

em·i·gra·tion

**the act of leaving one's own
country to settle
permanently
in another**

Jonny Garcia

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collage series

em·i·gra·tion is a reflection of Garcia's 10-year journey from 2014 to 2024, visually depicting his experience of arriving in Canada until attaining Canadian citizenship. This series captures the most significant moments throughout this intense journey. It reflects a period of both turmoil and growth, as he navigated the challenges of adapting to a new country.

Across the 10 artworks of **em·i·gra·tion**, Canada is symbolized by the colour red, while Brazil is represented by yellow. This chosen colour scheme serves to visually depict his identity and underscore the significance of each country within the narrative of his immigration journey. Red embodies the essence of Canada, capturing its vibrancy, warmth, and the abundance of opportunities it offers. Meanwhile, yellow evokes the spirit of Brazil, reflecting its rich culture, diversity, and storied heritage.

The end of Garcia's journey culminates in 10 digital collages created in 2024, based on past works, memories, and notes. Each collage is printed on a hard aluminum substrate, measuring 13x19 inches. The choice of metal substrate serves as a metaphor, It embodies the strength required to move forward, leaving the past behind in pursuit of meaning and fulfillment. Despite their digital nature, each artwork is limited to only two editions: one available for sale and another reserved for Garcia's personal inventory and future exhibitions.

Accompanying the work is a small booklet measuring 5.5 × 8 inches, available for acquisition. The publication follows a passport-style format, featuring details about the artist, a printed reproduction of each artwork, and a contextual paragraph for each piece.v

artist statement

I approach life with a focus on expression rather than perfection, valuing the act of creation over obsessive refinement. Driven by restlessness, I tend to work quickly, embracing spontaneity and fluidity in my endeavours. Digital tools play a crucial role in my creative process, offering me the freedom to experiment, iterate, and effortlessly manipulate visual elements. This technological liberation enables me to explore my creativity without constraints.

With the completion of 10 years in Canada, I delve back into past works, memories, songs, and notes to reflect on my journey. It became clear to me that I need to talk about what was left behind. **em·i·gra·tion** is the end of a decade-long saga focusing on emigration, the act of leaving.

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bio

Jonny Garcia is a Brazilian-Canadian multi-disciplinary artist. From an early age, driven by a passion for self-expression, Garcia immersed himself in various disciplines, including dance, mime, acrobatics, magic, and hypnotism, before delving into the visual arts.

Since 2019, Garcia has dedicated his efforts to exploring digital collages, accumulating a body of work comprising over 600 pieces. Garcia's collages have been featured in various exhibitions such as **Impromptu IV** exhibit at the Cultural Center of Cape Cod, **Corporeal Gestures: An International Exhibition of Contemporary Collage** curated by Clive Knights in 2022, and the **Cut/Paste/Resist** pop-up Exhibition at the University of New Brunswick Art Centre. In 2020, one of Garcia's collages was incorporated into a school program in the city of Kingston, Canada. Furthermore, the **Schwitters' Army Collection of Collage Art** at MERZ Gallery has included one of Garcia's collages in its collection.

In addition to his artistic pursuits, Garcia holds two computer degrees, along with a degree in psychoanalysis coupled with clinical experience.

engagement

Canada is known for its welcoming immigration policies. Over the last decade (2015–2024), 3.8 million people left their home countries in search of a better future. I was one of them. While each journey is unique, every immigrant faces challenges that are not always visible or easily understood by those born here.

em·i·gra·tion is a deeply personal body of work created to connect with those who have struggled to adapt, to break through cultural and language barriers, and to build a new life from the ground up.

At the same time, **em·i·gra·tion** speaks to Canadians—our neighbours, colleagues, spouses, and friends—with the hope of fostering greater understanding, empathy, and connection.

technical details

Artwork

- 10 digital collages printed on aluminum, each measuring 13 × 19 inches, ready to hang.
- Each artwork is available for sale as a unique edition.
- The artist retains the right to create one additional copy of each artwork for personal inventory and future exhibitions only.

Passport Booklet

- 5.5 × 8-inch booklet featuring 15 pages.
- The booklet is available for purchase.
- The artist has the right to print and distribute the booklet as he sees fit.

COLLAGES

MAIN



Wishes

In Brazil, I left behind many possessions and aspects of my life. Shortly after arriving in Canada, during one of my ESL classes, the teacher instructed us to list our goals for our time in Canada. Among the most prominent items on my list were acquiring a phone, obtaining a driver's license, and finding a girlfriend. At that time, achieving a sense of belonging in Canada meant being accepted by Canadians, particularly forming intimate connections, such as romantic relationships.

