

To Truly Return

We Must Belong:

Djirna's Tapak Dara

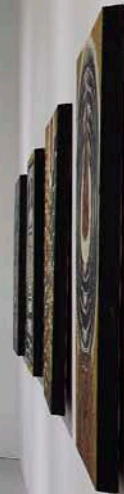
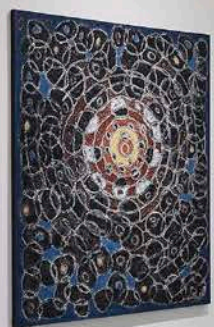
Solo exhibition by I Made Djirna
5 April – 15 June 2025

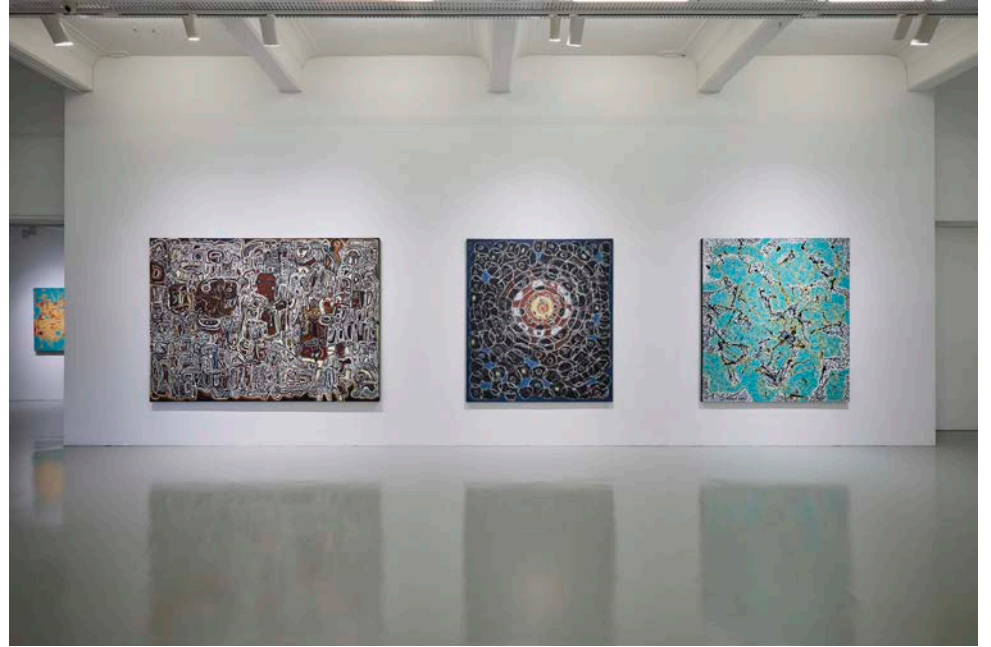
MIZUMA GALLERY

To Truly Return We Must Belong:

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Solo exhibition by I Made Djirna
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To Truly Return, We Must Belong:

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Tan Siuli

One of Bali's best-known artists, I Made Djirna was born on the island, and has lived and worked there most of his life. His artwork, which has been exhibited at international platforms such as the Singapore Biennale (in 2016) and the Asia Pacific Triennial (in 2021), encompasses painting, sculpture and installation, all often invested with a totemic and primordial quality.

Djirna's second solo exhibition with Mizuma Gallery in Singapore is a continuation of his existing preoccupations. Themes of achieving balance and harmony — with nature, and within oneself — inform his work, which has arisen from the artist's observation that contemporary life has thrown our lives off balance, and we are no longer sensitive to signs and signals from nature and the spiritual world. Aptly, Djirna has chosen to title this body of work "Tapak Dara", accompanied by the following reflection:

In all kinds of space and time, we are always at the point of two intersecting lines, and must lean one way or the other, so that we can maintain balance and truly reconnect with ourselves and our environment.

The *tapak dara* is a simple, plus-shaped symbol (+) that has profound significance in Balinese culture. Believed to have sacred and protective powers, it is the perfect counterpoise of a horizontal and vertical axis, representing the balance achieved between opposing forces, and the meeting of both earthly and spiritual realms. The intersection of the axes at its centre is the ideal point of existence, towards which all human life and action is oriented.

