

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

in a new land: (be)longing

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF FINE ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ART

CALGARY, ALBERTA

SEPTEMBER 2017

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Abstract

This support paper explores my growing interest in different forms of existence, being, identity formation and specifically diaspora. Through research creation, the field of art and design invariably involves a study of the interplay between a researcher and their artistic work in process. In this writing, the methodologies focus on exploring diaspora, immigration, Canada and ‘the migrants’ time’ in the twenty first century in terms of understanding political and cultural realities of migration. For Marsha Meskimmon and Robin Cohen, migration is the biggest concern in an era of globalization characterized by the rapid pace of modernization. Four different installation art projects are discussed in this support paper: *DESigual: (Ad)dressing identity, Becoming Words: on Process, Becoming Words: “I am going to die in this country as an immigrant.”*, and *“In a new land...Be longing”*. Through these projects, I have explored the practice of installation art, text-based art, and the underlying content of porcelain paper clay. I have undertaken a material exploration porcelain paper clay and a conceptual exploration of its use as a medium to emphasize what I refer to as embodied materiality. I aim to visualize the experience of replacement and displacement through representational and non-representational sculptures by making art objects, searching a new material: such as porcelain of paper clay and using texts.

Keywords: identity formation, diaspora, immigration, porcelain, installation, text-based art, multiculturalism, autoethnography

Acknowledgements

Many thanks go to my supervisor Kim Huynh and the Committee Members: Dr. Susan Cahill and Dick Averbs for being so supportive and patient with my MFA projects' processes. I must thank with a depth of gratitude Katherine Ylitalo and Dr. Brian Rusted who inspired me on how to live with my creativity and thoughts in a host culture. I thank Dona Schwartz, Linda Carreiro, Jean-Rene Leblanc, and Denis for their enthusiastic support and useful comments.

Thank you, Rick Calkins, for being supportive of every single different aspect of my art, life and as a friend. It has been appreciated so much since the time I met you until now. I would also like to recognize the technicians Steven Nunoda, and Anthony Reimer for their help.

I want to thank my dear classmates not only for sharing their knowledge anytime, but also giving me a hand and their time whenever I needed, especially Elmira Sarreshtehdari, Greg Robb, Christopher Savage, Brandon Hearty, and Morgan Campbell. I want to thank Graduate Studies Administrator Biljana Arnautovic who always keeps her door open for graduate students to provide resources and knowledge of Graduate Studies. I would also like to thank Samira Jaffer, Nicola Waugh, Nicole Ethier, and Denise West-Spencer for their helpful assistance.

Many thanks are due to the University of Calgary for their financial support and teaching opportunities, and for the Grant Support to Queen Elizabeth II. I would like to express my appreciation to The Nickle Galleries' people Christine Sowiak, Marla Halsted, Doug McColl, and John Hails.

Thank you to my family for being patient and supportive during my MFA program, especially my son Adrian Erden, my sister Nuriye Balac and my husband David Rodriguez.

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Chapter One: Introduction

My creative practice explores the experience of immigration and identity formation of dislocated individuals and diasporic experiences into visual art. I am interested in creating a new context and challenging the political discourse that revolves around immigration and identity formation of immigrant bodies in the twenty-first century in Canada. Specifically, my projects convey intersected subjects created by multiculturalism as they are often used to conceptualize becoming and being bodies in diaspora¹.

I experiment with materials such as porcelain mixed with paper, which becomes porcelain paper clay, rice paper, and ink while integrating text into visual art to represent identity formation and diasporic bodies within the artwork through printmaking and ceramics. Also, my work focuses on how legal documentation and human bodies can be integrated into installation art and attempts to disrupt diasporic discourse by finding words that distinguish active/dominant spectators with the passive/submissive objectified immigrants. To do this, I focused on legal forms, bodies; materiality: porcelain and paper. I represent the body with shoulders as a form to make a representational vessel; my official documents as paper works; finally, porcelain paper clay. In my final thesis project, I intend to disturb the politics of contemporary immigration of diasporic communities by drawing attention to simplified words, which are often used to characterize the experience of displaced or replaced individuals, on legal forms and how they are defined at an institutional level.

As an immigrant, I want to explain through my art what the policies of immigration in Canada are and how the Canadian Government regulates immigration at micro and macro levels - or personal and/or collective levels. According to my immigration experience, six years in three

¹ Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathon Rutherford. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 223.

different countries, I find myself qualified to say that immigration, to any country, is an arduous and multifaceted process. The results are not always predictable. The better you are prepared, the more information you gather before you make the final decision, the better you will be equipped to deal with the challenges and obstacles that will arise on a daily basis as a relocated individual.

I acknowledge that we live in an era shaped by the global refugee crisis and immigration issues, with the subsequent becoming resulting as collective foci of conversation in contemporary art.² This experience was a turning point in my artistic research, which has led to the bodies of work that I discussed in this support paper.

1.1 Context and Methods

My MFA research creation practice coincides with my observations of immigration and the exploration of transformative identity regarding emotional experience in a multicultural setting.³ My research started with questions such as: (1) What is the disconnection/connection between individual and collective or multicultural identity? (2) Where does the integration of an individual and his/her origin culture (experience) intersect? (3) How can I become a new citizen in a host country while maintaining a connection to my origin identity? (4) What processes lead to sociological, psychological, and political transformation? (5) What are the expectations from me/he/she as an immigrant to demonstrate and prove the eligibility to become a Canadian citizen? Using these questions to inform my studio practice-based. Qualitative observational studies help me examine and reflect lived experience in terms of providing a voice to unspoken immigrant issues. I want my projects to deconstruct the formation of collective identity by

² Marc Crinson, *A Companion to Contemporary Art since 1945*, ed. Amelia Jones. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing 2006) p.450-466

³ In collaboration with Pier 21, *Our Immigration Saga: Canada @150*, Canadian Issues, Spring 2017

disclosing and making public its underlying facets.⁴ I have been investigating how art making opens up new opportunities to speak about the personal and political issues as a concept or an ideology involved with the process of immigration and integration within a foreign culture.

Diasporic bodies and migrant individuals have been foundational concepts or subjects of my research. For the appropriate writing, methodological approach, and context of my research I feel it is important to emphasize the definitions of words including diaspora, cultural identity, nomadic, acculturation, and hyphenated. These words are used by theorists, sociologists, and art critics, among others. During my research, these keywords helped me define myself as an immigrant through my writing and to redefine my identity in a new land. Therefore, this practice assisted me to visualize my own artworks. On the other hand, to enhance practice-led research as an experience, I have prepared a glossary of technical terminology. Working in the studio and explaining my process of making is a big part of the discussed art projects in this paper and my practice as a whole. The nature of my processes, and also the tools and strategies I use are very important to me. This activity, not only conceptualizes my art work, but has been the position of my diasporic body in a global world. These diasporic experiences and my hyphenated identity have resulted in an uncertain relationship with theoretical and lived paradigms of the postcolonial condition.⁵ I use my personal individuated experiences as the conceptual foundations from which to address broader concerns of identity, ethnicity, Otherness, difference, language, and power. By working with a range of materials and processes, my practice explores the intersections between autoethnography, multiculturalism, a postcolonial theory, the nuances of a physical world, and real or 'lived' experiences in the context of contemporary globalization.

⁴ whereas Poletta and Jasper (2001) locate collective identity within the individuals, defining it as: 'an individual's cognitive, moral and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution', (p.285)

⁵ Rogers Brubaker, "The 'diaspora' diaspora" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Vol.28 No. 1 (January 2005)1-19
doi:10.1080/014187042000289997

I thought that I should invest time exploring colonial and postcolonial theories in this support paper ⁶. Thus, I decided to explain some keywords in this first Chapter to reflect the process of conceptualizing this research paper. Definitely, postcolonial theory could lead this conversation.

Postcolonialism is presented as a reaction to colonialism, however, the prefix ‘post’ does not only chronological progression. “Post” conveys the meaning of something that emerged as the opposite to the status quo established by colonialism because “colonialism is not restricted to a specific time or place.”⁷ Therefore we cannot completely proclaim colonialism is terminated. The literary works that are considered representatives of the colonial discourse present the topics only from the point of view of the colonizer without taking into account the fact that people (colonized) have been living in these places before. The development of a “postcolonial” consciousness and the rise of identity politics in the 1960s after the ending of European colonial empires in the post-WWII period. For Gayatri Spivak always colonized the object of discourse never the subject; thus, these two theories cannot be studied independently but only together because one influences the other.⁸ As postcolonialism is focused on the new perspective on individuals living in the former colonies, it makes use of the “multiplicity of history” a term connected with poststructuralism. Edward Said’s book *Orientalism*, in the 1970s, prominent support for the first postcolonial studies.⁹ The main contribution of this book was the critique of the western perception of the East or orient. Said, Bhabha, and Spivak drew heavily on the

⁶ Augie Fleras, *Immigration Canada*. (Toronto: UBC Press, 2015), 408-427

⁷ Margaret Kohn, "Colonialism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), eds. Edward N. Zalta, URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/colonialism/>>.

⁸ Gayatri Spivak, C. *Can the Subaltern Speak?: reflection on the history of an idea*. (Columbia University Press, 2010), 1-21

⁹ Pauline de Souza, “Implications of Blackness in Contemporary Art,” *A Companion to Contemporary Art since 1945*, ed. Amelia Jones. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing 2006), 356-377.

knowledge and the methods of important poststructural theorists like Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, and Michael Foucault.¹⁰ Their poststructural critiques examined the dominant models of identity, knowledge, discourses and power perpetuated by Western culture. Through Said's critiques of representation, Spivak's analysis of marginalization and Bhabha's strategies of Hybridity, ambivalence and simulation these key figures revealed.¹¹ According to Mark Crinson "postcolonial theory became an important aspect of contemporary art sometime around the mid to late 1980s"¹² Crinson concludes that postcolonial theory played a part in the changes that were made in the 1980s to decentralize curatorial activity and to open up Western Galleries and museums to art practices not only the West but also to art produced by minorities in the West itself.¹³ At the same era, the term 'multiculturalism' emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in countries like Canada and Australia. Moreover, in Canada set of issues covered by the term originally centred on indigenous people and francophone Quebec were consider 'nations' rather than cultures, and the term 'multiculturalism' has come to mean the accommodation of different nation, ethnicity and community in other words ethnoreligious groups formed by immigration in the last five decades.¹⁴ In addition, Tariq Modood states "Since 9/11 and its aftermath it is Muslims who have become the focus of discourse about minorities in the West. It is partly an issue of security, but more generally is accompanied by a rhetoric of multiculturalism is dead."¹⁵ On the other hand, multiculturalism has emerged the important role and representation of languages specifically the mother tongue and English, the language of the host language, in other

¹⁰ Mark Crinson, "Fragments of Collapsing Space": Postcolonial Theory and Contemporary Art", *A Companion to Contemporary Art since 1945*, ed. by Amelia Jones, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2006).450-467

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid.450

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Augis Fleras, *Immigration Canada: Evolving Realities and Emerging Challenges in a Postcolonial World*, (Toronto: UBC Press, 2016), 385-400.

¹⁵ Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood, "The Multicultural State We're In: Muslims, 'Multiculture' and the 'Civic Re-balancing' of British Multiculturalism", *Political Studies*, 2009 Vol. 57, 473-497
http://www.tariqmodood.com/uploads/1/2/3/9/12392325/multicultural_state_we_are_in.pdf

words, global language for immigrants.¹⁶ Learning a new language, in terms of a linguistic context, plays a crucial role in the experience of immigration and the shaping of a new identity.

Learning and using English as an immigrant is an essential condition of my everyday life. In other words, my belonging and identity embodiment, in other words “demonstrate an ability to communicate” of the official languages French or English, is to equalize my presence in Canada. Becoming multilingual migrants indicates that changing and shifting identities in a new culture. According to Christian Higgins, “In most of Britain’s former colonies where English was installed as an official language, it is often assumed that English serves to connect local official language, it is often assumed where English serves to connect local communities with globalized worlds.”¹⁷ Higgins claims that English a local language, thus, I also perceive English as a communication skill or tool because Canada is a native-speaker country and it is a connector in the multilingual language use¹⁸. As a multilingual family, I have been using English language as part of my everyday practice in Turkey, Spain, The USA, Canada and wherever I go in the world. Hence, I have been using English language the contexts of the global and local exercises, and now it allows me to have transnational life in Canada.¹⁹

Cultural Identity: Stuart Hall wrote in 1989: “Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories, undergo constant transformation. Cultural identity is not an essence, but a positioning”²⁰ Thus, each of us starts life with a social location or cultural environment and with some genetic that make a person who is he or she is at a point in time and place. Sharon Irish acknowledges that individuals ‘social location is the starting point, not whom we are

¹⁶ Kim Knott, & Seán McLoughlin, *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities*, (New York: Zed Books), 2010

¹⁷ Christina Higgins, *English as a Local Language: Post-colonial identities and multilingual Practices*, (Channel View Publications, 2009), 1-20

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”. *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathon Rutherford. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 223.

becoming.’²¹ Moreover, Sysovey states individual’s cultural identity as a construct that consists of many facets.²² Most commonly referred to and described in his writings are the following facets or types of one’s cultural identity: racial, ethnic, social, economic, geopolitical, gender, religious, ability/disability, language, professional.

