

PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY



CHERYL PAGUREK | STATE OF FLUX 15 | DIGITAL PRINT ON PHOTO PAPER | 25 x 37.5 INCHES | 2012

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PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY

CHERYL PAGUREK

EDUCATION

- 1992 M.F.A. University of Victoria, Victoria, Canada
1990 B.F.A. Queen's University, Kingston, Canada

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 State of Flux, Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2010 High Value Targets, Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2009 Reflection and Flow, Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal, at Maison de la culture du Plateau-Mont-Royal, curated by Gaëlle Morel, Montréal, Canada
2008 Flow, Ottawa City Hall Art Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2008 Ephemera, Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2005 Double Takes: Two Albums, Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2004 Impositions, Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2002 Unfoldings, VU, Centre de diffusion et de production de la photographie, Quebec City, Canada
2002 Balancing Act, Gallery 101, Resource Room, Ottawa, Canada
2000 A Day in the Life, La Centrale, Galerie Powerhouse, project room, Montréal, Canada
1998 daily news, Gallery 101, Ottawa, Canada
1996 InterView, Open Space, Victoria, Canada
1995 Projected, TRUCK: an artist run centre, Calgary, Canada
1995 Send in the Clowns: Acts 1- 4, Floating Gallery, Centre for Photography, Winnipeg, Canada
1994 5 Fraserwood Ave., Apt. #2, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, Canada
1993 Maison d'être, The Atrium Gallery, Nepean Civic Square, Nepean, Canada

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2012 Local Flora, SAW Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2010 Losing It, Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax, Canada
2010 The Triumph of the Therapeutic, Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2009 Microcosm, Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2009 The Collection's Cabinet, City Hall Art Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2008 Tradition and Transformation: Art by Jewish Women, Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, Illinois
2007 Aperture, City Hall Art Gallery, part of Festival X, Ottawa Photography Festival, Ottawa, Canada
2007 The New: Part 1, Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2006 Heteropias: Work from the Contemporary Collection, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2006 Eye Level Re-Shelving Initiative 2, Eye Level Gallery, Halifax, Canada
2005 Inside Look, Karsh-Masson Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2005 Contact Photography Festival, Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
2004 Setts and Impositions, Gallery 44, Toronto, Canada

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- 2003 Family Matters, WKP Kennedy Gallery, North Bay, Canada
- 2002 Container, SAW Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
- 2002 Collections in Context, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
- 2002 Private Constructs, Eastern Edge Gallery, St. John's, Canada
- 1997 PROOF 4, Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography, Toronto, Canada
- 1995 Reconfiguring Cultural Identity, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Victoria, Canada

SCREENINGS

- 2012 "Wave Patterns" in Square Pegs V: East/West, Modern Fuel Artist Run Centre, Kingston, Canada, August 15 2012 and AKA Gallery, Saskatoon, Canada, September 2012
- 2010 "Flow" in Experimental Docs 5: Phenomenology & Perception, at STEM Cell
- 2010 Sub Terranean Edmonton Media Arts Festival, Edmonton, Canada
- 2009 "Passage" at Square Pegs Two: Video Art in the Square, Modern Fuel Artist Run Centre, Kingston, Canada
- 2009 "Flow" at Centretown Movies Outdoor Film Festival, Ottawa, Canada
- 2008 "Flow" at the Fabulous Festival of Fringe Film, Durham Art Gallery, Durham, Canada
- 2008 "Passage" in Persistent Vision: Passages, a program of recent video on the theme of time, transition, and memory, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
- 2007 "Friday Morning" in Tales and Stories from the Interior, a program of recent video works, Centre de production Daimon, Gatineau, Canada

COMMISSIONS

- 2011 Awarded the City of Ottawa Public Art Commission to create Currents, a permanent, outdoor LED video display for the Market Place Corridor of the Southwest Transit Extension, installation May 2011

SELECTED AWARDS

- 2006 Centre de production Daimon, media arts and photography - Research and Creation Program
- 2005 Finalist for the 2005 Karsh Award for artistic work in a photo-based medium, City of Ottawa

COLLECTIONS

Foreign Affairs Canada
Ottawa Art Gallery
Canada Council Art Bank
City of Ottawa Public Art Collection (purchases in 1999, 2001, 2002, 2008, 2010)
Library of the National Gallery of Canada
Numerous Private Collections

PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES

- 2013 Davidge, Michael. "State of Flux: Cheryl Pagurek." BlackFlash Magazine, 2013 Issue 30.3, p 4-7. October 30, 2013. <http://www.blackflash.ca/303>.
- 2012 Modder, Sabine. "Sneak Preview: Cheryl Pagurek." Art Moco, Aug. 23, 2012. mocoloco.com/art/archives/027591.php
- 2012 St-Laurent, Stefan. Local Flora. Ottawa: Galerie SAW Gallery, 2012.
- 2012 Close to Home: Recent additions to the City of Ottawa's Fine Art Collection. Ottawa: City Hall Art Gallery, 2012.
- 2011 "Ottawa goes high-tech in how it displays public art". CTV Ottawa News at 6, (May 25, 2011).
- 2010 Willems, Steph. "Winner named for Marketplace art contest." Nepean/Barrhaven EMC [Ottawa], (Sept. 16, 2010).
- 2011 Ed. "Video art entertains Barrhaven commuters." The Ottawa Citizen, (May 30, 2011).
- 2011 "Place and Circumstance: Additions to the City of Ottawa's Collection." Ottawa: City Hall Art Gallery (2011).
- 2010 Simpson, Peter. "Work by Pagurek chosen for Transitway station." The Ottawa Citizen, (Sept. 3, 2010).
- 2010 Simpson, Peter. "The Big Beat: Cheryl Pagurek wins \$90,000 city competition for Transitway extension." The Ottawa Citizen online, Sept. 2, 2010.
- 2010 Flinn, Sean. "On the periphery." The Coast, [Halifax], (August 19, 2010).
- 2010 Ed., Canadian Art online: See it: "Losing It: Mental Notes". August 12, 2010.
- 2010 Simpson, Peter. "Unique proposals, uniform passion." The Ottawa Citizen, (August 10, 2010).
- 2010 Parker, Judith. Review of High Value Targets exhibit in Afterimage: The Journal of Media Arts and Cultural Criticism, issue 37.6, (May/June 2010).
- 2010 Landry, Mike. "Growing Pains and High Value Targets." Things of Desire, issue 66, Vol. 2 No. 27, Jan. 14, 2010 <http://thingsofdesire.ca/2010/01/14/growing-pains-and-high-value-targets-ottawa/>.
- 2010 Caplan, Mitchell. Radio interview on Click here, CHUO-FM89, January 20, 2010.
- 2009 Morel, Gaëlle, ed. The Spaces of the Image. Montreal: Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal, 2009.
- 2009 Wombell, Paul. A Theatre of Images: Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal. Next Level (UK), edition 18, 2009.
- 2009 Bouchard, Marie Ginette. Déjouer l'image. Vie des Arts, issue no.216, (Autumn 2009).
- 2008 City of Ottawa. Exhibitions 2008. Ottawa: Karsh-Masson and City Hall Art Galleries, 2008.
- 2008 Falvey, Emily. Tract 11. Ottawa: Ottawa Art Gallery, 2008.
- 2008 Halkes, Petra. Cheryl Pagurek: Ephemera. Ciel Variable, issue no. 79, (Summer 2008).
- 2008 Halkes, Petra. There, in the Flow of Time. Ottawa: Ottawa City Hall Art Gallery, 2008.
- 2008 Ottawa Art Gallery: Collections: Contemporary Art Collection. Ottawa, 2008
- 2007 Higginson-Murray, Connie. "Portraits of space inspire reflection." The Ottawa Citizen, [Ottawa], (Jan. 18, 2007).
- 2007 Ingrey, Katie. Aperture. Ottawa: City Hall Art Gallery, 2007.
- 2007 Regenstreif, Michael. "Artist explores Jewish immigrant experience in poignant exhibition." Ottawa Jewish Bulletin, [Ottawa], (Dec. 3, 2007).
- 2005 Gessell, Paul. "Critics' Picks: Fine Arts." The Ottawa Citizen, [Ottawa], (June 4, 2005).
- 2005 Modder, Sabine, ed. "Double Takes." Art MoCo, June 3, 2005 <http://mocoloco.com/art>.
- 2005 Racette, Bohdanna. "Domestic Space Invaders: Pagurek's politics of space get personal." Guerilla, Issue 5, June 2005. <http://www.getguerilla.ca>.

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- 2005 Simpson, Peter, ed. "Images of Ottawa: Five photographers vie for the Karsh Prize." The Ottawa Citizen, [Ottawa], (July 11, 2005).
- 2004 Irvin, Sherri. "The Image Becomes the Frame: Cheryl Pagurek's Impositions" in Impositions. Ottawa: Carleton University Art Gallery, 2004.
- 2004 Palmer, Alexandra. Setts & Impositions. Toronto: Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography, 2004.
- 2003 Budney, Jen, ed. RR101: 1999-2003 Gallery 101 Resource Room Projects. Ottawa: Gallery 101, 2003.
- 2003 McElroy, Gil. "Review of 'Family Matters'." ART PAPERS Magazine, Vol. 27, No.5 (Sept./Oct. 2003).
- 2003 Melhorn-Boe, Lise, comp. Looking at Art: Family Matters. North Bay: WKP Kennedy Gallery, 2003.
- 2002 Baert, Renee. Collections in Context. Ottawa: Ottawa Art Gallery, 2002
- Cantin, David. "Rôles et fictions." Le Devoir, [Montreal], Vol. XCIII, No. 15 (January 26, 2002).
- 2002 Greenwood, Vera. Container - A Dialogue Between Form and Function. Ottawa: SAW Gallery, 2002.
- 2002 Quine, Dany. "Expositions." Le Soleil, [Québec City], (February 2, 2002).
- 2002 Stelmackowich, Cindy. "Caught in the folds" in Unfoldings / Déploiements. Québec: Vu, Centre de diffusion et de production de la photographie, 2002.