In Balinese life and spiritual philosophy, every individual is mapped to a social and spiritual matrix. As noted by author Fred B. Eiseman Jr, in his study of Balinese culture and spirituality, "a direction describes a vector not just in physical space but in cultural, religious and social 'space' as well."¹ Space and direction in Bali are organized along two axes that approximate north/south and east/west, but they are oriented instead along holy sites and auspicious directions and their opposites: mountainward (*kaja*, or north) and seaward (*kelod* or south), sunrise (*kangin* or east) and sunset (*kauh* or west). Eiseman explains:

*"(t)his interlocking set of horizontal and vertical orientations is a consequence of the Hindu conception of cosmic structure and organization. Man is a tiny part of the overall Hindu-Balinese universe, but he contains its structure in microcosm...The interlocking, related structure and orientations produce balance, the goal of Hinduism. Unless a Balinese can orient himself properly in this universe of balance...he feels uncomfortable because he is lost and because he is not in harmony with his environment and the forces of good and evil within it. His gyroscope is not set. There is nothing to guide him."*²

As such, the *tapak dara* + perfectly pinpoints our place in the world, the equilibrium achieved at this crossroads of both earthly obligations and spiritual responsibilities — what Djirna aptly describes as "an internal compass".

Another aspect of Hindu-Balinese beliefs worth noting in relation to Djirna's work, is the importance of a third position — the centre — between the conventional binaries of thought and ways of organizing the world. For the Balinese, notions of 'good' and 'evil', 'sacred' and 'profane' are not exclusive, and the goal is not to eliminate one in favour of the other. Rather, Hindu-Balinese spirituality adopts a third position, at the centre of these poles, that aims to balance the two opposing forces. Coexistence is key, and the numerous festivals, ceremonies and rituals observed throughout the island of Bali are all means by which the Balinese devote themselves to maintaining the "dynamic equilibrium"³ between these cosmic forces.

This understanding may prove illuminating when encountering Djirna's works. Many of his canvases teem with figures or shapes that are individual in their expressions and forms, yet simultaneously subsumed into an all-over patterning or mosaic. They are many, as well as one: an interconnected whole pulsing with the dynamism of energies in flux. Other works invoke symbols of counterpoise and balance: the *tapak dara* appears in a painting, as does the *lingga-yoni*, the union of masculine and feminine, of micro and macrocosmos, and a symbol of the eternal cycle of regeneration. Works such as "Terrace", "Pyramid" and "Mandala" pay tribute to primordial forms that both embody and harness the energies of the earth and cosmos. Elsewhere, the expressive and lyrical linework of traditional Balinese painting informs works of pure abstraction that crackle with lines of energy traveling across their surfaces.

A palpable sense of vitality courses through Djirna's works — an energy that is very present, and that needs to be channelled so as to achieve that 'dynamic equilibrium', that centre point of the *tapak dara*. Djirna is alive to this world and the energies manifest in its multiple realms and axes, and these works are a deeply personal expression of those forces.

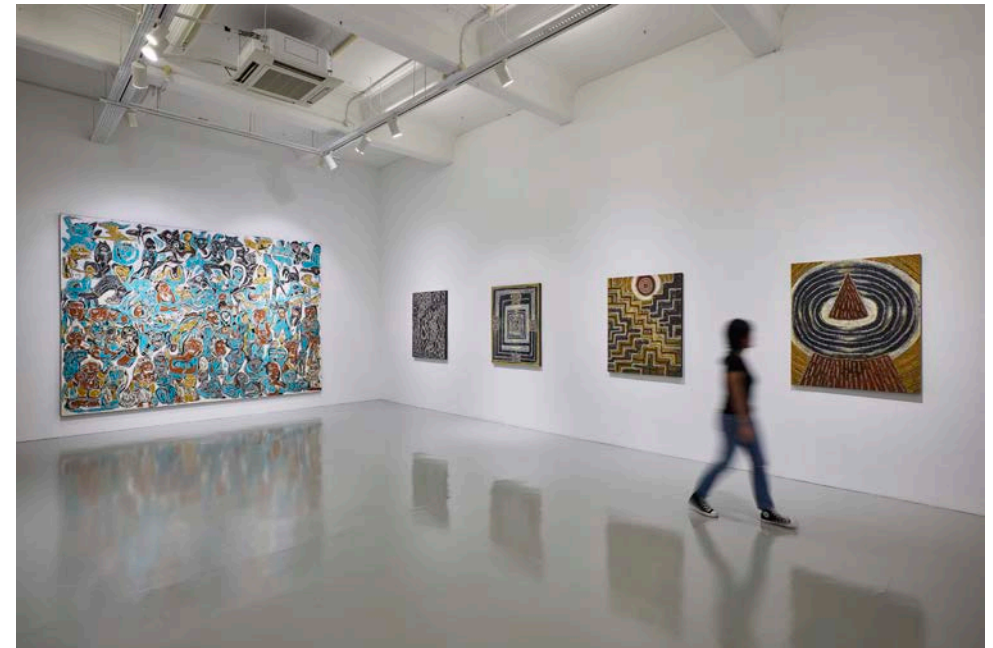
¹ Fred B. Eiseman, Jr., *Bali: Sekala and Niskala. Essays on Religion, Ritual, and Art*, 1990. Tuttle: Tokyo, Vermont, Singapore. pp. 3.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 6.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 128.



