



DEBBIE FLEMING CAFFERY
Portraits of Birds



White Peacock, New Mexico, 1996



Nigel, Livingston, Louisiana, 2019



Bubba, Rio Rancho, New Mexico, 2019

Reception with the Artist:
Friday, July 7, 2023, 5-7pm

Exhibition is on view June 9 through July 29, 2023

Obscura Gallery is thrilled to welcome Debbie Fleming Caffery back to Santa Fe for a Summer solo exhibition, *Portraits of Birds*, a beloved project Debbie has undertaken most of her career. At a young age growing up on the Bayou Teche in Louisiana, Debbie was inspired by her grandfather, who raised doves, pigeons, and chickens and took her on day trips to visit wild birds. Throughout Debbie's career, she continued her passion for these creatures, photographing birds in many varied settings: living wild in Louisiana, freed from animal markets in Mexico, and most recently rehabilitated as Avian Ambassadors in New Mexico. Debbie brings the same sensitivity into this stunning collection of black and white gelatin silver portraits of birds as she is known for when photographing people of various cultures.

The artist reception takes place on Friday, July 7 from 5-7pm.

1405 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501 505-577-6708 info@obscuragallery.net

WWW.OBSCURAGALLERY.NET



DEBBIE FLEMING CAFFERY, *Squeaky, Livingston, Louisiana, 2019, 17.25 x 21.75"*, gelatin silver print, edition of 5.

Debbie Fleming Caffery grew up along the Bayou Teche in southwest Louisiana and still lives in the area. Early in her career, she was inspired by the work of Dorothea Lange and many of the artists working within the FSA and Federal Arts Project of the WPA during the Depression. Like these forbears, she is interested in telling stories with her pictures. Her rich, and dramatic prints are the result of the deep relationships with the people and places she photographs, a visual corollary to the reverence she has for her subjects.

Caffery has photographed the sugarcane industry and its community in Louisiana since the late 1970s. She has also photographed in rural villages in Mexico for many years, creating works that draw connections between those communities and the ones in Louisiana that were so familiar to her from her own upbringing. In 2005, Caffery was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship for the work she made of women working in brothels in Mexico. In 2006, she received the Katrina Media Fellowship from the Open Society Foundations to continue to photograph the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Debbie's approach to photographing birds is no different than with any of her incredibly intimate projects. She has a long, intertwined relationship with the creatures that began in intrigue at an early age with her Grandfather near the Bayou Teche:

"My love for birds began as a child, during the time I spent with my grandfather, PaPa Angers. Every day, from kindergarten through 7th grade, I would walk to my grandparents' house after school.

"I loved to watch my Grandfather hatch guinea hen eggs in an incubator in his garage. He had chickens and a rooster that lived in his yard. The chickens were my pets.... After school I would often go with my grandfather to feed other birds at a beautiful, magical place on the Bayou Teche. He was a modest man, but he always wore a suit. He was blind in one eye, and he often took another old man with us, Mr. Polk, who only had one eye....so they had two good eyes between them!



DEBBIE FLEMING CAFFERY, *Nigel, Living stray, Louisiana, 2019, 17.5 x 21.75"*, gelatin silver print, edition of 5.



DEBBIE FLEMING CAFFERY, *Gabriella, The White Peacock, Mexico, 1996*, 18 x 17.5", gelatin silver print, edition of 5.

"While photographing in Mexico many years later, I visited an animal market, where there were owls and hawks in cages for sale. I felt bad for them and was fascinated by them, so I bought several owls and a hawk, photographed them in a burned out house in Mexico City and freed them in the country."

1405 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505 obscuragalleryphoto@gmail.com

WWW.OBSCURAGALLERY.NET



DEBBIE FLEMING CAFFERY, *Baby Eagle Owls, France, 2022*, 16.25 x 21 3/4", gelatin silver print, edition of 5.



DEBBIE FLEMING CAFFERY, *Northern White-Faced Owl, France, 2019*, 17.25 x 21.75", gelatin silver print, edition of 5.



DEBBIE FLEMING CAFFERY, *Stork, France, 2019*, 21.75 x 17.25", gelatin silver print, edition of 5.



1405 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505 obscuragalleryphoto@gmail.com

WWW.OBSCURAGALLERY.NET

DEBBIE FLEMING CAFFERY, *Eagle Owl, France, 2022, 17 3/4 x 21 3/4"*, gelatin silver print, edition of 5.



DEBBIE FLEMING CAFFERY, *Celeste, Rio Rancho, New Mexico, 2018, 21.75 x 17.25"*, gelatin silver print, edition of 5.

