

SEGARA RUPA LINTAS BANGSA

Curators

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Throughout 2023, not a few art events, festivals or art exhibitions carried the theme of Segara (Ocean). However, the international event held by the Fine Arts Study Program, Faculty of Art and Design ISI Denpasar, was able to present two-dimensional and three-dimensional works in a creative exploration that offered various possibilities.

The Samudra theme proved to be not a limitation, but an opportunity for these cross-national artists to retrace their aesthetic-stylistic achievements while exploring the Bahari in an imaginative way. Works that broadly express Segara through various forms - and their layers of meaning - follow visual tendencies that are denotative, connotative and symbolic.

The Surya Segara Rupa exhibition was attended by 34 artists, 6 of whom were from overseas, namely Japan, Hungary, Brazil, the Netherlands, and 2 from Germany. The artists from Indonesia came from various regions in the country, including: Bandung, Jakarta, Jepara, Yogyakarta and Bali. Most of these artists have a background in fine arts education and serve as teachers at art colleges.

It should also be mentioned at this stage that the three visual tendencies (denotative, connotative, and symbolic) also appear in the work in the form of a mix or intertwining of forms that allows the philosophical values contained in the thematic (Segara) to be reflected. Or Samudra in a literal (denotative) view evokes a view and reflection precisely because the composition of the object implies a call for social awareness or concern.

This international exhibition presents works with various perspectives; from realist sea forms with waves, sand, and coastal scenery; to colorful abstractions that remind us of the real and symbolic world around Samudra. Many works combine realistic and impersonalistic visuals in a specific symbolic context, suggesting an imaginative world; a mix of Sekala and Niskala.

Segara (Samudra) permeates some of the works in a connotative and symbolic manner where the creative orientation of the creators shows their experience and deep understanding of the iconography of past cultural traditions and artifacts. Their works with various abstractions or selected objects that refer to traditional iconography; created with a personalized creative approach.

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Segara Rupa

When compared to the exhibition also held by the Fine Arts Study Program FSRD ISI Denpasar in 2019, this exhibition presents a variety of forms that are more associative and imaginative. Evocative of the view and inviting contemplation, as if we were absorbing the endless expanse of the ocean; with its waves that flow silently.

A more denotative view of the sea and everyday life can be seen in I Wayan Kondra's "Spirit Ngiring Melasti" and Anna Sungkar's "Keluarga Pemulung". Both works imply a social message and a reflection on the importance of maintaining a common life as a communal social being.

It can be said that most of the works in Surya Segara Rupa's exhibition present Samudra or Segara in an abstraction style with a scattering of selected colors, along with minimalist objects, reminiscent of everyday beach scenes with puddles or impressions of sunrise and sunset light. See the works of I Wayan Karja (Surya Segara Rupa), I Wayan Gulendra (Manik Garbha Segara), I Made Hendra Mahajaya Pramayasa (Ragam Biota Laut), I Wayan Mudana (Telur Segara (Bibit Kehidupan)), Claudia De Britto Pereira Simões (The King Star And His Beloved Moon), I Ketut Mustika (Tridharmika Rupa), Gede Yosef Tjokropramono (Penjarahan Ikan), Ni Made Purnami Utami (Senja (Titik Akhir)), A. A. Gde Trisna Suryadinata T.Y. (Dinamika Gerak), Eszter Tari (Projection II), I Made Ruta (Blue Overlay), I Wayan Sujana Suklu (Ninth Dimension), Sri Supriyatini (Agung).

Still faithful to his abstraction, I Wayan Karja through his work titled "Surya Segara Rupa" processes layers of colors and unfolds a landscape that takes our imagination to the beach. The layered colors are rich in meditative nuances and reflect a world beyond the visible; where the clarity of sunlight and the ripples of waves express life force and hope. I Wayan Karja's works can be compared to Claudia de Britto Pereira Simões (The King Star And His Beloved Moon). Through the abstraction of her chosen colors, the Brazilian artist unfolds layer upon layer of sunlight in a cluster of suggestive colors. Presenting an object that is far from literal, but rather an inner world engulfed by the beauty and majesty of the universe's creation. These two works not only present a variety of abstractions but also a connotative and near-symbolic imagined world, a link between Bhuana Alit (microcosm) and Bhuana Agung (macrocosm).

Some works depart from the attempt to address traditional iconographic elements with personal stylistics-aesthetics. The works are created with abstractionist or impressionistic styles, but the object of choice can be traced back to mythological stories, or the Ramayana/Mahabaratha narratives and their derivative plays. For example, the works of I Nengah Wirakesuma (Puser Bumi), I Wayan Setem (Gelombang Lautan Susu), I Wayan Gunawan (Ulun Danu), Suwarno Wisetrotomo (Gandrung Gandring: Sadumuk Bathuk Sanyari Bumi), I Made Bendi Yudha (The Power of Octopus), I Made Yasana (Kekuatan Dewa Siwa Memusnahkan yang Tidak Berguna di Dunia), Tjokorda Udiana Nindhia Pelayun (Dalem Segara Hening), I Ketut Mustika (Tridharmika Rupa), I Dewa Putu Gede Budiarta (Kekuatan Dewi Dewi) Nano Warsono (Lost in The Microcosm), Luh Budiaprilliana (A Door to Inner Child Ocean).