Wishes, 2024, Emigration Series
digital collage on aluminum, 13"x19", Jonny Garcia



Language

For years, I harboured a deep dislike for my accent, knowing full well that it was impossible to rid myself of it. Yet, everyone around me seemed to celebrate it, viewing it as a unique part of their identity. However, it also served as a constant reminder of my difference and non-Canadian origins. During my time in Canada, I learned American Sign Language (ASL). For years, there were hearing individuals who had never heard my voice and thus assumed I was Canadian. However, the day one of them finally heard me speak for the first time, they commented on the strength of my accent.

Language, 2024, Emigration Series
digital collage on aluminum, 13"x19", Jonny Garcia



Immersion

My upbringing and entire life had been deeply influenced by my culture, shaping my beliefs and values. Toronto is known for its welcoming attitude towards immigrants. It stands as a vibrant mosaic of diversity, with thousands of individuals from various corners of the globe. However, upon arriving in this new land, I quickly realized that many of my ideals didn't quite fit in. Interacting with Canadians highlighted the vast array of cultural nuances that eluded me—subtle humour, cultural references, beloved television shows and cartoons from the 80s, songs, and countless other aspects of daily life. I often felt out of place, as if my experiences held little relevance in adjusting to this unfamiliar environment.

Immersion, 2024, Emigration Series
digital collage on aluminum, 13"x19", Jonny Garcia



Festivities

Part of the challenge of moving alone to another country is coming to terms with the realization that I'll miss out on many important moments I wished to be a part of. I missed birthdays, weddings, couldn't witness the growth of my nephew and niece, and was unable to spend time with my friends. These absences weighed heavily on me, serving as constant reminders of the sacrifices made in pursuit of a new life abroad.

Festivities, 2024, Emigration Series
digital collage on aluminum, 13"x19", Jonny Garcia



Culture Embrace

Understanding Canadian culture was a challenge that I struggled to adjust to. I recall how difficult it was to make friends. I attempted to participate in various activities where I was the only foreigner, but the majority of those endeavours proved fruitless. The intricate details and unspoken rules of a culture are deeply ingrained in the individuals since birth, creating an agreement that is challenging to grasp as an outsider.

Culture Embrace, 2024, Emigration Series
digital collage on aluminum, 13"x19", Jonny Garcia



Disaffection

Eventually, my early desire to be in a romantic relationship with a Canadian woman proved to be the most traumatic and difficult relationship I ever had. Through this experience, I learned firsthand how cultural differences can pose challenges in the way people relate to each other, particularly in communication and acceptance.

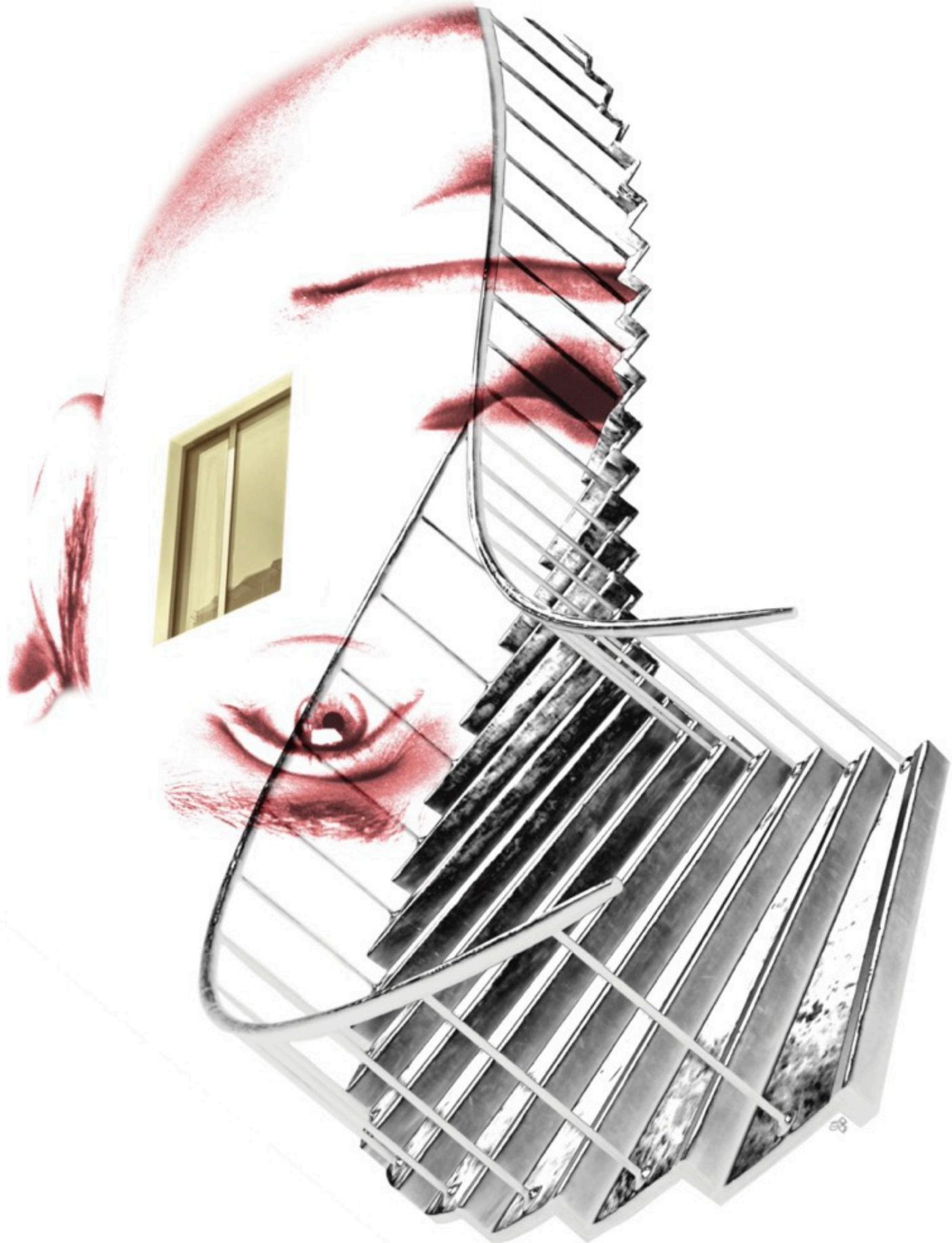
Disaffection, 2024, Emigration Series
digital collage on aluminum, 13"x19", Jonny Garcia