Artist project by **JAYCE SALLOUM p.19** | WALLS *that* SEPARATE p. 46

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BlackFlash

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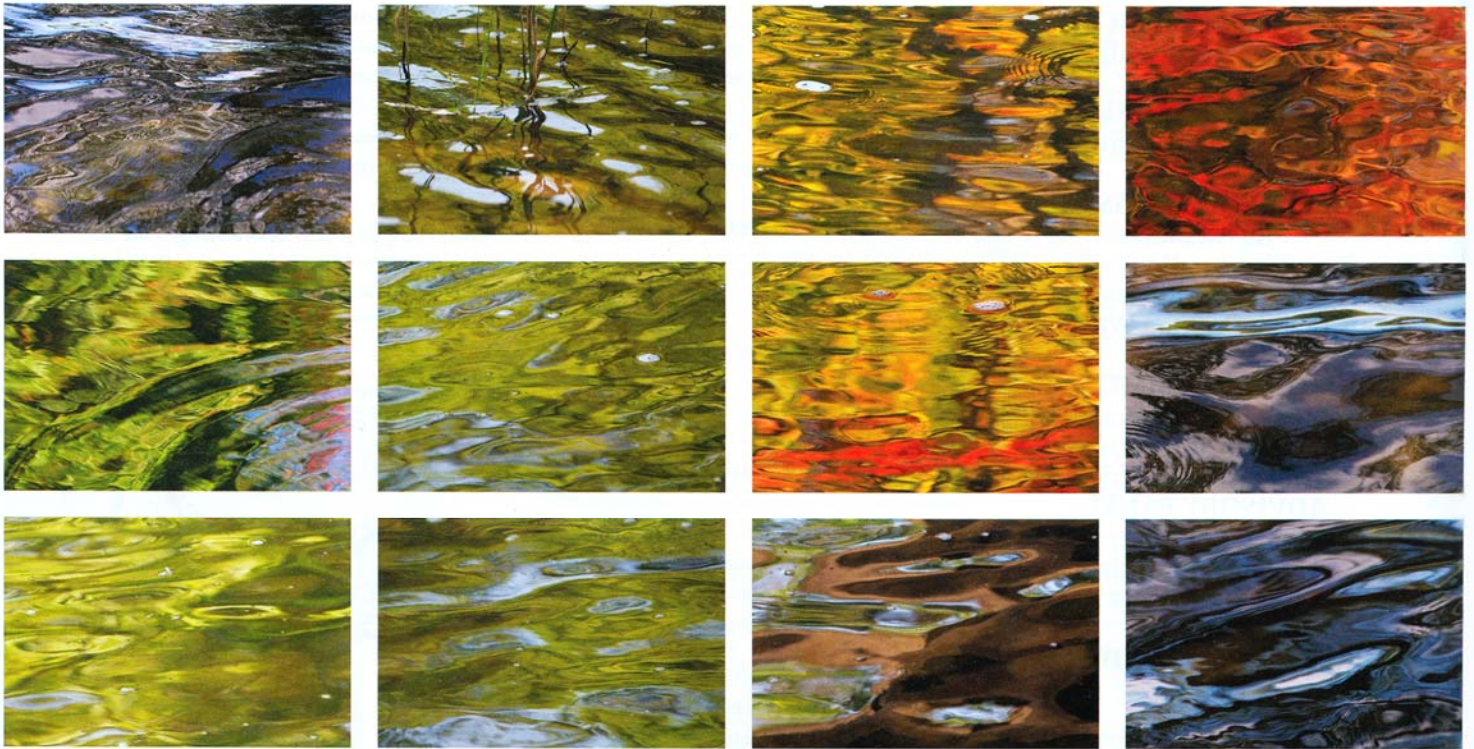
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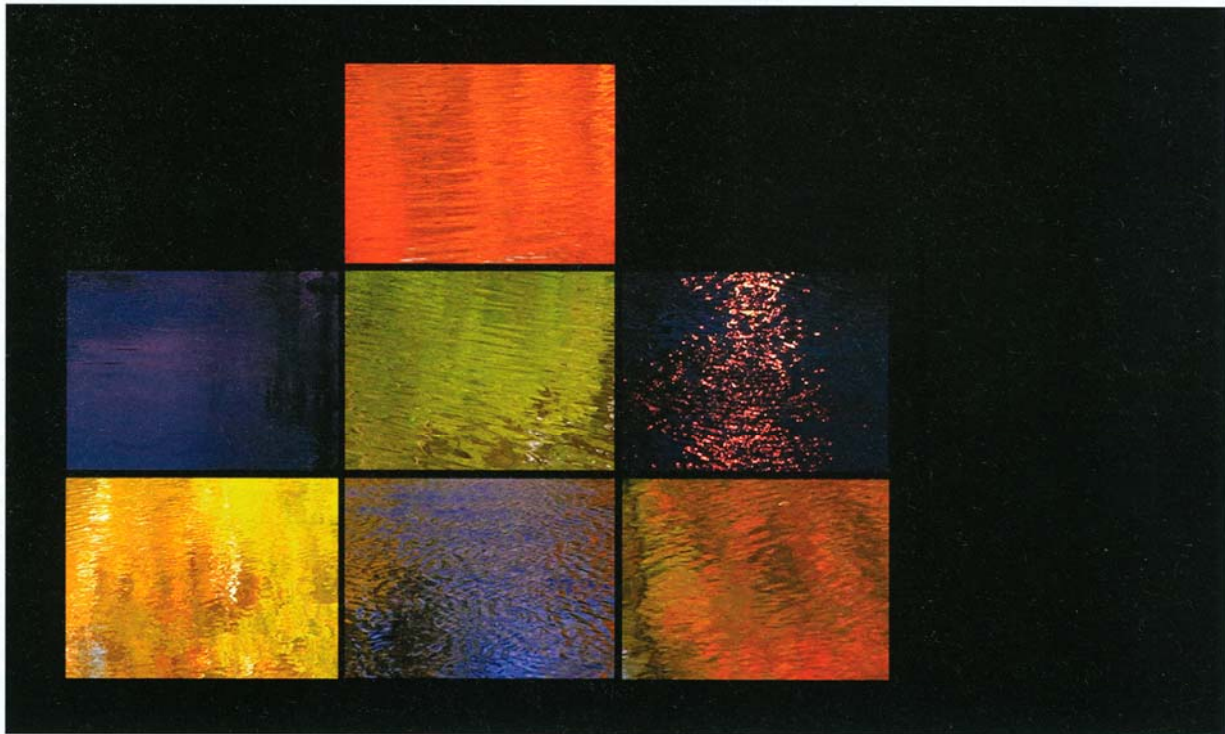
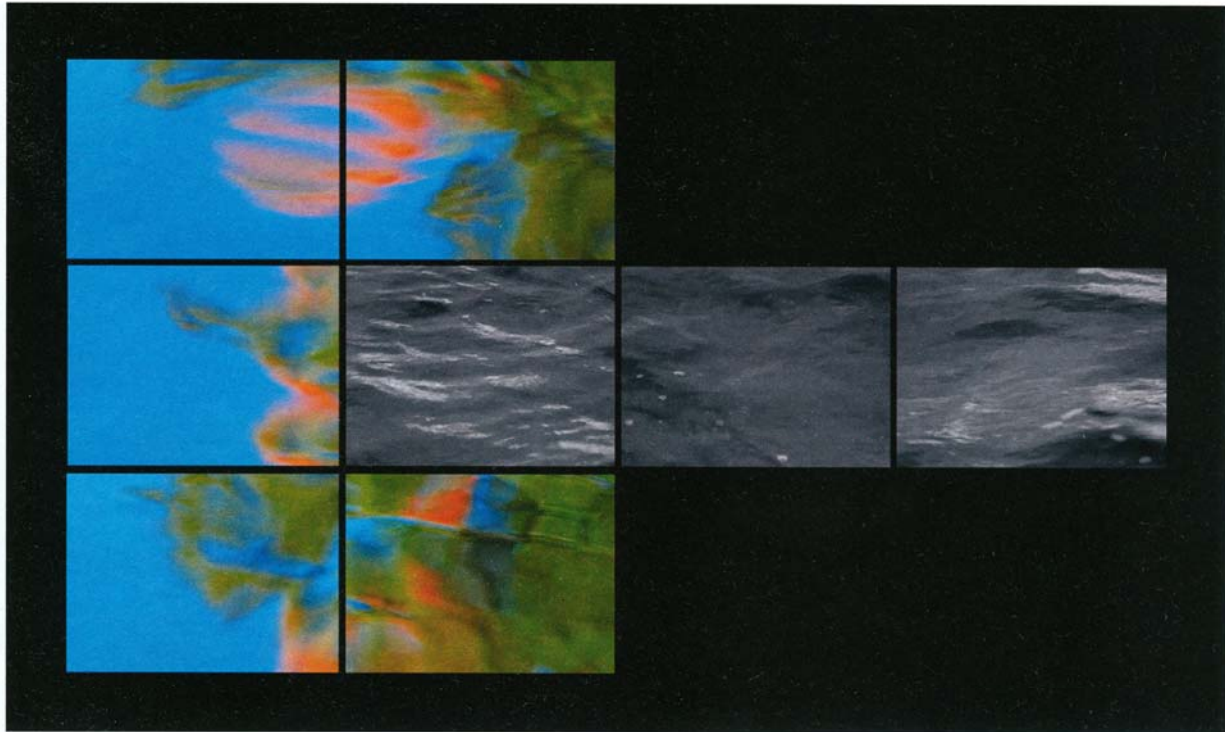
State of Flux