Multiculturalism: Between individuals and their groups, and between non-dominant peoples and the larger society, the process of integration is called ‘multiculturalism’. For Berry, this happens when diversity is an accepted feature of the society as a whole, including all the various ethnocultural groups.²³ Multiculturalism is a type of acculturation that allows the ethnic groups adoption by the host culture while experiencing the societal values and fostering diversity.

Acculturation: John Berry states that acculturation in contemporary societies is a dynamic, meaning-making process. This process is about how they aspire to be part of it and how they position themselves in it.²⁴ Thus, acculturation is not a result; it is an ongoing process of change that involves the active participation of individuals and groups. In other words, it covers both collective and individual elements of the self. Berry states that Acculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change’ John Berry has developed a model for understanding the strategies that people use in acculturation, and this model includes four types of acculturation strategies: ‘²⁵

- Integration – The individual maintains his or her own cultural identity while at the same time becomes a participant in the host culture. *

²¹ Sharon Irish, “Introduction,” *Susan Lacy: Spaces Between*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 7.

²² P.V. Sysoyev, *Individuals cultural identity in the context of dialogue of cultures* (Tambov: The Tambov State University Press, 2001), 38.

²³ John Berry, “Acculturation, Living successfully in two cultures,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 29 (2005) 697–712 <https://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic551691.files/Berry.pdf>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

- Assimilation – The individual gives up his or her own cultural identity and becomes absorbed into the host culture.
- Separation – The individual maintains his or her own cultural identity and rejects involvement with the host culture.
- Marginalization – The individual does not identify with or participate in either his or her own culture or the host culture.²⁶

Diaspora: In the founding work on diaspora communities, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (1997), Robin Cohen presents a thorough assessment and analysis of the world’s scattered communities. The word diaspora is derived from Greek verb sperio (to sow) and the preposition dia (over), so its literal translation is “to sow over”²⁷ Therefore, diaspora is an ancient term that has gained new currency in our contemporary moment. Diaspora refers to those social groups which share a common ethnic and national origin, but live outside the territory of their origin. Diaspora communities or groups have a strong feeling of attachment to their “homeland”, making no specific reference to ethnicity, or to a particular place of settlement.²⁸ It is the contemporary post-colonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha who provided one of the most influential formulations of Diaspora as a location of culture, and he developed it as a liberating position meant to lead beyond the limitation of a single identity.²⁹ All diasporas, either independent of national and ethnic background or treated as a single group in which ethnical boundaries are crossed and considered as being hybrid and globally oriented. When

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas*. (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 1997), 1-10. ProQuest Ebook Central.

*In my experience, Integration is the best characterized the acculturation orientation adopted by Canada as the host culture. At the same time, bilingualism and language use as a strategy of the acculturation or integration mode is the large part for the individual. I had to develop a strategy how to address the integration experience within a dominant culture. I figured out that the use of host culture’s language: English was the best vehicle that I could rely on.

²⁸ Femke Stock, “Home and Memory”, *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities*, eds. by Kim Knott and Sean McLoughlin. (New York: Zed Books), 2010.

²⁹ Homi Bhabha, “Introduction”, *The location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 1-19.

referring to people, the term “diaspora” implies that people have been relocated or removed from their original place of residence (homeland). In his book, Cohen describes the term diaspora about the experience of the Jews –a group of people who were forced out of their place of residence and scattered around the world. Consequently, in academia, the word diaspora is used in relation to the Jewish population’s forced relocation. From the point of view of a homeland, Robin Cohen created a new typology of diaspora based on diversity specifically, what he calls victim/ imperial diasporas, trading, labor, and the business of no specific ethnicity.³⁰ Diaspora formation is a result of immigration in the twenty-first century, in addition, becoming a member of a diaspora community is a process of self-identification and consciousness.³¹ After all, I consider the notion of diaspora as a process, practice, and not a description of people. I am interested in Cohen’s elaborations on diasporas as characteristic of a late modern condition.

1.2 Methodologies/ Research Methods

Through research creation, the field of art and design invariably involves a study of the interplay between a researcher and their artistic work in process.³² A set of methodological tools relating to qualitative research including data collection, analysis, interpretation and representation has been implemented in my practice-led research. Leavy states that qualitative research can be considered as a craft; “qualitative researchers do not simply gather and write;

³⁰ Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas*. (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 1997). Accessed April 28, 2017. ProQuest Ebook Central.

³¹ Ibid

³² Research Creation definition from SSHRC: “An approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. The creation process is situated within the research activity and produces critically informed work in a variety of media (art forms). Research-creation cannot be limited to the interpretation or analysis of a creator’s work, conventional works of technological development, or work that focuses on the creation of curricula. The research-creation process and the resulting artistic work are judged according to SSHRC’s established merit review criteria.” Retrieved from <http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programmes-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx#a22>

they compose, orchestrate, and weave.”³³ Accordingly, as a researcher, I am the instrument in qualitative research in my artistic practice; “both practices are holistic and dynamic, involving reflection, description, problem formulation and solving, and the ability to identify and explain intuition and creatively in the research process.”³⁴ Consequently, qualitative researchers can be referred to as ‘artist-scientist’.³⁵ This methodology comprises new theoretical and epistemological groundings that are expanding the qualitative paradigm.³⁶

Practice-led research has become the principle methodology of the second years’ projects because it provides a growing awareness of different kinds of knowledge. Barbara Bolt describes the importance of “the logical relation between making and writing.”⁴³⁷ I examined the theoretical, philosophical and conceptual discourses in the written interpretations for deriving the experimental, material and formal processes of my creative practice. Through contextual analysis and theoretical critique, the written interpretations allow me to investigate the broad contextual and critical field in which I work. It helps me gain a deeper understanding of the significance of art practice in regards to the production of knowledge. It also allows me to develop an in-depth understanding of my own practice. The overlaps and intersections between discursive activities in the studio and theoretical contexts are crucial for my methodology

My studio practice also involves a diverse range of materials and processes. I use clay, sculpture, installation, text and digital image making to explore the complexities and possibilities of postcolonial condition. These diverse methods and materials are crucial to my explorations as

³³ Patricia Leavy, *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice*, (2009), https://www.sfu.ca/cmns/courses/2012/801/1-Readings/Leavy_Methodmeetsart.pdf

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid, p.3.

³⁷ Barbara Bolt, *Art Beyond Representation: The Performative Power of the Image*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004) 157-190

they reflect my diasporic ways of seeing.³⁸ Therefore, practice-led research is not just embedded in the creative and academic contexts. Moreover, it focuses not just on what is enacted in creative processes and embodied in art products, but it also engages with who we are and where we stand. To conclude, Sullivan suggests that “visual arts research comprises practices that are theoretically robust, idea-based, process rich, purposeful, and strategic, and make use of adaptive methods and inventive forms whose uniqueness is best seen as connected to, yet also distinct from, traditional systems of inquiry”³⁹

Auto-ethnography: Autoethnography is an approach to research and documenting in the quest to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)⁴⁰. Carolyn Ellis in the Handbook of Autoethnography describes this powerful qualitative method eloquently.

“... autoethnography is not simply a way of knowing about the world; it has become a way of being in the world, one that requires living consciously, emotionally, reflexively. It asks that we not only examine our lives but also consider how and why we think, act, and feel as we do. Autoethnography requires that we observe ourselves observing, that we interrogate what we think and believe, and that we challenge our own assumptions, asking over and over if we have penetrated as many layers of our own defenses, fears, and insecurities as our project requires. It asks that we rethink and revise our lives, making conscious decisions about who and how we want to be. And in the process, it seeks a story that is hopeful, where authors ultimately write themselves as survivors of the story they are living.”

My auto-ethnographical approach allows me to understand how I perceive the past, how I receive the present, and how I can organize the future. The process of auto-ethnography is about an individual’s efforts to locate oneself and experiences in a specific place and time, and reflect

³⁸ Kobena Mercer, *Annotating Art’s Histories: Exiles, Diasporas & Strangers*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016), 125.

³⁹ Greame Sullivan, *Art practice as research: Inquiry in the visual arts*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2005), 245.

⁴⁰ Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams and Arthur P. Bochner, "Autoethnography: An Overview" *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* [Online], Volume 12 Number 1 (24 November 2010)

on the conditions that shaped the nature of one's experiences.⁴¹ Therefore, this methodology allows me to communicate and connect individuals and cultures.

Installation Art: "What is installation art?" is a sophisticated book created by Claire Bishop. She defines installation art "is a term that loosely refers to the type of art into which the audience physically enters, and which is often described as 'theatrical', 'immersive' or 'experiential'...the word 'installation' has now expanded to describe any arrangement of objects in any given space, to the point where it can be happily applied even to a conventional display of painting."⁴²

Installation art requires the complex interaction that defines the relationship of a work of art and the viewer as the object of study. Bishop argues that, as a result of being physically inside an art installation, the viewer's visual experience changes. The decentralization of the viewer implies the abolition of a single and central point of view that had been introduced with the Renaissance perspective⁴³. Components of installation art are "activation" and "decentralization" of the spectatorship, and for her, these concepts are connected to the poststructuralist theories which flourished in the 1970s. The rise of a new 'multiple perspective' in contemporary art has accompanied the ideology that is critical of the hierarchical model of the past. In other words, installation art enables artists to ensure that the viewer is not a passive spectator but an active agent in how the work (re)defines place.⁴⁴

1.3 Context

This is both the story of my personal adventure and an explanation of how the uniqueness of an immigrant must transform and mutate with the intention of integrating to a new land.

Migrants first choose their destination and then they decide whether or not to become a citizen of

⁴¹ Dwayne Custer, "Autoethnography as a transformative research method". *The Qualitative Report*, 19 (How to 21), p.1-13.

⁴² Claire Bishop, *Installation Art*, p.6. (London: TATE Publishing, 2005), 7-10

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

their adopted homeland. While a number of factors come into play with both choices, the majority of newcomers decide to become Canadian/citizens. By doing so, they obtain the rights, privileges, and responsibilities associated with being Canadian and, in a sense, make the symbolic transition from newcomer to permanent resident to become a Canadian citizen.⁴⁵ This process is the path to becoming a Canadian for immigrants. Jaspal and Coyle argue and state that “language is a symbolic marker of identity and in some situations, its use can constitute a threat to people’s identity.”⁴⁶ Thus, for immigrants, constructing an identity is an important issue in culturally diverse contexts, such as how people communicate between their culture of origin and the culture in the society in which they live. For me, the use of the host culture’s language is the most important strategy to enhance the migrant identity. In my experience, the more I study and learn English the more I become an eligible candidate of Canadian citizen. English as a language has enhanced my geographical understanding of the land where I live and will live until the end of my life.

Exploring these thoughts through my artwork allows me to reflect on and represent the identity shifts and struggles frequently encountered during the process of immigration. I believe that passing through passages of immigration, and individuals should strive to protect and connect with their origin culture, as opposed to completely abandoning their identity to assimilate into their new host culture. My artwork is a reflection of my transformative identity, encompassing both my new home and the place I originate from. It is important to incorporate aspects of my identity that are closely tied to Turkey, the country where I grew up because these were formative years that shaped my values and the way I view the world. Therefore, through

⁴⁵ Retrieved from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/perm/>

⁴⁶ Xenia Chrysochoou, “Identity process in culturally diverse societies: how is culturally diversity reflected in the self”, *Identity Process Theory: Identity, Social Action and Social Change*, eds. Jaspal and Glynis M. Breakwell. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 135-150

my artworks and installation art, I aim to demonstrate how to express the process of negotiating my new hyphenated identity as a Turkish-Canadian woman, simultaneously a Middle Easterner and a North American.

1.4 Outline

To conclude, this support paper seeks to address research questions about representational art objects, installation art, and contemporary theory. It will begin from my first solo exhibition work *DESignal* in Chapter 2. *DESignal: (Ad)dressing identity* is about addressing my personal questions about stated identity within a host culture, such as: Who am I? What am I? In this work, I wanted to reflect that my status and the process of obtaining it were critical in my everyday life to stay in Canada. The realization of how to collect the right legal records and documents were the only solution for transitioning from an immigrant to a permanent resident. In Chapter 3, I explain how my exploration into materiality and the use of language and text started in my artwork *Becoming Words: on Process*. While I was figuring out materiality as a practice-led research, I focused on conceptual art and how the text could work as a visual element to represent the migrants' experience on both social and political levels. Chapter 4: *Becoming Words: "I am going to die in this country as an immigrant."* discusses how diasporic individuals deal with becoming and being addressing the functions of language in Canada. Lastly, Chapter 5 examines my final thesis exhibition, which is about the body as a representative of the home concept versus being longed in the twenty-first century. In this chapter, I present and analyze my creative work that is a continuation of the third project discussed in Chapter 4. Through the final installation, *In a new land ... Be longing*, I have creatively explored the complexities of contemporary postcolonial conditions and my own ambivalent personal experiences.