Residency

My first visit to Canada was in 2008, followed by a second visit in 2010. In 2014, I immigrated to Canada. I enrolled in ESL classes and attended college, graduating in 2016. By 2017, I secured my current job. It wasn't until 2019 that I obtained my permanent residency after a long wait of one year and nine months. This milestone was monumental for me. Finally, I could officially stay in Canada for as long as I wanted without the constant reminder of the ongoing struggle to gain legal acceptance in the country.

Residency. 2024. Emigration Series
digital collage on aluminum, 13"x19", Jonny Garcia



Roots

My life improved significantly after obtaining permanent residency in Canada. I secured a good job, enjoyed more comfort, and finally built the cherished friendships with Canadians I had longed for. I felt genuinely accepted by those around me. With this newfound stability, I was able to acquire possessions like a motorcycle, a car, and a house. What I never fully grasped before moving to Canada was that life gains meaning when we achieve our desires through perseverance and determination.

Roots, 2024, Emigration Series
digital collage on aluminum, 13"x19", Jonny Garcia

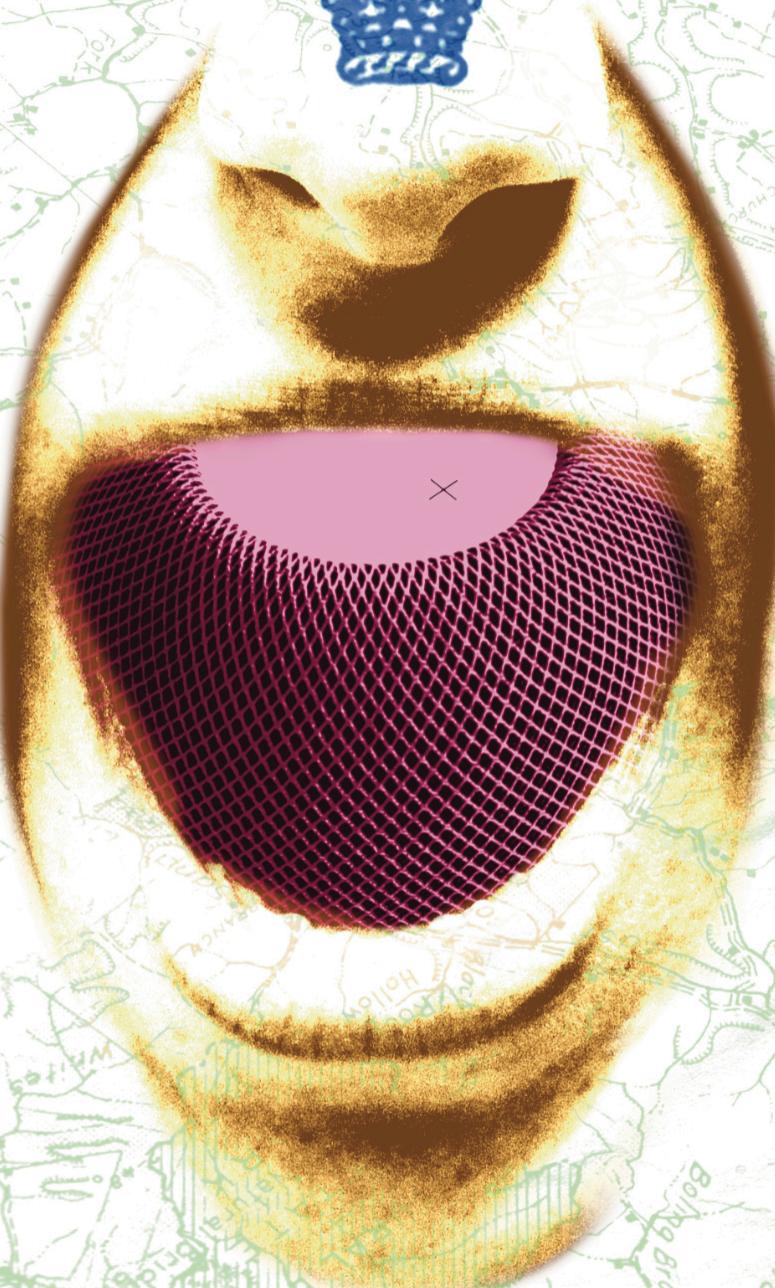


Permanency