Cheryl Pagurek

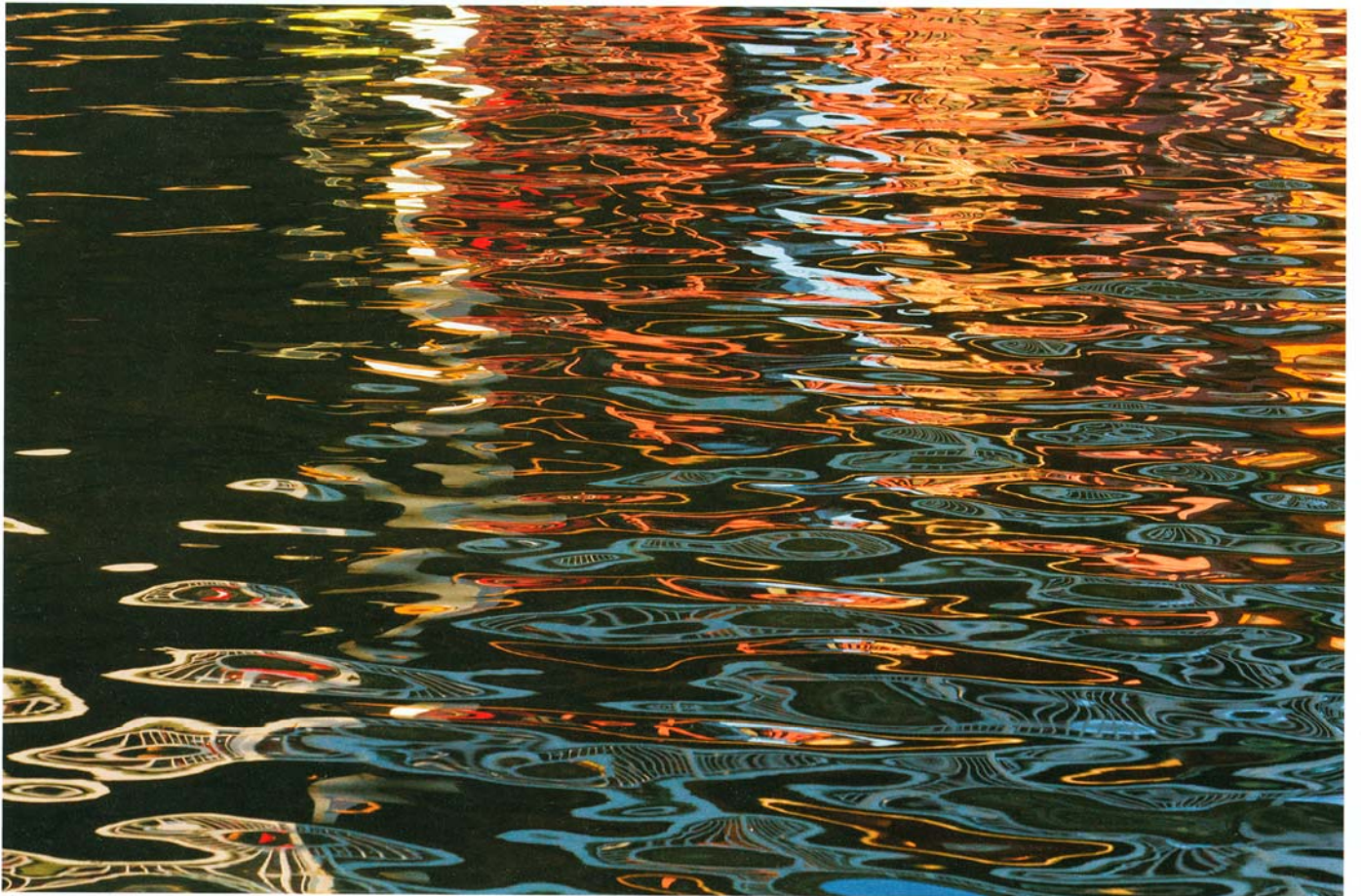
By Michael Davidge

The pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus's most famous maxim says that you cannot step into the same river twice. The observation is especially relevant upon viewing Cheryl Pagurek's latest body of work in *State of Flux*, an exhibition of pictures of rivers that dramatically vary in colour, form, and movement. Installed at the Patrick Mikhail Gallery, the exhibition comprised a sequence of three components: *State of Flux* (2012), a series of digital prints featuring close-ups of the variegated surfaces of rivers as they ripple

and flow; *River Suite* (2012), a print that presents twelve selected close-up views of the waters in a gridded composition; and *Wave Patterns* (2012), a dynamic video that activates a variation on *River Suite* with motion and sound. A lens-based artist living in Ottawa, Pagurek has been dealing with themes of change, the passage of time



Opposite: *River Suite*, 2012, Ultrachrome digital print on photo paper, 91.4 x 160 cm. **This page:** Video stills from *Wave Patterns*, 2012. Images courtesy of the artist.



and the impact of an increasingly urbanized environment on the natural world through the exploration of images of flowing rivers.

Though Pagurek's technique seems relatively straightforward in the work on display, the images themselves are complex and suggest there is more than one layer to them. Pagurek's choice of water imagery is intended to fluidly dissolve boundaries between opposed elements, blurring distinctions between natural and built environments, between abstraction and representation, nature and culture, even between photography and painting.

It is ultimately her medium, digital photography, which allows her to confound such static categories with ease. Unmoored from the anchor of analogue photography's index, the world of digital photography is analogous to the Heraclitean worldview of perpetual change, where "Everything flows."

Selections from the *State of Flux* series were the first works you encountered in the gallery. Each of the digital prints presented displayed the wide variety of effects and results Pagurek achieves by simply shooting close-ups of rivers at diverse locations, cropped to push the subject matter towards abstraction. Each work bears the title of the series and a number, such as *State of Flux 4* (the first work to the left as you enter) and *State of Flux 15* (the fourth if you continued clockwise through the space) designating perhaps the order in which they were printed, or more likely the order in which they were completed and saved as finished files.

The original referent is closer to the surface in some, such as *State of Flux 1* where the blue tops of waves are discernible, though they look like they might be solarized by a software filter. Because of their cropping and their saturated colours, all of the images appear highly mediated, but Pagurek specifies that she has done little to manipulate them. All of her results were achieved in camera by shooting the waters in varying states of agitation, as they reflect a multitude of colours and distorted forms. Pagurek often photographs waters at the edge of urban developments in order to capture greater variation in the details that are reflected. Some images are impressionistic, reflecting golden hues, or deep reds, bringing to mind fall landscape colours.

In some the surface completely breaks down into pulsating psychedelic pools. *State of Flux 11*, in another area of the gallery, looks like a screen capture of a glitch in the transfer of videotape to digital. As the works are not presented in a sequential manner, and there are gaps in the sequence, the suggestion is that they come from a greater number of images that were captured but not printed, framed, and presented.

Altogether, the series is indicative of what Marc Steinberg has called the "new seriality" (in *Parachute* 110) a mode of production characteristic of the information age instead of the industrial era. In the industrial model, the mass production of a commodity repeats what is essentially the same form. The information-capitalist model of seriality claims no fixed point of origin and proliferates through metamorphosis and mutation. It is the repetition of difference within the series that distinguishes the series.

In her water imagery, Pagurek finds the perfect vehicle to not only encapsulate the idea of continual change and intermixing but also to generate it. Rather than seeing the images as photographs or as abstract paintings, I'd like to view them as more akin to computer generated images.

There is not one "decisive moment" present but rather an infinite series of moments that a computer can recall and render at any given point.

These are discrete stills of global liquidity in the information age, where everything has an algorithm that is subject to manipulation and "innovation" is a word used to describe slight permutations of form.

The fact that there is no original or foundational moment to the series, or at least that such a moment is not necessary, was underscored by the remaining works in the exhibition. In addition to further prints from the *State of Flux* series, a second area of the gallery displayed *River Suite* and *Wave Patterns*. *River Suite* is a print that presents multiple viewpoints in a grid comprised of twelve selected close-up views of the water. Each view within the grid is reminiscent of images within the *State of Flux* series, here a series, or suite, in itself. While the grid might offer ballast against the fluidity of the waters, it also flattens twelve distinct moments of flux into one composition, reinforcing my feeling that there must be a multitude of images from which these are drawn, and that each can be reconfigured in any number of compositions, no one taking precedence over the other.

The surface of the photograph and its decisive moment becomes as malleable and mercurial as the surface of a flowing river. *Wave Patterns* takes the composition of *River Suite* one step further and lets you see not only the movement of the flowing waters but also the ongoing construction of a similar gridded composition, as views within a grid of twelve video images are shuffled and pop or fade in and out.

The rise of digital non-linear editing and advances in communications technology has bolstered an observation made by Fredric Jameson, in *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, that video is the dominant form of the current era. With reference to Raymond Williams's notion of "whole flow," Jameson describes the never-ending flow of television and video images as symptomatic of postmodern culture: an undifferentiated recycling of styles, images and fashions from different moments in time that has led to a lack of historical awareness and critical distance in its consumers. What are the ramifications of the cultural logic of late capitalism when its "total flow" as decried by Jameson is even more pervasive and everything that is captured in a digital file can be accessed and "streamed" almost instantaneously and at once?

Crucially, the audio track for Pagurek's *Wave Patterns* keeps us from slipping down a soporific stream: sounds of perpetual and frantic construction, blows of hammers and squeals of saws, accompany the succession of clips and reverberate with the rest of the still images that comprise the exhibition.

By foregrounding the constructed nature of her work, Pagurek offers the rejoinder that while we may be affected by change, we also actively effect it.

Michael Davidge is an artist, curator and writer who lives in Ottawa, Ontario. He holds degrees in both English Literature and the Fine Arts. Intertextuality is a major component of his work. His writing on art and culture has appeared in *BlackFlash*, *C magazine*, *Matrix*, and *Parachute* among other publications.

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[Pagurek's photographs dance on water](#)

January 2, 2013. 7:14 pm • Section: [Arts](#), [Big Beat](#)



A photograph from *State of Flux*, by Cheryl Pagurek at Patrick Mikhail Gallery in Ottawa.

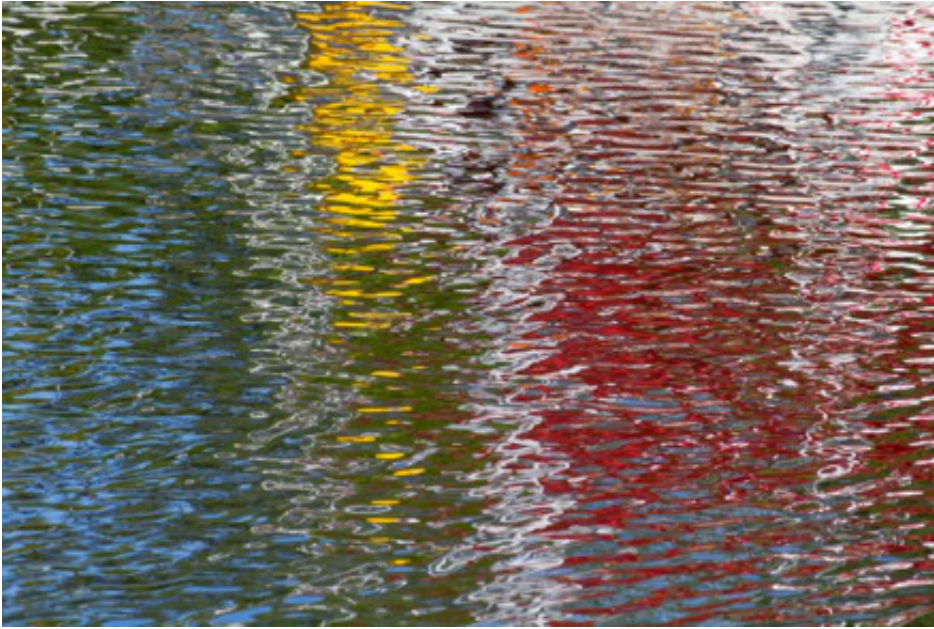
What & where: *State of Flux*, new works by Cheryl Pagurek, [at Patrick Mikhail Gallery, 2401 Bank St.](#)

When: Jan. 9 to Feb. 9, vernissage 5:30 to 9 p.m. Jan. 11.

I grew up on an island, and by I've wondered if all people, including the landlocked, have the same relationship with water.

Once or twice each year I'll sit on the south shore of P.E.I., gaze over the water and think about days past and days to come (one hopes). I do this an hour or two before leaving the island and returning to Ottawa. Sometimes the moment is joyful, sometimes maudlin, but always essential, a ritual. Something about that water — in the eternal ebb and flow of its tides, in the relentless forward motion of its waves — speaks about time and place. We grow, we move, we succeed, we fail, and always the water is there, flowing, rising, falling, giving life and sometimes taking it away.

State of Flux is the title of Cheryl Pagurek's new exhibition of photography and video at Patrick Mikhail Gallery. It's a study of water, in close-up shots that make it both universally recognizable yet somehow abstract, as if Pagurek has captured something that is always in the water but rarely seen.



