



# MIGRATION

OCAD UNIVERSITY FIRST GENERATION STUDENT WORK 2018



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# MIGRATION

## **FOREWORD**

Since its inception seven years ago, OCAD University's First Generation Exhibition and Publication has served as a space for students to delve into new ideas, challenge themselves as artists and makers, and celebrate their achievements on this creative journey.

This year's chosen theme is Migration, meaning "movement from one part of something to another". Within this theme artists and designers have explored concepts of: nostalgia, home, the familiar vs. the unknown, learning about one's roots, and self-discovery, through drawing and painting, time-based media, material art, and writing.

Seeing these works has been inspiring and for that I would like to say thank you to all our participants. Through this experience, I hope all of you will be encouraged to go forward with curiosity, courage, and confidence to seek opportunities which will enhance your growth as artists and individuals.

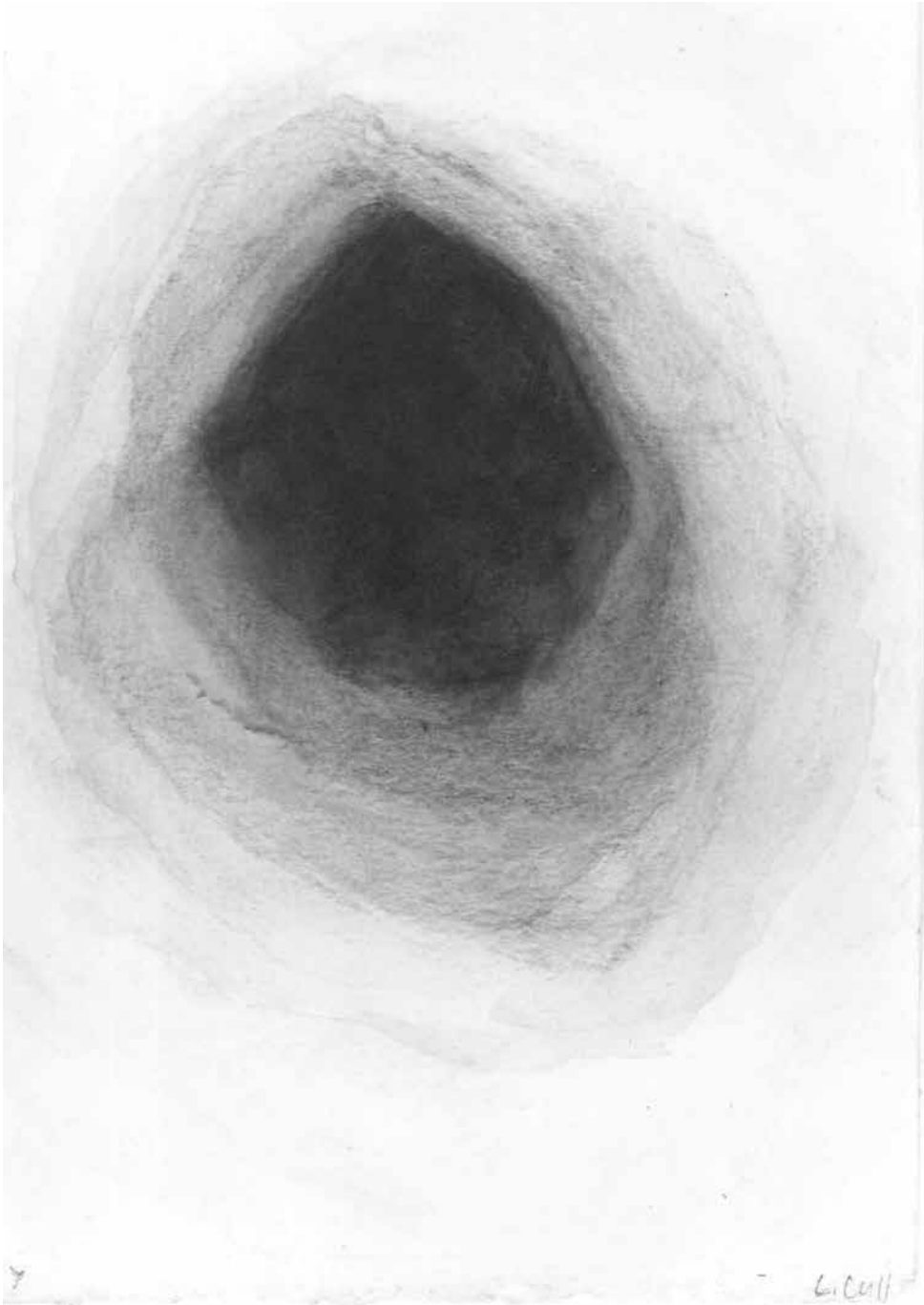
**Savindi Jinasena**

*Program Assistant, First Year Student Initiatives  
Writing & Learning Centre*



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## **LINSEY CULL**

***Beginnings*** (2017)

Graphite on Paper

The most difficult stage of any journey is the beginning. The beginning is the place where the destination is most obscure. The beginning is where we must act in faith. I began my own new journey in September 2017 when I left my home, my family and friends, and my community to study at OCAD University in Toronto. Although it is uncharted territory, I have faith in the journey and faith in myself to complete it.





## **VICTORIA DAYES**

***She Became Her Greatest*** (2017)

Photography & Wearable art

She Became Her Greatest is a series of self-portrait photographs representing the growth and movement of my artistic path. We not only migrate to other parts of the world but also as human beings: always learning and changing our own state of mind to better understand what is around us. By photographing myself wearing the headpieces, it can be seen how my poses and facial expressions change to speak for my pattern of migration. These images show through wearable art how one may start to migrate to a better self they have created.

**MAP #7 VIRGIN STANDING ON THE MOUNTAIN**  
**DIEGO MARTIN**

*(i) black silk night*

*[flowing through sleeping streets and houses like the river that flooded 45 days ago]*