Chapter Two: *DESigual*: (Ad)dressing identity with mix-media installation art for the Transformative Identities of Immigrants

Through the research creation of my first solo exhibition, *DESigual*, I aimed to contribute to the knowledge of the existence of artifacts created in the research process. I wanted to make sculptural forms based on ubiquitous objects – such as a dress. Dressing the body and molding parts of my own body as a way to explore the affects of the migrant experience through site-specific installed artwork. I preferred using my own body as the primary source because casting the body afforded me the opportunity to see the self from a new perspective. I produce individual works which became an installation that appropriates my personal legal documents to create self-portraits. The images associated with my experience immigrating to Canada are used to create a series of dress sculptures that invite the viewer to walk among the developing narrative that is symbolic of my journey through this process. This second project was an attachment to the previous project which was my first art project that is *Looking for a New Land* and was a mix-media installation⁴⁷. I used legally filled, submitted and certified legal forms, documented paper works that are supplied and need to be returned to the Canadian Government for me to pass the international borders. I wanted to reflect that I have a stated body and to confirm a likable identity I had to provide all my personal details.

2.1 Sculptural and mixed media installation art

In this project *DESigual* I wanted to focus on designing and creating conversant art: a mixed media installation using the classic dress form.⁴⁸ This installation consists of five garment-like structures; each one represents a stage of the dressmaking process and its discovery.

⁴⁷ See Figure 2.1

⁴⁸ See Figure 2.2

The installation was comprised of various materials including metal, paper and plaster, which are ancient materials used throughout human history in response to aesthetic concerns and functional purposes. For example, printed paper is fragile and highly ephemeral yet can combine with ink and glue to make a more permanent structure.

The dress structures are chronologically arranged as one progress through the gallery space. In other words, there is a linear visual development to the dresses: developing from simple wire skeletons and culminating in the final complete and refined dress-like form. The main frames of the works are handmade with wire and the outer layers consist of cheesecloth and plastered cloth bandages. The forms are solid, not flowing, and have uneven surfaces that mimic bodily surfaces. The dress structures are imperfect, with finished and unfinished qualities that provide evidence of the making process. Instead of hanging, my work is placed on the floor; it talks about a result, not an idea. Therefore, the emphasis is on the dress-like forms as a means of communication conveying that dressing is a part of the identity of individuals within a new social and cultural environment. I aimed to present a sense of the difficulties encountered during the procedures of becoming a newcomer. For immigrants, learning how to prepare a legal document can be a struggle because it requires comprehensive research and learning about what works and what does not work during the procedures of becoming part of a new culture. I also explored how to do all of these things and how to turn the procedure into a journey. The fact is that preparing documentation is essential to complete the journey of becoming a landed immigrant. The immigrant body has to hold the procedure and process' result as an identity construction.

The outer surface of the finished dress is made out of paper from printed copies of my legal documents that I had to provide to the Canadian Immigration office.⁴⁹ These legal documents include my passport, criminal background check, family information forms, bank statements for proof of financial independence, legal documents with a client number, visa and work permit application forms, and also my airplane ticket. I used my legal documents because they are the reason that “I” – that is my body – can be here, inside the Canadian frontiers. “I” has its status earned and given. I am a landed immigrant, in addition, my identity is changing to that of a Turkish-Canadian hyphenated individual.

I played with image size, magnifying the scale of certain documents such as the stamped page I received when entering Canada from the Immigration Office of Canada, and my passport and identity cards. Although passports and IDs are designed small to fit the average hand size and protect the privacy of the owner, I enlarge the size to emphasize the lack of privacy immigrants experience when having to comply with government immigration protocols.

2.2 Identity formation in a host culture

I use my artwork as means to explore my shifting identity and sense of self. Identity itself is a changing term in context because each of us has multiple social contexts and locations where we take on varying identities. Stuart Hall wrote in 1989: “Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories, ... undergo constant transformation. Cultural identity is ‘not an essence, but a positioning.’”⁵⁰ Though ‘who we are’ is where we start our lives, our sociocultural location informs whom we are becoming. To support the idea of being and becoming in a new culture, my intention was to reflect my inner thoughts on the dress form by using the handwritten style letter about when my mother passed away and I was not able to travel

⁴⁹ See Figure 2.3

⁵⁰ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation,” *Framework* 36, (1989), 68.
<https://www.scribd.com/doc/80746672/Cultural-Identity-Cinematic-Representation-Stuart-Hall>

because of on process document condition. This was a nostalgic and emotional notion, related to the policy of immigration which prevents you to leave while passports are being processed for permanent residence.

With this project, the dress represents a container for an immigrant. Marsha Meskimmon states that examining this kind of metaphorical artwork can circulate some questions about the shape, texture, and some dimensional observations.⁵¹ Dresses as objects and my stated identity as documents are instantly recognizable by the viewer. In addition, the dress form provides a connection with feminist theory. Thus, this encountering of feminism through the dress form is easy for the viewers. My emphasis is on the dress as a means of communication, and it can be understood that the dress is a part of the identity of individuals within a social and a cultural environment. Mary Harlow states “the visual and immediate messages of dress play a key part in presenting identities.”⁵² For me, Clothes are cultural artifacts. They are embedded in current and historical sets of meanings, shaped by social and economic forces, reflecting current social and cultural concerns.

The exhibition title, *DESigual*, is a Spanish word that I chose because it has numerous meanings in different contexts in Spanish. Similarly, in English *desigual* has six different meanings as an adjective: unequal, different, uneven, changeable, inconsistent, unfair. Relying on my own experience, I can tell that these adjectives mostly are used to depict the position of immigrants. As well, titling the exhibition using a non-English word can raise questions about the process of adapting to a new language and cultural norms: (1) Is there a new language to be acquired? (2) Is the new culture similar or different from the origin culture?

⁵¹ M Marsha Meskimmon, *Contemporary Art and The Cosmopolitan Imagination* (New York: Routledge: Taylor& Francis Group,2011) 53-73

⁵² Mary Harlow, “Dress and Identity,” (Oxford: University of Birmingham, 2012) 1-7

To examine and reflect on one's identity means to understand the self as a historical and social being, this is particularly crucial for those undergoing identity transformations while adapting to life in a new culture. I feel it is important for people to be open and flexible as they go through this process of self-discovery by connecting with others and forming new relationships. Engaging in intercultural communication can be a transformative experience for both parties. This transformation is not only about individual immigrants learning about different cultures, but also the experience forces a relearning of the self. Frida Furman writes about immigrants' identity discovery. According to her, "for migrants and other displaced persons, narratives about their own lives repeated preoccupation with losses of all sorts, including the loss of place and self-representation."⁵³ Therefore, in the completed dresses, the metaphor of self-fragmentation – of the self as broken, of pieces missing – is a motif in *DESigal* by the use of fragmented legal papers to show the resistance to forgetting. In Joan E. Hartman's analysis of consciousness, she states: "We construct ourselves as agents by piecing together our stories, by emplotting [historiography] the events of our lives[...] As we make our narratives our own, we apprehend ourselves as agents: we become conscious of ourselves as makers of our lives as well as makers of narratives about our lives."⁵⁴

My auto-ethnographical approach allowed me, during this project, to understand how I perceive the past, how I receive the present, and how I can organize the future. For Norman Denzin, the process of auto-ethnography is about an individual's efforts to locate oneself and experiences in a specific place and time, and reflect on the conditions that shaped the nature of

⁵³ Frida Kemer Furman, "The Long Road Home", *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community*, 30:1-2, (2005),91-116. http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J005v30n01_08

⁵⁴ Sharon Irish, "Introduction: Positionality, Performance, and Participation" *Susan Lacy: Spaces Between* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 7.

one's experiences.⁵⁵ Therefore, this methodology allows me to communicate and connect individuals and cultures. Also, auto-ethnography allows me to closely observe and interpret my transformative performance on a day-to-day basis in my new environment and eventually over a longer duration of time. In Arnold van Gennep's major works, *Les Rites de Passage*, he divides the journey of ritual observance into the tripartite sequence: separation, transition, and incorporation.⁵⁶ Similarly, within the project *DESigal* I have selected some documents from my immigration experience that reflect the different stages involved in this process: decision making with its reasons; processing and moving; arriving in Canada; and the concluding legal situation.

Literature-based research on multiculturalism and immigration has helped me understand my own rites of passage through my trans-locational experience as a Canadian immigrant. During this phase of my research, I narrowed my focus to the following keywords: identity, translocation, human body, liminality or between-ness, and belonging (home and home-land). In addition, studying contemporary visual artists has helped inform my understanding of my own processes involved in constructing the dress forms.

DESigal is also about addressing my personal questions about identity within my host culture, such as: Who am I? What am I? Artist Rebecca Horn's use of transformative bodies in her work is particularly influential to the conceptual framework of my artistic practice. Her art forms are constructions similar to shells, and through her installations she explores how bodies change. Horn uses her own experience, and says "I use my body, I use what happens to me, and I make something." Her focus is on "transformative messages" in her works, objects, and people.⁵⁷ Another female artist whose works I am profoundly interested in the Canadian artist

⁵⁵ Norman K. Denzin, *Interpretive Autoethnography*. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2014), 14

⁵⁶ <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2762690.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ac732d18e8dd898bf07bcd1263cbc736a>

⁵⁷ Vladimir Kozlov, "Body Extensions' by German artist Rebacca Horn to Moscow," *The Moscow News*, May 20, 2013

Jana Sterbak.⁵⁸ Specifically, I am interested in how she explores the materials that define her artworks. She makes objects that suggests a presence and they convey a sense of otherness, the body, and its identity.⁵⁹ For instance, her work “Vanitas” consist of sixty pounds of raw flank sewn together to form a dress. When exhibited, it hangs in the gallery and slowly desiccates, the dress shrinks and changes shape. Vanitas suggests a feminine subjectivity, and its material becomes a part the of idea.⁶⁰ Therefore, I used documents to make a dress-like form and the paper became a central idea in the project *DESigual*.

2.3 Conclusion

My critical analysis of conceptual contemporary art and artists also cultivated my historical and political development within my current creative practice. Questioning and thinking about the role of the artist as a researcher, I investigate the effect of interactive artwork that represents a new conceptual language and the role of an artist in society who interrogates the relationship between becoming a diasporic body and being in a host nation. The data I have collected studying contemporary visual art helps to link together my research about migrant’s identities, geographical histories, and current political realities. To do this, in my work, I also used collected documentation such as the paper work that I have been providing to the Canadian Visa and immigration Office. The viewer is influenced by both the implicit interpretation of visual artwork and the explicit meaning through reading the text over the dress-like form. These perceptions reinforce the meaning of each type of communication for the reader.

⁵⁸ See Figure 2.4

⁵⁹ Johanne Lamoure, “Vanitas: Robe de Chair pour une albinos anorexique / Vanitas: Flesh dress for an Albino Anorectic” *Escape: Art actuel*, n 51, 2000, p. 14-15

⁶⁰ See Figure 2.4

Chapter Three: *Becoming Words: on Process*

This chapter describes the background of the material choices made; the intend, process of making art work, and my role as a practice-led researcher. The practice-based methodology that I have employed in this research acknowledges the relationship between my practical experimentation with the material paper clay and my authority as a researcher making text-based artwork with the use of words as the image. Firstly, this chapter also gives a literary overview of text based art. It continues with the building of a conversation about ceramic materials, methods, processes, and contemporary ceramic practice involving within porcelain of paper clay. Adding to the conversation, I outline as a researcher how I lead my research as research creation.

3.1 The Use of Text in Visual Art

In this project *Becoming Words* my research questions were: (1) What do we mean when we describe a text-based artwork? (2) How does the use of the text in visual art resonate with contemporary art as an art medium? As an artist, I chose to work with text as an art medium in conceptually for my projects because I wanted to experience how text and language can be integrated into visual materials. For me, written language comprises or threatens the artwork's form and its content because the text is there as a vessel for interpretation of the artwork that confronts the viewer. Text-based art provides a theoretical basis for the interrogation of the artwork. Minissale defines the artworks which rely on words as "The reading becomes the subject of visual art," and he states that the viewer reads about the concepts "that point to our perception of the letters and words in the artworks when normally these are invisible to us."⁶¹ Words represent human actions, where written words are visible semantics and I believe that they can be as louder as actions. They are the most powerful tools that allow humanity to build

⁶¹ Gregory Minissale, "Word and image in contemporary art," *The Psychology of Contemporary Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 121.

or destruct communities or areas. The use of language within art works (including painting and sculpting) has always been felt. The bond between language and image is sustained from antiquity. The question was raised “whether ‘the word’ does or should predominate over visual perception or image?” Rene Magritte used it as an anti-art or “anti-aesthetic sentiment”⁶², and negated conventional artistic standards. The Cubists and the Dada collagists used collaborating images and texts in their visual art productions. In Modernism, the attention was on the aesthetic value and focused on images and objects themselves, independent of their concept. However, postmodernism broke down the barriers between images, objects as an artifact, and text, and pushing the investigation of the field between words and objects.⁶³

According to Ruth Blacksell, the shift from “looking” to reading” was evident in the text based art practices of the 1960s and 70s, including artists such as Vito Acconci, Lawrence Weiner, Joseph Kosuth, Robert Smithson, and Dan Graham. For her, most artists who created conceptual art were using text based practices. She claims that these works are situated in the general shift from the object towards art as an idea that is implemented conceptually through language rather than perceptually through vision or visual experience.⁶⁴ During the 1960s, the use of text in Modernism and Contemporary Art were a common practice and text played a large had a great role in front of the viewer.

Language has been a primary element in visual art since the 1960s—in the form of printed texts, painted signs, words on a wall, recorded speech, and more. In *Words to Be Looked At*, Liz Kotz traces this practice to its beginnings, examining works of visual art, poetry, and

⁶² Simon Morley, *Writing on the Wall: Word and Image in Modern Art*. (London: Florentine Hoffman, 2003),10

⁶³ Terry Barret, *Why Is That Art?: Aesthetic and Criticism of Contemporary Art*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 147-197.