A photograph from *State of Flux*, by Cheryl Pagurek at Patrick Mikhail Gallery in Ottawa.

The photographs were taken near man-made structures, so the colours and forms of human life are reflected in the water and distorted by the surface's constant motion. The colours are brightly lustrous and shift like amoeba, as if metallic, viscous liquids have been poured into the water.

The images “evoke the cultural realm of modernist painting in their engagement with surface and abstraction of shape and form,” Pagurek says. “I found that I was less interested in reflections of natural forms but rather concentrated on sites where the built environment abutted with bodies of water, so the reflections showed a coming together of natural and man-made.”

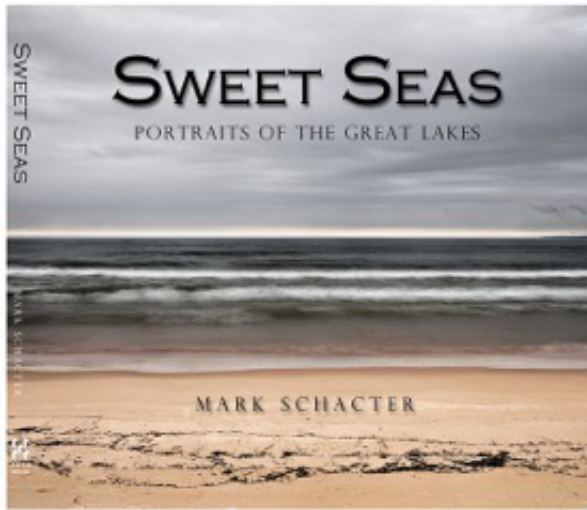
The exhibition was not yet up when I wrote this column, so I've only seen photographs on my computer screen, which is enough to be affected by them. The contoured patterns on the surface create a sequence with more variety than might be expected from such a seemingly singular idea. In one photograph a rich band of gold lazily divides the frame, in another bands of blue, yellow and red are like a spectrum. In one the water looks as if its covered in a paisley pattern.

Pagurek is known for her work with water, and her most widely-seen piece must be the video installation [*Currents, at the Market Place transit station in Barrhaven*](#), which mixes footage of water with historical images. In *State of Flux* she focuses on the water itself, as a sort of mirror that vaguely reflects human busyness as a metaphor for the passage of time.

The centrepiece of *State of Flux* is a 12-channel video that, even seen on a regular computer screen, is captivating. The frames are arranged in a grid and each fades in and out over a soundtrack of construction work — hammering, sawing. Pagurek has synced the sound and image. As the video frames flicker in and out

the water surfaces change in colour and direction, creating real tension. It's fascinating and invigorating, a highly original and worthy beginning to a new year in fine art in Ottawa.

[Click here to watch excerpts from the video, *Wave Patterns*.](#)



SWEET LAKES

Human life is often reflected in water, and not always for the better. As Ottawa photographer Mark Schacter writes in his new book of photographs, *Sweet Seas: Portraits of the Great Lakes*, “the lakes have a magnificence that continues to defy human carelessness and exploitation.”

Schacter is no Edward Burtynsky, out there finding a strange beauty in oil slicks and rusty hulls, but many photos in *Sweet Seas* focus on industrial use of the Great Lakes environment. Schacter takes his camera from open, empty beaches to the galley of a laker (with an artery-choking breakfast menu of “rolled oats, eggs, bacon, bologna, pan fried potatoes, cheese omelete, French toast”).

It's less about the lakes as ecosystems than it is about those bodies of water as platforms for human activity, but Schacter still finds the resilient beauty of nature.

Sweet Seas is available in bookstores.

HEADS CUBED

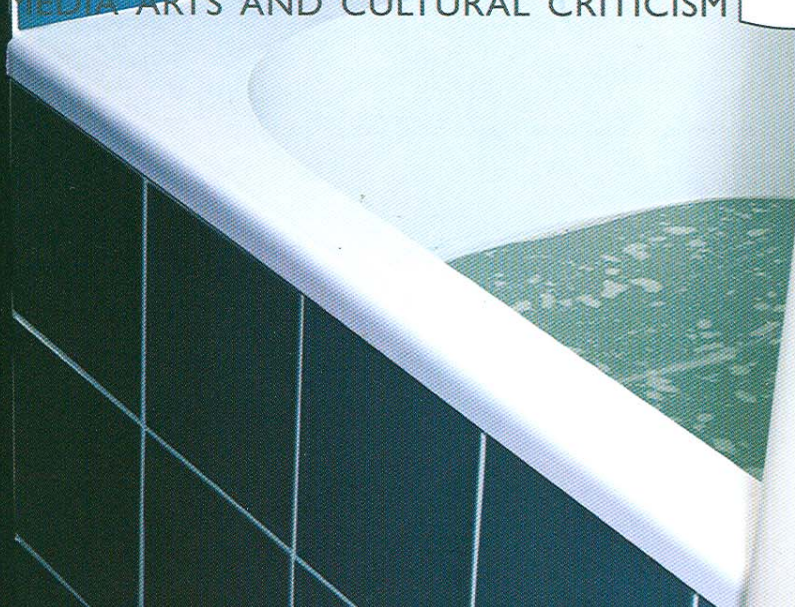
[Cube Gallery \(1285 Wellington West\)](#) starts the new year with a group exhibition, *Heads Up!*, and it includes names that'll be familiar to patrons of the gallery.

The show has works by the late Gerald Trottier, as well as Kristy Gordon, Katherine McNenly, Reid McLachlan, Michael Kinghorn, Elly Smallwood and Sharon Lafferty. The show continues to Jan. 27.

Around the corner at [Orange Gallery \(233 Armstrong Ave.\)](#), Crystal Beshara is back with another exhibition, *Fight or Flight*. It opens Jan. 10, from 6 to 10 p.m., and continues to Jan. 27.

afterimage

THE JOURNAL OF MEDIA ARTS AND CULTURAL CRITICISM



The Know-how of Thomas Demand
A conversation with James Tobias
Van McElwee's *Liquid Crystal*

VOL. 37, No. 6



USA \$5.50/CAN \$7.50

Holdt's photographs are often described as "anthropological," a designation that is not entirely accurate. While Holdt might be a perfect (and largely unwitting) participant observer, his insider/outsider status is complicated in that these are primarily portraits of people he considers friends. The unvarnished intimacy and frankness of his images, coupled with the patina of the cheaply produced snapshot (retained in digital reproduction), make his photographs more sympathetic to his subjects without romanticizing or aestheticizing the people and situations within them. Holdt seldom shoves his camera directly in anyone's face and rarely engineers a pose: thus, candid images of young lovers in bed and of people standing proudly outside their aging shacks have a balance of involvement and distance that enhances the images' tenderness and the subjects' dignity. That Holdt records intensely raw instances of drug use, prostitution, illness, sex, and destitution is testament to his enconement in those worlds rather than a manifestation of a quest to capture vicarious scenes.

The exhibition text draws comparisons between Holdt and artists such as Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, and Jacob Riis—all of whom turned their cameras on private corners of America to expose poverty and privation. The most salient comparison, however, might be with Nan Goldin, whose "Ballad of Sexual Dependency" (produced at roughly the same time) shares a vernacular immediacy due to her closeness with her subjects. Like Goldin, Holdt was (and still is) friends with many of his subjects, and like Goldin, he debuted his images as a slideshow, albeit a slideshow that repurposed his personal images as a critique of American social organization. The raw intensity of both Goldin's and Holdt's images, and the knowledge that some of their subjects died violent deaths, entices the viewer into a slightly uncomfortable voyeurism. Yet, there is little that is distinctly lurid about them, excepting those dealing with gun culture and physical brutality.

Unfortunately, but understandably beyond its purview, the exhibition did not address the purpose of placing these images in a gallery setting and did not address the question of whether Holdt

exploits his subjects' trust when exhibiting personal images. Holdt's campaign against racism and advocacy of a European-style welfare system certainly mitigate accusations of class tourism, but those people who see social documentary as irredeemably exploitative will probably find fault with some of Holdt's photographs. While Holdt could keep moving, his subjects were (and are) probably stuck where they are: a dilemma he shares with many photojournalists and anti-poverty campaigners.

Clearly, both Holdt's images and their arrangement ask us to consider the state of the American Dream over the past four decades; viewers are given little cause for optimism on the evidence provided. While it is tempting to see the images as synecdoche for life in America (with racism, inequality, violence, penury, toil, and rapacious capital high on the checklist), it is the personal narrative that emerges from the exhibition most prominently and is one of its greatest strengths. More than anything this is Holdt's view of America, and the titular "love" and "hope" of the exhibition are emotions that he genuinely feels are inherent in his subjects, as is evident through the detailed and often affecting captions that contextualize the images and demonstrate the depth of his compassion for those portrayed in his photographs.

Those familiar with Jacob Holdt's work might find it surprising that this was the first major solo exhibition of his forty-year career. Whether Holdt's moving social documentary constitutes "art" is a question too large to discuss here, but the impeccable setting that the Louisiana Museum provided certainly afforded the viewer ample opportunity to contemplate the work and allowed a broader audience to encounter Holdt's extraordinary corpus.

ANDREW JONES is a doctoral candidate in American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

SURVEILLANCE IN SUBURBIA

High Value Targets

By Cheryl Pagurek

Patrick Mikhail Gallery

Ottawa, Canada

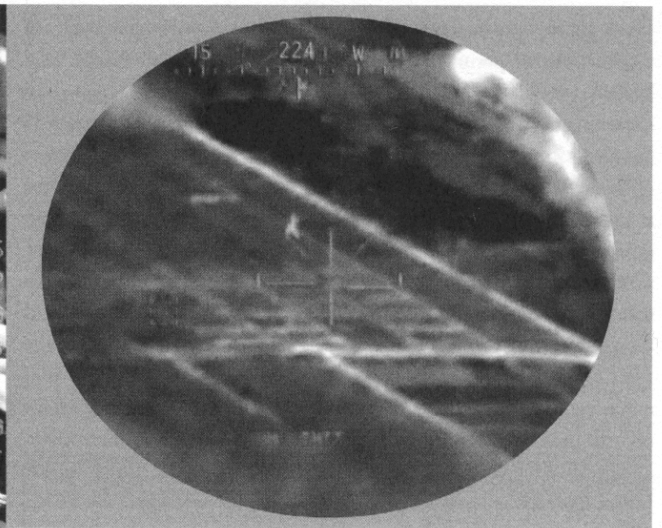
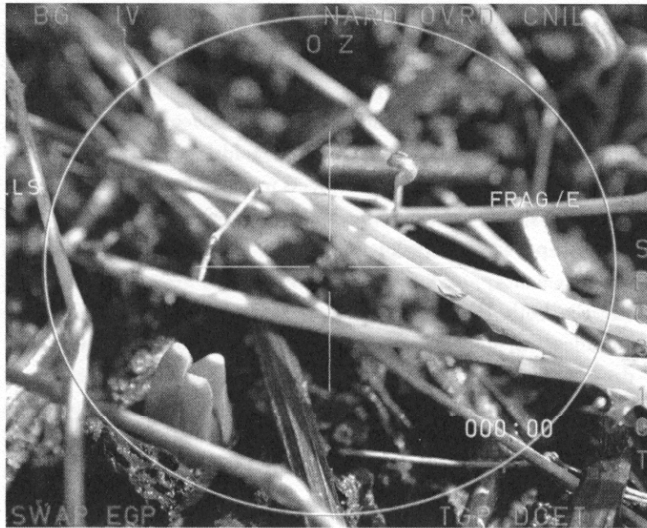
January 6–February 8, 2010

"High Value Targets," a multimedia exhibition by Canadian artist Cheryl Pagurek, employed a diptych format to present contemporary military surveillance and war imagery from the Middle East juxtaposed with domestic scenes of a lush urban backyard to convey a disquieting sense of unease and underlying tension in the family life of middle-class North America.

