

KINGS Artist Run acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate. We offer our respect to Elders both past and present and extend this offer to all First Nations people.

KINGS

*Luce Nguyễn-Hunt*  
IT'S ALL A HIẾU  
LẦM, AUE MY  
ENDLESS LOVE

AUGUST

10.08.23–2.09.23

*Artist Run*

Established in 2003, KINGS Artist-Run provides a location for contemporary art practice, supporting distinctive experimental projects by artists at all stages of their careers.

Open 12–5pm Thursday,  
Friday, Saturday  
69 Capel Street,  
West Melbourne VIC 3003

*Luce Nguyễn-Hunt*

## IT'S ALL A HIỂU LẦM\*, AUE MY ENDLESS LOVE

In many ways, my sister helped me find my voice.

I was only six years old when she introduced me to singing; we listened to pop songs and I practised them orally in a call and response with her. I mimicked her, because of course, I was still learning to read. I remember performing for my mama and my Vietnamese aunties at their house on Honeywood Street, where they would joke, “where do they get that voice from?”, since everyone knew my mum couldn’t hold a tune. At the time I had so much pride for my voice. It felt like my sister and I were musical prodigies, gifted and blessed with mellifluous abilities ungrounded in origin or familial connection. We were the only ones that could sing and it made us feel special, particularly when we were treated less than because we were mixed (with brown and not white) and female and our mother was the only one in her family to have divorced. It wasn’t until a few years later, when I visited Aotearoa for my Papa’s funeral, that I heard the tone and timbre of my own voice in others. It resonated through the voices of my cousins, aunties, uncles and father in my Nana’s humble living room, as we mourned over the body of our lost loved one.

My sister helped me find my voice, but it was always there, resting and waiting.

When I sing I can hear many voices, not just my own.

One voice echoes a lineage.

In this spatial temporal installation, singing becomes an enactment of cultural memory. My darling sister and I crafted a Christianised choral arrangement of the well known Cook Islands song, ‘My Endless Love’ by the Tongareva Five. Originally released in 1989, ‘My Endless Love’ was written by the lead singer of the band, Papa Turoa Taia, who adopts biblical verses in Psalm 42:1 to compare his love for his wife with one’s love for God. He can only describe the depth of his love for his wife in relation to his devotion to God.

The use of doubling in this work is my way of digitally weaving together a present and future self within the liminal space that is vā. The great Samoan poet and writer, Albert Wendt, imparts, “Va is the space between, the betweenness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All, the space that is context, giving meaning to things. The meanings change as the relationships/the contexts change.”

The use of body doubling in *Aue My Endless Love* serves as a symbol or physical embodiment of the reciprocal act of caretaking into the past and future, taking into consideration the function of the body within vā. This motion of detangling, curling and brushing with coconut oil is not done in vain, but with gratitude to the body and bodies that have carried me through. I sing to my endless loves for there is no greater kinship.

*Aue My Endless Love* is framed and held by the pink hues of a circular neon work, reflected on the floor at the foot of the textile. This neon work is part of a broader series of neon, *hiểu lầm*, which expands the scope of personal investigation to consider queer lexicons across their Vietnamese, Samoan and Rarotongan (Cook Island) heritage. How does language alter and steer our possibilities of self? Thinking through the duality of queer trauma and affirmation, the work explores the idea of straddling two worlds, or two states of being, highlighting the sometimes irreconcilable aspects of intersectionality that can be summed up through the slippages between languages. I find comfort in hiding behind abstracted and almost illegible text, stretching the glass medium to its limits through numerous twists and turns. Perhaps being almost unable to read this work is part of how I remain in a feeling of safety and ambiguity whilst distancing myself from these descriptions, slurs, labels.

\* hiểu lầm = misunderstanding

*Special thanks to my mama for helping with language translation and Leon Truong for neon design assistance. Meitaki ma'ata (thank you) to my sis, Emily Nguyễn-Hunt, for adding her beautiful harmonies onto the soundtrack.*

Exhibition details:

*hiểu lầm (misunderstanding), 2023,*  
from the *things I can't say / những điều tôi không thể nói* series.  
Neon, glass.

*Aue my endless love, 2022,*  
Single channel video with sound on digitally  
sublimated recycled jersey cotton.

**Luce Nguyễn-Hunt** is an emerging Vietnamese, Sāmoan and Rarotongan artist currently based in Naarm. Their research-based practice documents an evolving cultural gender-sexuality divergence through digitally manipulated moving image and photography installations. Using poetry, text and sound as an embodiment of cultural memory, they are interested in dissecting non-linguistic experiences in the face of non- or partial language knowledge. Recent exhibitions include *New Energy*, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney, *MADANOW 2022* at Monash University, Melbourne, and