

‘I AM MY-SHELF, I AM NOT MY-SHELF’

EXPLORING SELF-DEFINITION THROUGH DYSFUNCTIONAL/INCOMPLETE FURNITURE

PROPOSAL FOR BAKAT MUDA SEZAMAN '23

BY NAZRUL HAMZAH B MD NOR AZMAN



INTRODUCTION

- *"Kalau hidup sekadar hidup, babi di hutan juga hidup. Kalau bekerja sekadar bekerja, kera juga bekerja."*
- A profound yet simple quote by Hamka, often overlooked but carrying deep meaning. Upon deep reflection, I found myself agreeing and disagreeing with his statement, oscillating between these thoughts.
- In my youthful enthusiasm, driven by ambition, I believed life was about choosing a clear path and steadfastly pursuing it. However, as the years flew by unnoticed, I realized I wasn't alone in feeling overwhelmed by the rapid pace of the world. It made me question whether some ambitions are unattainable in the short term, leading me to embrace mere existence and survival as sufficient. I considered myself living "sekadar hidup."
- Yet, over time, I grasped Hamka's true intent in his words. It's not about relentlessly chasing the highest version of oneself; instead, it's about finding meaning in every aspect of life. Whether it's a seemingly insignificant task, a repetitive job, or a simple act of kindness towards others, embracing each moment fully is essential. This is how I interpret his message about the essence of survival.

INTRODUCTION

- In the fast-paced world of today, the pressure to adapt to certain roles can push us to engage in jobs or careers that may or may not resonate with our true selves. delves into the concept of self-definition or purpose, the feeling **"I Am My-shelf, I Am Not My-shelf"** of 'incompleteness,' and the **delicate balance between choosing survival and pursuing one's passions.**
- In our present society, it seems that most people are inevitably tied to the idea of being functional or purposeful, whether driven by passion or solely for survival. Perspectives on the choice between these two aspects - passion and survival, can vary from person to person, ultimately shaping one's self-definition within this challenging world.
- This artwork **serves as an invitation for viewers to introspect and contemplate their essence of being human** and the **compromises they make while navigating the demanding landscape of contemporary society.**



ARTIST STATEMENT

- I am intrigued in creating artworks that embrace the interchangeability between two or more materials or objects – their properties, and unique characteristics. I find it fascinating how each object can imbue meaning into others, fulfilling complementary roles and serving as utilitarian entities. This perspective, where every being fits into its distinct definition and purpose, motivates me to delve deeper into unexplored possibilities. I am driven to explore how I can expand their purpose into something untapped, pushing the boundaries of creativity and innovation.
- The artwork explores the concept of incompleteness and co-dependency by showcasing the interaction between objects and the human body. It features a bookshelf with its planes facing downward, necessitating the use of a string to pull it and hold it in place while books are placed upon it. This interactive aspect highlights the vital role of human intervention in fulfilling the shelf's intended purpose, underscoring the interconnectedness between our bodies and the objects that encompass us. In this way, it prompts a sense of purposefulness in defining oneself.