Pagurek's exhibition raised questions about personal and public security and vulnerability. As she noted in her artist's statement, "The work opens up a space to contemplate the myriad ways in which we, as individuals, might feel under siege in today's world." The artist's understated disclosure about the source of the military content¹—consisting of video footage and stills from the war in Iraq dating predominantly from 2007 and 2008²—allows it to be read as a symbol of threat and surveillance of our time rather than a specific reference.

The soundtrack of Pagurek's dual-channel video, *Growing Pains* (2009), combined everyday domestic sounds with the aggressive noise of armed conflict, and provided an intentionally disturbing ambience in which to view her series of five large digital prints, "High Value Targets" (2009).³

Pagurek's sinister title "High Value Targets" was derived from U.S. military combat terminology referring to attack objectives. Each of the photographs' subtitles—*They have wounded, Clear to engage, Good*



Missile, *We've got a runner*, and *Follow my lead*—is an example of military jargon or command taken from her video and reflect the type of armed activity seen in one half of the print and by inference the potential for this activity in the seemingly tranquil urban environment depicted in the adjacent half. For example, *High Value Target 4: Good Missile*, a vertical diptych, presents a verdant suburban “Garden of Eden” seen from above, abutting a grainy green aerial night-vision image of pale buildings surrounded by palm trees and a smoky green tail from a missile that has just hit its target. Both parts of the diptych are overlaid with viewfinder lines that center on the garden and conjure a sense of danger while also raising the spectre of civilian space as the objective of military assault. *High Value Target 2: We've got a runner*, a horizontal dual-image print whose title refers to chasing an escaping person, contrasts a close-up photograph of tender green and red shoots pushing through the soil amid a tangle of last year's dead foliage with a military observation image. The garden—also a scene of surveillance—is superimposed with a circular viewfinder and is seen beside a grainy brown night-time aerial surveillance image matted in vivid green, depicting a barely discernable, ghostly-white human figure running just beyond the crosshairs. Pagurek's work conjures the possibility that our safe and protected neighborhoods might also become a place of surveillance and danger; it also allows us to dimly grasp the living conditions of civilians who experience war from the air.

Pagurek's major work, the *Growing Pains* video, introduces the artist's other roles as parent and gardener. The dual metaphor of the female artist as cultivator of plants and nurturer of children is apt as both require acts of “balancing chaos and order on a small domestic scale” and “the handling of adverse effects.”⁴ As the title suggests, *Growing Pains*' original impetus came from the difficulties of negotiating the minefield of motherhood and the problems of making parental decisions about the control, freedom, and safety of children.⁵ The video commences with a car slipping on an icy driveway in a snowy suburban scene juxtaposed with grainy aerial footage of buildings showing plumes of black smoke seen through crosshairs, accompanied by the sound of a helicopter. Through overheard conversations we encounter intimate slices of daily family

life, reminiscent of the contents and tone of a personal journal. A shift in the parent-child relationship is relayed through Pagurek's son's first unaccompanied airplane flight across Canada at the age of twelve. We hear a man's voice ask, “What are you worried about?” and a woman's reply, “I'm not worried about his ability, but about the usual things—child abductions, plane crashes.” The domestic dialogue is immediately followed by the forceful explosion of a building under rocket fire.

Growing Pains establishes a haunting sense of imminent threat in the urban environment by using parallel cinematic language. Shots of the suburban home and garden frequently mimic the pans and zooms of the military surveillance footage, while complex layering and montage moves imagery and sound back and forth from one side of the screen to the other. The seductive colors and textures of gardening activity during four seasons, along with the destructive intrusion of slugs, are contrasted with intense military surveillance and combat footage that escalates to the horrific tracking and shooting of human beings from the moving perspective of a helicopter gunship. It is a scene that becomes all the more disconcerting as the sounds of automatic weapons and matter-of-fact dialogue between airborne gunners and their commanding officers are heard.

Pagurek's work creates connections between geographically separate worlds and the people that reside in them. It also raises questions about the relationship between warfare and “acts of security” there required to maintain our privileged lifestyle here.

JUDITH PARKER is an Ottawa-based art historian and arts administrator.

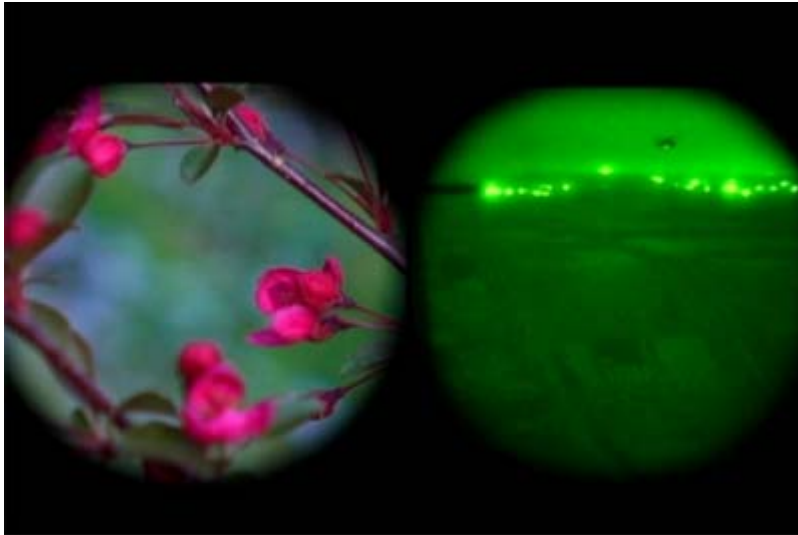
NOTES 1. The text in the press release for the exhibition reads, “Contemporary military footage from the United States war with Iraq.” The *Growing Pains* video credits the source as Digital Video and Imagery Distribution System (DVIDS). The DVIDS website FAQ section describes it as a public service paid for by the U.S. Department of Defense with the content created by U.S. military personnel, agencies, and contractors in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the world. 2. Author conversation with the artist, March 13, 2010, in Ottawa. 3. The prints in the “High Value Target” series range in size from 28 x 76 inches to 77 x 44 inches. 4. Cheryl Pagurek, *Artist's Statement*, *Growing Pains*, 2009; www.cherylpagurek.com. 5. Author conversation with the artist March 13, 2010, in Ottawa.

Above
High Value Target 2: We've got a runner (2009) by Cheryl Pagurek

Things of Desire

Growing Pains and High Value Targets —Ottawa

By Mike Landry



A video still from Pagurek's two-channel "Growing Pains".

[Cheryl Pagurek](#) has a pest in her garden. And it's not any slug or mite—it's war. At [Patrick Mikhail Gallery](#), in the Ottawa artist's latest, *Growing Pains* (see it [here](#)), video of her garden plays simultaneously next to military tracking footage. In the photographic companion piece, *High Value Targets*, Pagurek abuts grainy military video stills with high resolution garden shots titled with a short military statement or command. With her micro and macro pairings Pagurek has set her sights on a shared concern for control and surveillance.

ToD: This show features intimate recordings of a season of gardening. Have you always had a green thumb?

CP: I became interested in gardening when I lived in Victoria, growing flowers in pots on my doorstep. But really I only had the opportunity to garden more extensively when we moved back to Ottawa 12 years ago, to my current house which had many garden beds around it. I've been changing them and working on them ever since.

ToD: What was growing in your garden, and was there any importance to it?

CP: I have a mixture of perennial and annual flowers. I'd say the only importance is the mix of colours and plants to try to have a variety of colours blooming all season long.

Although, a long time ago I did grow a vegetable garden. Recently, I have focused on what is essentially a decorative garden, other than some herbs.

One of the important things about gardening to me is the solace it has provided during difficult times that I had no control over. Over the years I have thought about what it is about the gardening that's important to me, in addition to just trying to make something beautiful. It's about the ideas I've written about like attempting to balance order and chaos on a small scale where I can try to have a little bit of control.

ToD: You write, "cultivating a garden is portrayed as an act of optimism and hope." Where does your art practice fit in this perspective? Is it too an act of optimism and hope?

CP: I'd say that in the same way that gardening is an effort to put something creative into the world with a renewed energy every spring, I do find that each new art project brings its own energy of putting something new out there. Maybe just the act of continually making new things is optimistic in the midst of dire forecasts of all sorts around us.

ToD: Of course there's a sinister element to the garden as well it seems when you juxtapose the imagery to military footage. It makes me think of David Lynch's lawn mowing scene that opens *Blue Velvet*. Is this to question the optimistic and heartwarming endeavors of such activities like gardening and family?

CP: I don't mean to question them, but, rather, note the simultaneous coexistence of opposite forces—the destructive and dehumanizing forces of the world that are always at play. Throughout the video I'm working to protect the garden from bugs, weeds, dry spells, etc. In the same way, on the audio track my husband and I try to deal with protecting our children in their ventures into the world (at the same time as trying to allow them to become independent, beyond the reach of our control). There's the constant tension or worry about the world "out there". I've dealt with the tensions between oppositions in past work also.

ToD: On the other side of the spectrum in the show is the macro perspective of contemporary military tracking footage. Where did you get this footage?

CP: I found it on the internet, originally on Youtube where people had put together low res clips of this type of footage and added a heavy metal soundtrack and offensive titles in a complete glorification of violence. I wondered where they had found the footage and traced it to an organization called [DVIDS](#) (Digital Video and Imagery Distribution System). It was set up to connect the media to US military units around the world for news and communication. Their website contains an archive of images and video released by the military. This footage is from Iraq.

ToD: Why choose war imagery? It's so steeped in politics. Were you playing on these or was it a matter of the metaphor fitting?

CP: I used the footage not as a comment on the specific conflict portrayed but rather for what the footage says about ways of seeing, aggression, threat and surveillance. The footage evokes our current climate of anxiety and fear. I felt the aerial shots especially epitomize the relationships of knowledge and power inherent in photographing (I'll include video in this as well), in the way they portray dominance over the landscape and people pictured. I found I wasn't interested in the regular colour video taken by soldiers on the ground documenting each other. What I found more compelling was the footage seen through a veil of technology, the aerial footage marked with targets and navigational data, and the green circular night vision footage. The distancing mechanism that they convey matched the detached way the military personal talk about what they're doing ("engaging" high value targets, for example.)

