

## PATRICK MIKHAIL GALLERY

2401 BANK STREET OTTAWA CANADA K1V 8R9  
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PATRICKMIKHAILGALLERY.COM

## CHERYL PAGUREK

### EPHEMERA

#### ■ VIDEO STILLS

##### WEB IMAGES 1 TO 9

“Passage 1 to 9”  
Inkjet prints on photographic paper  
17 x 24 cm each  
2007

#### ■ REFLECTION SERIES

##### WEB IMAGES 10 TO 16

**Reflection 1 to 7**  
Inkjet prints on Lustre paper  
Approximately 25 x 17 inches  
2007

##### WEB IMAGES 17

**Reflection 8**  
Inkjet print on Lustre paper  
Available in two dimensions:  
25 x 17 inches  
38 x 57 inches

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### EPHEMERA

Cheryl Pagurek's recent photo-based and video works investigate the interrelated concepts of time, memory, and history. They are elusive in that they offer glimpses of time and place, but because of missing visual information, they frustrate our desire for a complete, captured moment. Relationships of presence/absence, already intrinsic to photography in the framing of the subject (what is included and what is left out) and in photography's indexical nature (the subject matter was previously—but is no longer—present in front of the camera) are highlighted in these works. The ephemeral quality of Ms. Pagurek's recent work in video evokes the "present-ness" of the disappearing past. Referencing her familial history through archival footage, the video works contemplate present experience in relation to that of the past.

### PASSAGE

Passage (2007) evokes several layers of time and place through video imagery and sound. Separate yet connected narratives unfold: Present-day footage follows richly coloured light and shadow patterns appearing inside and outside the artist's house throughout the course of the day, from the cool blue-purple of morning light to the warm oranges of early evening. Meanwhile, black and white archival footage provides fleeting glimpses of Jewish life during the early part of the last century—everyday life in pre-World War 2 Eastern Europe, and the immigration of some to ghettoized urban life in North America. Amongst these fragments of an earlier era, we recognize women at market, hands sewing, immigrant's disembarking from a ship, street scenes. At the same time, the accompanying soundscape situates us simultaneously in the past and present, in domestic and public spaces. The rhythm of her family's daily activities and interactions unfolds through sound, while the passage of time through the day is tracked from the song of birds at dawn to the late-night chirping of crickets. A past era is made more immediate through the sounds of horse-drawn wagons, marching troops, spoken Yiddish and traditional melodies. The fleeting immateriality of the video finds material embodiment in the nine sequential stills printed from Passage, each an intersection of coexistent narratives.

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### REFLECTION

The eight ink jet prints from the Reflection series (2006-7) layer simultaneous narratives of different times and places. Attracted to the “world within a world” quality of reflections in pooled water, Cheryl Pagurek photographed reflected houses, trees and streets, appearing upside-down as they emerge from the flat plane of snow or pavement surrounding the puddle. Like the patterns of shadows in previous works that are abstracted from the physical objects that cast them, the upside-down reflections of the neighborhood similarly transform a familiar reality, this time with a sense of dislocation. To echo this feeling of disorientation, and to further accentuate the passage of time captured through the changing seasons in the images, she has digitally inserted into each image one or more snapshots from several decades ago, also placed upside-down. This last gesture nudges the work further into abstraction as colours and textures function apart from the reality they represent. The old photographs are not seen in their entirety but, like fragments of memory, are glimpsed through the contemporary street images.

The photographs of the water are focused on the depths of the reflections, while the shallow depth of field blurs the peripheral foreground, blending it into the soft grain of the old snapshots. Several sets of dualities intermingle in the work: The play between surface and depth in the images evokes a contemplative sense of looking into a different time and space, the present and past coexisting. The images oscillate between representation and painterly abstraction, while the intimate, private context of the family snapshot merges with the more public realm of landscape and street photography. Further, there is a dynamic tension between the photograph’s traditional role as documentation of the “real” and the constructed nature of these images. In counterpoint to the minute-by-minute frantic pace of contemporary life, the work proposes a space of introspection and reflection on our individual place within a temporal and spatial continuum.

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