

longing and not belonging



Rosalie Favell

centre d'art indien (MAINC)(DIAND) Indian Art Centre
galerie d'art indien / Indian Art Gallery

Longing and Not Belonging

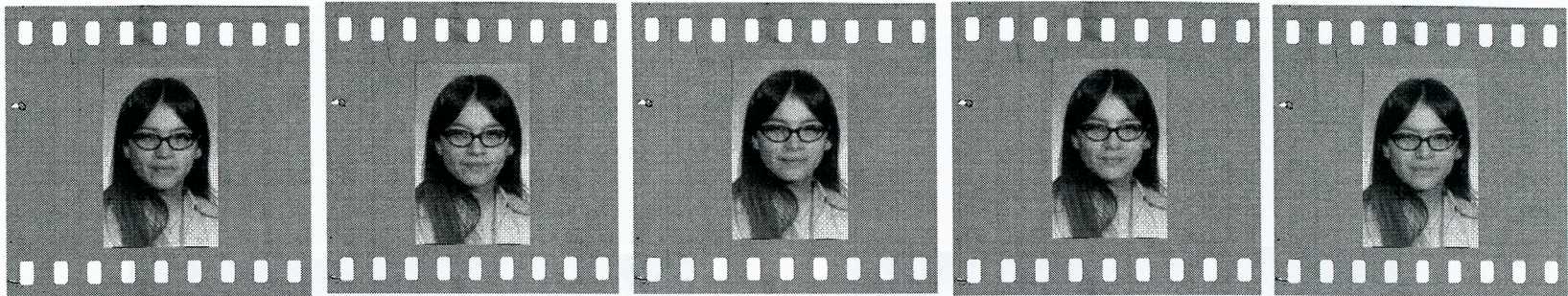
My work investigates identity: the reconstruction and realization of personal and cultural identity. From an early age, I longed for a sense of belonging in the world. My identity is connected to my place in my family and in turn my family's place within a larger social context. I have been mining my families' snapshots, images of my own making, and images from popular culture, in search of visual evidence and the possibilities of new visual equations.

My ledger in this exhibition references both the family album and the ledger art of the plains warriors at the turn of the last century. Although it was rare from a woman to have been a ledger artist, women were the keepers of the family album. When the family album was viewed there were inevitably stories that accompany them. Perhaps these stories filled the gaps that the album and ledger art have some similarities, as they function to record the exploits and history of the life of the maker. It may be that ledger art marked a transition from the oral to a recorded account of histories and was an earlier version of the family albums of this century.

This exhibition is a visual synthesis of my attempts to comment on, resolve, to construct and realize change. I have included a Warrior women from popular culture and mixed them in with the family images to acknowledge and comment on the importance of heroes, women in my family and in my life. These images have become documents of my personal and visual journey.

Longing and Not Belonging is a late 20th century view of a seventh generation child that felt she grew up invisibly in a mixed-blood urban family in the middle of North America. It is my hope that ***Longing and Belonging*** illustrates my desire to belong and that my visual document may serve to inform my future relations when they, too, are searching.

Rosalie Favell, 1999

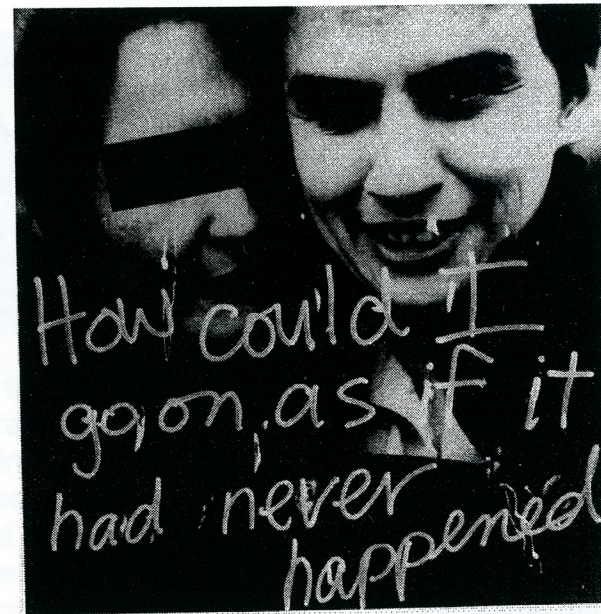
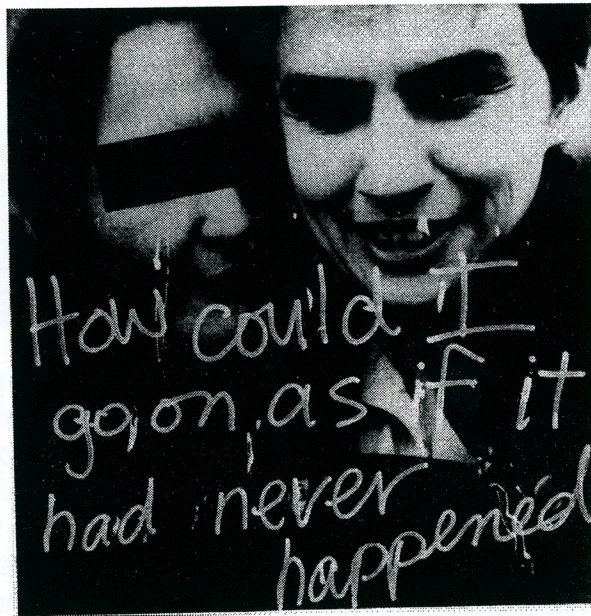