Tan Siuli is an independent curator with over a decade of experience encompassing the research, presentation and commissioning of contemporary art from Southeast Asia. Formerly Head of Collections and Senior Curator at the Singapore Art Museum, Tan has undertaken a spectrum of exhibition projects including two editions of the Singapore Biennale (2013 and 2016), inter-institutional traveling exhibitions, as well as mentoring and commissioning platforms such as the *President's Young Talents* exhibition series. She has also presented on contemporary art from Southeast Asia at platforms such as Frieze Academy London and Bloomberg's *Brilliant Ideas* series. Tan is currently Art Lead and Curator at multidisciplinary space Appetite, as well as Contributing Editor for ART SG.







Diyadinin Tapak Dara

ARTIST STATEMENT

I Made Djirna

In this exhibition, I began with questions that touch on our existence. These questions are closely related to our individual balance/harmony, as well as the social and natural environment we are all connected to. Balance/harmony in life is universal, but at the same time, it is also unique to the individual themselves, especially based on where and how they live. As someone who is blessed with Balinese culture, it is the values of Balinese tradition that I use as my 'breath' to create balance in my daily life, and in my artistic practice. As a symbol, this "direction" is called *Tapak/Tampak Dara*; represented by the icon of two crossed lines (+) which is a simple variant of the swastika. This symbol becomes a guide that raises awareness/understanding at which point our existence is positioned at the intersection of *Tapak Dara*.

In essence, *Tapak Dara* symbolizes the unification of the duality of life (*Rwabhinada*): the vertical line symbolizes devotion to the Universe (the Creator), while the horizontal line signifies a form of reciprocal devotion to fellow human beings. As one of the visual/shape representations of prayer (*rajah*), *Tapak Dara* is used to ward off danger or to provide peace of mind. It is a symbol of the balance between the macro and microcosmos; a reminder to always maintain balance in our lives and living.

Questions about balance will continue to emerge throughout our lives. Everyone will experience it, it is just a matter of when and how often. Personally, I came from a generation that lived in an era of communication where data was scribbled on wooden blocks, even writing letters was rare. It is a very primitive era compared to now. This experience was part of what triggered my questions surrounding the balance of our lives. The rapid and broad changes in our lives today — social and spatial changes, the coming and going of people from all walks of life, the intersection of perspectives and clash of interests— can all make us lose our own balance, alienating us from others, from our surrounding environment and from ourselves.

In the struggle to maintain this balance, I try to ground myself to my Balinese breath and internal compass in my daily life. This becomes a reference for how I relate to myself and the outside world: recognising feelings within me, connecting with that which radiates from the souls around me, digesting the scattered shapes and colors, and processing them with various experiences and values that have become part of me. As an artist, I realised that my works cannot be separated from the rhythm balance that emerges from my breath. In particular, the issues of alienation and the pursuit for balance become the