*(ii) the lights from the city below, 12.4km*

*[23 minutes away, stillness on the hill, oblivious to the yellow chaos of clotheslines on balconies and doubles stands in the distance]*

*(iii) dark palm trees reaching into the night*

*[see also: the heavens, only visible when strong wind causes their fronds to rustle, catching the light]*

*(iv) the sound of stars, scintillating through the foliage of dark green mountains*

*[emitting flashes of singsong light, the spirit under the angel wing begonia wakes and stretches, refer to map #16]*

*(v) the blue virgin with black skin*

*[La Divina Pastora, Siparee Mai, lapis and dark copper, living flesh, standing on the mountains which the moon disappears behind as the earth turns, crown of gold, flowers and oil flow from the mountains' peak and into the streets]*

## **ABIGAIL HOLT**

***Maps of Trinidad*** (2017)

Paper & Text

This project is an exploration of memory, using the visual language of cartography and translating it to a written language; turning land maps into sensory maps that record my memory (sound, sights, tastes, imaginations, visions, fabulisms) of incidences experienced travelling back to Trinidad. The written elements in the maps act as labels which map sensations, and the map index indicates fictionalized names of sites; some maps are left blank to mimic the gaps of memory, translation, time, and immigration. While maps function as symbolic abstractions, I am translating visual abstractions into written abstractions; mapping sensations, surveying the land through sensory memory, and unearthing an internal cartography.

**MAP #28 W.W.'S RUNNING ROUTE BY THE COCOA  
CHAGUARAMAS**

*(i) fresh fallen rain*

*[glimmering pools on asphalt, white moths emerge from the dripping green]*

*(ii) endless road lined with ixora flowers*

*[call and response singing between the soles of each foot (see also: orisha drums)]*

*(iii) beneath the mountains*

*[abandoned military airplane, dark blue gulf under the watchful sun, cocoa trees with old sad eyes]*

*(iv) howler monkeys, the bamboo cathedral*

*[sound: unseen choir, deep guttural howls, tearing through the darkness, heard within 4.8km]*

*(v) deep water bay*

*[flanking hills of tropical forests, the sun is born again in the sea, an iridescent green jacamar sings "victory"]*

*(vi) secret sugar apple tree*

*[W.W. swims 10 yards, hidden within the green W.W. does not pick the fruit: all trees are asleep after 6pm]*