Longing and Not Belonging: Rosalie Favell

There is something enticing, seductive and perhaps a little voyeuristic about viewing a family photo album, especially when it is not your own. There is a desire to compare, internalize and scrutinize your own personal experiences, family relations, cultural heritage with those of others. There is always an element of romanticism, a thin white veil, that pervades our contextualization of photo-based reality, as we attempt to reconstruct that particular time and space of the image. Our romanticised perception may have nothing to do with the actual context of time and space in which the image is actually situated, but instead it fulfils an emotional desire or “longing” to engage, merge, or interact with the figures frozen in time.

Rosalie Favell's photographic practice and exhibition history takes us on such a journey, a photographic travelogue of *longing and not belonging*. In her earlier exhibitions, such as ***Living Evidence*** (1994), Rosalie explored her personal feelings regarding the break-up of her relationship and her loss of love. She expressed herself through textual narrative, hand-written statements on large Ektacolour prints. She covered the eyes of her lover with black tape to protect her anonymity, but left her own eyes exposed, open to public scrutiny. Since her break-up was very personal, it was important to provide the appropriate narrative to ensure her message was not misconstrued when she decided to exhibit her emotionally charged work publicly. The exhibition was truly a daring and precarious endeavour; for it is always risky business to publicly “out” oneself. Yet, it was an important and timely decision for her to make. In doing so, Favell freed herself to honestly pursue her art practice, and break new ground for herself; both as an artist and as a woman of mixed ancestry. As well, the exploration of her identity in ***Living Evidence***, allowed her to move on, subtly incorporating her orientation as a component in her exploration of identity as a mixed blood Cree women.

For Longing and Nel Gulongog, I used her drawings to explore the identity struggle that led to her photographs juxtaposing them with images from 19th-century popular culture. One family photo shows her mother, maintaining our oral tradition about our personalities and our histories. They are our most precious possessions, evoking memories of ancestors, relations, friends, community and place. In viewing a photo, we are challenged to conjure up a myriad of stories, when strung together are the threads of our identity. Photographs, however, and stories tell us and others who we are, where we came from, and can even provide us with insight into where we are going.



In Longing she has been telling these histories of community called with the comings

Another significant tradition of visual narrative that emerged were the ledger drawings. This form of visual documentation emerged around 1875 and were made by captive Indians at Fort Marion in St. Augustine, Florida. Imprisoned by the United States forces for their resistance and unwillingness to accept the imposed reservation system, seventy-three Cheyenne, Kiowa, Arapaho, and Comanche began sketching images of their lives prior to captivity and the ensuing battle that led to their capture. The drawings were made with ink and coloured pencils on trader's ledger paper (lined) that had been issued to them by government officials. After their release in 1867, most of the captives returned to Anishko, Oklahoma, many of whom continued to produce drawings and paintings of their past lives.

For **Longing and Not Belonging**, Favell has chosen to explore her identity through her family photographs, juxtaposing them with images from 20th century popular culture. Our family photo-albums are important to maintaining our oral tradition about our genealogies and our histories. They are our visual memory landscape, evoking memories of ancestors, relations, friends, community and place. In viewing a photo album, the images conjure up a myriad of stories, when strunged together are the threads of our identity. Together, the images and stories tell us and others, who we are, where we came from, and can even provide us with insight into where we are going.