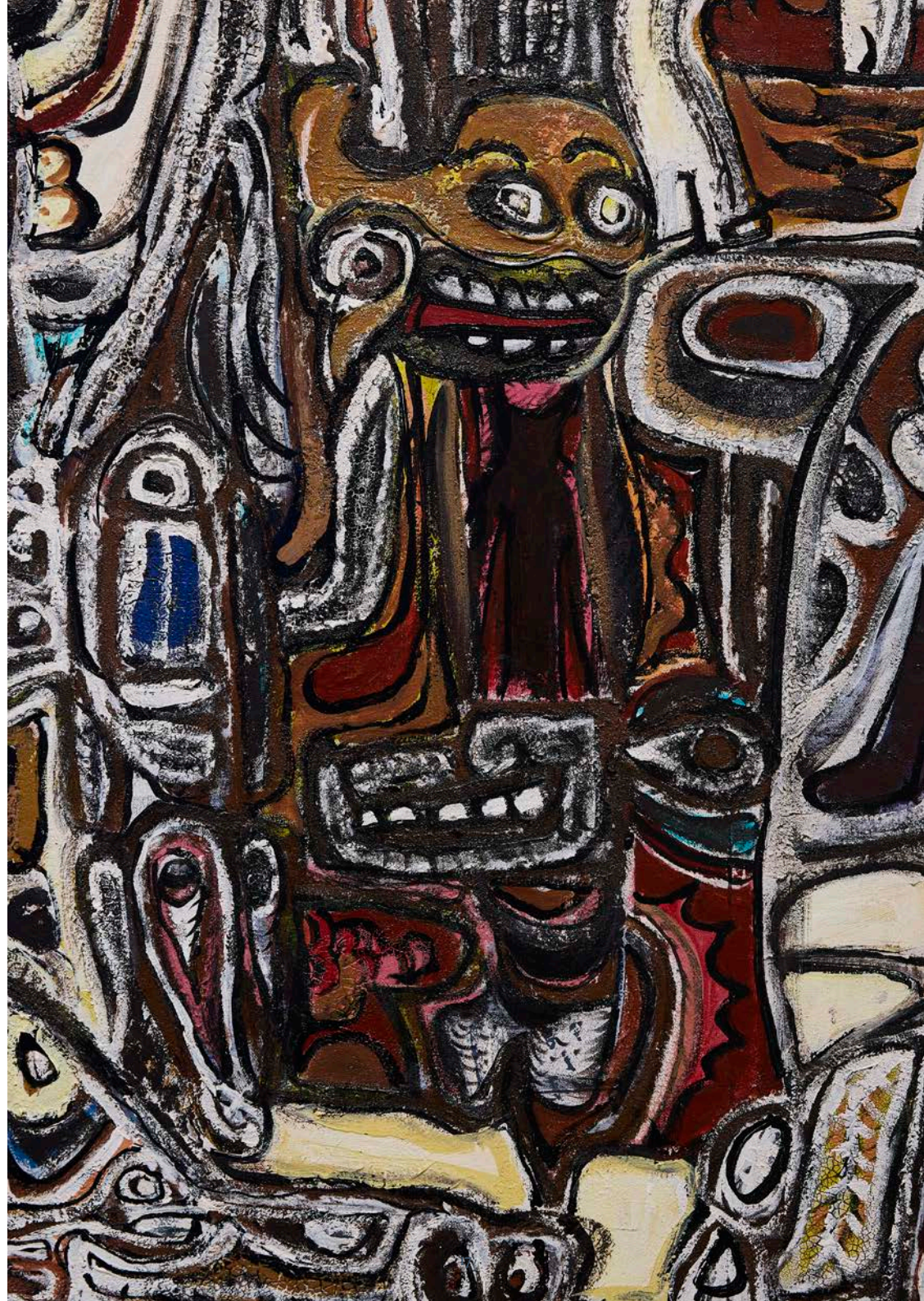
thread that connects my works in this solo exhibition, '*To Truly Return, We Must Belong: Djirna's Tapak Dara*'.

The works in this exhibition were formed from fluid and dynamic experiences, re-imagined in a non-chronological way, mirroring how balance is something we must continuously navigate. The use of colour, material responses, and visual language all reflect the perspectives and experiences shaped by *Tapak Dara*. In all space and time, we find ourselves at the point of two intersecting lines, constantly leaning one way or another to sustain balance. This exhibition is a meditation on this ever-present negotiation, inviting us to reconnect—with ourselves, with each other, and with the rhythm of existence itself.



Dinamika Kehidupan di Bali (Dynamics of Life in Bali), 2024

Mixed media on canvas
200 x 280 cm





Harmoni yang Tak Terpisahkan (Inseparable Harmony), 2024

Mixed media on canvas

200 x 180 cm



Awal Kehidupan Baru (Beginning of a New Life), 2025

Mixed media on canvas
200 x 180 cm





To Truly Return, We Must Belong:

