

Q&A with Film-maker Jasmin Ng

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Director Jasmine Ng, 40, is involved in a multi-media installation for Prism, an event by Drama Box and the Institute of Policy Studies. The event is designed to get people thinking about the Singapore they want in the future.

You studied film at a time when the film industry here was just starting to grow. Would you encourage youth to follow their passion like you did?

Yes, but you also really have to work your butt off. Feed off the energy from doing something that you're excited about.

That's a lot of fuel and you should allow it to combust into something more. Push yourself and don't wait for someone to give you an opportunity.

A lot of the works you've done are about life in Singapore. Why this topic?

It's my response as someone who has lived her whole life here. It just so happens that I'm doing it through my art work – film.

I think it's what more of us should do – talk about weighty issues affecting Singaporeans and be open to hearing from other people. Why should it not be your business, as you're Singaporean or live here?

We need stories about Singapore for ourselves – the good, the bad, the ugly. It allows us to know ourselves and others around us better.

What national issues are most important to you?

As a filmmaker, I think we need to put more effort into making our stories available, to let people know that there's a story to be seen and shared. There's a need for more resources to show the kind of quality work that we are capable of.

And I come back to the whole issue of governance. I hope people around me will learn to ask questions about the status quo and have the imagination to come up with new visions.

We need to know ourselves a little better – and not just in terms of figures and statistics – and to push ourselves further.

See Jasmine Ng's work at Prism, which will be held at the National Library Building from next Thursday to Nov 14. Admission is free. Take part in a survey that will ask for your thoughts on Singapore governance.