I'm not trying to make a specific political comment other than in the sense of "the personal is political", in that issues we experience in our private, individual lives are not unique to us but systemic at a societal level, filtering through to affect our day-to-day lives and perceptions.

ToD: Did you always know the pairing of the two macro and micro videos would work? Or was this something you figured out through exploration?

CP: I knew I could somehow make it work (for many years I have worked in this type of vein, using contrasting source materials and finding ways to both contrast and connect them), and had some ideas as to how I could reveal those contrasts and connections, but a lot of the specific methods (overlaying the conventions of the military footage onto the garden; how the audio tracks would interrelate; how to register in the garden footage that an explosion was happening simultaneously in the military footage) I developed as I worked with the imagery. I was really carefully studying the military footage while shooting the footage in the garden. So although a lot of the garden footage is immersive, with the camera low down right in the garden with close up shots of my hands working, at the same time I was also shooting "bird's eye" views of the garden with pans and zooms to mimic the conventions of the military footage. I didn't know exactly how I would use it all until I started editing.

ToD: You write that with *Growing Pains*, "the work opens up a space to contemplate the myriad ways in which we as individuals might feel under siege in today's world." How do you feel under siege? Was there a particular moment when you first felt this pressure?

CP: I think we all can often feel under siege at many levels at the same time, whether it's a general societal sense of unease and threat, or an individual sense of being targeted as a consumer or by corporations, or by the media, or even by familial and societal pressures or expectations.

ToD: Finally, this work marks a new strategy and focus for you. Why the change?

CP: Although in some ways this work seems like a departure, in many ways it picks up on themes I have dealt with before. It's true that more recently, the contrasting source

material I have used combined the present with the past, using archival film and old family movies along with my own footage of everyday phenomena like light and shadow patterns and reflections. Those explorations were more inward, I guess, and could be described as visually “beautiful”. This new work picks up on relationships of private realm/public realm that I investigated many years ago in works that used news imagery. The current work is harder hitting and more disturbing. Although the gardening imagery is beautiful, the viewer is not able to simply enjoy the beauty because of the jarring juxtaposition with the military footage.

Why the change? I think I’m just reflecting the climate around me. And I think whatever I needed to work out in the last couple of projects has been worked through sufficiently.

ToD: Is there anything else the reader should know that we didn’t touch upon?

CP: I thought a lot about using what I consider to be violent imagery, and how best to deal with it, even if I should be using it. I know that it’s not very violent compared to some of the other stuff out there, including games, but because the footage is real it carries a lot of weight for me. I was very aware of my own reaction to a video installation I had seen that was made of cinematic footage of guns shooting. Although my initial reaction was powerfully physical, a real sense of physical threat and unease, I also became aware of how quickly, within 10 minutes, I started to tune it out and become comfortable. I didn’t want that to happen to viewers of this piece so I was very careful to not just blast them for 20 minutes with explosions firing. The video builds slowly from tracking and exploding buildings in the distance to later footage where individual people can be seen as targets. I also found that sometimes the audio was even more powerful than the visual component. As an audience I think our sense of unease continues to build throughout the 20 minutes of the video.

Growing Pains and High Value Targets will be on display until Mon February 8 at [Patrick Mikhail Gallery](#) in Ottawa.

Posted by admin

Filed in [Volume 2 Number 27: Jan 14-20](#)

CV79

ART, PHOTO, MÉDIAS, CULTURE

LES COULEURS DE LA VILLE
Photographier la rue, dans la durée, pour rendre compte de l'évolution de la ville demeure une stratégie toujours d'actualité. Cela permet ici de s'attacher à la survivance du petit commerce, à la mutation urbaine de Vancouver et à l'illusion envahissante des images publicitaires. Ces flâneurs contemporains ont le regard scrutateur.

COLOURS OF THE CITY
Photographing the city and its streets over time, to detect traces of evolution, is a strategy that is still current. Here, it enables us to observe the survival of small businesses, the urban mutation of Vancouver, and the invasive illusion of advertising images. These contemporary flâneurs have an inquisitive eye.

Zoe Leonard

PETRA HALKES

Robert Walker

PIERRE DESSUREAULT

Fred Herzog

HELGA PAKASAAR



Projet Web 3

SYLVIE PARENT

**Conservation /
obsolescence**

JEAN GAGNON

Chantal Pontbriand

Entrevue / Interview

Archive Fever
Gilles Mahé
Pascal Grandmaison
ReConstitutions
Made in Tehran
Alain Laframboise
Charles Gagnon
Gutsche & Miller
Lida Abdul
Cheryl Pagurek
Michel Campeau
J'ai VU

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(2005), in a landscape strewn with ruins, Abdul painstakingly paints the rubble of a destroyed building white. Invoking the idea of whitewashing history, for Abdul the most difficult thing is to move beyond the memory of an event, pointing to the loss of the navigational principles that determine our understanding of belonging, identity and place – the “contingent ethics of geographical emplacement in which we might jointly puzzle out the perils of the fantasms of belonging as well as the tragedies of not belonging.”²

With work that takes up the subjects of history and memory as Abdul does, there is always the possibility of resorting to familiar tropes found in popular media, and to use them in didactic and simplistically singular (neo-Orientalist) ways. By implicating herself within the complex act of memory making, Abdul avoids this; instead, she creates poetic spaces that allow viewers to interrogate the familiar and the personal. Her work combines ritualized formalism with mythology and playfulness, seeking to understand the surrounding world. In many

ways, witnessing her pieces is like attempting to make visible (but never resolve) the contradictions and the paradoxes of our understanding of her homeland.

Born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1973, Lida Abdul resides there now. Her most recent work has been featured at the Venice Biennale 2005; Istanbul Modern; Kunsthalle Vienna; Museum of Modern Art Arnhem, Netherlands; Miami Central; CAC Centre d'Art Contemporain de Bretigny; and Frac Lorraine Metz, France. She has also exhibited in festivals in Mexico, Spain, Germany, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Afghanistan; She was a featured artist at the Central Asian Biennial 2004.

1 Lida Abdul, “Statement”
<http://www.lidaabdul.com/statement.htm>
 2 Irit Rogoff, “Introduction,” in *Terra Infrima* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 3.

Sadira Rodrigues is an independent curator and arts administrator based in Vancouver. She is currently involved in public programming at the Vancouver Art Gallery.



What we saw upon awakening, 2006, Installation view at Centre A, Courtesy of Giorgio Persano Gallery & Centre A. Photo: William W Ting.

Cheryl Pagurek

Ephemera, Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Ottawa, January 9 – February 3, 2008

Over the years, Cheryl Pagurek's art practice has gradually shifted from sculpture and installations to printed photographs and, finally, in the present exhibition, to the ultimate *Ephemera* of moving digital imagery. The more fleeting her work becomes, however, the more strongly it shows a desire to anchor familial memories, whether historical or personal, to a solid, tangible object or site, a stable place that would allow stories to evolve from somewhere, rather than shatter in the synchronic presence of fleeting images.

Anchoring the fragmented, dispersed imagery of Pagurek's photographs and videos in this exhibition are images of her present home and street. They form a background, a projection screen, for a whirl of archival video footage and family snapshots. In light boxes and a video, *Passage*, the artist traces a play of light and shadows on the walls and floors of her house – inside and outside, from morning to night. She interweaves this footage with glimpses of her own family life and images of Jewish life from pre-war Europe and the immigrant ghettos of America: portraits, children at play, marching troops, and horse-drawn wagons.

Similarly, every photograph in the series *Reflections* mirrors lampposts, trees, and houses on wet sidewalks and in puddles on Pagurek's Ottawa street, which lends the fragments of old family photos that they incorporate a certain stability. Framed stills from the video, which round out the exhibi-

tion, accentuate this longing for stability, the wish to stop time and hold a moment in place. In *Passage* and *Reflections*, both Pagurek's home imagery and the framing of the stills can be read as devices to create a real, concrete setting for dispersed, ephemeral imagery.

But the rippling puddles in *Reflections* make the street and its houses appear fragile, in danger of disappearing. And the interwoven family photographs appear upside down, which, at first sight, turns them into abstracted patterns. *Passage* is similarly unstable; the shadows do not



Reflection 8, 2006, Inkjet print on semi-matte photographic paper, 43.4 x 65 cm
 Courtesy of Patrick Mikhail Gallery

show the objects that throw them, thereby giving the “ground” that is home a fleeting quality, as if anticipating its passing.

There is a sense, then, in Pagurek's work that a stable reality, stable histories, will not be found, but can be created as imaginary constructs that have utopian¹ values. As Andreas Huyssen writes in *Twilight Memories*, “In an age of an unlimited proliferation of images, discourses, simulacra, the search for the real itself has become utopian.” Pagurek creates connections among the Jewish diaspora, the dispersal and lost identities of old family photographs, and a broader contemporary sense of unmooring in the unending flood of meaningless images. In the context of this exhibition, the photograph *Reflection 8* brings to mind a story from the Kabbalah. In this creation story, God's original universe is described as a shattered glass vessel forever in need of mending. The photograph shows the reflection of a tree in fall

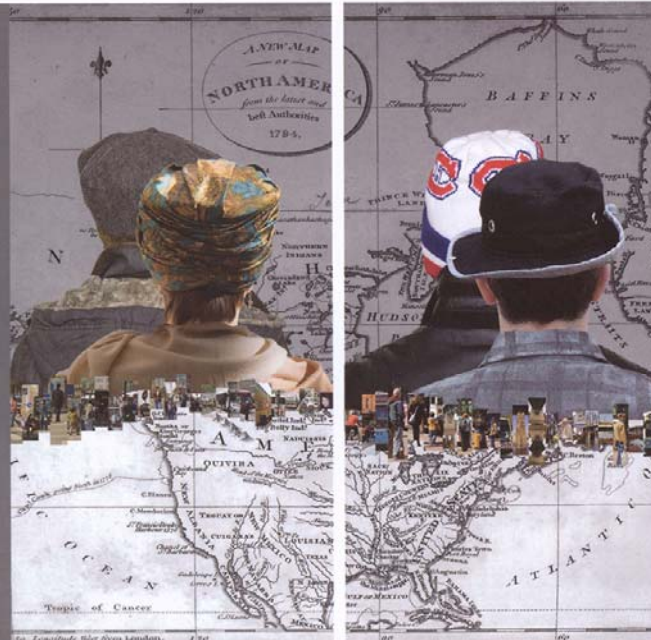
foliage – bright orange and ochre against a blue sky – surrounded by hundreds of perfect circles created by the refracting light on wet pavement. In five of those circles, Pagurek inserted fragments of family photos: the face and feet of unknown relatives, bits and pieces of her grandparents' furniture, and a fragment of a photo of herself as a teenager.