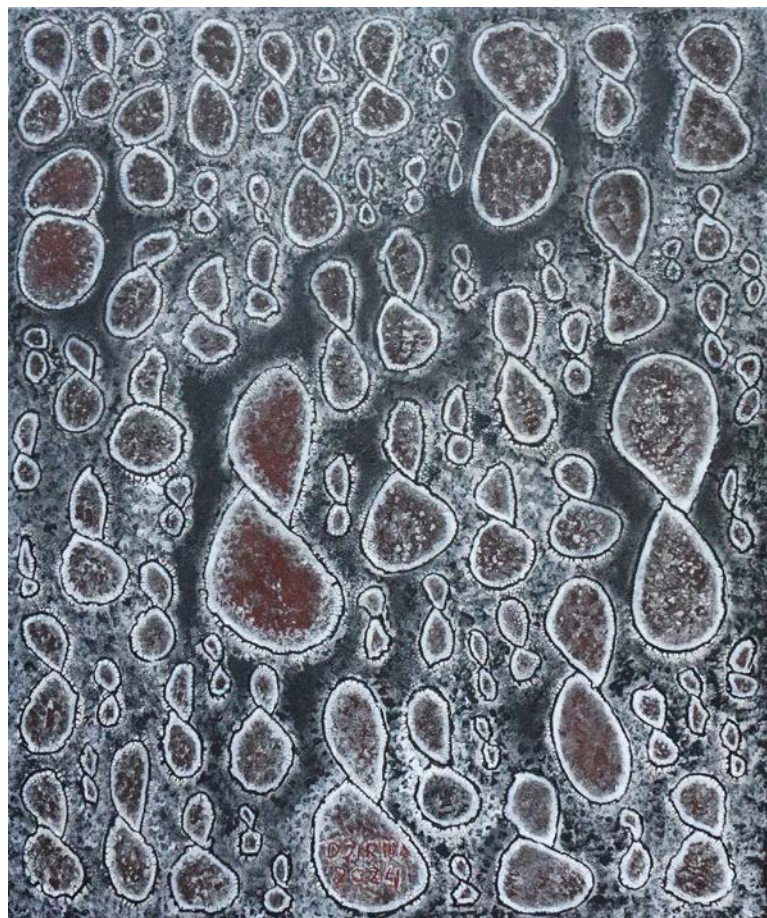
Djirna's Tapak Dara



Jejak Leluhur di Tanah Suci (Ancestral Footprints in the Holy Land), 2023

Mixed media on canvas

280 x 380 cm



Mandala Kosmik (Cosmic Mandala), 2024

Mixed media on canvas
120 x 100 cm



Mandala, 2024

Mixed media on canvas
120 x 100 cm



Terasiring (Terrace), 2024
mixed media on canvas
120 x 100 cm



Piramid (Pyramid), 2024
Mixed media on canvas
120 x 100 cm



Taman Impian (Dream Garden), 2025

Mixed media on canvas
200 x 150 cm





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Keseimbangan Energi (Balance of Energy), 2024

