

ABSTRACT

Ways of Being Here: The Making of Immigrant Subjects
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This thesis project investigates how contemporary artists articulate immigrant positionality in their work. It asks: how are notions of selfhood taken up in contemporary art practice to speak to the political and affective dimensions of moving from one place to another, and consequently establishing oneself in relation to multiple locations? The exhibition *Ways of Being Here*—featuring works by Abedar Kamgari, Rah, and Alize Zorlutuna—was conceived to answer this question. The works in the exhibition performed the tensions inherent in negotiating multiple cultural and individual identities. This feminist thesis project argues that the works in the exhibition challenged the normative multiculturalism demanded by official Canadian discourse. It insists that current art practice responds to the need for a renewed political consideration of the realities of being an immigrant in Canada today. In doing so, this thesis informs a broader cultural understanding of the local, national, and international dimensions of global migration.

Keywords: Canada, contemporary art, critiques of nationalism, curating, diaspora, exhibitions, feminism, immigration