If there is a positive outcome to the Jewish myth, in that the original disaster produced opportunities for humanity to be creative and caring toward the world, perhaps the splintering of photography into the endless and ethereal synchronic juxtaposition of images could produce a similar utopian desire to set things right. Pagurek's exhibition provides a site in which to explore a parallel between the splintered universe of Jewish mythology, and the shattering effects of unlimited reproduction. The Jewish tradition of constructing unity and identity in a shattered world pervades the work with a sense of hope.

Pagurek no longer counters the loss of materiality by using concrete materials in sculptural installations; instead, she works through the technological realities of contemporary life and attempts to provide a sense of the real, even within the material limitations of lens-based art. Her work provides hope that a shattered universe can be mended; she makes a beginning by artfully reassembling people's lives, piecing places to memories, providing homes and stories where none remained.

1 Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York and London: Routledge 1995) p 10.1

Petra Halkes is an artist and writer. Her book *Aspiring to the Landscape* was published by the University of Toronto Press in 2006.



Place and Circumstance Lieu et circonstance

Recent Additions to the City of Ottawa's
Fine Art Collection

Nouveaux ajouts à la collection d'œuvres
d'art de la Ville d'Ottawa

Place and Circumstance

Recent Additions to the City of Ottawa's Fine Art Collection

Place and Circumstance showcases the most recent additions to the City of Ottawa's Fine Art Collection. In 2010 local artists submitted 2,733 artworks to a peer-review jury process. In total, 67 artworks by 37 artists were selected. The exhibit features at least one work by each of these artists; it also highlights recent donations and four new commissions that are part of the Percent for Art Program.

Artworks recently acquired through the City of Ottawa's Fine Art acquisition program offer important insights into what has shaped and is shaping our lives as residents of Ottawa. These artworks disrupt the passive consumption of expected views and vistas of Ottawa as a capital city; they illustrate and imagine the ways lived experience influences our understandings of what it means to reside in this city.

Visual devices such as diptychs or pairings are used by some artists to compare and contrast juxtaposed bodies of information in order to show the tension between pictorial space and lived space. Artworks depicting tableaux simultaneously challenge and invert one's normative expectations of Ottawa's cityscape, its residents and the current events taking place in this city. Distorted structures and shapes represent contemporary, ambiguous relationships between place and circumstance. Whether relying on images of familiar places and events to produce meaning through comparison, or destroying pre-existing notions of order and identity through the impositions of new narratives, these artworks explore what shapes our experiences as residents of this city.

One artwork that connects personal experience with recent local events is **Katie Argyle's** large hand-made print entitled *day by day, week by week, month by month: Ottawa Bus Strike*. This artwork is a direct response to the 52-day event that consumed the lives of many Ottawa residents: the city-wide bus strike that took place in the winter of 2008-09. Her linoblock print, done in the German Expressionist-style to signal political protest, is composed of individual prints arranged in systematic rows, beginning with the first day of the bus strike in December and concluding with the last day of the strike in January.

Argyle's 52 prints relate to images the artist gathered from the newspaper and the Internet while the strike was in effect, creating an account of autobiography, daily ritual, anxiety and experience. This private form of archiving highlights a lived experience that does not hide the effects of sudden shifts in circumstance on individual lives. In focusing on those most affected by this event, Argyle's poignant artwork shows where personal, public and municipal narratives intersect.

In the case of **Cheryl Pagurek's** and **Jeff Thomas's** artworks, personal identity is connected with photographic and digital archives. Pagurek's large diptych, *High Value Target 1: Clear to engage*, combines intimate photographs related to cultivating a personal garden with images from military tracking footage and viewfinder target markings. Her diptych questions how the personal and the familial might intersect with the goals and strategies of the military. Harboring feelings of vulnerability, Pagurek's work suggests a disquieting sense of unease and points to



Katie Argyle, *day by day, week by week, month by month: Ottawa Bus Strike* (detail/détail), 2009, linocut on paper/linogravure sur papier, 213 cm x 122 cm, 2010-0012

underlying tensions in the family life of middle-class North America.

Thomas's work also uses personal photographs as a means to interrogate. In *Return the Gaze, Swallow Bird* (Crow Tribe), *Joseph Crowe* (Saulteaux Tribe), he pairs his own photograph of a powwow dancer in traditional aboriginal regalia with a portrait by Edward S. Curtis, the early-twentieth century photographer of the North American Indian. By aligning the inherited colonial representations with the perspective and

realities of an urban aboriginal person, Thomas's juxtapositions encourage a critical reading of North America's history of Aboriginal assimilation. Using their personal photographic practices in unique and stimulating ways, Pagurek and Thomas bring their voices, stories and perspectives into the present.

In **Cécile Boucher's** art practice, repetition, duplication and classification have become enduring methods that she adopts. Over the last few years, she has focused on issues related to communications, nomadism and new technologies,

adapting her practice to techno-artistic tools such as object and image scanning, graphic editing, digital photography and printing. In her print entitled *Here and There: Look*, different individuals wearing diverse hats and representing various cultures have been photographed from the back. Positioned along the borderlines of an antique map of North America are a series of small candid snapshots, referencing how notions of belonging and the movements of people and ideas are shifting and changing our world. These individuals seem to want to maintain their unique identities, yet they



Jeff Thomas, *Return the Gaze, Swallow Bird (Crow Tribe), Joseph Crowe (Saulteaux Tribe)* (from the series/de la série *My Conversation with Edward S. Curtis*), 2006, digital photograph on paper/photographie numérique sur papier, 66 cm x 81 cm, 2010-0068

also appear to be searching for a geographic place to call their own.

Ambiguities stemming from current world circumstances also encode **Judith Berry's** paintings. In Berry's *Disparate Elements*, natural, industrial and agricultural elements collide and produce what she refers to as a "convoluted rerouting of plans". Within these contemporary interpretations of our modern-day landscapes, traditional references concerning place and circumstance have collapsed and mutated.

A number of artworks bring into sharper focus the identities of the city of Ottawa and the experiences



Judith Berry, *Disparate Elements*, 2008, oil on MDF board/huile sur panneau MDF, 24 cm x 105 cm, 2010-0013

that are shaping it. The following two artists highlight the activity of seeing or witnessing, as performers and spectators. In **Ramses Madina's** series *Night for Day: Road Crews*, the people who work at night are brought into focus. These photographs depict the construction crews on Highway 417 and the otherwise invisible circumstances of laborers working for the public while we sleep.

Melinda Mollineaux also activates an awareness of nighttime experiences in her pinhole camera images. Mollineaux set up her camera during extended periods of insomnia on her downtown Ottawa balcony at sunset, or at the time she wished to go to sleep. The camera remained open throughout the night while, as the artist recalls, she tossed and turned until the morning. Images such as *Ottawa Insomnia #6* capture the time from night until day, tracking the moon across the sky. This photograph conveys a poetic sense of time and space that took place in an Ottawa neighbourhood, marking extended moments of waiting and recording.

The artworks included in this exhibition of recent purchases, commissions and donations constitute an accumulated body of unique images that serve as creative testaments to lived experiences and encounters among people, ideas, events and the built environment. Collectively, they explore the tension between pictorial space and

lived experience. Individually, they forge unique representations of and for this specific place, its cultural histories, and the myriad of circumstances that shape our lives as residents.

The Public Art Program nurtures a positive interaction with local professional visual artists by organizing peer reviewed juries to critique and recommend artists and artworks for purchase, donation, commission and exhibition. The City of Ottawa would like to thank the professionalism and dedication of the 2010 acquisition jurors: David Barbour, Carrie Colton, Josée Dubeau, Inaas Kirayakos and Michèle Provost.

Published in conjunction with *Place and Circumstance: Recent Additions to the City of Ottawa's Fine Art Collection* presented at the City Hall Art Gallery from April 22 to June 12, 2011.

Lieu et circonstance

Nouveaux ajouts à la collection d'œuvres d'art de la Ville d'Ottawa

Lieu et circonstance présente les dernières acquisitions dont s'est enrichie la collection d'œuvres d'art de la Ville d'Ottawa. Au cours de 2010, les artistes locaux ont présenté 2 733 œuvres d'art dans le cadre d'un processus de sélection par des pairs. Au total, 67 œuvres exécutées par 37 artistes ont été sélectionnées. L'exposition présente au moins une œuvre de chacun de ces artistes et met en lumière les dons récents et les quatre nouvelles commandes qui s'inscrivent dans le cadre du programme *Pourcentage pour les arts*.

Les œuvres récemment acquises par le biais du programme d'acquisition d'œuvres d'art de la Ville d'Ottawa ouvrent d'importantes perspectives sur les événements qui ont façonné, et continuent de façonner, la vie des résidents d'Ottawa. Ces œuvres viennent bouleverser la consommation passive de vues et de panoramas de la capitale nationale auxquels nous sommes habitués; elles illustrent et imaginent les façons dont l'expérience vécue influe sur notre perception de la vie dans cette ville.

Certains artistes recourent à des éléments visuels comme les diptyques ou la juxtaposition d'images pour établir la comparaison et le contraste entre certains faits et illustrer la tension existant entre l'espace pictural et l'espace vécu. Les œuvres d'art dépeignant des scènes qui, simultanément, provoquent et renversent les clichés que chacun nourrit à l'égard du paysage de la ville d'Ottawa, de ses habitants et des événements qui s'y produisent. Des structures et des formes dénaturées représentent les liens actuels et ambigus qui existent entre le lieu et la

circonstance. Qu'elles fassent appel à des images de lieux familiers et d'événements habituels pour produire un sens par le biais de la comparaison, ou qu'elles viennent détruire certaines notions préexistantes d'ordre et d'identité par le biais d'une relecture de l'histoire, ces œuvres pénètrent les éléments qui façonnent nos vies à titre de résidents de cette ville.

S'il est une œuvre qui met à merveille le lien entre l'expérience individuelle et les derniers événements locaux, c'est bien la gigantesque gravure de **Katie Argyle**, exécutée à la main et intitulée *day by day, week by week, month by month: Ottawa Bus Strike*. (Au fil des jours, des semaines et des mois : la grève des autobus à Ottawa). L'œuvre est une réponse directe à la grève des autobus qui a paralysé pendant 52 jours la vie de nombreux résidents d'Ottawa, à l'hiver 2008-2009. Cette linogravure, dont la facture de style expressionniste allemand souligne un geste de protestation politique, est composée de gravures individuelles méthodiquement agencées afin d'illustrer chaque jour de la grève, du premier, en décembre, au dernier, en janvier.

Les 52 gravures d'Argyle se rapportent à des images recueillies par l'artiste dans les journaux et sur Internet tout au long de la grève. Elles constituent un compte rendu d'expériences autobiographiques, de rituels, de sentiments d'anxiété et d'événements quotidiens. Ces archives personnelles affichent au grand jour les conséquences que des changements de circonstance soudains ont sur la vie de chacun. En mettant l'accent sur les couches de la population les plus touchées par l'événement, cette œuvre poignante se situe à la jonction du compte rendu personnel, public et municipal.