Mixed media on canvas

200 x 150 cm



Tanah Bercerita (Storytelling Land), 2024

Mixed media on canvas
120 x 100 cm





Mandala Jiwa (Soul Mandala), 2025

Mixed media on canvas

150 x 120 cm



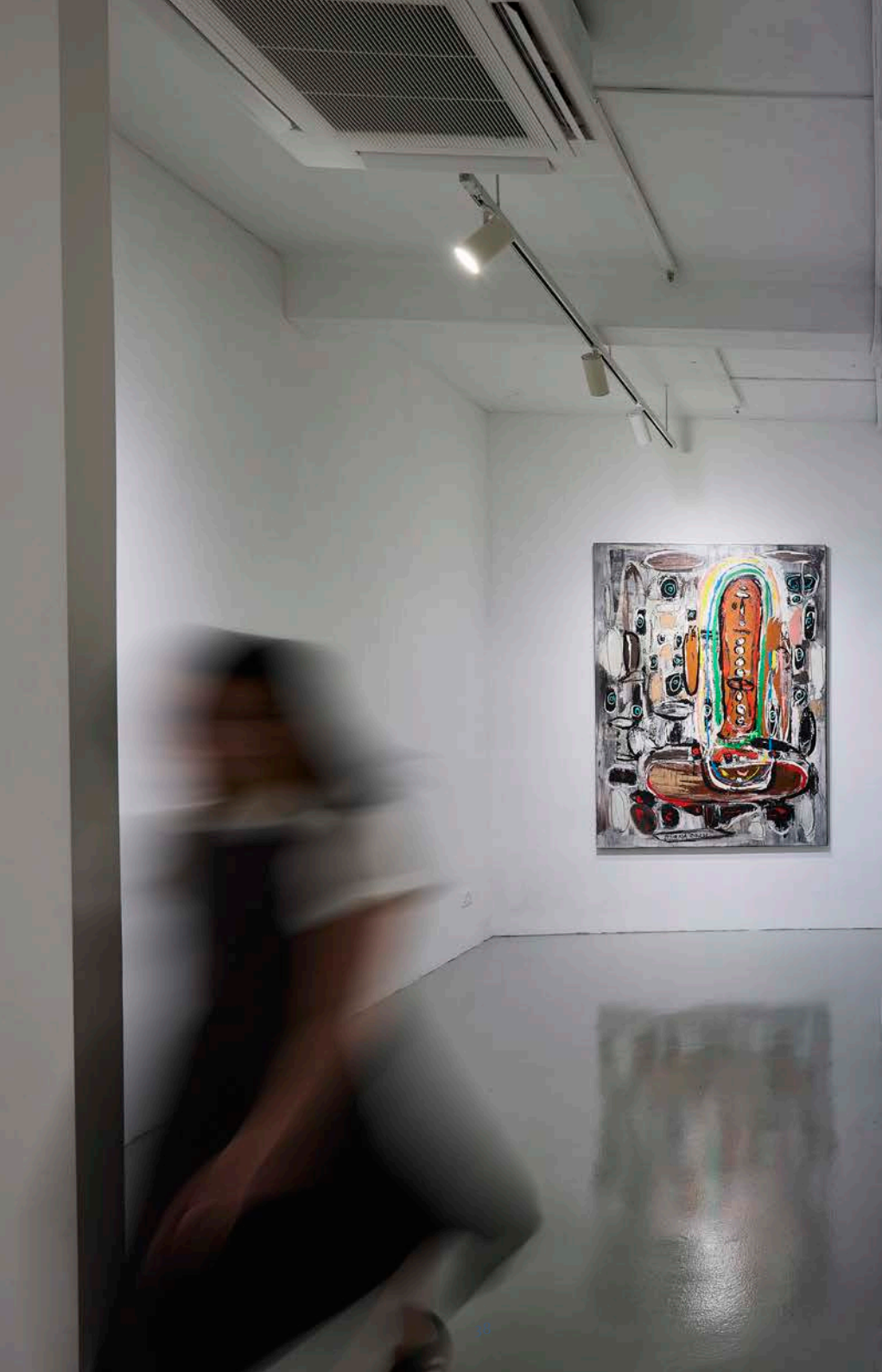
Perbedaan yang Harmonis (Harmonious Differences), 2024

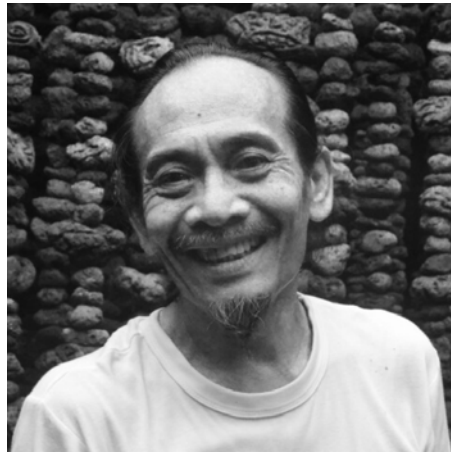
Mixed media on canvas
120 x 100 cm



Akar Kehidupan (Roots of Life), 2025

Mixed media on canvas
110 x 70 cm





I Made Djirna (b. 1957) is a Balinese-born Indonesian artist known for his explorations that resonate with issues relating to life, our relationship with each other, and our surroundings. His works are imbued with the experiences of life and are reflections of his innermost self-awareness of his art and life's journey.

I Made Djirna explores a variety of mediums, materials and perspectives, embracing a practice that transcends any single genre or style. In his two-dimensional works, the artist often plays with colours and textures — sometimes applying mixtures of materials — which become his unique visual accents that accompany his explorations on lines. In his sculptural and installation works, I Made Djirna makes use of natural materials such as wood, rock, stone, clay, where forms are built from his treatment of ready-made, natural found objects, or a combination of both.

I Made Djirna's visuals extend from his personal experience and his interaction with the characteristics of his materials; a combination that is bound by Balinese philosophy of life and tradition, along with his artistic and aesthetic pursuits in the context of space and time.

