

# Rosalie Favell

Belonging

1982



CURATED BY Ryan Rice

2024



ONSITE GALLERY

GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY  
THE DELANEY FAMILY

JUN 18  
→ DEC 6  
2025

# Rosalie Favell **Belonging**

1982



***Belonging*** is the first retrospective of renowned Red River Metis artist Rosalie Favell, showcasing a powerful curated selection of her lens-based works from 1982 to 2024. This exhibition celebrates Favell's groundbreaking photographic

practice—from seminal series like *Living Evidence* and *Plain(s) Warrior Artist* to her expansive archive *Facing the Camera*—which invites us to bear witness and explore the complex themes of identity, empowerment, same-sex desire, community and the nuanced search for belonging through a lens that is both deeply personal and subtly subversive.

Favell's work draws inspiration from diverse affluent sources—including her family history and archives, popular culture, and her Red River Metis (Cree/English) heritage—that leads the journey as she bravely searches for autonomy and acceptance. Her work embodies a deep sense of desire—not just for recognition, but for a space where one's multifaceted identity is seen, valued and received. Through layered imagery, digital collage, and

portraiture, Favell reclaims narratives that have historically excluded or misrepresented Indigenous and queer identities.

Favell's work is, in a sense, autobiographical and reflects a longing to connect with histories, traditions, and representations that affirm her place in the world. In doing so, she challenges the conventional notions of belonging, framing it not just about inclusion but as an ongoing act negotiating sovereignty and self-definition within both personal, cultural and collective spaces.

Through these influences, she constructs a complex portrait of self, rendered through shifting personas, fictional portraits and interwoven familial and communal relations to redefine belonging by situating herself within larger cultural dialogues and communities. Accepting her identity as a contemporary artist and Indigenous woman, her work reclaims visibility, affirming her positionality and reflecting her experiences, aspirations and resilience. ■

**Ryan Rice** Executive Director + Curator,  
Indigenous Art, Onsite Gallery.

2024



**Rosalie Favell** is a celebrated artist whose 40-year career has earned national and international recognition. Working with photography, video, portraiture, and painting, she is a leading figure in Indigenous contemporary art and photography.

Her work is held in major institutions like the National Gallery of Canada, the Indigenous Art Centre, and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. She has received numerous prestigious accolades, such as the Paul de Hueck and Norman Walford Career Achievement Award, the Karsh Award, and an Honorary Doctorate from OCAD University.



Based in Ottawa, Favell continues to challenge boundaries, affirming Red River Metis history, and fostering dialogue on belonging and representation.

LEFT TO RIGHT:

Rosalie Favell, *Rosalie Favell, Facing the Camera*, Nigig Residency Toronto, 2016

*I Awoke to Find My Spirit had Returned*, 1999 from the series *Plains(s) Warrior Artist* (1999-2003)

*How could I go on as if it never happened*, 1994 from the series *Living Evidence*

All images courtesy of the artist



# Rosalie Favell

## Facing the Camera: TSÍ TKARÒN:TO

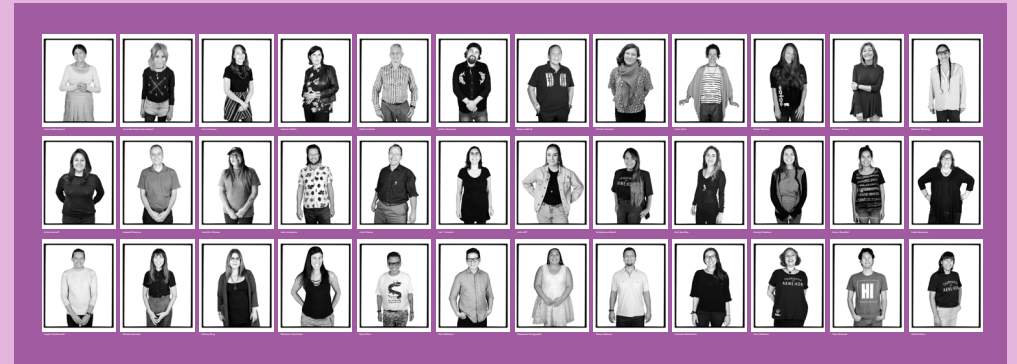
May to November 2025

Onsite Gallery, exterior | Curated by Ryan Rice

Presented as a unique, large-scale, outdoor installation on the façade of Onsite Gallery, Rosalie Favell's *TSÍ TKARÒN:TO* comprises a suite of photographs selected from the Ottawa-based Red River Metis artist's renowned black-and-white portrait series *Facing the Camera*, a monumental national and international visual archive documenting the broad diversity of Indigenous arts and cultural communities. This iteration features a curated selection of images taken during Favell's 2016 tenure as Nigig Artist in Residence at the Ontario College of Art and Design University in tsi Tkaròn:to. The portraits on display were photographed over three open-invitation sessions hosted by the university's Indigenous Visual Culture program.