⁶⁴ Ruth Blacksell, “From Looking to Reading: Text-based Conceptual Art and Typographic Discourse”, in *Design Issue*, Vol. 29, No. 2, (Spring 2013), 60-81(doi:10.1162/DESI_a_00210).

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experimental music created in and around New York City from 1958 to 1968. In many text-based artworks, language has been reduced to an object nearly emptied of meaning. Robert Rauschenberg described a 1967 exhibition at the Dwan Gallery as consisting of “Language to be Looked at and/or Things to be Read.”⁶⁵

Visual artists use the text of all sorts in their studio research as inspiration, resource, and as a material in work itself. No matter what media they use including painting, video, sculpture, installation, and performance, the text became the creative use of language. Artists, as storytellers, use text as an image, poetry as inspiration, and narratives as a foundation of their works. Text-based art or the use of text in visual art surveys critical debates about visual culture, aesthetic value, and the intersection of creative disciplines. In summary, text and words are used as materials on the same level as images and physical objects.

The twentieth-century artists, poets, and philosophers had studied language or linguistics and text, especially towards the end of the century when art was transitioning towards pictorial and visual cultural representation. W. J. T. Mitchell explains that the 'textual picture' demonstrates how a text cannot do without words, whereas 'pictorial texts' demonstrate that the image cannot do without words.⁶⁶

Jenny Holzer believes that words are what drives one to make art, influencing her to play around with language. She believed that her art contained ideology rather than stories. The reason being, she wanted to use words to be direct. In other words, she could say exactly what she wanted on any subject and could address specific topics to write Truisms. Her aim was to be called a public artist and an installation artist. In her works, she considers color, form,

⁶⁵ Liz Kotz, *Words to Be Looked At*. (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2007), 2.

⁶⁶J.W.T. Mitchell. *Iconology: Image, text, ideology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 43.

composition, and material to make it (the artwork) right.⁶⁷ She is concerned with the visual presentation of her art, where each work begins with a text: “Language has been the core because the writing holds most of the subject matter.”⁶⁸

Use of text allows me for sighting to characterize the function of contemporary art as a form of mediation. When I focus on mediation, it allows me to rethink both the process of creative production and identity of the artist. The reason is that mediation refers to the alteration of an object. I say, Jenny Holzer’s approach working with text more familiar for this approach.⁶⁹ She collects ideas then she selects words or makes sentences by surrounding issues as context. Similarly, as a contemporary artist, I focused on how power of language or the use of text forms and shapes migrant individuals and diasporic bodies. I studied how the text has been part of the contemporary art world for decades. I also looked at how it has been presented by particular artists. I aimed to create text-based art about issues in cosmopolitan society such as multiculturalism and diasporic identities. Then I displayed my work in local art community in a provocative yet accessible way that starts conversations with the art communities.⁷⁰ I experienced that once the artwork was displayed an interactive dialogue starts between the viewers and artists as means of social engagement.

3.2 Materiality: Paper Making

I approach the experience of language first by thinking materially through the process first by a practice of papermaking. Early on I decided to make my own paper. For me, papermaking as a process was very attractive and romantic. It was coming from my own hands and bodily effort leading to new material discovery, which became a big part of the project.

⁶⁷ Michael Auping, *Universe Series in Woman Artists: Jenny Holzer*, (New York: Universe,1992)

⁶⁸ Ibid. 95.

⁶⁹ See Figure 3.3

⁷⁰ See Figure 3.2

Barbara Bolt claims “materials are not just passive objects to be used instrumentally by the artist, but rather the materials and processes of production have their own intelligence that come into play in interaction with the artist’s creative intelligence.”⁷¹ This means, my creative research practice started when I began dealing not just with the materials but also tools of production. Thinking about the process of making and ‘material thinking’ were critical steps in the process in my studio practice.

The production process of making paper is highly sophisticated, involving a high-speed filtration process that weaves an ultra-thin fibrous web.⁷² Modern day paper-making is made up of several technologically advanced processes, all of which had to happen before its use as a clay additive.⁷³ The physical identity of paper is made up of a network of fibers. The basic and most fundamental material of paper is thus the cellulose fiber. Cellulose, a basic structure of plants, is an essential component of paper which is isolated to become paper-makers’ pulp. Paper-makers tend to favor longer fibers, such as cotton, as they give greater strength.⁷⁴

In April 2016, I started searching for paper-making workshops online. Meanwhile, I discovered that the Printmaking studio has a papermaking tools, provided by Rick Calkins, Printmaking studio’s technician. I shredded sheets of high cotton recycled paper, and immersed it in a vat of water. The mixture was then beaten to form a pulp. With a deckle and mold, the suspended paper pulp is scooped up onto the mess covered mould. Once a sheet of paper is formed on the mould, it is transferred to a to damp, high cotton fabric, known as a felt. To create flat sheets of paper, the damp paper is pressed between two boards, to get rid of the water. However, for my work, I was not interested in making flat sheets of paper for writing or drawing

⁷¹ Barbara Bolt, *Art Beyond Representation: The Performative Power of the Image*. (London: I.B. Tauris), 2004

⁷² Roberts, J.C. *The Chemistry of Paper*. (Cambridge: The Royal Society of Chemistry, 1996). 1.

⁷³ www.paperclay.com/RosettaGault. Accessed July 2016

⁷⁴ <http://www.grahamhay.com.au>. Accessed June 2016

on, but rather blind embossing to create an art object with dimensionality. Once the paper had been strained from water, the wet sheet is pressed into plaster molds to make paper.⁷⁵

After testing papermaking, I started making paper embossed incorporating words. Then the accumulated paper pieces became a body of work: *Becoming Words*.⁷⁶ While I was searching text based artworks and selecting words for my research paper, I was accumulating hand-made papers and created a body of work. This installation was shown at the University of Calgary's +15 Windows Gallery, during summer, July 2016.

3.3 Background of practice-led research: Porcelain paper clay

This practice-led research had developed from my own creative practice. The background information and accompanying images of my early paper clay studio work illustrate the beginning of my creative exploration with the material. Hence explaining why I have chosen to research paper clay from a practitioner's perspective.

I was first introduced to paper clay by Fusun Uludinc, who is a senior instructor, in 2015 while I was visiting the Fine Arts Faculty of Dokuz Eylul University in Izmir, Turkey. It was my desire to make a set of tea cup, and it was suggested by Uludinc that I should experiment with the material paper clay to achieve a new sculptural form that was delicate and paper-like. The resulting works were paper thin and remarkably translucent.

I decided to work with paper clay for the Spring semester of my MFA research project electing to exploit the paper-thin qualities of porcelain paper clay, instead of its translucency (lately, the translucency has become a favorite quality of the materiality). The effective strength of paper clay allowed me to cast literal paper-thin sheets of clay. I was then able to fold, cut, tear and join the clay sheets together to create paper-like forms.

⁷⁵ See Figure 3.1a, b, c, d

⁷⁶ See Figure 3.2

The use of cellulose fibers is essential to the success of this technique to achieve sufficient cohesion. The thickness of the structures is built up poring slip cast. An added benefit of paper pulp is that wet paper clay as a semiliquid mixture can be added on top of a dry layer without the underlying layer cracking. The paper-compromised porcelain slabs were all fired to 1200 °C (cone 6). The internal paper burnt away leaving behind a porcelain ‘outer shell’ of the original paper form 300 °C.

As a practicing ceramic artist, I have the tools, or as Graham and Gault put it, the ‘insider’ knowledge to merge my own interest and experiences with paper clay to create new knowledge based on personal understanding. I feel that paper clay pushes the boundaries of ceramic material practices. I could focus on its hybridity which challenges the conventional clay techniques’ boundaries of studio pottery, in which clay was a fundamentally natural substance.⁷⁷ The creative processes used when working with paper clay are vital. Thus, I wanted to explain as a ceramist, what the use of paper clay involves my creative expression. There is a need to document the process and methods associated with the making of paper clay as a medium of creative expression: techniques and processes used when making determine form, meaning and effect.⁷⁸

As previously stated, clay is a complex material. If there was a way of working with the same material but eliminating all of its negative/problematic qualities why would ceramists not make use of it? Material to facilitate such difficulty is paper clay:

Imagine a clay body that can be used to make large slabs with little or no warping or cracking; has incredible green strength; can be assembled at any stage; is compatible with your existing glazes and when fired, weighs up to 50%

⁷⁷ Bernard Leach, *A Potter’s Book*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1969)

⁷⁸ Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies*. (London: SAGE, 2001, p.), 13-14.

less than ordinary bodies. With such a clay, formerly 'impossible' construction and firing techniques are no longer taboo...so what is this miracle body made of clay and paper.

Gault defines paper clay as a half solid, half fluid plastic modeling mix of clay, paper pulp and Water.⁷⁹

The strength of paper changes by the length and strength of the individual fibers. The cellulose tubes should be long to act intertwining the small clay particles. This way paper clay can increase green ware or drying clay body strength. Its resilience is important during making and firing.⁸⁰ The long flexible fibers absorb water instantly and enable paper clay to be wet many times without drying cracks forming. Gault states "contemporary paper clay is descended from several well-established bodies of knowledge and tradition." encourages⁸¹ Through my practical studio experimentations working with paper clay, I examine paper clay as an exceptional ceramic medium unlike ordinary raw clay. I understand that paper-comprised clay has developed a strategic scientific solution for ceramic studio practice, and it can be used in industrial developments in clay production.

Paper-making and paper-compromised porcelain as a clay body are involved in a hybrid practice. As a ceramist and paper-maker, I wanted to contribute as a practice to improve creative and physical attributes of the material. Porcelain paper clay or paper-compromised porcelain has characteristic qualities including thinness, translucent (after fired), flexibility, strength, whiteness, smooth surface. I wanted to gain an understanding of the technical aspects of paper clay, in addition, I thought that I must have a good knowledge of clay bodies including and their

⁷⁹ Rosette Gault, "Success with large Scale Paperclay and Beyond." *Ceramics Technical* no.18 (January 2004), p.99-103 Omni File Full Text Select

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Ibid

components, the ceramic science. ‘Paper clay ceramics could not exist without an existing foundational knowledge of compatible clay and glaze chemistry’⁸².

I was allured to working with paper-comprised porcelain by its ability to refuse traditional rules of ceramic practice. The style and form of my ceramic work are not available without paper added to the clay. Working with porcelain, the addition of paper pulp gives the porcelain unusual strength in both the wet and dry states. Then, I produce paper-thin sheets or slabs of clay. These sheets can then be torn or cut with scissors and then assembled by folding and bending around various forms before firing the clay body. Clay mixed with varieties of both organic and synthetic materials, offers ceramists alternative material practice and process that would not be possible with a standard clay body. Peterson states that ‘new ways of incorporating complex materials with raw clay before firing may be the most exciting area for ceramics today’⁸³. She acknowledges that contemporary ceramists combine raw clay with a multitude of man-made or natural materials as a way of enriching the creative and productive meaning. The combination of non-clay materials, such as paper pulp, with a clay body as a material changes the working properties of clay. By working with paper-comprised clay I feel that I am creatively not confined by porcelain’s characteristics.

According to Graham Hay, paper clay or paper-comprised clay has been at the center of an international clay revolution that has been building since the 1980s⁸⁴. He states that paper clay radically overcomes many of the typical problems that ceramists face working with traditional clay, such as drying out, cracking and low dry strength. Artists who work with clay are profoundly involved with techniques, materials, and forms. For the purpose of this dissertation, I

⁸² Rosette Gault, “Success with large Scale Paperclay and Beyond.” *Ceramics Technical* no.18 (January 2004), 99-103 Omni File Full Text

⁸³ Susan Peterson, *The Craft and Art of Clay*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2003), 14.

⁸⁴ Graham Hay, “The Paperclay Revolution,” *National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts Journal*, USA, vol: 28, (2007), 104-105. <http://www.grahamhay.com.au/hay2007prevolution.html>

have included a step-by-step visual guide illustrating, (A) how I make my porcelain of paper clay and slip-slab casting, slab constructing working 2D and 3D pieces or objects



A. 1. Paper preparation



A.2. Clay preparation: mixing water and dust clay (P300)



A.3. Mixed porcelain paper clay



A.3. Slip casting



A.4. Drying process of slip casting



A.5. drying before firing



A.6. Gas kiln loading



A.7. Porcelain, fired cone 8 (1235 C temperature)

Chapter Four: *Becoming words: “I am going to die in this country as an immigrant.”*

I feel that we are living in an era that is shaped by the global refugee crisis and immigration issues where displaced bodies have become a common topic in contemporary art. My art installation titled *Becoming Words “I am going to die in this country as an immigrant.”* is a representation and nonrepresentation for diasporic concerns and my understanding of the experience of migrants and refugees in a country that prides itself on multiculturalism. *Becoming Words* presents a loud voice through text-based artwork on identity and immigration. For me, this is the start of a dialogue on diasporic experience among/from/by newcomers and landed immigrants and their process of becoming Canadian.

Before I started this project, I have contextualized my studies in terms of practice-led methodologies. I established the validity of my role as a practitioner-researcher, likening the ceramic studio to a scientific laboratory, conducting and documenting my experiments with paper and clay. I also reviewed key texts in conveying the histories and aesthetic influences of paper clay as a creative ‘new’ material in ceramics. In this project, I aimed to identify significant historical surveys and contemporary productions of paper clay. I introduced to paper clay as being a postmodern material that rejects the modernist view of clay as a natural, earth material.