ARTWORK DESCRIPTION

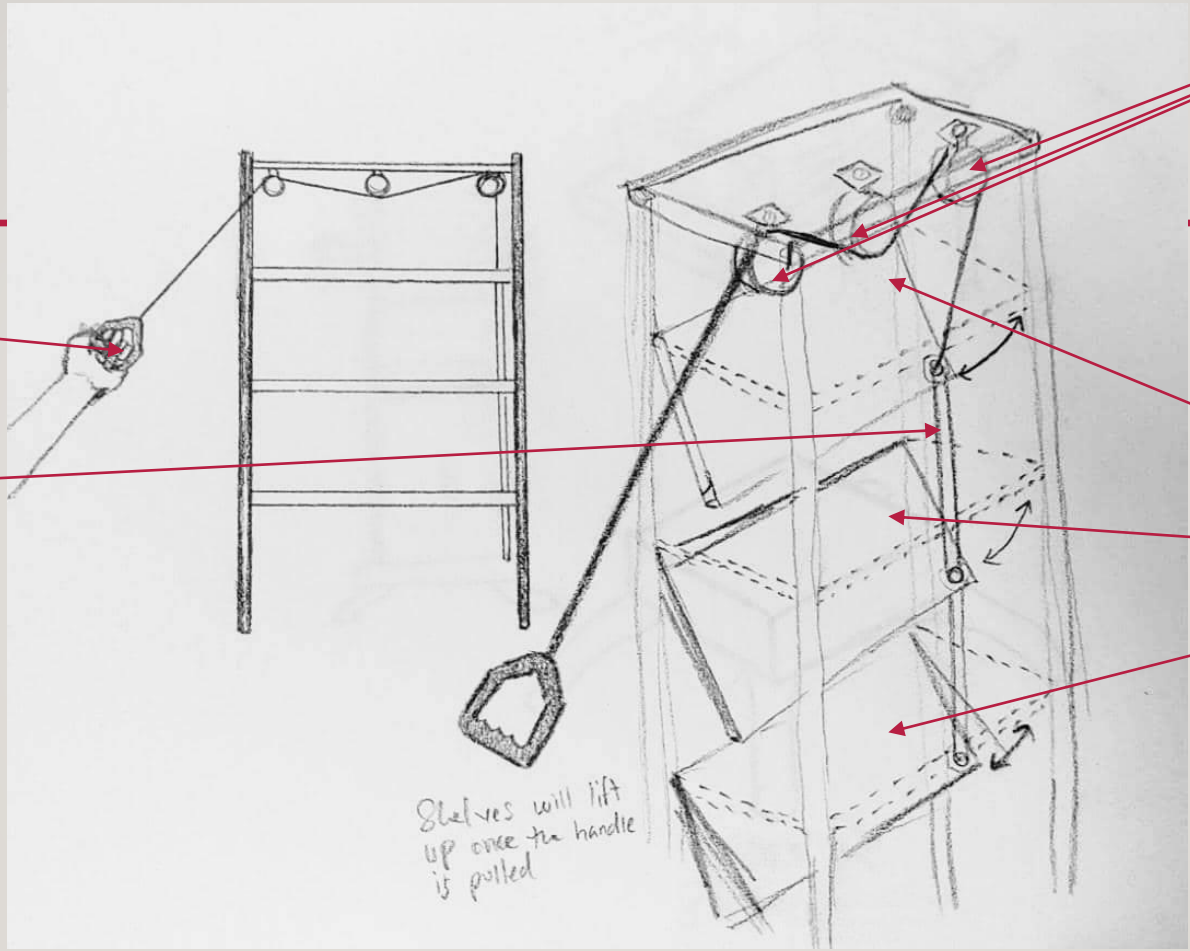
- In this artwork, there is a bookshelf (either a standing one or a wall unit), and the artist will pull down a string attached to the shelf's planes. This action will lift up the planes, allowing books to be placed on top of them.
- During the performance, the artist, dressed in work attire, will pull the string from 10 am to 5 pm, simulating a daily job routine. This performance will take place at a bookstore over a two-day weekend period.

METHODOLOGY AND EXECUTION

- A team of carpenters will be commissioned to build the shelf (Have not decided yet who is the team).
- The shelf is made of combinations of woods and possibly stainless steel for the structure. The planes are in thin plywood but supported by about 0.5 diemeter metal structure, to make them less heavy and easy to lift up.
- Suitable strings will be used (haven't decided yet)
- Due to the load of the books, there is a need in researching for pulley system that requires pulley wheels that will be attached to the string to decrease the loads of the books on the planes.
- This work is rather a live performance and will be recorded and documented. Due to the tow-day performance only, video of the performance will be put to social medias for a lasting viewing.
- The whole performance will be recorded live in social medias like Facebook or TikTok or Instagram so that the whole moment will be recorded.



The pulling of the string will lift up all all three planes that consecutively pulled by cylinder rods



Compound type pulley system

Shelf planes

I Am My-shelf, I Am Not My-shelf



BIOGRAPHY

Hails from Kuala Lumpur, Nazrul Hamzah (b. 1991) is an artist and an art enthusiast, whose works mainly focus on the engagement with everyday objects and how these objects could unveil new meaning when it comes to art making. More of a 'discipline juggler', he is interested in experimenting with different disciplines in art, ranging from painting, installation, and photography.

Graduated with Bachelor in fine arts, from UiTM Shah Alam in 2014, Naz since then has been involved in several art projects including curating and managing art exhibitions, art archiving, writing, tutoring, as well as facilitating. He was a resident artist of Kedai.co in 2015 and made his first trio show there titled 'How To: Live Your Life According to Someone Else'. Also part of Bukan Seniman group, his group debut exhibition was held in Kapallorek Artspace, Perak, titled 'BendAsing' in 2016 which focused on the usage of banal objects rooted in Duchamp's idea of readymades into art. Since then he has participated in a number of exhibitions, as well as curating and writing for exhibitions for galleries around the Klang Valley.

