

Exhibitions Galleries & Museums On Now Surrey Visual Art

Experience Cheryl Pagurek's Interactive Installation at Surrey Art Gallery

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There's a new art exhibit opening on July 14 at [Surrey Art Gallery](#) featuring an interactive digital collage by Ottawa-based media artist [Cheryl Pagurek](#). Depicting an indoor oasis, *Winter Garden* invites viewers to become participants in the artwork, contributing to its growth and regeneration.

Pagurek, whose practice spans photography, video, and digital media, counts her early training in sculpture and printmaking as key to her constructive and layered approach to artmaking. *Winter Garden* stems from a series of still life photographs of a small oasis of indoor growth. (One photograph from the series, *Winter Garden 9*, will be on view alongside the interactive component.) Taken during lockdown in the winter of 2021, the images evoke hope and resilience. From the photographs, the work has evolved into an interactive media experience, where viewers' movements guide navigation through the artwork.

Colourful collage elements are recognizable—a money plant here, a rose bloom there; a plant pot here, a vase of flowers there—and fragments play with opacity and transparency, as well as positive and negative space. Viewers control and affect the composition of the digital collage through their location and movement. The number of viewers exploring the work, and the speed at which they are moving, directly influence the composition of the collage and the movement of the collage elements. From Surrey Art Gallery: "Through the use of machine learning, motifs of the plants emerge and recompose against a changing backdrop of winter imagery that follows the movement of the viewer via webcam."



Image credit: Interacting with Winter Garden. Image courtesy of the artist

Winter Garden was previously shown in 2023 at Patrick Mikhail Gallery in Montreal. For the latest iteration of the work, specifically for the presentation at Surrey Art Gallery, the artist has integrated the camera's view of the viewers and the space around the "to better reflect how people's presence and movements affect the interactive digital collage." In doing so, viewers can see themselves within the work, like performers influencing the imagery of the artwork, thereby inviting further interaction and exploration.

Pagurek holds an MFA from the University of Victoria. Her work has been shown across Canada and internationally, with numerous video screenings in France, Brazil, Columbia, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Netherlands, and the USA. Her works have appeared in public art events, including *Nuit Blanche* Ottawa Gatineau, Kamloops Art Gallery's *Luminosity* program, Toulouse's *Rencontres Traverse Vidéo*, and Kingston's *Next Door* public art exhibit. Solo exhibitions include *Connect/Connexion* at the Ottawa Art Gallery and *States of Being* at Art-Image Gallery in Maison de la Culture de Gatineau, Québec. Pagurek's work is held in collections including Global Affairs Canada, the Canada Council Art Bank, the Library of the National Gallery of Canada, Cenovus Energy Inc., the Ottawa Art Gallery and the City of Ottawa.

Digital media is an integral part of programming at Surrey Art Gallery, a contemporary art museum focusing on work since 1975, making it a unique institution to see and explore art in Metro Vancouver. *Winter Garden* is on view at Surrey Art Gallery until December 8, 2024. Admission is free. For details, visit www.surrey.ca/arts-culture/surrey-art-gallery.

Summer hours are:

Monday, 9am-5pm

Tuesday to Thursday, 9am-9pm

Friday, 9am-5pm

Saturday, 10am-5pm

Closed Sundays and holidays

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Feature image courtesy of the artist.