

Emerging Indonesian artists celebrated at Bali's contemporary art exhibition

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Activist, observes and reports on developments in the Bali and Indonesian Art Scenes.



Artworks by Budi Agung Kuswara. Courtesy of Heri Permad Art Management Bali Team.

Presenting works by some of the finest emerging Indonesian contemporary artists over a month, *Seleamatan Masa Depan* (A Celebration of the Future) closed on Jan. 15 at the AB•BC Building, Bali Collection Nusa Dua, Bali.

Curators Rifky Effendy and Ignatia Nilu selected 47 artists from Bandung (10 artists), Yogyakarta (17) and Bali (20); who contributed a diverse array of 74 works in 2- and 3-dimensional forms – sketches, paintings, prints, sculptures, installations, video art and new media art.

In the follow up to the Art • Bali *'Beyond the Myths'*, the exhibition highlighted some of the talents who are pushing the boundaries of Indonesian contemporary art.

While exhibitions that display contemporary artistic talent from Bali side-by-side with counterparts from across

Indonesia may be seen in Java, in Bali these occasions are infrequent. Importantly, this allows opportunities for young local artists, students and creatives, who have internet connectivity and can access the "greater art world", yet may not have the chances to travel outside of Bali, to personally witness the developments and future direction of the national scene.

Opened by Bali's new Governor Wayan Koster on Dec. 15 last year, *Selamatan Masa Depan* is the second of a series of regular events at the AB•BC Building, which will help to define the location as one of the island's foremost contemporary art venues, while becoming a new art and creative destination within the Indonesia Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) Nusa Dua tourism precinct.

ITDC Nusa Dua is a designated location with tourism facilities and many of the island's largest five-star resorts.

"Balinese artists contributed some of the strongest works in the exhibition," said well-known art critic Jean Couteau. "Especially Satya Cipta, Citra Sasmita and Budi Agung Kuswara."

In *Balinese Baroque (Discovery Toward Invention)* 2018 and *Time After Time (Discovery Toward Invention)* 2018 by Budi Agung Kuswara, the artist experiments with the cyanotype technique, a photographic printing process that produces a cyan-blue print onto the paper with sunlight, along with archive photos and cultural items to produce aesthetically unique and beautiful images.

"His works are highlighted by innovative visual framing, kind of pop art, yet visually refreshing and intellectually articulated around the memory theme," said Couteau.

Budi represents the vanguard of emerging contemporary artists in Bali today.

Satya Cipta, who has recently captured the attention of the Balinese art world with her premiere solo exhibition *A Budding Talent* at Ubud's Puri Lukisan Museum in late 2018, presents four beautifully balanced Chinese ink sketches on paper. Drawing is the basic fundamental of Balinese traditional art, and her combination of drawing techniques with modern gender political themes are an exciting, recent development on the Bali art scene.

"Satya's wild exploration of a woman's demand for control over her own body is formulated in a revamped, imaginative post-traditional line style similar to Gusti Lempad," said Couteau.

Metamorphosis (The Flowers of Carnage) 2018, by Citra Sasmita, in her characteristic style of minimal iconography, also 'speaks' of gender politics, while communicating through an array of symbols.

"In my new painting I adopt nature and nurturing symbols such as stone, cactus, a knife and scissors, a placenta and cloth with gold rose patterns," Citra said. "I want to visualize to the current generation that they should be aware of and protect their roots and traditions, for the benefit of the next generation. The future will mean nothing if the next generation do not have any idea about their past and history, and also the philosophies."

"Citra's painting is a highlight because she explores and denounces macho vocabulary, and for her feminist statement," Couteau said.

"*Selamatan Masa Depan* enjoyed increased attendance than the Art • Bali 2018 event because of the tourist high season, and more international and domestic visitors and locals visiting the venue," said Army Firmansyah, one of the board members of Art • Bali and the AB•BC Building, part of the Heri Pemad Art Management Bali Team.

"Located in the Bali Collection shopping area many visitors see the sculptors and installations outside of the AB•BC Building, become curious and come in. Attendance is important to us because the ticketed entry has to support our operational costs."

"The idea of contemporary art and creative events as a tourism attraction is new to this area and while foreign tourists are happy to pay entry fees, we have to help change the mindset and behavior of domestic visitors to go to alternative ticketed cultural events, rather than recreational venues and movies, for example."

"The management of the AB•BC Building has many challenges to engage in building the brand of this multifaceted creative space – inclusive with the Creative Economy Agency vision for the development of the Indonesian creative economy that includes cuisine, design, architecture, and art-themed events."

"As for upcoming events in 2019, we are now in progress of preparing three shows [including ART • BALI 2019 in October] that will be produced by HPAM. Those shows are in addition to one art exhibition that we are still discussing with the organizer," he adds. (kes)