

Presented by Latcham Art Centre



Selected portraits from the series *Facing the Camera*

## Rosalie Favell: **Shifting Focus**

OCTOBER 20 - DECEMBER 8, 2018

Front cover from left to right:

Caroline Monnet, Winnipeg, MB, 2011

Christian Chapman, Winnipeg, MB, 2017

Daphne Odjig, Ottawa, ON, 2009

Peashawn Bread, Santa Fe, NM, 2012

Robert Houle, Ottawa, ON, 2009

Rita Letendre, Toronto, ON, 2012

Vanessa Dion Fletcher, Winnipeg, MB, 2011

Wally Dion Banff, Alberta, Canada, 2011

Wanda Nanibush, Toronto, ON, 2014

## Rosalie Favell: Shifting Focus

For her solo exhibition at Latcham Art Centre, Métis artist Rosalie Favell shares work from three on-going projects that all celebrate identity, representation and community. Favell's practice is primarily photographic and is inspired by her family history and Métis (Cree/English) heritage. Her earlier works combine self-portraiture with recognizable figures and scenes from history and pop culture as a means to explore her own experiences as a contemporary Indigenous woman. Favell continues to investigate the power of portraiture as a tool for image-making, but there is a shift away from self-portraiture and a focus on documenting others. The exhibition title, *Shifting Focus* not only speaks to Favell's interest in playing with the conventions of photographic portraiture, but also to the notion that self-expression is always evolving and ever-changing. Favell explains:

*"My quest to find my place in the world has taken me many places physically, intellectually and spiritually. My work comes from a culmination of searching for a way to comment on the worlds that I live in, investigating issues of personal and cultural identities. As a Métis woman I am well versed in the difficulties of defining cultural identity. It is from this unique perspective that I map the territory that Aboriginal artists must navigate in imaging themselves. I am interested in exploring that space that has developed for Aboriginal image-makers who dare confront stereotypes and forge new identities playing with the lure of globalization yet maintaining their footing in their evolving traditions."*<sup>1</sup>

In her most recent series including, *Facing the Camera*, *Artists in the Landscape* and *The Collectors*, Favell is working to document Indigenous artists, art professionals and art supporters over time to create a record of these networks, celebrate their contributions and continue to reveal the complex nature of representation.

*The Collectors* series provides a behind the scenes look at artworks by Indigenous artists and their collectors. These photographs become an artwork within an artwork, where the viewer is able to see a document of the original artwork alongside the joy, pride and passion of the art collector. The support of collectors buying and showcasing the artwork is paramount for all working artists trying to

<sup>1</sup> <https://rosaliefavell.com/portfolio/plains-warrior-artist/>

earn a living from their practice and build a reputation. Likewise, the collectors are able to choose works that speak to them and build a collection as an expression of themselves and their own interests. This relationship has always been an important part of cultural exchange through art and this support and care-taking has an enduring impact as collections are passed down through generations, or on to cultural institutions like galleries and museums. Collector Vicky Henry is shown below with an early work by Favell entitled *I woke to find my spirit had returned*. Take note of how Favell plays with the story from the film *Wizard of Oz*, re-imagining the scene within her own narrative, tucked into Dorothy's bed under a Hudson Bay blanket with the addition of Louis Riel looking in from the window.

*"My work has always been diaristic and serial in nature and I took this a step further and situated my character within the context of Plains Ledger art that chronicled the lives of Plain(s) Warrior Artist. I fashioned my character based upon my fictional hero and the Plain(s) Warrior Artist was born and set out on many adventures."*<sup>2</sup>



*The Collectors: Vicky Henry with Rosalie Favell Photograph, 2013, Digital Print*

<sup>2</sup> <https://rosaliefavell.com/portfolio/plains-warrior-artist/>

*The Collectors* series affords the viewer an opportunity to see a diverse range of artworks by Indigenous artists and see the way art collectors live with these works in their private spaces.

The earliest work in these recent series is *Facing the Camera* which began in 2008 after Favell participated in an artist residency in Banff, Alberta. She took the initiative to photograph the other Indigenous artists in attendance and upon reviewing the images and seeing the community of artists represented, she realized how impactful this documentation could be. In this moment, the series *Facing the Camera* was born and she continues to arrange portrait sessions to photograph Indigenous artists, curators, writers, musicians, dancers, and more. To date, Favell has created over 450 portraits in this series across Canada, in Australia and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

*“In these images, as in all my work, I see the photograph as a performance space, where identity is constantly worked and reworked, represented, and perhaps hidden. I use the portrait convention to acknowledge the agency of the individual in bringing together in a conscious and unconscious way, the numerous cultural and personal factors through which the sense of self is expressed. This idea applies to me taking pictures of my self, and others, who stand before my camera, seeing their selves revealed in the photograph.”<sup>3</sup>*



Installation view, *Facing the Camera*

<sup>3</sup> <https://rosaliefavell.com/portfolio/facing-the-camera/>

In this series, Favell continues to explore her own sense of self and cultural identity, but in relation to the subjects who are being photographed. Each portrait session allows her to meet new people and have meaningful exchanges about identity, representation and community. It's also about giving back to her community, creating a collection of images that will exist well into the future. Shifting the power dynamic where the images being produced of Indigenous peoples are being made by and for Indigenous peoples is significant. These portraits celebrate the presence and contributions of Indigenous artists and art-making, creating new collaborative opportunities for self-representation.

*Artists in the Landscape* is a series that grew out of *Facing the Camera* where Favell creates long, panoramic images that highlight the land in relation to the subject. Like the darkroom reference of the black borders she maintains in the *Facing the Camera* portraits, she builds the panoramic views shot by shot, exposing the whole image of each photograph and stitching them together to create organic and dynamic portraits of a time and place.

This exhibition continues Latcham Art Centre's ongoing commitment to provide a public venue to showcase artwork by Indigenous artists and is generously sponsored by The University of Ontario Institute of Technology.

Elisa Coish, Curator



Installation view, *Artists in the Landscape*



Rosalie Favell, MMelbourne, Australia, 2016, Digital Print

***Rosalie Favell*** is a Metis artist, born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, now living and working in Ottawa, Ontario. Favell's work has been exhibited in Canada, the US, Edinburgh, Scotland, Paris, France, Taipei, Taiwan and Melbourne, Australia. Her artwork has been collected by the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography (Ottawa), Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (Washington, D.C.), and Global Affairs, Canada. She has received numerous grants and awards including the Chalmers Fellowship, the Victor Martyn Lynch-Staunton Award, and the Karsh Award. A graduate of Ryerson Polytechnic Institute, Rosalie holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of New Mexico and a PhD (ABD) from Carleton University in Cultural Mediations. In Ottawa, Rosalie has taught at Carleton University, the University of Ottawa and Discovery University.

# latcham

ART CENTRE

Latcham Art Centre inspires the community to engage with visual art through exhibitions of contemporary art and education programs including classes, workshops, artist talks and tours. It is funded by donations, sponsorships, membership and fundraising events as well as annual grants from the municipality of Whitchurch-Stouffville and the Ontario Arts Council.

THIS EXHIBITION GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:



LATCHAM ART CENTRE 2 PARK DRIVE STOUFFVILLE 905 640 8954  
HOURS: Tuesday - Friday 10am - 5pm Saturdays 10am - 4pm  
[WWW.LATCHAMARTCENTRE.CA](http://WWW.LATCHAMARTCENTRE.CA)