

## ANONYMOUS ANCESTORS: THE UWRF18 ARTWORK BY BUDI AGUNG KUSWARA

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Anonymous Ancestors was created for the Ubud Writers & Readers Festival 2018 by contemporary Balinese artist Budi Agung Kuswara, more fondly known as Kabul. Born into a family of traditional artists, Kabul left Bali to study painting at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Yogyakarta. Since graduation, he has exhibited his works in Indonesia, Singapore, the UK, Malaysia, Taiwan, Italy, Mexico and Japan.

Kabul is creatively motivated by the desire to create a concept-based ecology in his artworks – one that is constantly finding harmony between the microcosmic and macrocosmic, and keeping balance between the interior and exterior worlds. He is Co-founder of Ketemu Project, a transnational art collective and social enterprise hybrid, and Co-founder of Rumah Berdaya Denpasar, a rehabilitation center for people living with schizophrenia.

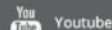
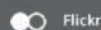
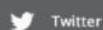


“When I saw faces in a photo from Bali in the 1930s, I wondered who the faces belonged to,” Kabul explained. “Anonymous Ancestors is a form of appreciation for the faces, the ancestors of modern Balinese society and the forebearers of the tourism industry, which is now part of the economy as well as spiritual life.”

Kabul further explained that his artwork interprets the UWRF18 theme, Jagadhita, as prosperity which is not just “the accumulation of numbers,” but a “flow of knowledge from generation to generation, like water, which can be consumed by anyone.” Having spent most of his childhood living near the sea, water is a key motif in many of Kabul’s works.

Of the figure at the center of the artwork, he said, “The figure in this work is wearing a dress usually only worn by the European bourgeoisie, and indeed the spirit is reality. In Bali the tourism industry breaks down hegemony and the power of social class, a colonial legacy. Yes, Jagadhita does not know caste.”

Kabul will join more than 150 authors, artists, thinkers and activists as they create the 15th Ubud Writers & Readers Festival from 24–28 October. His art will also be exhibited at Casa Luna throughout the Festival.



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