Cheryl Pagurek, *High Value Target 1: Clear to engage*, 2009, digital photograph on paper/photographie numérique sur papier, 75 cm x 197 cm, 2010-0055

Les œuvres de **Cheryl Pagurek** et de **Jeff Thomas** traitent le thème de l'identité personnelle par le biais d'archives photographiques et numériques. Le grand diptyque de Pagurek intitulé *High Value Target 1: Clear to engage* (Objectif de valeur : prêt à s'engager), associe des photographies représentant la culture d'un jardin privé à des images tirées d'archives militaires et à des graphiques de marqueurs de cible au laser. Son diptyque est une interrogation sur la façon dont la dimension personnelle et familiale de la vie recoupe parfois les objectifs et les stratégies de la vie militaire. Empreinte de sentiments de vulnérabilité, l'œuvre de Pagurek transmet un sentiment d'inquiétude troublant tout en évoquant les tensions qui sous-tendent la vie familiale de la classe moyenne nord-américaine.

L'œuvre de Thomas utilise également la photographie pour poser des interrogations. Dans *Return the Gaze, Swallow Bird (Crow Tribe)*, *Joseph Crowe (Saulteaux Tribe)* (Retour vers le regard, Hirondelle (nation Crow), Joseph Crowe (nation Saulteaux)), Thomas associe une photo-graphie, prise par lui, d'un danseur de powwow en costume traditionnel autochtone à un portrait d'Edward S. Curtis, photographe de l'Ouest américain ayant vécu au début du vingtième siècle et à qui l'on doit

une impressionnante collection de photos d'Indiens de l'Amérique du Nord. En juxtaposant des images héritées de l'ère colonialiste et les perspectives et réalités d'un Autochtone vivant en milieu urbain, Thomas invite le spectateur à une relecture critique de l'assimilation des Indiens d'Amérique du Nord. Grâce à leur façon unique et stimulante d'utiliser leurs expériences photographiques personnelles, Pagurek et Thomas font ressurgir dans le présent les voix, les histoires et les perspectives des peuples autochtones.

Les œuvres de **Cécile Boucher** se caractérisent par les méthodes de répétition, de duplication et de classification auxquelles elle recourt de façon constante. Ces dernières années, Cécile s'est concentrée sur les problèmes liés aux communications, au nomadisme et aux nouvelles technologies, adaptant sa pratique de l'art à des outils techno-artistiques tels le balayage d'objets et d'images, l'édition graphique, la photographie et l'impression numériques. L'image intitulée *Here and There: Look (Ici et là : regarde)*, des personnages affublés de chapeaux différents, photographiés de l'arrière, représentent les diverses cultures. Positionnés sur les contours de cartes anciennes de l'Amérique du Nord, une série de petites photos spontanées renvoient à la notion d'appartenance

et à la façon dont la mouvance des peuples et des idées transforment notre univers. Ces personnages semblent vouloir conserver leurs identités uniques, en même temps qu'elles semblent être à la recherche d'un lieu géographique qui soit le leur.

Les ambiguïtés émanant des circonstances du monde dans lequel nous vivons sont également encodées dans les toiles de **Judith Berry**. Dans l'œuvre intitulée *Disparate Elements* (Éléments disparates), des éléments naturels, industriels et agricoles entrent en collision pour produire ce que Berry qualifie de « détournement subtil de projets ». Ces interprétations contemporaines de nos paysages modernes font s'effondrer et se métamorphoser notre système de référence traditionnel à l'égard du lieu et de la circonstance.

Un certain nombre d'œuvres d'art mettent en lumière les diverses identités de la ville d'Ottawa et les expériences qui la façonnent. Les deux artistes que voici soulignent l'activité d'observer ou d'être témoin d'événements, à la fois en tant qu'acteur et spectateur. Dans sa série *Night for Day: Road Crews* (La nuit pour le jour : équipes de voirie), **Ramses Madina** braque sa caméra sur les travailleurs de nuit. Ces photographies mettent en scène les équipes de construction de l'autoroute 417 et font pleins feux sur les circonstances, autrement invisibles, de ces travailleurs publics qui s'activent pendant notre sommeil.

Melinda Mollineaux déclenche elle aussi une sensibilisation aux choses de la nuit à travers les images de sa caméra cachée. C'est juste avant d'aller dormir, ou pendant de longues périodes d'insomnie entourant le coucher du soleil, que Mollineaux installe sa caméra au balcon de son appartement du centre-ville d'Ottawa. La caméra demeure sous tension tout au long de la nuit pendant que l'artiste, comme elle dit, se tourne et se retourne jusqu'au matin. Des images comme celle intitulée *Ottawa*

Insomnia #6 (Insomnie à Ottawa no 6) captent le temps qui s'écoule entre le soir et le matin, suivant la trajectoire de la lune dans le ciel. La photo-graphie présentée ici, témoin de longues heures d'attente et d'enregistrement, confère une dimension poétique au temps et à l'espace de ce quartier d'Ottawa.

Les œuvres présentées dans le cadre de cette exposition d'acquisitions, de commandes et de dons récents forment un ensemble d'images uniques, témoignages artistiques d'autant d'expériences vécues et de rencontres entre les gens, les idées, les événements et l'environnement bâti. Collectivement, elles scrutent les tensions entre l'espace pictural et l'expérience vécue. Individuellement, elles forgent des représentations uniques de ce lieu particulier, de ses antécédents culturels et des myriades de circonstances qui façonnent nos vies en tant que résidents de cette ville.



Ramses Madina, *Road Crew 29* (from the series/de la série *Night for Day: Road Crews*), 2009, photograph on paper/photographie sur papier, 38 cm x 38 cm, 2010-0045



Melinda Mollineaux, *Ottawa Insomnia #6*, 2007, photograph on paper/photographie sur papier, 91 cm x 91 cm, 2010-0050

Le Programme d'art public favorise le développement de relations fructueuses entre les artistes professionnels en arts visuels de la région en organisant des jurys d'évaluation par les pairs dont le rôle est de critiquer et de recommander des artistes et des œuvres aux fins d'achat, de don, de commande et d'exposition. La Ville d'Ottawa tient à remercier les jurés, David Barbour, Carrie Colton, Josée Dubeau, Inaas Kirayakos et Michèle Provost, pour le professionnalisme et le dévouement

dont ils ont fait preuve dans le cadre de l'acquisition d'œuvres d'art 2010.

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Cheryl Pagurek, Ephemera



[By Petra Halkes](#)

Patrick Mikhail Gallery, Ottawa,

January 9 – February 3, 2008

Over the years, Cheryl Pagurek's art practice has gradually shifted from sculpture and installations to printed photographs and, finally, in the present exhibition, to the ultimate *Ephemera* of moving digital imagery. The more fleeting her work becomes, however, the more strongly it shows a desire to anchor familial memories, whether historical or personal, to a solid, tangible object or site, a stable place that would allow stories to evolve from somewhere, rather than shatter in the synchronic presence of fleeting images.

Anchoring the fragmented, dispersed imagery of Pagurek's photographs and videos in this exhibition are images of her present home and street. They form a background, a projection screen, for a whirl of archival video footage and family snapshots. In light boxes and a video, *Passage*, the artist traces a play of light and shadows on the walls and floors of her house – inside and outside, from morning to night. She interweaves this footage with glimpses of her own family life and images of Jewish life from pre-war Europe and the immigrant ghettos of America: portraits, children at play, marching troops, and horse-drawn wagons.

Similarly, every photograph in the series *Reflections* mirrors lampposts, trees, and houses on wet sidewalks and in puddles on Pagurek's Ottawa street, which lends the fragments of old family photos that they incorporate a certain stability. Framed stills from the video, which round out the exhibition, accentuate this longing for stability, the wish to stop time and hold a moment in place. In *Passage* and *Reflections*, both Pagurek's home imagery and the framing of the stills can be read as devices to create a real, concrete setting for dispersed, ephemeral imagery.

But the rippling puddles in *Reflections* make the street and its houses appear fragile, in danger of disappearing. And the interwoven family photographs appear upside down, which, at first sight, turns them into abstracted patterns. *Passage* is similarly unstable; the shadows do not show the objects that throw them, thereby giving the "ground" that is home a fleeting quality, as if anticipating its passing.



Reflection 8, 2006, Inkjet print on semi-matte photographic paper, 43.4 x 65 cm, Courtesy of Patrick Mikhail Gallery.
© Cheryl Pagurek

There is a sense, then, in Pagurek's work that a stable reality, stable histories, will not be found, but can be created as imaginary constructs that have utopian¹ values. As Andreas Huyssen writes in *Twilight Memories*, "In an age of an unlimited proliferation of images, discourses, simulacra, the search for the real itself has become utopian."# Pagurek creates connections among the Jewish diaspora, the dispersal and lost identities of old family photographs, and a broader contemporary sense of unmooring in the unending flood of meaningless images. In the context of this exhibition, the photograph *Reflection 8* brings to mind a story from the Kabbalah. In this creation story, God's original universe is described as a shattered glass vessel forever in need of mending. The photograph shows the reflection of a tree in fall foliage – bright orange and ochre against a blue sky – surrounded by hundreds of perfect circles created by the refracting light on wet pavement. In five of those circles, Pagurek inserted fragments of family photos: the face and feet of unknown relatives, bits and pieces of her grandparents' furniture, and a fragment of a photo of herself as a teenager.

If there is a positive outcome to the Jewish myth, in that the original disaster produced opportunities for humanity to be creative and caring toward the world, perhaps the splintering of photography into the endless and ethereal synchronic juxtaposition of images could produce a similar utopian desire to set things right. Pagurek's exhibition provides a site in which to explore a parallel between the splintered universe of Jewish mythology, and the shattering effects of unlimited reproduction. The Jewish tradition of constructing unity and identity in a shattered world pervades the work with a sense of hope.

Pagurek no longer counters the loss of materiality by using concrete materials in sculptural installations; instead, she works through the technological realities of contemporary life and attempts to provide a sense of the real, even within the material limitations of lens-based art. Her work provides hope that a shattered universe can be mended; she makes a beginning by artfully reassembling people's lives, piecing places to memories, providing homes and stories where none remained.

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Petra Halkes is an artist and writer. Her book *Aspiring to the Landscape* was published by the University of Toronto Press in 2006.

Note

1. Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York and London: Routledge 1995) p 10.1

Petra Halkes · CV79 Chroniques · Sunday, 01 June 2008 00:00

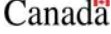
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PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY



CHERYL PAGUREK | REFLECTION 1 | INK JET PRINT ON SEMI-MATT PHOTOGRAPHIC PAPER | 43.4 X 65 CENTIMETERS | 2006