A graduate (1985) of Indonesia Institute of the Arts (ISI) Yogyakarta, I Made Djirna is one of Indonesia's most recognised artists. Many of his works are now part of both public and private collections in Asia, Australia, and Europe. I Made Djirna has also received numerous awards for his works. Since the late 1970s, he has been invited to participate in solo and group exhibitions in various galleries and museums in Indonesia, Australia, Guam, Netherlands, Singapore, and Switzerland. I Made Djirna lives and works in Bali, Indonesia.

Education

- 1993 International Exchange Programme Basel, Basel, Switzerland
- 1981 Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, Indonesia Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Solo Exhibitions

- 2025 *To Truly Return, We Must Belong: Djirna's Tapak Dara*, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
- 2021 *Djirna: Retrospective (1992-2022)*, ARMA, Bali, Indonesia
The Voice of Nature, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
- 2017 *Transparan, Historia*, Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2013 *The Logic of Ritual*, Sangkring Art Space, Yogyakarta Indonesia
- 2012 *Ubud 1963 (Re) Reading the Growth of Made Djirna*, National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2010 *Djirna Menguk Tabir Baru*, Emmitan Gallery, Surabaya, Indonesia
- 2007 *Seascapes*, Gajah Gallery, Singapore
Modern Indonesian Master, Museum Rudana, Bali, Indonesia
- 2002 Taksu, Gajah Gallery, Singapore
- 2001 *Selected Works of Made Djirna from the Year 2000*, Padma Hotel, Bali, Indonesia
- 2000 Santi Gallery Jakarta, Indonesia
- 1998 *Mystique of Motherhood*, Gajah Gallery, Singapore
- 1996 Komaneka Gallery, Bali, Indonesia
- 1989 Northern Territory Museum of Art and Sciences, (now Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory: MAGNT), Darwin, Australia

Group Exhibitions

- 2024 *Artsubs – Ways of Dreaming*, ARTSUBS, Pos-Bloc Surabaya, Indonesia
Pinara Pitu, Santrian Gallery, Bali, Indonesia
Ebb and Flow – Indonesian Contemporary – Konfir Kabo Collection, Art Gallery of Ballarat, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia
- 2023 *Post Tradition: Revisiting and the Future of Balinese Painting*, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
ARTJOG 2023, Jogja National Museum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- 2022 *Distrik Seni Sesi 2: Berkelanjutan!*, Distrik Seni X Sarinah, Sarinah Community Mall, Jakarta, Indonesia
Konvergensi, R.J. Katamsi, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Good News from Bali, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore

2021 *The 10th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT10)*, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Brisbane, Australia

2020 *12*, Sika Gallery, Bali, Indonesia
Rooted in Bali, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore

2019 *ARTJOG Common Space*, Jogja National Museum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Balinese Masters, AB•BC Building, Bali, Indonesia

2018 *ART•BALI 2018: Celebration of the Future*, AB•BC Building, Bali, Indonesia
The IMPART Collectors' Show, Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre, Singapore

2017 *Jakarta Biennale 2017: JIWA*, Gudang Sarinah Ekosistem, Jakarta, Indonesia
LINKAGE: 20th OHD MUSEUM, OHD Museum, Magelang, Indonesia

2016 *5th Singapore Biennale: An Atlas of Mirrors*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
Manifesto V: ARUS, National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia
Group Exhibition, 20th Anniversary Exhibition, Gajah Gallery, Singapore

2013 *VERSUS - Indonesian Contemporary Art*, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
Irony In Paradise, ARMA Museum, Bali, Indonesia

2012 *Tribute to a Mentor*, Garis Art Space, Jakarta, Indonesia
Homo Ludens 3, Emmitan Contemporary Art Gallery, Surabaya, Indonesia

2011 *We Are Now Open*, Garis Art Space, Jakarta, Indonesia
Homo Ludens 2, Emmitan Contemporary Art Gallery, Surabaya, Indonesia
Good Luck Charm, Garis Art Space, Jakarta, Indonesia

2010 *Ethnicity Now*, National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

2009 *12 Indonesian Artist "Indonesian Journey"*, Galerie Waterton, Singapore
Sanggar Dewata Indonesia, Bentara Budaya, Bali, Indonesia

2008 *Self-Portrait: Famous Artists of Indonesian Living*, Jogja Gallery, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

