

Cosmos – Ketut Budiana

Senior Balinese artist Ketut Budiana celebrates his 64th birthday at Bentara Budaya Bali on 6th October with the opening of “Cosmos” Ketut Budiana, the first of three exhibitions running concurrently at the Bentara Budaya cultural centers in Bali, Jakarta and Yogyakarta.

An artist of rare quality, Budiana has succeeded in breaking away from the mould of the village tradition, setting out upon his own innovative journey while still remaining true to his heritage. His greatest achievement is the adaptation of the Balinese Hindu Buddhist philosophy into his own personalized language of figures and forms that communicate its core; that negative and positive are both equal and essential characteristics of the single unifying omnipotent force in which all matter evolves from the nothingness of the cosmic void.

Budiana’s works are typically depicted in black ink and acrylic paints with sparse use of color on paper and canvas; the interrelationship between black and white is an important aesthetic, as well as philosophical feature. From the dark unknown spaces; swirling masses of energy appear and manifest into fantastic, often horrible forms in his core surrealistic style.

Observers are granted insight into the origins of creation, beyond the epic narratives where rhythmic patterns predominate the eternal process of continuity; decline and renewal (duality) are cyclic and constant, and universal balance is achieved.

Budiana’s ‘Cosmos’ exhibitions are symbolic of the life cycle stages of the Balinese Hindu people, representing both a process and conforming set of cultural conducts. The initial stage; brahmachari: signifies birth, growing up and learning, the next; grhastha, marriage, family and community responsibilities, vanaprastha; the period of self reflection and denouncing of material desires, and bhiksuka, the withdrawal from life.

At Bentara Budaya Bali he presents an enormous installation – brahmachari, signifying the creative life force that man has yet to learn to control. The focal point represents the lingam and yoni and the relationship between the Hindu deity Shiva’s creative power along with the female energy of the goddess Shakti; a two-meter wooden phallus, (lingam) interrelating with the yoni; the divine male and female energies unite to create the origins of life.

Colored cloth springs forth from this centerpiece flowing along the floors in the cardinal directions to the walls of the pavilion and the stage. Upon the stage the large 3-meter wide painting “Perjalanan Menuju Kebasan” is the feature. The cloth and the walls are adorned with hundreds of mysterious, fantastic forms representing infinite possibilities, both positive and negative that must be controlled during our formative years. Bali also represents *bhiksuka*, the process of returning to origins of the life cycle and the continuum.

In Jakarta, the country’s capital and most dynamic city, Budiana exhibits paintings on canvas and paper. These represent controlled energy from a mature, adult source, and features 25 works, one large canvas 2 x 8 meters and another 10 meters long by 700 cm. In Yogyakarta, the cultural center of Javanese traditions with a deep spiritual history, Budiana’s works represent ideas and imagery created in periods of self-reflection and contemplation by the senior artist. They are of the finest quality of his prolific career, 20 works on paper.

The greatest Balinese artists are those who experiment with form, composition and materials, while interpreting the narratives and infusing their artworks with their own character and style. Except for Bali’s first modern artist, the iconic architect + artist Gusti Nyoman Lempad (1865? -1978), no other Balinese artist has forged a path of such unique quality as has Budiana, who’s sketches are often compared with Lempad’s.

uroto 2, Kotabaru, 14-20 October

Born into a family of master artisans in the village of Padang Tegal, Ubud in 1950 Budiana is highly skilled as a sculptor and architect, and specializes in making scared temple images, ceremonial masks and sarcophagus for ritual cremations. A former art teacher, he studied art at SSRI, the Indonesian School of Art in Denpasar and briefly with renowned Dutch painter and architect Rudolf Bonnet.

Budiana began painting in the early 70's and exhibiting from 1974 and has shown his work in 8 foreign countries while he has won a string of local and international awards. He has been active as a curator at Ubud's Museum Puri Lukisan from 1986 – 1990 while serving in 1990 as a curator at ARMA museum, and has contributed numerous articles and essays to various publications. "Cosmos" is Budiana's ninth solo exhibition and is curated by Wayan Seriyoga Parta and Jean Couteau.

While he often refers to the great Balinese narratives and tales, and depicts the renowned characters in works of which drawing is the main fundamental, Budiana's universe pertains much more than this.

In 'Cosmos' Budiana's creative prowess spanning more than 3 decades transforms into a grand celebration of life and the Balinese life cycle revealing insights into his journey as an artist and person in his quest for self-knowledge during his transient passage on earth.

"Cosmos" Ketut Budiana

Bentara Budaya Bali, Jalan Prof. IB Mantra 88A, Kewetel, 6 – 20 October

Bentara Budaya Jakarta, Jalan Palmerah Selatan 17, 9-14 October

Bentara Budaya Yogyakarta, Jalan S



Ketut Budiana, Sept 2014, Image by Richard Horstman



air susu ibu, 2008, 64x50cm, akrilik dikertas



Ketut Budiana, Perjalan Menuju Kebasan, Chinese Ink on paper, 200x300cm, Image Richard Horstman



KETUT BUDIANA_Merebut Kehidupan, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 110 x 77 cm



jogja-KETUT BUDIANA_Matahari Terbit di Pantai Sanur, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 57 x 74 cm



penjaga bumi, 2008, 65x50 cm, akrilik dan tinta china di kertas