In **Longing and Not Belonging**, Favell has moved away from the written narratives of **Living Evidence**. Instead, she has returned to a more subtle approach of pure visual narrative, reminiscent of early Indian mnemonic story-telling devices. They read like “winter counts” or “ledger” drawings that played an important role in the recorded histories of aboriginal peoples on the presentation of Favell’s works *Great Plains*. The earliest visual recordings of community activities and accomplishments were once recorded on buffalo hide in the form of pictographic paintings called winter counts. Important battles, hunts or significant milestones were recorded as markers or sign-posts for the community. These early drawings were important visual prompts, perhaps one of the first visual diaries. Another significant tradition of visual narrative that emerged were the ledger drawings. This form of visual documentation emerged around 1875 and were made by captive Indians at Fort Marion in St. Augustine, Florida. Imprisoned by the United States forces for their resistance and unwillingness to accept the imposed reservation system, seventy-three Cheyenne, Kiowa, Arapaho, and Comanche began sketching images of their lives prior to captivity and the ensuing battle that led to their capture. The drawings were made with inks and coloured pencils on trader’s ledger paper (lined) that had been issued to them by government officials. After their release in 1887, most of the captives returned to Anadarko, Oklahoma, many of whom continued to produce drawings and paintings of their past lives.

Unquestionably, we can all relate to this sense of longing and desire felt by these captive Cheyenne, Kiowa, Arapaho and Comanche. Their dream to return to a happier time is not any different than our desire to revisit our past experiences to better understand ourselves. Like the ledger drawings and winter counts, Favell's family photographs juxtaposed against popular cultural icons are her touchstones, her visual prompters that allow her to return to and explore a specific point in time. **Longing and Not Belonging** is about power; the power of memory in regards to a reclamation of personal power. The power of her visual images are medicine for our individual and collective healing, asking us to question policies of exclusion (gender, sexual orientation; cultural, institutional) and look for positive sign-posts to guide us along the way.



Girl Power

Rosalie Favell's work takes us to places not uncommon to our own life experiences. Her family photographs remind us of our own special times, like Christmas, birthdays and those precious "Kodak moments". Family photographs provide the documentation of Favell's history as a mixed blood Cree growing up and living in an urban environment. Favell searches for her sense of place by juxtaposing family photographs, Polaroid snapshots with images from western popular culture. The images provide a mirror for Favell to see herself and reflect upon where she is and where she is going. Her world is broad. As a mixed blood, she shares both Euro-Canadian and Cree ancestry, belonging somewhere in the middle. As an urban Indian, her sense of home is the city. From this fertile domain, Favell address a multiplicity of complex issues. At first, her work may seem a bit inaccessible; but upon further scrutiny, her work reads like a testimony to many of our own personal journeys.

For each and everyone of us, our personal sense of longing is marked by a period or milestone where our longing is fulfilled. In Favell's work, images of family, flora and popular culture icons work together to fill that void. Family is her foundation and the floral images represent that sense of grounding, growth and change and her personal quest for individualism. Favell incorporates many different types of flowers into her works. The variety of different flora from her own geological area as well as from other areas, is a metaphor for flux and hybridity; a reference to her mixed ancestry. The unifying component of Favell's work are the popular images from television and film which entice the viewer to evoke these images of popular culture from their past. If we are not seduced by one aspect of the work, another will attract our attention. Paired in threes, we have a choice.

Peer pressure and pop culture play an important role shaping our perception of self in society. Time and place are also important factors in locating our sense of place, but it is popular culture that maintains powerful universal magnetism and influence. Music, television, film, print and fashion, guide us in many directions that ultimately shape our lifestyle and sense of self. Also, they help us escape into the realm of lifestyles we dream of having. By incorporating popular images of women into her work, Favell fills the gap between our desire for longing and belonging. These women of television and film are role models who Favell has either grown up with, idolized or fantasized about. They are part of her being and are common to our own sense of being.