4.1 Exhibition Description

Becoming Words “I am going to die in this country as an immigrant.” describes the experience of immigration and identity formation of diasporic bodies. The process of reforming identity into language is central to this experience and connects my creative practice to contemporary artists working both with and against language in visual art. I approach the experience of these language process by thinking materially with ceramic and porcelain paper clay paper to suggest both fragile and rigid ways that bodies encounter language. I want to bring

here Bennet's claim that "art is a vehicle for the interpersonal transmission of experience"; in addition, she quotes Deleuze's words "More important than thought there is 'what leads to thought' ... impressions which force us to look, encounters which force us to interpret, expressions which force us to think."⁸⁵ Thus, when I think about materiality, I focus on the personal experience of possible spectators how their feeling could be captivated by elements of my artwork. In other words, I wanted to create an event with materiality in a space without involvement into my artwork it wouldn't be experiencing

This installation art is also about addressing my personal questions about identity within a host culture such as: Who am I? What am I? The groups of words that I choose in this works are the same: ACCULTURATE; OTHERNESS; HOME LAND; HOST – CULTURE; HYPHENATED; COLLECTIVE; IDENTITY; DIASPORIC.⁸⁶ These words represent negative, conflicting, and descriptive meanings to be encountered by the audience through reading. I focused on words that reflect my own experience, which is creating and rebuilding a new identity in a host culture. Therefore, I used clay: porcelain paper clay which could mirror an identity formation of diasporic bodies. I used text on porcelain to record lasting documents with destroyed – broken and scattered porcelain around – information to create a narration by conveying information. I continue using the same molds for slip casting. I aimed to make an environment in the gallery that viewer is confronted into. The need to walk over the fired (broken) porcelain slabs to see the framed images, scanned fired porcelain plates or slabs, acts as a border separating the viewer, in this condition a participator. By focusing on penetrating the text in my works, I wanted to emphasize fragility through giving a sense of official paper work or documentation with porcelain as the material. This exhibition was an expression of how I

⁸⁵ Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 6-7

⁸⁶ See Figure 4.1

understand the experience of immigrants and refugees or any displaced or replaced individuals in diaspora, specifically, the decision-making moment.⁸⁷

The fired porcelain slabs are aligned on the floor like a border from wall to wall with a width of one meter. This cluster contains almost sixty-four pieces of fired porcelain slabs fired to cone 6, and it is wide enough not to be able to step over the arranged porcelain plates without stepping on them. Therefore, I created a surface on the gallery's floor for viewers to pass through it. Each one is a single of representation of a body; however, they contain one word over the surface with the capital letters. As viewers stayed in front of the border, they found their eyes being drawn deeper down into the incised words of the images. As an artist, I am interested in the surface of the clay body and marks found on it including words and cracks, as well as, the paper like appearance of the flat porcelain surface. I am trained as a ceramicist and ceramic artist, but I wanted to make clay body works on a variety of surfaces to create an immersive installation. For instance, connecting my conceptual practice art such as the use of text-based art and its relation to the space of the gallery and particularly the floor, as a means of shifting the perceptions of the viewers

The artist's own body is the beginning point in forming the porcelain rectangular objects to the point of almost embodying them. In the gallery, however, the viewers' decision is the result of breaking the objects by his or her steps. In other words, the decision maker is the viewer and by walking the viewer becomes a participant. Therefore, the installation art becomes complete with the viewer's action. The artist's production could be described as self-portraiture, and leaving the viewer to seek out the overall picture through the clay surfaces. I believe that I must remind the artwork reader that immigrating and replacing as an individual is implicit.

⁸⁷ See Figure 4. 4

At first viewing the frames on the wall and the cluster of porcelain rectangular slabs wall to wall in appearing to be completely abstract, yet framing the images helps give the objects a representational quality.⁸⁸ The rectangular glass frames and accompanying color-printed digital images approximate giant versions of the porcelain slabs on the floor. With the more of the viewer's attention, the prints seem to shift again. Although each image is originated from one scanned porcelain object as a signifier, this physical manifestation of words defines the signified immigrant body. After the viewer walked over fired porcelain slabs, cracks and scattered pieces portrayed unrecognizable fragments of text to the average eye. There is no skin or embodied object at the end; there is only broken English words.

The bodies are presented in a flattened, fragmented and dispersed form. I explored, a similar system for representing the body is also in *Becoming Words: on Process* (May 2016). I engaged with self-portraiture and the depiction of the body through text or words that coincide with feminist theories and practices that evolved in the 1970s and 1980s. During this period, women artists were actively exploring self-identity and self-definition. Mary Kelly presented on the impossibility of representing the female body in a patriarchal society.⁸⁹ Conceptual art practices in the 1960s, specifically with the text-based works of Jenny Holzer and Edward Ruscha explored text as a device for making art as a concept or an idea instead of an object based artwork and art practice.⁹⁰

4.2 Broken English

I became a permanent resident in Canada in October 2013, sponsored by my husband who was nominated by the Provincial Nominee Program in the Province of Alberta in 2011. As

⁸⁸ See Figure 4.2

⁸⁹ Jones, Amelia, *A Companion to Contemporary Art since 1945*, ed. Amelia Jones. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing 2006), 74-76.

⁹⁰ See Figure 3.4

an immigrant, my identity formation and diasporic experience have been evolving since 2009 as an itinerant worker statue. In the meantime, my artistic work over the past two years has been developing gradually in parallel with the transformation of my immigrant identity. Although my life began in Calgary in 2009, I still feel like I am viewed differently (as an outsider) when I go outside of my home, my space, or my shell. My struggle allows me to raise questions, such as: How do migrants and minorities experience life differently and manage their multiple identities and languages in a host culture? Can diasporic identity formation be independent of culture and its language?

My project *Becoming Words* involves the creation of a series of porcelain paper slabs with written text and words. I aimed to model the simplicity of Edward Ruscha's artworks in their explicit references to the use of language, and highly plain surfaces. What matters to Ruscha is the effect of the language and he considers: "Art's about the glorification of something. Though in my case, it's not necessarily the common object. It may be the power of the word or words that I'm glorifying."⁹¹ Thus, I follow 'a word' concerning how much it can say about the diasporic experience. For me, I perceive the word as a container, and I evaluate it with how much meanings it can hold for us. For instance, *OTHERNESS* gives off as a word tells us a myriad of possible interpretations, and any individual connects this words with his or her memories. Perception of subjectivity works through the words – as statements. It has its own power. However, it is shaped when visualized in association with the viewers' memories.

I wished to experiment, through my installation art, with the ways text can be used to imply subjectivity, and how a personal experience can directly confront one's cultural, political, and social positioning. I also wanted to examine how harsh wording and foreshortening can be

⁹¹ Morley, Simon. *Writing on the Wall: Words and Image in the Modern Art*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003), 123.

used to fragment contemporary immigrant issues in everyday life through by application of installation art strategies. Ultimately, the effectiveness of these strategies could be understood upon the resulting feedback acquired after spending time in the gallery interacting with visitors.

In my practice, I created written pages applying low relief technique, which metaphorically represent translocated immigrant identities, using words that prescribe and naturalize. To recognize the written words as imagery, the viewer is invited to critically think about the visual strategies used to objectify diasporic bodies. Furthermore, this research investigates how artists have previously challenged the use of text and implement social and political ideologies to address the contemporary issue of refugee crisis and immigration. Specifically with the viewers' experience: *taking a decision moment* to interact with the installation artwork in the gallery is a crucial part that completes the events.

4.3 Performativity in Art Work

I intend to create touchable objects made of porcelain that have the following characteristic qualities before fired: softness, plasticity, and fragility; after fired: hardness, solidity, and translucent when fired at extremely high temperatures (1220 C/cone 6).

Specifically, I am interested in how I can explore the materials of both porcelain paper clay and text to combine 'Form and Idea' that then define the artworks. I make objects that suggest a presence; they convey a sense of otherness, and the body, and its identity. My creative research practice includes focusing on words that reflect my content, which the rebuilding of a new identity in a host culture. Thus, I decided to make a new body of clay which could mirror an identity formation of diasporic bodies.

My artistic practice works to manipulate porcelain paper clay to imitate real paper and documents of personal significance. These faux documents concerning my relationship to the immigration process, while censoring and redacting the information. I use texts on porcelain to

record lasting documents with destroyed information to create a narrative through by conveyed information. The porcelain paper documents will be broken and scattered around the space of the gallery. Furthermore, I wanted the viewer or visitor to walk over the fired porcelain slabs. Inviting the viewer to step over the porcelain plates, I needed to block out the enter of the door of the gallery room with the porcelain slabs. My focus on penetrating the text in my works, I want to emphasize fragility by giving a sense of paper shapes like quality with porcelain materials.⁹²

The list of words I use in my installation represents living in-between diverse cultures, countries, and languages that has become a critical influence and point of intrigue within my artistic practice.

4.4 Context

Using an auto-ethnographic approach, I planned to adopt self-analysis and journaling practices, offering my own immigration story as a method of documenting the multiplicity of the Canadian experience.⁹³ Auto-ethnography combines practical, theoretical, and experiential approaches to show self-discovery and self-awareness as products of an experience.⁹⁴ I interpreted immigration processes through artifacts and documentation of my own immigrant experience. My aim is to use my artistic voice to represent the interrogation of immigrants' transformative identities within a new culture. This project deconstructs the formation of collective identity (refers diasporic identities) by revealing its underlying facets.

According to CIC (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) Immigration Statistics Report Express Entry Year-End Report 2015, which launched in January 2015, over 31,000 invitations to apply to permanent residence were issued to a diverse range of highly skilled immigrants.

⁹² See Figure 4.3

⁹³ Dwayne Custer. "Autoethnography as a transformative research method," *The Qualitative Report*, Volume 19(37), (2014) 1-13.<http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol19/iss37/3>

⁹⁴ Norman K. Denzin. *Interpretive Autoethnography*. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2014), 23.

Among those invitations, almost 10,000 individuals (principal applicants and their family) have already landed in Canada as permanent residents.⁹⁵ As an artist, this research is an investigation of multiculturalism and social equality in Canada. This is both the story of my personal adventure and an explanation of how the unique identity of an immigrant must transform and change with the purpose of integrating into his or her new land. Migrants first choose their destination and then they decide whether to become a citizen of their adopted homeland or a new culture. Exploring these thoughts through my artwork allows me to reflect on and represent the identity shifts and struggles frequently encountered during the process of immigration. I believe that throughout the process of immigration an individual should strive to protect and connect with their origin culture, instead of completely abandoning their identity to assimilate into their new host culture. I want my artwork to reflect my transformative identity, encompassing both my new home and the origin. It is important to incorporate in the origin of my identity that is closely tied to Turkish culture, the country where I grew up, because these were formative years that shaped my values and the way I view the world. Therefore, I aim to express the process of negotiating my new identity as a Turkish-Canadian: simultaneously a Middle Easterner and a North American.

Postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha has established the notion of multiplicity in identity in terms of hybridity and hyphenation in 1990s.⁹⁶ According to him, the person – who lives in a different place than the place she/he is from – has to navigate herself or himself constantly changing the relationship to both her/his initial cultural context and the present one. The word “Hyphen identity” can be defined as a person’s negotiation of intersecting,

⁹⁵ <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/reports/ee-year-end-2015.asp>

⁹⁶ Mark Crinson, “Postcolonial Theory and Contemporary Art”, *A Companion to Contemporary Art since 1945*, ed. Amelia Jones. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 457

contradictory, and complementary social, cultural and geographical characters of two places. Thus, the idea of hyphenated identity allows for multiplicity in identity or a double bind.⁹⁷

4.5 Conclusion: Interactive Installation Art

Becoming Words is about addressing my personal questions about identity within my host culture such as: Who am I? What am I? Literature-based research on multiculturalism and immigration has helped me understand my own rites of passages through my trans-locational experience as a Canadian immigrant. During this phase of my research, I narrowed my focus to the following keywords: identity (diasporic; collective; hyphenated) belonging (home-land; host-culture) human body and difference (otherness; acculturate).⁹⁸ In addition, studying contemporary visual artists (including painting, sculpture, designer, ceramics) has helped inform my understanding of my own process based techniques, and material, choices within my studio practice. The groups of words represent negative, conflicting, and descriptive meanings to be encountered by the audience through looking and reading.

While I was working on molding for plaster boards, I focused on exploring how to prepare porcelain paper clay. Graham Hay and Rosetta Gault are two artists who prefer making their own porcelain paper clay. They mix the clay body with paper to create flexible ceramic forms and manipulate the material to create organic or curved shapes. I relied on their experience of making diverse clay bodies because they focused on the transition between making and finishing an artwork comprised of porcelain slip clay with unprinted, clean, white, paper. During my research, I realized that Gault had a more comprehensive research about porcelain paper clay, and her process became my guide during exploration of the material process in my studio practice. As stated by Gault, paper clay body is a good foundation in basic clay working

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ See Figures 3.2, 4.2, 4.3.

techniques including coiling, pinching, slap building, press molding or even when throwing there is no need to be too cautious. My project aims to create large porcelain slabs with small deformations and cracking.