**MAP #1 BLUE HUMMINGBIRD NIGHT  
DIEGO MARTIN**

*(i) deep blue night*

*[the colour of the caribbean sea at (14.540111, -74.967637)]*

*(ii) smell of guavas carried on the wind*

*[the wind rising from the sea, moving in the streets, through the pink ripe guavas, passed the barred windows, sticking to sweating skin]*

*(iii) snake with yellow markings wrapped around a mangosteen tree and sprawling into the asphalt road*

*[the same snake D.H. saw 8,004 nights ago]*

*(iv) coqui frogs under a heavy green leaf, singing like birds in the darkness*

*[sound: high-pitched, ringing in the distance, "CO-QUI" "CO-QUI"]*

*(v) guard dogs sleeping in their yards, waiting for a sound of footsteps breaking*

*[black coats that disappear in the dark and teeth that gleam white like moonlight]*

*(vi) red bromeliad flowers folding open in the night*

*[sunlight caught inbetween its petals from the day condensing into honey, a hummingbird is born from the gold]*





## ABIGAIL HOLT

*Luz Salpicada (Holy Ghosts)* (2018)

Photography

Through ritualistic processes and the creation of altar-like images, *Luz Salpicada (Holy Ghosts)* is a reconciliation with rupture, in which the wound becomes a site for creation, a carnival song in the morning—life begins. In this series, I used natural elements found in the Caribbean (purchased from West-Indian grocery stores in Canada) that have healing properties and are used in home remedies, such as: ginger, turmeric, mauby bark, papaya leaves, and fever grass. Framed by flowers and fruits are images of my family who, like my native land, I've spent the majority of my life separated from. The natural elements are tangible conduits to my island; the images of my family breathe light like votive candles burning. The phrase *Luz Salpicada* translates to light scattered: light like holy water, light spilling over, light filling the four corners, light crossing seas and borders, light uncontainable, light ascending—carrying through time like a song.





## **NEELA IMANI**

***Da Watan (This Land)*** (2018)

Oil on Canvas

Informed by the stories of my migrant family members, in conjunction with my own once-removed relationship to and understanding of my motherland, this painting, entitled *Da Watan*, explores the impact of American Imperialism and terrorism within Afghanistan. This 40 x 42 inch work responds to current biased photojournalism that has been used to reinforce Western propaganda by juxtaposing a historical and current photo of Afghanistan. Featuring the opening couplet of Afghanistan's national anthem, "Da watan Afghanistan Dai, Da izat de har Afghan Dai," which translates to "This land is Afghanistan, it is the pride of every Afghan," this work also documents my coming to terms with my ethnicity. It intends to represent the ultimate tenacity of every proud Canadian Afghan in the face of orientalist colonialist attitudes.

My methodological approach is influenced by Li Songsong's photomontages of political images, particularly in the way that "each defined area operates as a painting within a painting, suggesting a layered and disjointed approach to historical interpretation". Although there are defined spaces within my painting, the subjects in these spaces also interact with one another, creating a dynamic narrative.



## **SOHAE JEONG**

***Untitled 1,2,3*** (2018)

Acrylic on canvas

After a long day  
a narrow end of the day  
laid on my bed after a shower  
but sleepless night in the middle of creases

The nights in a foreign land  
days of bottomless agony  
anxieties of apprehension  
endlessly untying the knots

the fetters of latitude  
an aspiration of galloping endless green fields  
long for a dream

## RUI KANG

*Power Struggle* (2018)

Mixed Media

The surface meaning of this piece is to explore the conflict between disease and the capacity of the human immune system. In a deeper sense it metaphorically reflects the underlying power of one ethnicity. Which is the invisible power in our lives that gives us trouble?

The issue of domestic prejudice is still happening; just like diseases, we may overcome one type, but others will show up again. Sometimes this happens during our lifetime, when we get older, or we become weaker physically or mentally. The only thing we can do is keep our body fit and able to fight against them when they show up again, and be prepared all the time for the continuity thing.

Most immigrants don't usually receive health benefits. One of the issues they face is the language barrier; it can affect the way they explain their illness to their doctors. That may cause the doctor to misunderstand their situation and give them the wrong medicine.

