

PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY

2401 BANK STREET OTTAWA CANADA K1V 8R9
T.613.746.0690 1.800.388.3298 F.613.746.4996
PATRICKMIKHAILGALLERY.COM

STEPHEN BROOKBANK

ARTIST STATEMENT

Brookbank's interest is essentially that of a documentarian. His work focuses on the interdependence of our working and living communities, with allusions to broader issues of our times, quietly expressed. Through time exposures of available light, whether from a towns' reflected light off an overcast sky, a simple streetlight, to a bulb's illumination in a living room; Stephen Brookbank's photographs serve as allegories.

■ EAST SIDE

How our living and working environments are shaped by human experience is a predominate concern in this body of work. How the mind's eye might travel when we catch a glimpse of our shared humanity through the framework of a window. What do we see in the looking glass of a doorway to a man's home, steeped in the sweat of a life observed?

This work documents residential, industrial communities. I wish to explore the relationships between our neighborhoods, the services that provide us with the light and warmth of our homes, the industries that are the backbone of so many communities. I am attempting to portray the humanity of a neighborhood in the presence of such things as a transmission grid, factory, or power plant.

The title of this series, *East Side*, is a reference to the architecture and artifacts that grew up around early planners and industrialists building housing downwind from factories. Neighborhoods and towns where so many of us came from and call home is the starting point of my work.

The industrial revolution pulled people away from agricultural lives to the burgeoning factories, which led to the huge growth of cities. This transformation created vast new wealth but also the misery portrayed in the fiction of Charles

PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY

2401 BANK STREET OTTAWA CANADA K1V 8R9
T.613.746.0690 1.800.388.3298 F.613.746.4996
PATRICKMIKHAILGALLERY.COM

Dickens and the photography of such masters as Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine. Economists tell us that we are in the midst of a tremendous shift in which global economic forces are having an immediate impact on many of our communities. Undoubtedly, the lifestyle and architecture I am photographing are in decline.

My intention with this collection is to capture the self-reliance and strength of a people in a sometimes degraded and forsaken landscape. The uncertainty and uneasiness of our own times and issues of social justice are things I consider while producing this work. I focus on communities where the interplay between life and work are not so easily distilled or understood. A theme first articulated by Walker Evans, a photographer who so brilliantly documented late 1930s America, is how the present time will look as the past. This idea is of great interest to me.

Many of the images explore the effects long exposures at night have in terms of colour and density through the available, primarily artificial light of a scene. The stark solitude and luminescence of night, from the lights of an apartment building to sentinel streetlights and autos lit like beacons. The man-made light in our community streets reveals much that might be overlooked in the banality of day.