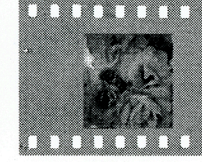
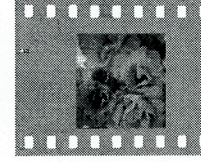
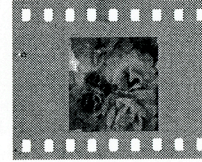
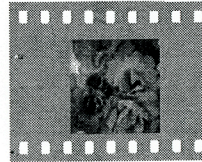
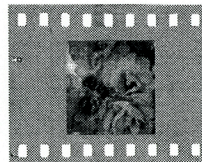
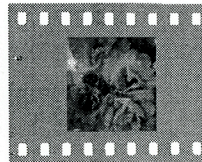
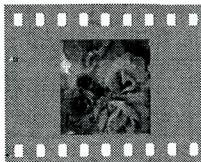
"Girl Power" has come to the forefront of popular culture quite recently with the onslaught of the Spice Girls taking over the world. Ironically, it's not a new milestone. Strong females such as Diana Ross and the Supremes ruled in the 1960s; Carole King, Helen Reddy and disco divas dominated in the 1970s; Madonna and Cyndi Lauper debut in the 1980s, and still remain in the spotlight today in the 1990s. This formula for stardom is paralleled on television and in the movies. Women with strong, sexy, sultry, capable, cool and sophisticated characteristics rank high on the public popularity scale. It is no wonder Favell incorporates these heroines into her work. Mrs. Emma Peel, a British import from the television series "The Avengers", takes us back to the 1960s. A period where television was still coming of age. At time, when Favell was also coming of age. This popular image conforms well to Favell's blueprint for Longing and Not Belonging. The images are nostalgic and trivial, yet draw us back to a specific period in time. We can connect with Jamie Sommers as Bionic Woman, because her image instills certain feelings we had at the time no matter what age we were.

Favell's love for television provided her with an outlet for escape, an opportunity to become a part of the popular culture. For most of us, growing up Indian is a unique experience that isn't often addressed or presented in print, television or film media. Although there has been a definite lack of major Indian icons on television, in the movies or on the radio, there are a few exceptions. Tonto, Buffy St. Marie, and Billy Jack all made an impression. As well, there have also been glimmering glimpses of Indian women as stars, including Elaine Miles who portrayed "Marilyn" on Northern Exposures, an all-knowing stoic sort of character. In "Dances with Wolves", Mary McDonnell's role as "Stand With A Fist", a feisty, strong character white women adopted by Indians, held our interest over Tantoo Cardinal's role as the submissive chief's wife. Although Tina Keeper and others on "North of 60" are quickly becoming recognized as artists in their field, their roles do not provide them with "star" status. Considering the lack of Indian icons, Favell's choice of non-native women makes you realize that there is definitely something lacking in popular culture. We see a lot of cowboys, but where are the Indians? A strong, powerful female (or male) icon is almost impossible to find. The obvious solution; go with the flow.

The characters Favell uses in her juxtapositions inspire, encourage and empower women. They are highly intelligent, capable and powerful individuals. A trait that Indian women are proud of, yet, there are few roles for Indians to aspire to. Favell's own portrait is placed beside Mrs. Emma Peel's, both women are cool, calm and collected. An image of Favell's sister is placed next to Xena: Warrior Princess, which gives us an insight to the strength and grace Favell places on her older sister. Lt. Ellen Ripley from "Aliens", displays power and caring as she protects a child and humanity. A bit fantasy, but the power of the matriarch is capable of the same. Sarah Connor from "Terminator 2", also portrays a mother who would do anything to protect her child. These fictional characters are larger than life and take you away from our mundane marginalized existence. They are not victims: they are heroes. Favell connects with these women, and so do we. When viewing **Longing and Not Belonging**, the popular images connect us to Favell's existence and experience because we are not so different. We long to belong as well.

Ryan Rice
Indian Art Centre

Barry Ace
Indian Art Centre



ROSALIE FAVELL

BORN: 1958
Winnipeg, Manitoba

ART MEDIA:

Photography, mixed media

ART EDUCATION:

University Of New Mexico, MFA
Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, BFA