The artist's broader ongoing project consists of more than 500 photographs taken in cities across Canada, the United States, and Australia between 2008 and 2018, and was revived in 2023. Favell's ambitious project is the largest documentation of living Indigenous artists and culture bearers—inclusive of a broader swath of the creative-inclined community—developed in the 21st century, established with the intent to save face and acknowledge the visual histories, critical interventions, and creative contributions each person has made. The series highlights the interconnectedness of individual and communal identities to present a positive image of an often underrepresented, joyful, contemporary creative community.

During portrait sessions, Favell encourages individuals to represent their personal and cultural experiences, and frames the self not solely as individualistic but as intrinsically tied to community values, traditions, place, and shared histories. The presentation of *Facing the Camera: TSÍ TKARÒN:TO* as an outdoor mural magnifies the impact of the series' relationship to both the transient and enduring presence of Toronto's Indigenous urban community, inherent to place. As a site of interrogation,



Facing the Camera: TSÍ TKARÒN:TO, 2025

Favell's suite of portraits becomes a record for posterity, serving as a profound artistic and cultural statement rejecting imagined archetypes or reductive portrayals, instead recognizing a community that is both diverse and foundational to the city.

By way of formal introduction, Favell's portraits gently prod the viewer, the passer-by, to see, acknowledge (as they should the land), and become acquainted with her community through the identities they represent, countering forms of erasure and misrepresentation. The images celebrate individuals' uniqueness and advance agency for the self to be present, instinctively determined by each sitter through their consensual interaction with the photographer, her process, and ultimately, with the viewer.

Through intimate, one-on-one collaboration, Favell's open invitation for participation across communities builds on her desire to belong. It expands a space for others to be made visible, welcome, and recognized in a truly authentic manner, bolstered by a longing for kinship. With her photographic practice, the artist consciously addresses the historical baggage of photography as a medium, particularly its recurring role in misrepresenting and/or essentializing Indigenous peoples. Her portraits aim to critically intervene in that history, offering a form of visual empowerment that acknowledges the complex interplay of cultural, political, and social factors shaping identity over time. ■

*Facing the Camera: TSÍ TKARÒN:TO* is presented in conjunction with Onsite Gallery's touring exhibition *Rosalie Favell | Belonging (1982–2024)*, June 18 – December 6, 2025.

**CONTACT**  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
FESTIVAL

**Onsite Gallery presents contemporary,  
Indigenous, and public art and design to  
advance knowledge creation and stimulate  
local and international conversations on  
the urgent issues of our time.**

ONSITE GALLERY

***Rosalie Favell | Belonging  
(1982-2024)***

**JUN 18 → DEC 6, 2025**

STREET-LEVEL MURAL (ONSITE GALLERY)

***Facing the Camera:  
TSÍ TKARÒN:TO***

**MAY → NOV, 2025**

**Visit [ocadu.ca/onsite](https://ocadu.ca/onsite)  
for our up-to-date,  
free program of events**

ONSITE GALLERY STAFF

**Ryan Rice**, Executive Director + Curator, Indigenous Art  
**Lisa Deanne Smith**, Senior Curator  
**Susan Jama**, Programs + Community Coordinator  
**Kesa Smith**, Curatorial Assistant  
**Heather Pigat**, Collections Steward

**CURATORS/AUTHORS:** Ryan Rice  
**DESIGNER:** Tom Chaggaris, Sarah Currie  
© Onsite Gallery 2025

**COVER:** Rosalie Favell, *My first day of assimilation*, 1996  
(remastered 2024) from the series *from an early age*.  
Image courtesy of the artist.



199 Richmond St. W.  
Toronto, ON, Canada  
M5V 0H4

[ocadu.ca/onsite](https://ocadu.ca/onsite)  
[onsite@ocadu.ca](mailto:onsite@ocadu.ca)  
416-977-6000, Ext. 265



Wednesday  
**noon to 7 p.m.**

Thursday – Saturday  
**noon to 5 p.m.**



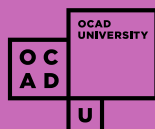
[facebook.com/  
OnsiteOCADU](https://facebook.com/OnsiteOCADU)



[@onsite\\_at\\_ocadu](https://www.instagram.com/onsite_at_ocadu)



Onsite Gallery  
at OCAD University



**ONSITE GALLERY**

GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY  
**THE DELANEY FAMILY**



WITH  
SUPPORT  
FROM



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des arts  
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO  
an Ontario government agency  
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Ontario



FUNDED BY  
THE CITY OF  
TORONTO

**TERRA**  
FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN ART