



Budi Agung Kuswara

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Budi Agung Kuswara, nicknamed Kabul, left Bali in 1999 to pursue his study in Yogyakarta. Drawing inspiration from the diverse social issues he has experienced during his stay in Yogyakarta and employing the Balinese tradition of storytelling, he composes images which evolve around social reality. He's currently exhibiting his works at Rumah Sanur Creative Hub until the end of January.

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Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I was born and raised in Bali, and I've pursued art since my study at the High School of Arts in Batubulan. The high school times were when I looked for my identity. The situation at the time made me move out from Bali and continue my studies in Yogyakarta. Unlike now, being accepted by Institute of Arts in Yogyakarta wasn't easy. The selection process was very strict, while the applicants were too many. Thankfully, I was accepted. I started living in Yogyakarta and realized that the art situation was very different compared to Bali, especially in terms of understanding art.

How do you get ideas for your art?

In Yogyakarta, I found another art function that is beyond what I saw in Bali. In Bali, for me, it's more about the tradition itself; it's either a part of ritual or tourism. In Yogyakarta, art is related closely to the movements in society, including political issues and activism. From there, what I see now is that art function is actually more than tourism or attractions.

It's being said that whatever you got in Yogyakarta is still strong, and you still carry it with you even after your return to Bali.

Yes, because art with this particular character is always close to the social reality. Meanwhile, the art tendency in Bali is like trying to freeze itself from the social reality. It doesn't have so much development, and is so well-preserved. However, if we look back, the tradition didn't exist instantly. It has influences from the kingdom era, and it has been going through a long process. The art beyond that is something that can move along social reality steadily, and it's more relevant.

How about the elements of parody in your art?

That's one way to communicate, conveying something through parody. Visual language is normally multi-interpretational. As an artist, we can't always expect that our audiences will understand the meaning of our works like the way we do. Additionally, it's also how the works can communicate something in a form that is not too serious, while still containing a seriousness within.