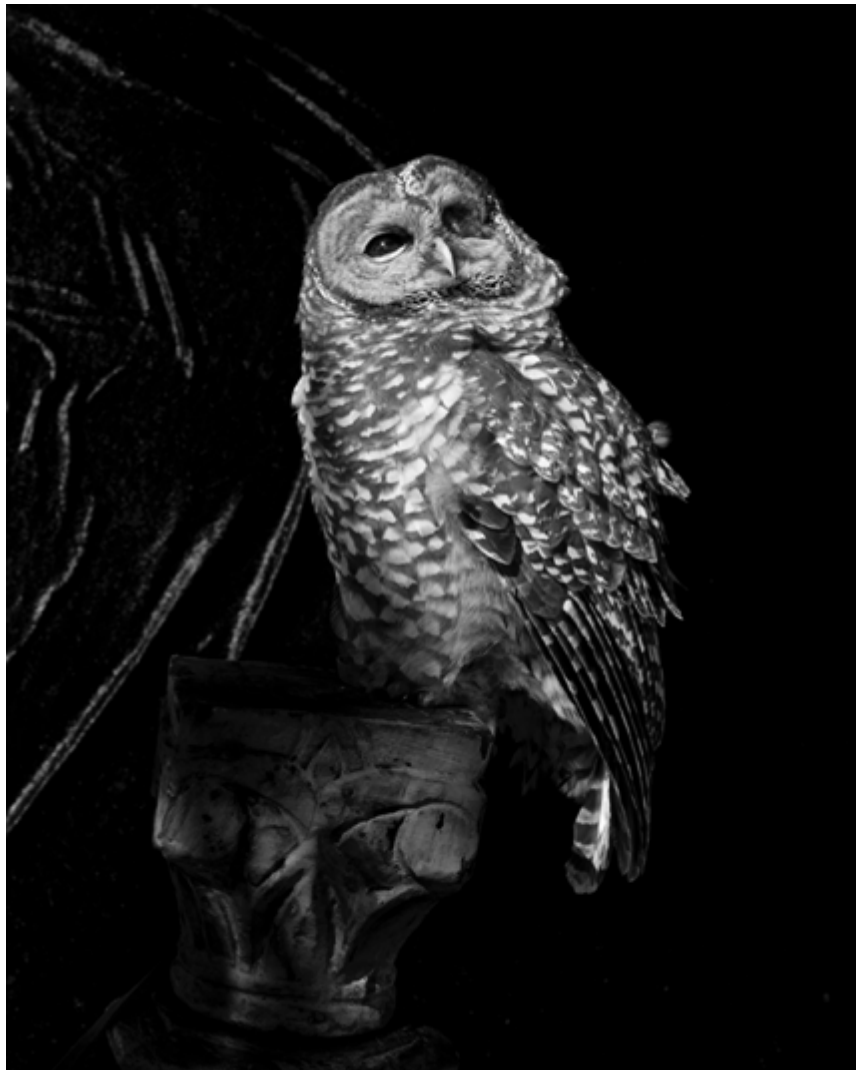


DEBBIE FLEMING CAFFERY, *Beauty, Turkey Vulture, Corrales, New Mexico, 2018, 17.25 x 21.75"*, gelatin silver print, edition of 5.

1405 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505 obscuragalleryphoto@gmail.com

WWW.OBSCURAGALLERY.NET

“More recently, while in New Mexico, I discovered there were organizations that were rescuing injured birds and once they were healed, releasing them into the wild. Many of the birds were unreleasable due to broken wings, injured eyes, etc. These birds were referred to as the “Avian Ambassadors.” They are brought to schools and various places in the communities to educate the public about protecting birds in the wild. One of the Avian Ambassador birds I photographed was a beautiful Mexican Spotted Owl, named Jemez. She was also blind in one eye. She reminds me of my Grandfather, who wore glasses with a grey fuzzy cloud over his blind eye. Every time I looked at her I remember the memories of my time with my Grandfather, knowing his inspiration is always with me.”



DEBBIE FLEMING CAFFERY, *Jemez, New Mexico*, 2018, 21.75 x 17.25", gelatin silver print, edition of 5.

Caffery received a commission from the High Museum in Atlanta for their *Picturing the South* photography initiative which resulted in the 2021 exhibition in Georgia. She will have a retrospective of her work at the New Orleans Museum of Art this Fall 2023. Caffery's monographs include: *Carry Me Home* (Smithsonian, 1990), *The Shadows* (Twin Palms Press, 2002) and *Polly* (Twin Palms Press, 2004), *The Spirit & The Flesh* (Radius Books, 2009) and *Alphabet* (Fall Line Press, 2015).



DEBBIE FLEMING CAFFERY, *Shadow, Rio Rancho, New Mexico, 2018*, 17.25 x 20.75", gelatin silver print, edition of 5.

THE GALLERY LOCATION AND HOURS

Obscura Gallery is located in the Santa Fe downtown historic district two blocks east of the revitalized Downtown Railyard district. Gallery hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 11-5pm and by appointment.

Parking is limited. Additional parking is available Monday – Friday from 8:00am – 9:00pm at the State Capitol Parking Facility municipal garage located at 485 Galisteo Street. There is also metered parking always available on Galisteo street next to the Parking Facility.