This clay body can be fired in electric, raku, natural gas even salt kilns. However, for firing paper clay there are few things to watch out including well-ventilated kilns, never using cellulose fiber with fire retardant, and to expect a smoking period during the first two hours of the firing. I fully followed Gault's instruction in preparation of equipment, considering and studying firing precautions, paper preparation, mixing paper clay, using paper clay and how to most effectively use paper clay. Porcelain paper clay does not wedge-like normal porcelain clay body where the drying stage is shorter and difficult to control. The purpose of using porcelain paper clay is that I do not need to cover the work with plastic to keep it moist. Just leaving the piece to dry in open the air is enough. Moreover, working with this body of clay, I can fix cracks, attach parts any time before firing.

Paper clay has been an excellent choice for my large-scale projects; I can use them as wall pieces, mix and attach different bodies of paper clay, and make super lightweight sculptures.

Chapter Five: *In a new land ... Be longing* – Thesis Exhibition

In the summer of 2015, I went to my home country to visit my family, after eight years of living in North America; two years in the USA and six years in Canada. I visited my family and my home country with my son who was eleven years old, at the time. When I was in Turkey I decided to visit Izmir where I studied for my BFA and where, in 2000, I had my most productive and successful time during my degree studies become a ceramic artist. When I was in Izmir in August 2015, I had been in the middle of the Syrian Refugees Crisis, because Izmir was the most popular city and the closest point of the land to the Greek Islands. Syrian Refugees were everywhere, but not during the day time, in the evening was the only time they were in the streets. Many Syrian Refugees were in Izmir, where they were in economic and social disparities amongst the host culture's citizens. Even though I had experiences of the various stage of migration, with some side effects such as assimilation, segregation, exclusion from class, language difficulties, and experiencing racism in Europe, Spain, and California, I was unaware of the differences between "I" and host culture. Their conditions as a refugee individual was drawing today's world, and I couldn't erase my thoughts of diasporic individuals and migrant bodies where I live now.

This is referring to that encountered by seeing Syrian Refugees on the streets of my favorite city in the world. That was a trauma. I felt failed! I failed as a human being! I saved my son and myself and I left Izmir's streets with thoughts of how lucky my son and I were and how good our future is. I left behind me all those Syrian Refugees at the shore of Izmir where they were waiting for their life death defying; 5.1 mile long sea trip on the top of a plastic boat in the middle of the night over the Eagen Sea's salty water, where Ulysses traveled for twenty years to get back to his home and family.

I had my dinner side by side with refugees. The only difference was that I was inside of the restaurant. Many of them were sitting scattered around so as to not create a big crowd. Each of them had a small black plastic pack in their hands, and they were chatting quietly and carefully trying to be invisible. Everybody in the restaurant suddenly got restless when they opened their food to share and eat together. Their existence was impairing the experience of the restaurant's customers. There was a moment when I caught someone's eye who was feeding her toddler son.

This is not a story; I have held it with me as close a secret memory because I even couldn't share it with inner circle for a long time. Eventually, I shared this story in my class

discussion, with the statement “I feel I failed.” I still don’t know what I should have done, instead of walking away, then flying, then driving, until I got back home to Calgary, Canada. I feel I failed in front of my son and the other children! What happened to that mother and son, after they had their dinner?

Kamal Boullata states “Measuring the distance between home and exile was no longer confined to longing for a paradise lost.”⁹⁹ I believe that those refugees who become migrants are a more challenging choice for an analysis. Their becoming otherness emphasizes on the notion of diaspora as a product of a civil war taking place in the Middle East in the twenty-first century. Now, I am writing here in Canada, and trying to tell to give a diasporic sense through my thesis art project. I wanted to visualize migrant individuals’ personal histories. In order to develop a focused study and context for my production, I have followed my MFA explorations to the aesthetics of diaspora, in other words, scattered and diasporic individuals. With my project, I aimed to speak specifically about undocumented migrants across the globe, but particularly asylum activities of Canadian and American borders.

My thesis project, *In a new land ... Be longing*, is building on a dialog that was started by the previous series *Becoming Words*: “*I am going to die in this land as an immigrant.*” With my previous project, I realized that installation art allows to experience spectator’s interpretation the subject of my research creation in a more active manner. For example, linking my project, in the chapter 4, to the final exhibition, I brought back broken pieces which became even further broken by the viewers’ interaction. Bringing back the parts of other people’s identities is the embodiment of a bodily experience. To support the idea of experiencing the human body, I brought two new elements into this thesis exhibition installation. They are the human shoulder as

⁹⁹ Kamal Boullata, “Sharing a Meaning: An Introduction” *Belonging and Globalization: Critical Essays in Contemporary Art and Culture*, (London: SAQI, 2008).

the fragment to reference human body condition, not as a figure, but as painted texts on tablets. Unlike the previous project, I started referring to porcelain slabs as tablets. They contain painted words that are taken from a legal form that is called the Confirmation of Permanent Residence.¹⁰⁰

5.1 Exhibition Description

In a new land... Be longing is the component of my Master of Fine Arts Thesis exhibition, being displayed at the University of Calgary's Nickle Galleries from August 11-September 24, 2017. The exhibition is a culmination of my research creation through installation art. This installation explores different conditions of diasporic groups in Canadian multiculturalism.

The exhibition has three components, and they are all made of porcelain. Two of those, the shoulders and the tablets, are displayed in parallel on opposite walls. The shoulders and tablets are installed on the long walls while mirroring each other. The third component, the scattered porcelain pieces, are displayed as arranged in the center of the room and scattered with a rectangular shape; the broken porcelain pieces act as a *border* or *frontier*. Each of them completes one another in the exhibition space. The space is painted white in a rectangular shape (19 feet x 30 feet) and has two entries or exits on either side of one end wall because there are two doorways. Two walls both on the left and right side, from the entry, are installed and the third one is on the floor centered about 24 inches. They are deliberately positioned in a curvilinear-line allowing each shoulder to cast its shadow under the forms. Shadows are

¹⁰⁰ Confirmation of Permanent Residence IMM 5688 (04-2012) E When we approve an immigrant for permanent residence in Canada, we will give them a Confirmation of Permanent Residence (COPR) document. An immigration officer at the port of entry or an IRCC office signs and dates this document when permanent residence is finally granted. Permanent residents use this document to show to provincial and territorial organizations to access services. There is an immigration category printed on this document.
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=797&top=10>

completing their existence. Separate components complete each other in the exhibition room. Twenty-one porcelain shoulders are installed on the left entrance wall, they are all unglazed. They create one environment for the audience, whether by walking by the line existing and entering actions.¹⁰¹ On the right wall, there are twenty-one porcelain tablets – they are linear. Each tablet has text on it that was taken from the Confirmation of Permanent Residence forms. The tablets are various sizes.¹⁰² They create an environment for the audience to contemplate at several registers, the issues of containment, authority or institutional language, and bordered spaces.

Each shoulder is coming from the same mold – my own shoulder. Each one of them has different conditions; they are curved or reshaped in the duration of drying and firing process of the porcelain – reminiscent of the process are broken, cracked, deformed, grey to a white porcelain color palette.

In my final thesis project, *In a new land.. Be longing*, I wanted to focus on three concepts: tablets and words as barriers or boundaries (documents), the shoulder as the human/migrant body, which acts as a metaphor of a vessel, representing containment, and materiality (porcelain paper clay). From the beginning of this program, focusing on installation as an art practice, as a practitioner has been my aim to explore a method of presentation that includes the use of the space as part of the methodology and art work. Making an installation art that allows me to use any surface of a gallery, not only displaying works, but also to allow the space in-between to become component of an installation art work. In this project, I used different spatial components of the gallery space, which are the wall and floor or the negative

¹⁰¹ Figure 5.1 (Panorama)

¹⁰² Figure 5.2 (tablets)

space in the room, allowed me to emphasize how challenging being a migrant body can be on local, national and global levels.

Materiality is the heart of my practice which I use to convey my message. I first focused on practicing 2D and 3D mixed-media installation art, and exploring materiality with porcelain combined paper. Then, I aimed to have an artistic dialogue about form, the image of the body, the scattered figure, space, and narrative through re-examination of how diasporic individuals' lives are structured by documents. Hence, the materiality and the making process are important to me as a researcher. My second research question asks, how does autoethnography help me understand the human experience, specifically the process of learning through a practice-led research?

5.2 Migrant Selves, Definitions, and Confinements

I started thinking about how I could bring the experience of making art objects being similar to the way that people can experience things. A similarity between the process of making and the process of experiencing.

I constructed my ideas by molding and casting my body parts that relay my thoughts about the body as a home. I use the human shoulder because I believe that the body of an individual is the most amazing thing in the world. In this project, use of the human shoulder in one size is an art form representing adult women. The molded shoulder is focusing on displaying diasporic bodily experiences through the scars, cracks or broken parts of its surface.¹⁰³ I have chosen to put the components of this installation art on a wall instead of on a plinth because a wall is an important surface for images at home. It is also a separation form as well as having a formality in its usage. I put my shoulder sculptures on a wall because I see them as portraits; each one is a representation of different experiences. These shoulders carry the idea of

¹⁰³ See Figures 5.1 a, b

generation, cultures, communities, geographies; they are hung on steel bar holders that are mounted on the left entrance wall in the exhibition space. I intended to create a crowd by making many of them. The shoulders have a temporary status like they are stuck in silence. They are all along a wall, are installed in a curvy line that urges spectators' breath held till completing gaze over the shoulders. However, each of the shoulders has a different position, some angled left and some right. These parts also contain a reference to the body's emotional condition. Shoulders are an important part of the human, carrying the body, giving and representing its strength. They are almost emancipating from the gender because they can vary in size but do not necessarily represent the gender they are relate to.

On the wall of across the gallery, like household mirrors, there are twenty-one paper porcelain paper like porcelain tablets, slip-slab constructed.¹⁰⁴ They are placed on white painted wood shelves. These slabs have words from a legal form IMM 9688, and the written words are in different font sizes as well as various sizes of slabs' surfaces.¹⁰⁵ Each fired porcelain paper clay tablet contains text painted with red slip ware called terra sigillata.¹⁰⁶ The tablets puzzle the viewer from the moment they enter, or from the point of entry, yet draw the gaze through their presence. Words are definitions of individual's information. For me each of the words demands answers about the legal forms of the owner or holder; therefore, they contain real information about immigrants for the viewer to contemplate.

¹⁰⁴ See Figure 5.3

¹⁰⁵ See Figure 5.2

¹⁰⁶, The term terra sigillata, which means 'sealed earth', comes from the name of a type of Roman pottery mass-produced around the first century AD. This pottery was decorated with impressed or stamped decoration, which is what the word 'sigillata' refers to. (Think of the kind of stamp, or 'seal', which would have been used to seal wax on a paper document.) These pots were coated with the same kind of very fine slip which Greek potters had been using for hundreds of years to create their famous black and red pottery. Though many books incorrectly refer to this slip as a 'glaze', it was not actually a glaze but the material we now call terra sigillata. by Sumi von Dassow. Accessed from <https://ceramicartsnetwork.org/daily/pottery-making-techniques/ceramic-decorating-techniques/terra-sigillata-101-how-to-make-apply-and-troubleshoot-terra-sig/>, on August 11, 2017

Tablet forms intentionally are not perfectly trimmed or cleaned before firing. They have uneven edges that are like faults that actually bring out kinds of intriguing as behaviour of material itself. Unglazed surface represents its coldness, creates intentional formal distance. Therefore, these pieces act as legal forms or documentation papers of all of the tensions and stresses that are set up in the firing. Once the tablets come out of the kiln, they are in a permanent condition. As I mentioned earlier, viewer is being challenged by the legal documents and its information about immigrant selves. Specifically, there are rigid and unforgettable moments that I cannot erase from my memories. There is a mixture of the earthly texture on the tablets surface like a landscape, but they look like paper. Where the idea is for the clay body came from the striations, cracked or torn during firing the pieces. Once the pieces come out of the kiln and meet the atmosphere in room, in the form of crusty and unrefined. The moment that I most loved in discovering the ceramic material was the differences between the input material in the kiln and the after fired output of that, the beauty of unpredictability. Thus, that moment of discovery the thing that I get the experience all the time in my studio as I set up these porcelain pieces as whole, broken, shattered, unrefined edges, and permanent. Every firing, it seems like there is another moment of a way that a material has changed that I hadn't expected or I couldn't predict.

By making these tablets, I intended to echo my experience of a migrant's life to the viewers, doing that becomes a proxy or stand in for me. Ceramics is the one material that shows my hand completely, and it is real and tactile when I hold it. It also gives this record of where I am on the planet. It gives us longevity. I made these tablets out of local clay product – porcelain, vitrified. They are going to be here thousands of years; that longevity really pushes my creativity and studio activities.

Traditionally, an immigrant is defined as an individual who comes to live permanently in a foreign country. Current literature refers to immigrants as “newcomers who are born elsewhere, voluntarily arrive, and are entitled to permanent status on the basis of two grounds: to be reunited with their families or because of promised economic benefits as workers or entrepreneurs.”¹⁰⁷ The federal government of Canada lists several categories of possible immigration to Canada. Individuals seeking to immigrate may choose among the following categories: skilled workers and professionals; Quebec-selected skilled workers; Canadian experience class; investors, entrepreneurs and self-employed people, provincial nominees, and sponsoring your family class.¹⁰⁸ It was this experience of otherness, of belonging to and identifying with more than one culture that inspired parts of this artistic research. For the purposes of this study, immigrants are individuals who self-identify as immigrants regardless of whether or not they have made the journey from a foreign country during their life. What is for that one individual who comes to live in Canada from another country? The individual starts communicating or speaking in another language, being an out-sider, eating different style of food, continuing everyday life where the dress code is different.¹⁰⁹

With the aim of starting my research I also have collected the questions that people have asked in my daily life for as long as I can remember:

How did you get here?

