom of the grid (Texas), the upper right (New York) and the left (California). The places where she spends the most time are saturated in red. Between them are lighter strands of activity, representing brief stays or airplane flights. "It's a crazy pattern, sort of a metaphor," she says.

Frick, a descendant of Windsor's Colonial-era Bissell family, got degrees in engineering and business, and then for decades ran product divisions for high-tech companies. Then she took early retirement at age 48 10 years ago and went to New York Studio School for an MFA.

She has a lot of ideas about where art, technology and daily life will mesh in the future. "Eventually we may be living in spaces with textured walls, that show where we are walking, how we are feeling, all those things that make up 'how do you feel?'" she says. "It would create an artistic backdrop for our emotions."

This melding of art and science is nothing new. "In the Renaissance era, a lot of great artists were scientists, too," she says. The meshing of the disciplines just takes on new dimension with every advancement in technology, which provide convenience at the expense of personal privacy.

"The funny thing is, devices have a better memory of what happened to you than you do," she says. "People naturally forget. Forgetting is a coping mechanism because not all memories are good. Some are sad and some are just boring. But the monitors remember."

LAURIE FRICK: MAKING TRACKS will be at Real Art Ways, 56 Arbor St. in Hartford, until Thursday, March 21. Hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday 2 to 10 p.m., Friday and Saturday 2 to 11 p.m. Admission is free, but a $3 donation is suggested. Details: http://www.realartways.org.