

SINGAPORE BIENNALE 2019

22 Nov 2019 –
22 Mar 2020

EVERY
STEP
IN THE
RIGHT
DIRECTION

EDUCATION KIT

ARTIST FOLIOS

PART OF
THE BALIK
BARRACKS
TRAIL!



NABILAH NORDIN
AN OBSTACLE IN EVERY DIRECTION
2019

AUSTRALIA / SINGAPORE

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THE ARTIST
NABILAH NORDIN

- (b. 1991, Singapore) Nabilah is a Singaporean born Malay artist who works with large-scale sculptures and employs a haptic approach to art making by combining various unusual or found objects together with construction materials.
- Nabilah has exhibited widely across both Australia and Singapore. She graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Art from RMIT University in Singapore and Master's in Contemporary Art from the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne.
- Her finished sculptures tend to include areas where evidence of the handmade, for example, marks, scrapes or movement, can be seen. Her works also relate to her own life experiences and are often playful in nature.



DID YOU KNOW?

The artist took three weeks to create all these sculptures, and four days to install this artwork. How long do you think you would take?

THE ARTWORK

AN OBSTACLE IN EVERY DIRECTION
2019

Mixed media installation. Dimensions variable
Collection of the Artist.
Singapore Biennale 2019 commission

- **MEDIUM:** Between 20 to 40 sculptural components are placed across the gallery, each made of different formations, textures, colours and sizes. The sculptures are positioned to function as an obstacle course.
- **TECHNIQUES / PROCESSES:** The artist approaches her art making with the idea of play — defined by herself as “chance” and “improvisation” — to embrace what is unknown. She forms her final artwork within the space itself and makes many decisions on the spot. The arrangement of the pieces often changes throughout the installation process.
- **IDEAS / INSPIRATIONS / CONTEXT:** The concept is inspired by the idea that failure is needed to create a hopeful future. The series of sculptures presents the many ways which the appearance of failure can be expressed. For example, some sculptures look like they are on the verge of falling, breaking or sliding, although that is not the case. Many people play the outcome in their head before it happens. The artist captures this moment of potential failure in her artwork and embraces the unknown possibilities. She believes that without failure, there are no imagined futures. And so, ultimately, she understands every failed attempt as a step in the right direction.

STEP BY STEP

PRIMARY:

ART / ENGLISH / CCE

STEP 1 :: PRE-VISIT

THINK

When you hear the word “failure” or “fail”, what other feelings or words do you associate it with? Why? List down these words and discuss them with a partner!



STEP 2 :: AT THE ARTWORK

DESCRIBE:

What do you see?
How many words ending with an “ing” can you find within the sculptures?

- Falling
- Slipping
- Sliding
- Toppling
- Breaking
- Crumbling

PAIR:

- In pairs, choose one person as Person A, and the other as Person B.
- Person B sits with his or her back facing the artwork.
- Person A picks a sculpture and describes how it looks to Person B. When Person A is done, Person B must point to which sculpture they think Person A is describing. Did you guess it right?
- Swop roles and try again!

SHARE:

Which artwork was easier to describe? Why? What objects did you recognise?

RESPOND:

Having discovered the message of this artwork, how do you now feel about the artwork? Why do you think the artist decided to talk about this issue? How does it relate to you? (Refer to the words listed in STEP 1)



STEP 3 :: POST-VISIT

CREATE:

Choose a word that you have identified in STEP 2 and create your own artwork based on that word. You may gather found objects or even use recycled materials!

SHARE:

Was it difficult to create your artwork? What was the most challenging part? Share about your artwork with your classmates!



FIND OUT MORE

THE ARTIST

- <http://www.nabilahnordin.com/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/nabnordin/>
- <https://www.disini.art/nabilah-nordin>
- <https://perspectives.uwcsea.edu.sg/community-news/artist-residence-nabilah-nordin>

OTHERS

- **Other works by Nordin:**
<https://rcgntn.sg/2018/01/nabilah-nordin/>
- **About Nordin and Nick Modrzewski:**
<https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/contemporary-art-cuts-the-scrap-as-niddrie-surrenders-its-nocturnal-treasures-20151002-gk011x.html>