

PLEASE DO NOT EAT THE SCULPTURES

Nabilah Nordin

Curated by Sophie Prince

Missing Persons

8 May 2021

Since March 2020, Nabilah Nordin has been exploring the intersection of food and art.

Beginning as a series of experiments that used food as a sculptural material, she soon began to activate new works in a series of sculptural dinners in her Abbotsford home. Each month, three artists (who did not necessarily know one another) were invited to dinner to eat amongst a new installation. Their practices and career-stages varied. It was a meeting of art, artists and conversation, grounded in a desire to build friendships and share ideas.

Please Do Not Eat The Sculptures at Missing Persons is the final iteration of the series. The context, installation and scale of the final exhibition is different to the atmosphere of the intimate dinners in Abbotsford. However, the works continue to convey Nordin's interest in fostering wonder and a kind of social magic. Please Do Not Eat The Sculptures harnesses Nordin's continuing fascination with texture, colour and form, in this instance sitting somewhere between the abject and the delicious.

The introduction of food to this series expands the possibilities of what sculpture can do. It becomes a social binder, re-imagining norms around the public and the private. It encourages curiosity and speculation on the patterns we accept when engaging with art. When guests (viewers) eat the sculptures, they are implicated in the creative process. For Nordin, this is part of her ongoing attempt to remove any distinction between art and life.

The unlearning of our established relationships with food has been an essential ingredient of the series. The way we eat and cook is personal and cultural. The coded and socially reinforced expectations around eating are reinvented by their meeting with sculpture. Familiar recipes take on new names, eating utensils are discarded and food is served directly on sculptural platforms. Additionally, the preparations for Please Do Not Eat The Sculptures at Missing Persons have been supported by family, friends and communities who have given their time to cooking, discussing and planning. It is a testament to the powers of art and food to bring people together.

While there have been different expressions of Please Do Not Eat The Sculptures, the common thread is people coming together in ways that are a little unfamiliar, potentially uncomfortable but always warm and inviting. It is an initiative that will, surely, continue to bring more (and more and more and more and more) art into life.

Sophie Prince, Curator, May 2021

About the artist

Nabilah Nordin is a Singaporean/Australian sculptor. Interested in material invention, her installations embrace wonky handiwork, playfully celebrating the visceral and anthropomorphic qualities of materials. Cycles of construction and destruction characterise her studio process. Nordin “unlearns” correct methods and techniques to maintain a state of conscious naivete. She amplifies sculptural scraps and off-cuts, transforming them into parodies of monumental artefacts. They speak of unbridled ambition and impossible physical challenges. Her ever-expanding sculptural vocabulary strives for the slimy, slopping, seeping, slippery seduction of sensuous surfaces. Forms topple and collapse upon themselves in a nonsensical cacophony of ridiculous attempts to make sculpture. She is represented by Neon Parc.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the country where we work, eat and create. We are reminded of their continuing connection to land, waterways and community. We pay our respects to their elders and all Kulin nations people past, present and future.

Thank you to Sophie Prince for the dialogue, ideas, cooking, planning, openness, friendship and for all of the special moments she helped create during this project. Thank you to Nick Modrzewski for all his support and contributions to every aspect of this project (and to our shared art and life). Thank you to Lou Klerks for generously inviting us to share this exhibition at Missing Persons.

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