

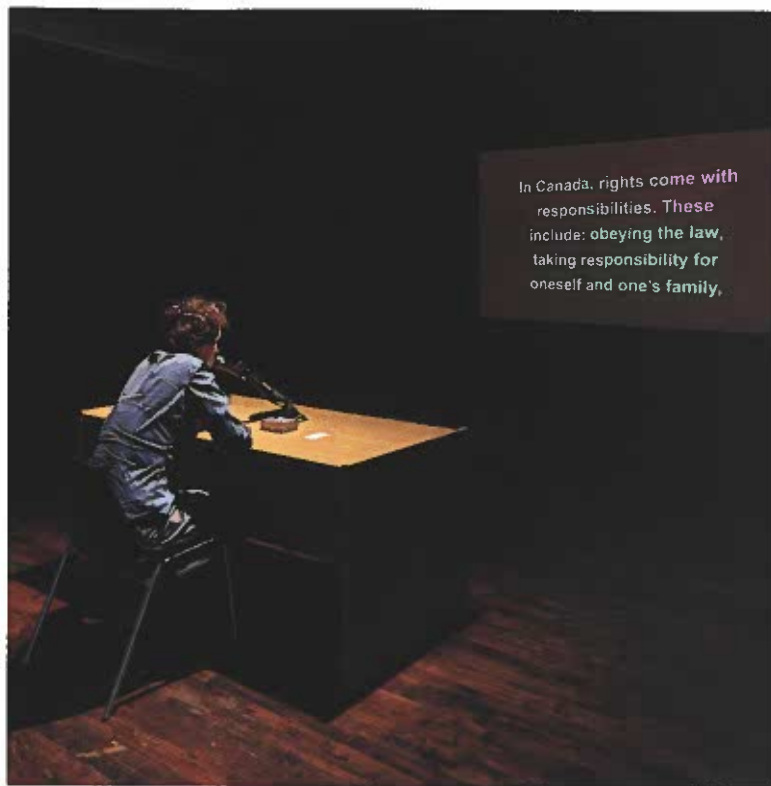
**CONCEPT**  
**“SILENT CITIZEN”**

AKA ARTIST-RUN, SASKATOON

March 16 to April 21

*This prescient participatory installation first shown in 2014 uses karaoke to engage the audience in dialogue about Canada’s mandatory language test for immigrants. Sharlene Bamboat and Alexis Mitchell—a.k.a. Bambitchell—describe its continued relevance.*

We became interested in silence and language policing when the Harper government passed a bill that stiffened the requirements of the English or French language proficiency test for hopeful immigrants. *Silent Citizen* highlights the absurdity of this state policy and the way it restricts immigration to Canada. The viewer prompts the installation by pressing a button that cues a video taken from the Canadian immigration website. It tells prospective immigrants what they need to do to become successful Canadian citizens, and it’s quite campy, concluding with a woman patronizingly stating, “If you work hard and play by the rules, you’ll succeed!” A computerized voice then announces a series of questions—such as “What is the responsibility of a Canadian citizen?” and “Did you invite your mother to dinner on Friday?”—and the karaoke text prompts the participant’s responses, which are recorded, then looped back, along with the voices of others who have taken the test prior. The language test, which costs about \$300, is a discriminatory policy that showcases the type of immigrant Canada actually hopes to attract, regardless of claiming open doors.



Bambitchell *Silent Citizen* (installation view) 2015 PHOTO GUY L'HEUREUX

Floorers removing the hides, Union Stock Yards, Chicago. Date unknown. SUHLING AND KOEHN CO. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS. PUBLIC DOMAIN



**PROCESS**  
**“THEATRE FROM THE JUNGLE”**

ART GALLERY OF SOUTHWESTERN MANITOBA, BRANDON

April 12 to June 9

*For their latest project, Richard Ibghy and Marilou Lemmens work with migrant workers in Brandon, MB, to workshop Upton Sinclair’s 1906 novel *The Jungle*—a story about the exploitation of immigrant labour in Chicago’s meat-packing industry at the turn of the 20th century—drawing striking parallels to today.*

Brandon is home to Canada’s largest hog-packing plant, and it’s the town’s number one employer. Its poor working conditions and low wages led to high staff turnover until 200 when the Provincial Nominee Program, an immigration incentive initiative, shifted the plant’s workforce to foreign labour from the Global South. The program requires participating immigrants to serve a certain number of years at the plant to qualify for Canadian citizenship; the promise is held out as a carrot, teasing the into working in industries with exploitative working conditions. We’re using Sinclair’s novel as a catalyst to discuss immigration and labour in a reading group with 8 to 10 of the workers. The issues we’re looking at are specific to Brandon, but the project allows us to think about immigration policies as a whole with people who are directly affected by them.