That is what we struggle with and worry about all the time.





## **RUI KANG**

**UNTITLED** (2017)

Acrylic

Diversity is a very broad topic; it can be shown in different ways, such as the variety of food and culture in Toronto. Because of migration, we become more open-minded and accepting and we can celebrate the differences between various groups of people.

I value the months I spent learning English in Halifax, which expanded my social networks. In the language school, I met people from various countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Brazil, and Ecuador. These are places I have never been to, and only heard about in the news. They seem to be so far away from my life before coming to Canada. But at that time, we didn't have any concerns, we were just classmates; we were able to talk to each other and get to know each other's cultures. It was beneficial to change our impressions of how other countries might look. Now I am in Toronto, a more diverse city than Halifax, but I still miss the time that I spent in the multicultural language school. The place where we were so close, we could talk like a family.





## **JINA KIM**

***Night*** (2017)

Acrylic

Migration has been a recurring part of my life. I immigrated from Korea to Canada when I was 12 years old. I moved away from my family in Calgary to attend University in Edmonton. Then I left my friends in Edmonton to paint in Toronto. Migrating from my birthplace, saying goodbye to family and friends, and adapting to new environments was never easy. But from every migration, I was able to earn family, friends and experiences that have helped me mature.

The painting *Night*, shows the night scene from my first place in Toronto.

The night sky is painted in layers of glazes that darken with trepidation.

Lights sparkle in spite of the dark moments to come in this new environment.

*Night* is the starting point of my new migration with intricate emotions.



## **SHEVON JAKE LEWIS**

***Home in Adversity*** (2017)

Watercolour on Paper

Home in Adversity is a piece about how the changes in home affect individual growth. The piece explores the theme of migration by illustrating the growth of a plant with limited resources. The milk crate lacks adequate nutrition for the plant but it still grows in the empty vesicle. This intends to represent the displacement of an individual from its home. If the plant was in soil it could take root and flourish, but we glimpse an in-between phase, void of past and finality. The milk crate also offers shelter to the plant; though it may not be ideal, the plant is still growing, and this momentary shelter may reach new fertile soils for the plant to thrive. This piece asks the viewer to look at their own histories when they faced transitional periods and offers the plant as a loving representation of their response to adversity.



## **GINO MAROCCO**

***Black Balloon*** (2017)

Material Art

Migration goes beyond physicality; it is having the audacity to explore new realities and ways of thinking. The malleability of perception exists only when we liberate ourselves from fixations and choose to explore unfamiliar worlds. *Black Balloon* represents the possibilities of a balloon set free; does it escape the atmosphere and find a new friend on a foreign planet, or does it get trapped in an airplane motor and cause the demise of hundreds of passengers? Like our lives, we can choose what to fill our bags with. What we believe becomes our reality; what we carry becomes part of us, like the journal filled with memories, the stories in the scratches and stains. A backpack is more than an object, it is an extension of ourselves and the home away from home on the journey to understanding.





## **STAR NAHWEGAHBO**

***Mother*** (2017)

Video

Becoming a parent is like migrating to an unknown world.

I had no idea how challenging becoming a mother would be and couldn't have imagined the transformation this would create. Ultimately the life-long dance of mother and child leads to a place of growth, knowledge, and understanding. This is a story that takes you through a personal journey of motherhood. My intention is to demonstrate not only the birth of a child, but the birth of a mother.

## **JOAN CAMILLE NUGUID**

*The Move* (2018)

Digital Painting

The piece illustrates the move away from home. The birds passing the houses below symbolize a family's travel from one country to another in search of a shelter that would bring them safety. Migration, whether it be animals or people, therefore suggests only one thing: survival.





