

*Untitled (Entitled)* is a text-based installation that is an extension of Jacqueline Hoàng Nguyễn's exploration on the ideological construction of white-colonial settler's multiculturalism and its mechanisms. In a study titled "Why Do Some Employers Prefer to Interview Matthew, but Not Samir? New Evidence from Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver", scholars Philip Oreopoulos and Diane Dechief revealed that employers in these cities are nearly 35% more likely to call back a job applicant with a Western European name than someone with a name common in minority and Indigenous groups, regardless of the applicant's experience. Although Canada perceives itself as a leader of multiculturalism, Oreopoulos & Dechief's numbers show a gaping contradiction, specifically in regards to employment equity. *Untitled (Entitled)* is a critical assessment of the nation's interpretation of multiculturalism, offering exposure into the daily realities and struggles of non-white lives who have been forced to implement westernized naming practices.

Starting in 2012, Nguyễn has been conducting interviews with migrants across Canada and abroad to understand the rationale behind the adoption of an English homologue of their given name. These interviews have been translated through an installation where each subject is represented by a lenticular panel and mounted on a mobile structure. Lenticular lenses are used commonly for advertising billboards and allow the presentation of two images embedded in one, creating an optical 'flip effect'. Depending on the viewing angle of the audience, the lenticular shows one image merging into another, which then creates an illusion of animation. For the exhibition, both the adopted and mother tongue names of the interviewed subjects are printed on the lenticulars, oscillating back and forth in reaction to movement within the gallery. The objective of *Untitled (Entitled)* is to make visible the uneven linguistic and colonial translations culturally marginalized groups perform everyday, by revealing the permeable strategies of Western society. Language, as used in this exhibition, exposes the fictional, misleading and individual character of naming practices, making evident the limits of national multiculturalism.

The text and layout for the lenticular lenses was conceived in collaboration with Buffalo and Brooklyn-based designer Chris Lee and the structures are built by Isak Nordell in Stockholm.

Jacqueline Hoàng Nguyễn is a research-based artist and uses a broad range of media, often relying on archival material to investigate issues of historicity, collectivity, Utopian politics, and multiculturalism within the framework of feminist theory. Currently based in Stockholm, she completed the Whitney's Independent Study Program, New York, in 2011, having obtained her MFA and a post-graduate diploma in Critical Studies from the Malmö Art Academy, Sweden, in 2005, and a BFA from Concordia University, Montreal, in 2003. Nguyễn's work has been shown internationally in institutions including Gordon Smith Gallery of Canadian Art, Vancouver (2018); Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, Philadelphia (2018); MAMA, Rotterdam (2018); MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina (2017); and SAVVY, Berlin (2017). Nguyễn was the 2017 Audain Visual Artist-In-Residence at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada and participated in NTU Center for Contemporary Art Singapore's Residencies Program (2018).

Dr. Diane Dechief designs and teaches science communication and digital writing courses at the McGill Writing Centre. In 2019, she received a student-nominated Distinguished Teaching Award from her faculty. In 2014, at the University of Toronto's iSchool, she completed her dissertation on personal names as the juncture of power, language, and identity in Canada's shifting cultural landscape. Dr. Dechief's current research focuses on science communication, equity, and names. (On that final note, Dechief is pronounced de-CHEF.)

***Untitled (Entitled)***  
**Jacqueline Hoàng Nguyễn**  
**Nov. 08 – Dec. 14, 2019**

Diane Dechief  
October 27, 2019

Your name is the word that is most deeply embedded in your senses. From birth, before you could even see for any distance, you heard your name. You were called this word by your parents, your broader family, your neighbours, even strangers.

Your name was the first written word you recognized. You spent hours learning its letters, learning to form them as your own hand learned to pilot a pencil. Your name became the noun you have written most often throughout your life.

The letters that construct your name are your most-loved letters. You will always be aware of places, things, roles—other names even—that are also built from these vowels and consonants.

Your name gets rhymed into silly phrases. Your name is yelled excitedly by new friends. Your name is stated with gravitas as you receive honours. Your name is carried forth in writing, on lists, through space. Your name is proclaimed with esteem by one who loves you.

But then they came. They didn't recognize your name, so they gave you a number. They said that everyone in your community needed a new name. They devised these names.

They made a list of people in your community, but it contained only numbers and these strange new names.

When they visit, they call you by this word that they've chosen for you. They think this word is you.

Or then you moved. Or your parents moved. Things changed: this place is different, this language is new.

That sense-imbued name of yours? It doesn't work quite as it did, as common names in this place do. In fact, your name might lose its diacritical marks, become unspoken—because people are unsure of how to speak it. Your name might close doors.

So you evolve another name that... works. You or your parents craft it. Perhaps it has a similar sound, a similar meaning. Or it's shorter. It's you, too. But not the same you. It's a way of being with the people who don't know your earliest name. A way that they can know you. A way that your name will fit. This name moves you through the turnstile. This name gets you a job.

Managing these two names takes work. Your senses tell you which name to use where. When it is safe to reveal the earliest one, when it is necessary. You evolve a story to explain your names. You polish it. You share it again. This telling has weight. And it gives you a certain way of seeing. It's repetitive work. And it's continuous. It's tiring.

It comes down to power. That original name, who gets to stick with theirs? Instead of receiving a new name. Instead of explaining their name to each new acquaintance. Who is asking the questions? "Oh, isn't that an interesting name?" And, "Does it have a special meaning?"

You learn to avoid these questions, to escape these odd power dances. You recognize others whose names draw questions. Like you, they've found shortcuts, tricks.

A namespace contains many names which are seldom shared. But these names demonstrate what a name can do, the stories that a name can carry. The ways names can make their bearer feel. The ways names speak to people who listen.



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