Where are you from?

When did you move to Calgary or Canada?

Where did you get that lovely accent?

What background do you have?

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/index.asp>

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

¹⁰⁹ According to my own experience.

Are you a newcomer?

Is your kid Canadian?

Do you and your husband have the same nationality?

Where did you get together?

How did you meet your husband?

How long have you been here?

Did you directly come to Calgary?

Have you traveled around Canada?

How frequently do you visit your home country?

Do you speak your native language at home with your kid?

Do you have your family here in Canada?

Do you speak other languages? How many languages do you speak?

What is it that attracted you to Canada?

Do you want to be Canadian?

I wrote these questions and stopped... I realized that the answers to these questions can construct and depict an migrant's identity or profile in the questioners' mind drawing the migrant's place in a new culture. Moreover, I always answer these questions, like many other immigrants, to win recognition from those in the host community. Ranaji Guha quoted in his writing *The Migrant's Time* Heidegger's claim "Belonging- somewhere has an essential relationship to involvement."¹¹⁰ Guha agrees that belonging to a community requires being involved with others in the everyday life and he concludes "Once the migrant situated himself or herself for the everydayness in the host community's intersects and it is about the future-

¹¹⁰ Ranajit Guha, "The Migrant's Time", in *The Migrant's Time*. (Massachusetts, US: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2016), 4-10.

oriented.” Saloni Mahtur points out that Guha’s phrase “the migrant’s time” suggests both to the unsettling temporality of the experience of the migrant and states clearly being between past and present.¹¹¹

The notion of migration echoes other international concepts including diaspora, exile, globalization, hybridity, migration, mobility, multiculturalism, transnationalism, and the nomad, all which relate to human displacement in today’s world.¹¹² For me, raising questions about migration forms a political space for the migrants’ condition as they carry a non-belonging body. According to Iain Chambers “...The migrant’s sense of being is rootless. Of living between worlds, between a lost past and a non-integrated present, is perhaps the most fitting metaphor of this (post)modern condition.”¹¹³ This points out the themes of diaspora communities. In a contemporary world, the concept of diaspora communities or multiculturalism suggests the transformation in our understanding of movement, marginality and contemporary life. As an immigrant artist, my main aim is how I can bring these concerns into my art and how I can find a manifestation in my practice of the visual arts while interrogating my own ongoing cultural processes of migration and belonging in a new land, Canada.

In order to create the objects for this project, I had to select elements of form from one specific material, the local clay bodies while questioning failure, expectation and intent. The human shoulder, the tablet and porcelain offer my studio practice to reflect my passion for contemporary ceramics and insights on contemporary diasporic world. Ceramic production has long been influenced by an industrial standard of perfection. However, I deconstruct and imploding the forms with an intention of a visceral reaction that defies the human desire for

¹¹¹ Mathur, Saloni. “Introduction” in *The Migrant’s Time*. (Massachusetts, US: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2016), vii-xx.

¹¹² Rogers Brubaker, “The ‘diaspora’ diaspora,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Vol. 28 No. 1 (January 2005): 1-29

¹¹³ Ian Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, (New York: Routledge, 1994)

perfection. I aimed to bring confrontation to my project by the perception of the process. I hope to challenge and redefine what is beautiful.¹¹⁴

The elements of *In a new land... Be longing* developed a long search of body molding of text as representation of individuals who have the experience of the migration processes. The process of investigation required long term of conversations with my supervisor Kim Huynh, specifically, about finding core components of installation art; including understanding the use of space, as one of the main components in thesis project. It has been a big concern how to organize the components including the shoulders, tablets, scattered porcelain pieces, light, and space; as well as to connect the concept with the title of the exhibition until the last minute.

British artist Antony Gormley has made a contribution to my understanding of exploring the human body in the space as an object. Gormley played a particular role in my studio; he inspired me to search my bodily experience through molding and sculpting. Specially, a documentary, titled and prepared for Tate Modern Art Museum, “Five Sculptors: Antony Gormley” is about his body related artworks.¹¹⁵ He explains the way in which he uses his own body as an object. He sees the body as a barrier between in his spiritual world and physical surrounding. How the body occupies the space is motivated the orientation of the shoulders that I used in my thesis exhibition, while the tablets can connect with an external world. Studying Gormley’s works or exhibitions and his extensive other practices in general have given me insight into a viewer’s participation in and access to the art work. In my own work, I have developed an interest in the visual experience and viewer’s expectation of familiarity and discomfort with art. I wanted to include within staged environment that express a vulnerable and fragile combination.

¹¹⁴ See Figure 5.5

¹¹⁵ Marsha Meskimmon, *Contemporary Art and the Cosmopolitan Imagination*, (London: Routledge, 2011), 74.

Hossein Valamanesh is another artist who is a point of reference in my research. Valamanesh's work of (1997), *Longing/Belonging* represents his interrogation of his own becoming immigrant.¹¹⁶ He had to move from Iran to Australia, in the 1970s.¹¹⁷ In his *Longing/Belonging* has two components: a photograph, by Rick Martin is an image of Persian carpet burning in the Australian scrublands and is presented behind the burnt carpet itself in a gallery. Presence of double place is reworded by Marsha Meskimmon as material double-play.¹¹⁸ I find a dualism in his work, for instance, a photo –based can potentially allow viewers to locate a site where the actions happen. At the same time, the physically located burnt carpet in a gallery is connected with photograph information that connects two different passages to occupy his viewer. In this way, the work confirms or certifies to a form of metaphorical truth. I am interested in how an artist's own experience can potentially acknowledge the trauma that are caused by the displacement or dislocated; A back a forth movement between past and present.¹¹⁹ In the thesis piece in intended to integrate this *back and forth* as contrast dualist in this way wanted to reflect that immigration effect real people in real spaces or geographies.

5.3 Immigrant Artist as Narrative

In a new land... Be longing as an installation work has been my response to the experience of becoming and being diasporic individuals in Canada. I wanted to prepare and give to an audience a magical and/or well-organized and cohesive place. I chose to articulate three components including a fragment of a body part as a shoulder, tablets, and physical border. I wanted to make people aware of becoming diaspora by installation art to come alive for the today's contemporary art. I chose three themes: (1) diasporic individuals, (2) institutional level

¹¹⁶ See Figure 5.6

¹¹⁷ Ibid

¹¹⁸ Marsha Meskimmon, *Contemporary Art and the Cosmopolitan Imagination*, (London: Routledge, 2011), 75.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

of power politics, and (3) a physical border as a divider or boundary as confinement in an institutional space as a gallery. I wanted my material porcelain impression to reach audience through my senses. Therefore, I chose porcelain as a material talking about these themes to enhance the space with whiteness that is the skin of my work(s). Our skin is the most sensitive organ of the body, and human body senses the world through it. Also, I wanted to make alive many of them in my studio. In a concept of making many of them allowed me to think about another component of installation art that is about organizing a space, especially when audience visit the institutional place and become part of the environment. I intended that the audience is completing and taking further the artwork as an installation.

First, the audience sees the exhibition space as an outsider; then it becomes about the viewer, audience or observer. There are two strategies that I had to think and analyze:

- How the viewer was controlled and separated from the components of installation specifically where the viewer stands up and becomes a spectator. Emphatic judgment might be affected by who you are especially by experiencing a sense of presence by reading and understanding text on the tablets.
- When the viewer sees the work from outside, the work is beautiful. The viewer becomes the main element of installation that makes and give a concept of the space that installation takes place. Involvement into space is a crucial activity should be done by observing the works and seeing the details, reading an artist statement, and experiencing the space by entering and exiting or jumping over the divider.

I also see my work as a collaboration with the material, porcelain, because I can not and I don't want to control everything in/through processes of making art. Materiality as porcelain, it is tactile; it is real. It has an unpredictable process especially duration of firing; however, as

an artist, I have to predict what happens in a kiln. Thus, my knowledge is necessary. There is input raw clay as material, and output is porcelain (with its unpredictability), and it becomes permanent.

To conclude, I aimed to create a dialog that this dialogue will make think about words, a fragment of human body as a shoulder, and a borderline/ frontier that created tensions that separated the space, and gave different functionality for the ground. By involving, looking, observing, learning each piece could allow the visitor interrogating about the immigration terminology about landed immigrants and the land's citizens as written text on tablets, uneven porcelain surfaces, scattered and broken porcelain pieces, and deformed and restless shoulders positioned on a wall and in space as a big dialogue. This project is the dialogue between as an artist living in and becoming – and is a story of making as an immigrant artist – and belonging to a new land where is a longing to be free for many of others.

Conclusion

One side of me thinks that home is where I was born (Samsun, Turkey), where I learned the mother language: Turkish. How to ask for food, water and love, taste and smell the food that my mom prepared. It seems like imaginary because in a host country nobody knows what kind of sense of belonging I carry within me or my heart when I think about the land where I grew up in. I know that I cannot return to that geography anymore with the same sense I am feeling now. Another side of me thinks that home is where my everyday life continues, where I accumulate my lived experiences for my memory, where I learned how to survive under - 30 C degree weather, where I have to speak, listen and write in English with the endless effort of extending my vocabularies. I am very conscious of how much I portray an immigrant body, and how this relates to my own history and the context of diaspora in which I live as.

Nurgul, Calgary, December 2016

During my MFA, my studio became full of activities. It has been a kind of a windowless laboratory on the 6th Floor of the Department of Art. My studio and departmental galleries which have not only been a place for material experimentation, but also a good place to contemplate these experiments and to think about how I could expand and extend them into multiple and larger pieces.

Throughout my MFA experience I have seen a progression in thought about the term diaspora, home/homeland, be/longing. The concept emerged through an attempt to understand the process of becoming an immigrant and the processes of replacement through my own experience in a new culture with a new language, English. This became naturally an auto-ethnographical approach by including it in my reflections on my own process into my research as

a methodological approach. Keeping this experience as a diasporic individual on the micro level, I broadened the context by adding parts of the documentation processes lived by any other relocated or displaced body. Referring to the connection between diasporic individuals and diasporas in twenty first century in Canada, I tried to raise up questions about diaspora and homeland, through my creation research, studio based research, methodology theory and installation art. I attempt to apply my craft skills set to the making of objects and artifacts by practicing printmaking, ceramics and paper-making processes. The display of my art has transitioned from displaying an artwork in a traditional format to that of an immersive installation art. From the beginning I was trying to explore different mediums and materials as mixed-media and sculptural approaches. I also tried to make the audience part of my installation artworks. To do this, I had to work on the performativity to create a moment of interactivity or involvement in the exhibition space. Making multi sensory art work as an approach helped me to understand the relationship between audience, space and medium. I focused on a sense of empathy though by participation to create the artwork.

I intended creating a social and political thoughts within installation art and conceptual art with the use of text. By using the text-based artwork my narrative became not only about immigrants or replaced individuals but also about displaced individuals including refugees, exiles, and travelers who have experienced the processes and procedures in a new country and culture. I have explored how the power of language can form and shape the immigrant individuals and diasporic bodies. As an artist, I feel that I have a responsibility to talk about social, cultural and political issues and concepts through my artistic research. Contemporary Art invites artists to surface their personal stories within practices and such different mediums as clay hand building, printmaking, and paper making and sculpting.

“What does it mean to be Canadian?” is a big change of my life, I have completed my Canadian Citizenship Application’ Document List. I am becoming a Canadian Citizen.

The shifting activities of international politics surrounding the current refugee and immigration crisis’ that have targeted Middle Eastern identity and culture¹²⁰ is the centre of my upcoming research. focus of my research. Some powerful countries are setting physical walls between cultures as a frontier in the twenty-first century. My next project is about the walls that are built as dividers, and the physical wall divides up the land politically, culturally, emotionally as well as geographically.

¹²⁰ Augie Fleras, *Immigration Canada: Evolving Realities and Emerging Challenges in a Postnational World*. (Toronto: UBC Press, 2015), 408-429.