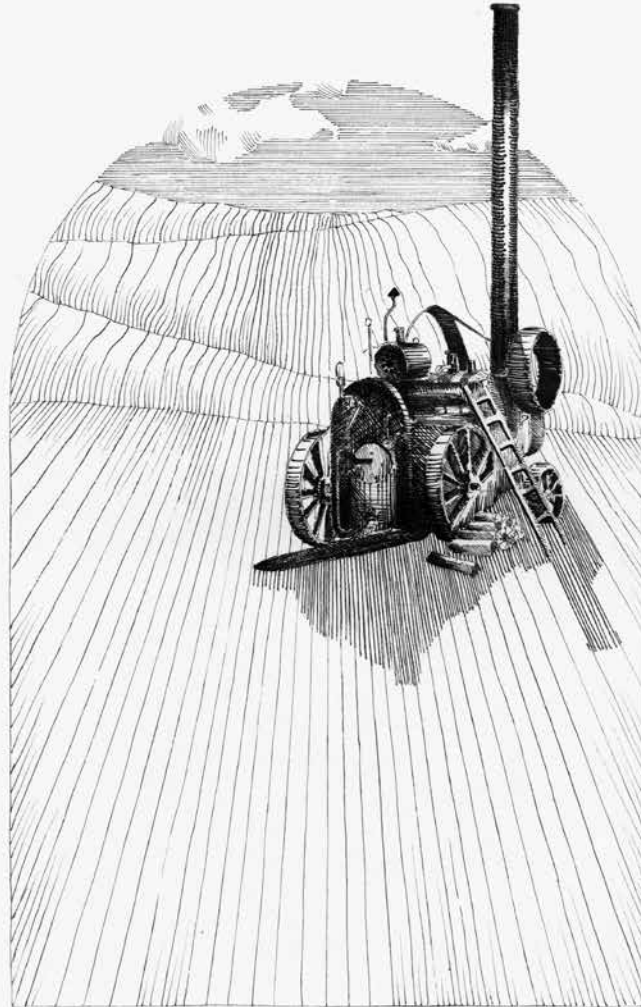


## **NEVITA SANKAR**

***Navigating Pasts & Places; a Start*** (2017)

Acrylic & Collage

The fragmented composition of the landscape in this piece creates an obscured vision of the details and identifying markers of the specific locations. This mirrors the feeling of trying to recall an old memory or trying to imagine a distant but familiar part of the world. The clearest parts are the stages of movement itself from place to place, through pasts and possible futures. The varied, complex and sometimes obscured visions of the present want to come together and form a clearer whole, but the process is not complete, only beginning. A beginning where everything starts to drift into place; even then the perspectives continue to drift.



## **MIKHAIL SHCHUPAK- KATSMAN**

*The Lonely* (2015)

Micron Pen

The machine emits motion in static—motion as anxiety. Constant movement without relocation.

Anxiety from new places and unknown people breeds loneliness, and stillness. But anxiety is a static force. Even in silence, in complete isolation, it cranks and turns its gears perpetually.

## HEEJAE SHIN

### *Self Portrait* (2016)

Oil on canvas

I projected my emotional state as an immigrant on this painting. The stiff posture of the figure and the sullen look on the face suggest the anxiety that I have as an immigrant. Even in a place of comfort—like on a couch—I can feel alienated and anxious. The painting depicts the moment that my routine life turned so strange that I got confused in my place of comfort.











## ZHUOQING TAN

*Seeing Light* (2016)

Photography

I believe almost all newcomers have asked “Where do I belong?” During my stay in Canada I took pictures to document the feeling of being in a new environment. These pictures were taken during Christmas. The festival air is striking, and it creates a sense of strangeness that made me feel I didn’t belong. I miss my hometown, the land where I was born.



## **CARMEN YUEN**

### ***Streaming World*** (2017)

Acrylic & Fabric

Streaming World is specifically focused on the experience of moving into a new culture or community as a minority, and the associated feeling of isolation. Ultimately, I want to express how outcasts, when rejected by society, can find their own communities and friendships in order to support each other.

Using origami, I folded fish of many different colours, moving together in unison. There are two green characters, a turtle and fish, isolated in the middle, which is a metaphor for the feeling of being excluded and left out of the community. The inspiration comes from a visit to a garden pond where I noted the koi fish had moved together in groups– there would occasionally be a fish on its own but had eventually found its place in a group again. Animals, by instinct, join together as a group, and so do humans.

Through this work, I want to give viewers the message that one can find others to rely on, in order to build their own individual path. Just like a school of fish, people need each other, or they would feel lost without support and guidance.

To me, one cannot move to the next destination solely on their own.

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