This journey began when I was an outsider and culminated in the moment when I finally received legal, verbal, and physical acknowledgment that I belong in Canada. On February 15, 2024, I took my oath to become a Canadian citizen. During the ceremony, the judge affirmed that not only do I belong to Canada, but Canada also belongs to me.

Permanency, 2024, Emigration Series
digital collage on aluminum, 13"x19", Jonny Garcia

CANADA



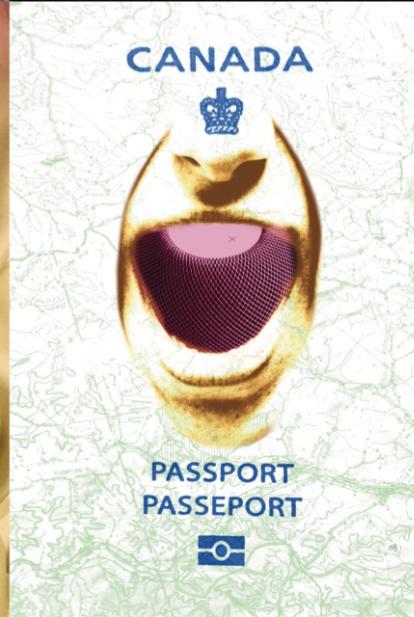
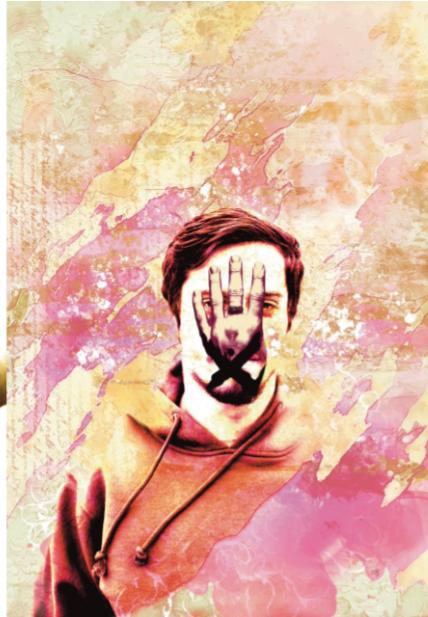
PASSPORT PASSEPORT



Citizen

As the final artwork of this series, I contemplate what it truly means to be Canadian or Brazilian, and what defines one's nationality. I do not speak perfect English; I was not born in Canada; I don't fully comprehend Canadian culture; I don't share the same cultural background as most of my friends. I do not speak perfect Portuguese; I don't share many moments with my family and dearest friends; I don't eat Brazilian food as often; I don't live in Brazil. I speak Portuguese as much as I speak English. Still, I am Canadian and also Brazilian.

Citizen, 2024, Emigration Series
digital collage on aluminum, 13"x19", Jonny Garcia



em·i·gra·tion

2024, 13"x19", digital collage on aluminum, Jonny Garcia