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 1998 LONGING AND NOT BELONGING, One Star Studio, Lubbock, Texas,
The Photographers Gallery, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
- 1997 IT WAS A MOMENT..., Jan Sommers Gallery UNM, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1996 ECLIPSE 1: A GATHERING OF SPIRIT, The Floating Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba
- 1996 THE MANITOBA SERIES, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba
- 1995 LIVING EVIDENCE, Blue Moon Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland
- 1995 LIVING EVIDENCE, Dazibao, Montreal, Quebec, Little Gallery, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
- 1994 LIVING EVIDENCE, Mount Saint Vincent University Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia, The Dunlop Art Gallery,
Regina, Saskatchewan
- 1994 LA TEMPS PASSE...LE SOUVENIR RESTE, Lumiere Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba
- 1993 PORTRAITS IN BLOOD, NIIPA Gallery, Hamilton, Ontario

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1998 4TH ANNUAL JURIED GRADUATE STUDENT EXHIBITION, Janson Gallery, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1998 IN ABSENTIA, Mount Saint Vincent University Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia
- 1997 3RD ANNUAL JURIED GRADUATE STUDENT EXHIBITION, Janson Gallery, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1997 NO BORDERS: RECENT NATIVE WORK, Jan Sommers Gallery, UNM, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 1997 A GENEROUS VIEW, Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba, Brandon, Manitoba
- 1997 POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES, Street Level Gallery, Glasgow, Scotland, Inverness Museum, Inverness, Scotland, Ion Gallery, Kingussie, Scotland
- 1997 WE ARE MANY, WE ARE ONE (travelling exhibition)
- 1996 THROUGH OUR EYES, NIIPA Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario
- 1996 CONTEMPORARY NATIVE AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHERS, Santa Fe Picture Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico

COLLECTIONS:

Winnipeg Art Gallery
Manitoba Arts Council Art Bank
Air Canada
Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Longing and Not Belonging (le désir sans appartenance)

Mon œuvre est une quête d'identité personnelle et culturelle. Depuis ma tendre enfance, j'éprouve le désir d'appartenir à mon milieu. Mon identité se définit en fonction de ma famille et de sa place dans un contexte social plus vaste. J'explore les photos de ma famille ainsi que mes propres expériences de la culture et de la diversité du monde qui m'entoure.

Cette exposition rap-
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la transition entre la

Cette exposition est
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l'importance que j'ai
documentaire de mo

Longing and Not Belonging, une œuvre qui explore la question de l'identité et de l'appartenance. Elle est une œuvre qui a été créée par une jeune femme qui a grandi dans une famille urbaine mais au centre de l'Amérique du Nord. Elle a vécu de façon invisible dans une famille urbaine mais au centre de l'Amérique du Nord. Cette exposition montre clairement mon désir d'appartenance et que mon œuvre servira de référence à ma famille dans leur propre cheminement.



Rosalie Favell
Untitled 1/5, 1999
digitized output

Rosalie Favell, 1999

Longing and Not Belonging (le désir sans appartenir)

Mon oeuvre est une quête d'identité personnelle et culturelle. Depuis ma tendre enfance, j'éprouve le désir d'appartenir à mon milieu. Mon identité se définit en fonction de ma famille et de sa place dans un contexte social plus vaste. J'explore les photos de ma famille ainsi que mes pensées et l'iconographie populaire afin de découvrir le monde qui m'entoure et les possibilités visuelles qu'il offre.

Cette exposition rappelle à la fois l'album de photos de famille et le «ledger art» des guerriers des plaines du début du siècle. Certes, il était rare pour une femme de faire fonction d'artiste, En revanche, elles étaient les dépositaires de l'album de famille qu'on ne compulsait pas sans avoir droit à des récits. Les histoires que racontaient ces femmes complétaient les images et ajoutaient une dimension à la vie de leurs auteurs. Peut-être le «ledger art» représente-il la transition entre la tradition orale et les textes écrits et tenait lieu de nos albums de famille.

Cette exposition est l'abrégé de mes tentatives d'expliquer et de réaliser le changement. J'ai mêlé des photographies de guerrières de la culture populaire à des images de famille en guise de commentaire sur l'importance que j'attache à la présence féminine et notamment aux héroïnes. Ces images constituent le documentaire de mon cheminement personnel et de mon art.

Longing and Not Belonging jette un regard d'un enfant de septième génération qui, au couchant du XX^e siècle, dit avoir vécu de façon invisible dans une famille urbaine mixte au centre de l'Amérique du Nord. J'espère que cette exposition montre clairement mon désir d'appartenance et que mon oeuvre servira de repère aux membres de ma famille dans leur propre cheminement.

Rosalie Favell, 1999

