

---

## 5 Minutes with a ViewPoint Member

### An Interview with Roxanne Smith

by Angela Creaser, January 2016

---

**Angela:** You graduated from [Mount Allison](#) with a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a major in photography, but early on in your career you showed paintings, drawings and [assemblage art](#). What drew you back to photography?

**Roxanne:** Accessibility. Being able to work in photography is what drew me back. I was working at [Carsand Mosher](#) and I had access to a darkroom. The darkroom is what got me into photography and REALLY solidified me into photography.

**Angela:** Do you still use a darkroom now?

**Roxanne:** No.

**Angela:** Do you miss it?



**Roxanne:** My darkroom is slowly, very slowly, being dismantled. I'm having a really hard time letting it go. I miss seeing the image appear on the piece of paper. That's what got me hooked and got me into this business, and I do miss seeing that.

**Angela:** Did your creativity change, going from photography with film and a darkroom to photographing with digital?

**Roxanne:** Yes, I'm using a different kind of creativity. You're not just recording



or editing the world around you in terms of choosing what to frame in a viewfinder. You are not

limited to that and recording it in that way. You are unlimited in terms of your imagination with digital. You can stitch, combine, and it can be all seamless to make it look real - but it's always what you see with your eyes. You can make dreams come true, and with my assemblage photography, I can make temporary things very permanent, things that don't exist more than the length of the photo. Although, a lot of people say any photo doesn't exist any longer than the photo, so that is a moot argument. Digital can make what is in your imagination real. It's quite lovely.

**Angela:** Your recent photography depicts intimate moments and places, with you as the main subject...

**Roxanne:** I don't consider it to me "me", but I'm using myself as a model.

**Angela:** What I mean is most photographers prefer to be behind the camera.

**Roxanne:** And so do I, I hate having my picture taken.

**Angela:** So, why do you choose to be the model versus working with someone else?

**Roxanne:** I'm available. I take direction easy and I know exactly what I want to have done. So it's very simple and seamless in that regard. I have used family members, including my husband. Some people don't like it (modelling) but I am at the point now where I can ask other people to model for me. People have asked to me to use them as a model, but I haven't gotten around to doing that at this point.



**Angela:** Where does the inspiration come from to create the moments that you then capture with your camera? How do you know when you're going to capture the "intimate moment"

**Roxanne:** As you said, they are "intimate moments", so what often happens is that I'm in a space, often for a long time and I think, "this is really beautiful, and it's beautiful in a really subtle way". I know if I just take a picture of it, people won't necessarily see the beauty of it in that very, very subtle way I do, so I add a person to enhance or amplify it.

**Angela:** Why are your photographs mostly in black and white versus colour?

**Roxanne:** The other day I went through a bunch of images I've been working on, trying to work out a new exhibition. I went through them all and took the black and white filter off and looked at them... and looked at them... and looked at them, for a long time. Then I put the black and white filter back on. I find as much as I love colour, and I absolutely adore it, I love black and white more. I like the tonality and the richness of black and white. I find colour sometimes distracts us from the subject. I've got this phrase from someone else; it [the photograph] becomes a window with colour as opposed to an object. It tells a different story with colour.



**Angela:** Your CV of exhibitions is expansive. Is there one exhibition that stands out for you above all the rest? Maybe you learned something about yourself, or it started a new direction? If so, can you explain?

**Roxanne:** [Breathe Normally](#) is definitely a new direction for me and the exhibition I've just had, [Winter Gardens](#) is something that I had wanted to do for a while; combining my assemblage work with photography. Breathe Normally was about story telling; it was about putting emotion into the photographs. It's an open story - each image had its own story that people could find, but the whole body of work could tell a story as well. Previously, I had a body

of work that would tell a whole story together, but Breathe Normally, each image can stand alone, or be part of the whole set working together. With Winter Gardens I wanted to work with two mediums (photography & assemblage) and have each piece tell a story in a different way. I want to continue with that. It's a slow cooking process, because you have to build them, assemble the materials, wait for the light to be right because it is a studio with natural light.

**Angela:** We have time for five quick questions. What is your...

Favorite TV show?

[Coronation Street](#) (every day, otherwise [Doctor Who](#))

Favorite Artist?

[Rembrandt](#)

Favorite Art Gallery?

[Getty](#)

Preference: Water or Mountains?

Water

Preference: Tea or Coffee?

Coffee