Image List

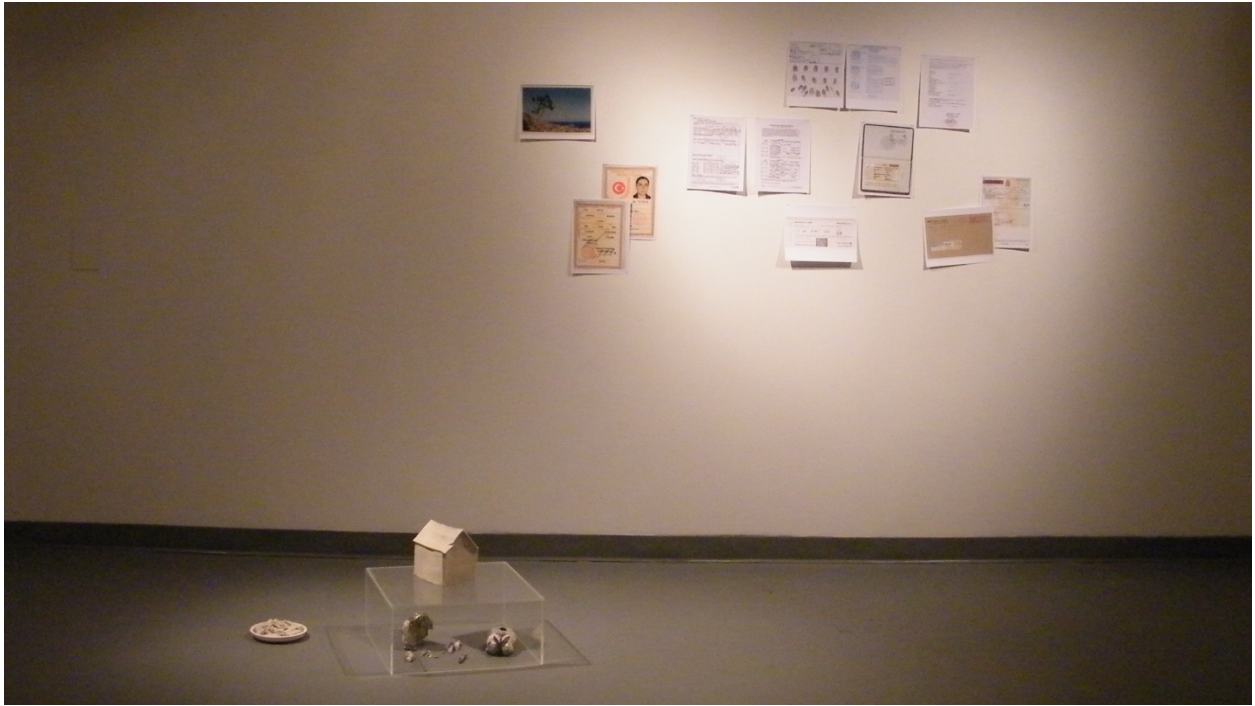


Figure 1. 1 *Looking for a new land*, 2015, mixed-media installation, ceramic, Plexiglas, digital images



Figure 2.1. Nurgul Rodriguez, *DESigual*, 2016. Paper mache, chicken wire, plaster bandage, rice glue, plate lithography, 140 cm x 120cm x120 cm.



Figure 2.2 Nurgul Rodriguez, *DESigual*, 2016. Paper mache, chicken wire, plaster bandage, rice glue, plate lithography, 140 cm x 120cm x120 cm.



Figure 2.3 Jana Sterbak, *Vanitas Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic*, 1987, flank steak
<http://larochejoncas.com/jana-sterbak/> (Accessed on August 14, 2017)



Figure 3.1a, b, c, d





Figure 3.2 Nurgul Rodriguez, *Becoming Words: on Process*, 2016, hand-made recycle paper, installation art, fish line, 10 x17 inches



Figure 3.3 Jenny Holzer. *WHITE*, 2006. Nichia white LED's mounted on PCB with aluminum housing, 192 1/4 x2165/8x53/8 inches. Installation view: Cheim & Read, New York. (Accessed on August 15, 2017 <http://magazine.art21.org/2008/12/04/self-consciousness-around-controversial-issues/#.WcXt8BNSyRs>)



Figure 3.4 Edward Ruscha, *Level*, 2003, acrylic on canvas, 64x72 inches <http://edruscha.com/works/mirror-image-level/> (Accessed on August 17, 2017)

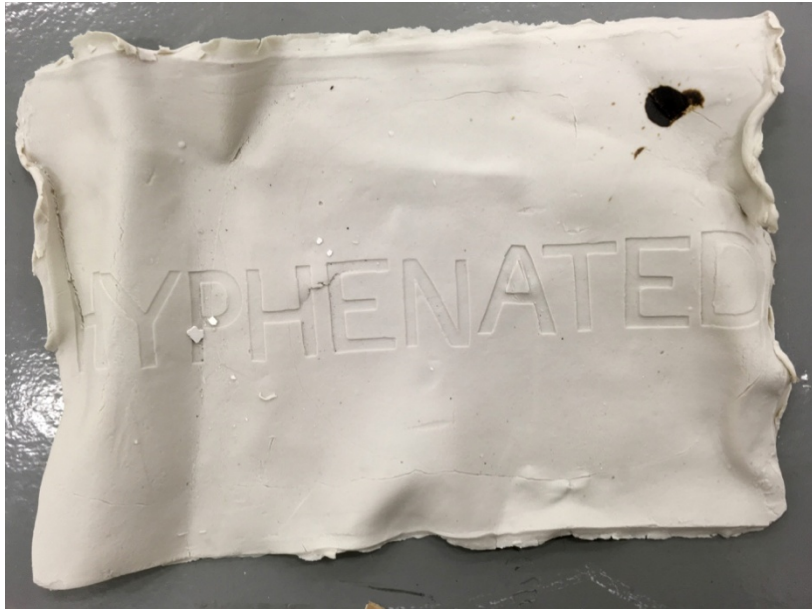


Figure 4.1 Nurgul Rodriguez, *Becoming Words*, 2016 porcelain tablet, 33 cm x 25 cm



Figure 4.2 Nurgul Rodriguez, *Becoming Words: "I am going to die in this country as an immigrant."*, 2017. Installation component, framed digital image 111cm x 74cm,



Figure 4.3 *Becoming Words: "I am going to die in this country as an immigrant."*, 2017.
Porcelain tablet, installation detail,



Figure 4.4 *Becoming Words: "I am going to die in this country as an immigrant."*, 2017.
Porcelain tablets, installation detail,



Figure 5. 1 a, b Nurgul Rodriguez, *In a new land ... Be longing*, 2017, installation art, unglazed porcelain of paper clay, fired cone 6-8, steel, terra sigillata, (left-side-enter wall view, floor view, detail)



Figure 5.2 Nurgul Rodriguez, *In a new land ... Be longing*, 2017, detail, installation art, unglazed porcelain of paper clay, fired cone 8, terra sigillata (right wall)



Figure 5.3 Nurgul Rodriguez, *In a new land... Be longing*, 2017, installation art, unglazed porcelain of paper clay, fired cone 8, steel, terra sigillata, panoramic view of whole installation.



Figure 5.4 Nurgul Rodriguez, *In a new land... Be longing*, 2017, installation art, unglazed porcelain of paper clay, fired cone 8, steel, detail.



Figure 5.5 Antony Gormley, *Man Asleep*, 1985, installation
<http://www.antonygormley.com/sculpture/chronology-item-view/id/2356/page/662#p1>
(Accessed on August 17, 2017)



Figure 5.6 Hossein Valamadesh, *Longing/Belonging*, 1997, mixed-media, a - photograph; 99 x 99 cm; image/sheet
b - carpet; 215 x 305 cm, Contemporary Collection Benefactors 2002
<https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/207.2002.a-b/> (Accessed on August 18, 2017)



Figure 5.7 Nurgul Rodriguez, *In a new land... Be longing*, 2017, installation: unglazed porcelain paper clay, fired cone 8, detail.

Glossary

Bisque, biscuit	Unglazed but fired ware, usually accomplished in a low temperature firing prior to the glaze fire: also applies to unglazed fired high, as in porcelain bisque. (Peterson 2003, 412)
Body	A combination of natural clays and non-plastics, especially formulated to have certain workability and firing characteristic. (Peterson, 2003, 412)
Bone China	Porcelain of high translucency made with bone ash. (Peterson, 2000, 412)
Cellulose fiber	The primary natural ingredient found in most paper and as a clay body additive, it has distinct characteristics. (Gault, 2005, 25)
Ceramics	Art and science of forming objects from earth materials containing or combined with silica, produced with the aid of heat treatment of 704 C or more. The study of this subject. (Peterson, 2003, 412)
Ceramist	Originally a technician, now used for a ceramic artist or potter.
Cones	Pyrometric cones. Cines are placed in the kiln during firing as a guide, and to indicate the final heat. (Peterson, 2003, 413)
Cotton fiber	The white material found on cotton plants, the short fibres of which can be used in paper pulps. (Gault, 2005)
Decal	Ceramic pigments photo-screened or patterned on to flexible decal paper for transfer to bisque or over-glaze. (Peterson, 2003, 413)
Deckle	A frame on the mold used to shape the pulp when making paper by hand.
Deflocculants	Electrolyte or catalyst that causes clay and water mix to become liquid faster with a minimum addition of water. (Peterson, 2003, 413) Added to casting slip to regulate viscosity.
Earthenware	All ware with a permeable or porous body after firing; by definition earthenware has 10 to 15 percent adsorption. (Peterson, 2003, 413)
Elasticity	When referring to clay, its ability to be maneuvered without breaking. (Peterson, 2003, 413)

Engobe	A liquid clay slip coloured with metallic earth oxides or glaze stains applied to wet or leather-hard ware for decoration; also natural clays of different colours applied on raw ware for decoration. Engobe can be covered by glaze or used alone. (Peterson, 2003, 413)
Feldspar	Mineral found in granite which melts around 1260°C, used as a flux in clay bodies and glaze. When feldspar rock loses its alkaline content through decomposition, it becomes kaolin and is thus the origin of clay. (Peterson, 2003, 413)
Glaze	Glassy melted coating developed by chemicals and heat on a clay or metal surface; technically, an impervious silicate coating formed by the fusion of inorganic materials. Glaze has a similar oxide composition to glass, but also includes a binder. Glaze provides decoration and colour, prevents penetration of liquids or acids, and yields a matt or glossy, easily cleaned, functional surface. (Peterson, 2000, 397)
Gum Arabic	A natural tree gum. (Peterson, 2003, 414)
Kaolin	Anglicized with China clay. The purest clay, approximating closely the idealized clay mineral kaolinite. Contains very little iron impurity and is therefore white. It is an essential ingredient. (Peterson)
Kiln	Furnace for fired clay, slumping glass, or melting enamels; studio kilns can achieve temperatures up to 1371°C, depending on their construction materials; they can be fueled carbonaceously, organically, or electrically. (Peterson, 2000, 398)
Leather-hard	Cheese hard stage which clay reaches before being bone-dry; stiff enough to support itself, but can still be altered. (Peterson, 2000, 398)
Mold	Usually a plaster form, single or multi-pieced, which will be used to reproduce any number of accurate copies of the original model in clay, plasticine, plaster or found object (Peterson, 2003, 415)
Paper fibers	Paper is made out of different kinds of cellulose fibres. Paper fibres can be used in all types of clay bodies including a casting slip. To obtain

cellulose fibres different kinds of paper can be used.

Paper porcelain	Porcelain slip mixed together with paper pulp and cast and rolled into Slabs. (Peterson, 2003, 146)
Paper clay	A half solid, half fluid plastic modeling mix of clay, paper pulp and water. Paper clay handles both like and unlike the clay and paper it is made of (Gault, 2005, 7)
Plaster	The mineral gypsum, with the chemical composition of calcium sulfate, used for clay reproduction and as a work surface (Peterson, 2003, 415)
Plasticity	Workability; clay is the only material having real plasticity, meaning that ability to form into any shape, and to get progressively harder in the same shape on being fired to 704 C and above. The essential property that allows clay to be shaped and reformed (Peterson, 2003, 415)
Porcelain	Mechanically strong, hard, frequently translucent, fired clay body with zero absorption. Porcelain is dense and vitreous, the strongest of all clay bodies unless very thin (Peterson, 2003, 415)
Pottery	A loosely-used term; often means earthenware or just any clay piece that has been fired. (Peterson, 2003, 415)
Pulp	The main ingredient in the papermaking process, consisting of a variety of ingredients including cotton, rag and wood. (Gault, 2005)
Saggars	(1) Refractory container or fire-clay box in which pottery is stacked during firing or protection from direct flame. (2) A container for holding fuming materials such as metal oxides, chemical salts, and organic substances, that will act on the ware in the saggars during the fire (Peterson, 2003, 416)
Shrinkage	Contraction of clays or bodies in drying and firing, caused by the loss of physical and chemical water and the achieving of molecular density (Peterson, 2003, 416)

Silica	Oxide of silicon, found abundantly in nature as quartz, sand, and flint; the essential oxide in ceramics. (Peterson, 2003, 416)
Slab	Flat piece of clay from which shapes can be fabricated. (Peterson, 2003, 416)
Slab building	Forming a shape from sheets of clay (Peterson, 2003, 36)
Slip	A suspension of ceramic materials in water, generally refers to casting slip for molds; can mean a liquid clay engobe for decorating or glaze slip (Peterson, 2003, 416)
Stains	Watercolor wash on bisque with metallic coloring oxides or commercial glaze stains; also a term referring to glaze stain. To expand the color range, ceramic stains can be added to a clay body. (Peterson, 2003, 417)
Stoneware	Hard, dense, and durable ware generally fired to 1200°C and above; a body with 0 to 5 percent absorption, regardless of firing temperature (Peterson, 2003, 417)
Translucency	Ability to transmit scattered light, not quite transparent. (Peterson, 2003, 417)
Terra Sigillata	Low-fired clay work with a sheen resulting from burnishing; an extraordinary fine ground clay suspension in water that shines when applied as a coating and fired at low temperature (the molecular structure changes at high fire, destroying the sheen); the surface of Attic Greek ware. (Peterson, 2003, 417)
Vitrous	Glass-like, hard, dense. (Peterson, 2003, 417)

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