

AJA Louden

Elsa Robinson, 2019, acrylic spray paint on panel

Artist statement

Like Me is a series of spray-painted portraits on wooden assemblages made from construction materials that celebrates brilliant artists who, like me, practice their craft in Edmonton. The reference images for the portraits were pulled from each artist's social media feed and the materials are purposely scrappy, as if they were pulled off the street.

In this work, I am interested in the way artists in particular are pushed to construct a public persona by sharing our craft, our process, our stories, and our lives online, and how this evolved and was amplified during the pandemic. Through posting images of ourselves and our work, we implicitly ask to be seen, for our voice to be heard, for the thoughts and ideas that define us to be acknowledged and reflected.

Elsa Robinson is a multifaceted artist and the matriarch of a family of important Edmonton artists. Elsa's sculptural textile works, paintings and collages exploring representations of Black families are particularly inspiring.

As an educator and workshop facilitator, much of Elsa's life work has involved making art and artistic practices accessible to communities in a way I wish I'd felt as a youth. Two of her children, Shima and Judah, are prolific artists in their own rights, and seeing Elsa's expanding legacy imbued in her own lineage helped me understand the undeniable value of nurturing and nourishing emerging talent.