

A Proposal for

Bakat Muda Sezaman

2023

Installation artwork

The Powers That Be

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I write this proposal as a concerned citizen.

Background

In 2018, Malaysians experienced the first change of government ever since the independence. Soon after that, politics was in flux and we saw successive change of guards in power in 2020, 2021 and 2022. 4 PMs in 5 years. We live in an era of interregnum; politics is the art of the impossible.

During the Covid pandemic, we saw the raw power of the state. The state controlled every aspect of our lives. They had the power to decide who lives and who dies. It shows the importance of checks and balances.

Artist Statement

Regardless of who is in government and in opposition, there are many politicians who have been elected for more than 1 term. This artwork is a reminder to politicians to always be on the edge of their seats to serve the people and not to be complacent.

We imagine people who are in power, most of the time an old man wearing an expensive suit and tie, sitting in a fancy leather chair and a mahogany table in a nice office. That is exactly what this artwork will be about; a representation of someone who wields power. The bearers of this office are painfully aware that the immense weight of responsibilities to make policies for the country will have far-reaching consequences that will affect generations to come. Any mistakes could cause him/her to lose their position of power because we, the people, can boot them out.



Figure 1. A visualisation of art installation

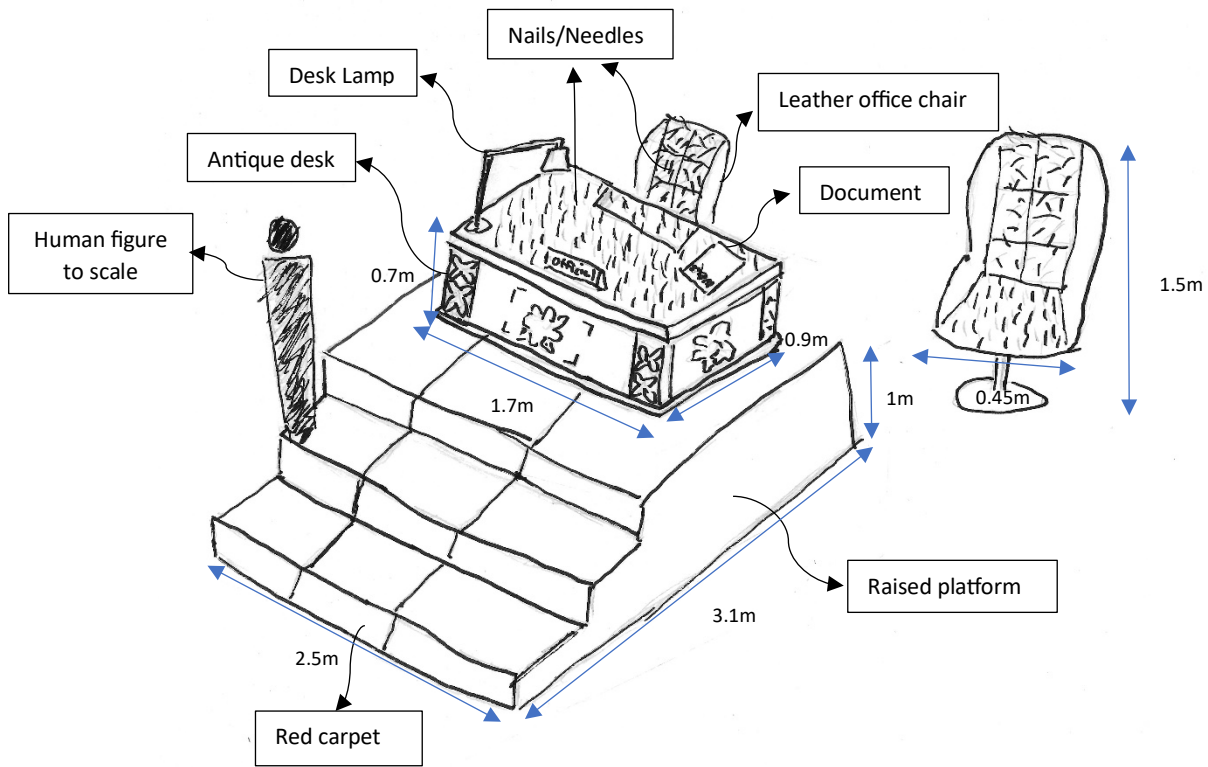


Figure 2. Sketch and measurements

List of materials

- Antique wooden desk
- Leather office chair
- Needles/Nails
- Documents
- Stage/raised platform
- Desk lamp/spotlights
- Red carpet

Proposed location

 A photograph of the Parliament of Malaysia, featuring a tall, modern building with a grid-like facade, viewed through a large, white, arch-shaped gateway. The scene is set outdoors with greenery and a clear sky.	Parliament of Malaysia
 An aerial photograph of the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Building, a large, modern complex with a central tower and a circular structure, surrounded by greenery and a parking lot.	Bangunan Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz
 A photograph of the Prime Minister's Office, a large, classical-style building with a prominent green dome and multiple windows, set against a blue sky with clouds.	Prime Minister's Office

The proposed locations are Parliament of Malaysia, Bangunan Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz (Selangor State Assembly) and Prime Minister's Office. More than one location is proposed to have to the alternative to exhibit the artwork if rejected by a venue. These locations are chosen because they are the centres of power. The artwork is relevant to our current political climate and it gives those who work and roam in the halls of power to be reflective of themselves and not to be complacent, be it MPs, Senators, aides of MPs, the civil servants etc.

Reference

“Listen! Don’t get comfortable in here. Don’t learn to love the trappings of office. These offices, these chairs, are not for us. Our place is out there, on the streets, in the squares, with the people. We got in to get a job done on their behalf. Never forget that this is why we are here. For no other reason. And be ready. If the bastards find a way to stop us from delivering what we promised, you and I must be ready to hand back the keys and get out on the streets again, to plan the next demonstration.”

-Former Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras saying that to his then finance minister Yanis Varoufakis

“Power lies not with the oppressors but with the oppressed.”

-Marquis de Condorcet

Conclusion

Power is something that should be seen as dirty as taking out the trash. A chore, something we have to do but not desirable.