2006 *Angkor – The Djin Within*, Gajah Gallery, Singapore

2005 *Between Glasses and Two Bottles*, Gajah Gallery, Singapore

2004 *Asian Masters*, Gajah Gallery, Singapore

2003 *Epic*, Gajah Gallery, Singapore

2001 *Patterns of Identity: Artist Experience Bali*, Komaneka Gallery, Bali, Indonesia

2000 *12 Painters of Sanggar Dewata, Hotel Padma Bali, Indonesia*

1999 *Soul Ties: The Land & Her People – Art from Indonesia*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
Tiga Rupa, Hotel Padma, Bali, Indonesia
Indonesian Paintings: Towards the Third Millennium, Jawa Pos, Surabaya, Indonesia
Sanggar Dewata Millennium Exhibition, travelled to six museums in Indonesia: Agung Rai Museum of Art, Ubud, Indonesia; Bali Museum, Denpasar, Indonesia; Gunarsa Museum, Klungkung, Indonesia; Neka Art Museum, Ubud, Indonesia; Rudana Museum, Ubud, Indonesia; Taman Budaya, Denpasar, Indonesia

1998 *Ruwatan Bumi*, Art Center, Bali, Indonesia

1997 *Between Two Worlds: Contemporary Balinese Art*, Parliament House, Darwin, Australia

1996 *Biennial Arts Exhibition X*, Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta, Indonesia
Museum fur Volkerkunde, Basel, Switzerland

1995 Tom Thomson Memorial Gallery, Ontario, Canada
Farewell to Paradise? New Views from Bali, Museum für Völkerkunde und Schweizerisches Museum für Völkskunde, Basel, Switzerland
Torque, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth, Australia
ARK 4 Asia Pacific, Pica Art Gallery, Perth, Australia

1994 *From Ritual to Romance: Paintings Inspired by Bali*, National Museum Art Gallery (now Singapore Art Museum), Singapore
Group exhibition of Contemporary Art (Installation), Taman Budaya Yogyakarta, Indonesia

1993 Art Center 9, Guam, USA
Museum fur Volkerkunde, Basel, Switzerland

1992 Lotus Art Gallery, Rotterdam, Netherlands

1989 *8th Biennial Indonesian Painting Exhibition*, Jakarta, Indonesia

1982 *SDI Group Exhibition*, Karta Pustaka, Yogyakarta; Indonesia America League Building, Jakarta, Indonesia

1978 *Young Artist Group Exhibition*, Ratna Warta Museum, Bali, Indonesia

Awards

1987 *Best Painting Award*, PORSENI Exhibition, Jakarta, Indonesia

1983 *Pratisara Affandi Adhi Karya*, Indonesia Academy of fine Arts, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

1982 *Lempad Prize – Best Painting*, Sanggar Dewata Indonesia, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

1978 *Best Sketch and Best Painting Awards*, Indonesia Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Collections

Project Eleven, Melbourne, Australia
Tumurun Private Museum, Solo, Indonesia
OHD Museum, Magelang, Indonesia
Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
Northern Territory Museum of Art and Sciences (now Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory: MAGNT) , Darwin, Australia
Museum fur Volkerkunde, Basel, Switzerland

About Mizuma Gallery

Executive Director Sueo Mizuma established Mizuma Art Gallery in Tokyo in 1994. Since its opening in Gillman Barracks, Singapore in 2012, the gallery aims for the promotion of East Asian artists in the region as well as the introduction of Southeast Asian artists to the international art scene. From 2014 to 2019, the artist residency space “Rumah Kijang Mizuma” opened in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, to create a new platform for dialogue by supporting exchanges between East Asia and Southeast Asia. From 2018 to 2023, “Mizuma & Kips” opened in New York, USA, as a shared collaboration between Mizuma Gallery from Tokyo and Singapore and Kips Gallery from New York.

About Gillman Barracks

Set in a former military barracks dating back to 1936 and surrounded by lush tropical greenery, the Gillman Barracks visual arts cluster was launched in September 2012. Gillman Barracks’ vision is to be Asia’s destination for the presentation and discussion of international and Southeast Asian art. Today, Gillman Barracks is a place for art lovers, art collectors, and those curious about art. The cluster is a focal point of Singapore’s arts landscape, and anchors the development of visual art in the region and beyond.

Executive Director

Mizuma Sueo

General Manager

Theresia Irma

Project Manager

Marsha Tan

Project Executive

Catherine Low

Gallery Assistant

Annie Wu

Designer

Yusuf Aji

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Exhibition Views: Photography by Wong Jingwei

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