With the language of art, these artists mostly utilize iconography that is revised or processed as an achievement of innovation to express certain impressions and messages. These works are in fact contextualized with the socio-cultural transformation of the local community that they personally experience. Symbols or signifiers that refer to traditional iconography or past cultural artifacts are created through design-figurations or figure-less impressionistic styles.

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Rupa Semesta

Through three-dimensional and two-dimensional works, or a combination of both, the existence of Segara or Samudra is no longer entirely connotative or symbolic. Rather, it suggests Rupa Semesta as presented by Wayan Kun Adnyana's Enigmatic Earth, an attempt to explore and understand the enigmatic Earth, like an infinite universe. Like the bottomless depths of the ocean, it invites thoughts and dreams about the mysteries that encompass the life and existence of this universe. Every form or shape that emerges from such creative endeavors is the result of the confluence of sensory experience and the overflow of the subconscious world.

Sculptor Keiji Ujiie (Japan) through his work titled Sun Over The Sea and Franziska Seifert (Germany) with her work Ibu Topeng, each process the media/medium of choice into a form of expression with an authentic aesthetic-stylistic. Stone in the hands of Keiji Ujiie is processed with a personal touch that is not only symbolic or metaphorical. It impresses us with its unique shape and composition, instantly opening a blank space of imagination; as if the viewer is in the expanse of the sea of life. Similarly, Franziska Seifert's bronze compositions create a sturdy minimalist form; inviting associations with the loving face of a mother (as the title suggests). Both works essentially express the existence of the universe in the desire for love and hope for peace.

I Made Jodog with his three-dimensional work titled Yuyu Bang depicts the phenomenon of the universe through simple forms or small creatures that are overlooked or forgotten. Three crabs in red instantly remind us of the transience of human beings in the midst of the oceanic universe with its unpredictable dynamics. This work is also a metaphor of life where humans do not realize their limitations, but instead are carried away by their ambition by using all means to control everything.

I Gede Jaya Putra's three-dimensional work (Berenang dalam Arus Deras) is unique in that it does not merely present seven sculptures as symbolic figures guarding the universe or the environment around us. The two-dimensional work also depicts a guardian figure by creating a self-portrait that presents the ironic reality of Bali today in the scourge of tourism.

There is no literal Segara or Samudra present in the two-dimensional works of Peter Dittmar (Germany) and Brigitte Djie (Netherlands), as well as Ira Adriati (Indonesia). But if we look again and again in depth, we immediately feel the surge of feelings that roll through the waves of color and minimalist composition. The imagined world of the universe suggests enigmatic depth and mystery. Peter Dittmar, like his Color Window calligraphy series, is the fruit of his deep appreciation for the practice of Zen meditation. His work is reminiscent of traditional Japanese painting; emphasizing the simplicity of composition in reaching the essence of things. Similar to haiku poetry, it chants events in simplicity – a kind of attempt to achieve satori, which is instant enlightenment in the style of Zen-Buddhism. It is interesting to juxtapose this with Brigitte Djie's work (Sun and Sea, Source of All Life on Earth), which chooses a composition in the form of a mandala; an iconic form inherited from Tibetan Buddhism as a depiction of the universe. This work conveys the message of the importance of maintaining harmony between humans, the natural environment, and all its inhabitants.

Simplicity of composition is also chosen by Ira Adriati through her works on shibori cloth, paper and acrylic. On the canvas alone is a visual of a children's toy paper boat, with a blue background layered with texture as a reminder of the ocean. To a particular viewer, a boat has multiple meanings; it could be Sinbad's boat that lives in childhood stories; it could also be poet Sapardi Djoko Damono's paper boat that sails the ocean of words, or a song that has been sung since long ago about Nenek Moyangku Pelaut, in line with the title of this work.

Thus the Sea, Segara or Samudra, takes the artist and us on a journey across time and nations. Every work is a meeting; and every meaning emerges as a dialectic between the creator and the viewer.

Curators Profile



Jang Shin Jeung, MA

Born in 1974. Is a curator from South Korea with an international reputation. Obtained an MA degree in Visual Arts Administration, New York University and was a curator at the MoMA PS1 Contemporary Arts Center, New York, NY. As chief curator of the Icheon International Sculpture Symposium (2013); chief planner and exhibition team for Asia Culture Center, Gwangju, Korea (2014 - 2015) and currently serves as President C Art Company, Seoul, Korea. Since 2013 he has been actively involved in and organizing a number of art exhibitions in Seoul, Korea, including: 'Soom', Soombi Art Center, Seoul, Korea (2023); 'HaRyu' & 'Soom', Iconography, Seoul, Korea (2023); 'Soyoyou II' & 'PALYGROUND' & 'Soyoyou', Iconography, Seoul, Korea (2022); 'Sa-Sang-Hwa' Baum Artspace, Seoul, Korea (2022); 'EVER-CONNECTED' Ara Art Center, Seoul, Korea (2021); etc. He is also active as a teacher and conducts research on fine arts in Korea.

Warih Wisatsana



He received multiple national recognition throughout his career, including the Borobudur Award, the Taraju Award, SIH Award, and the Bung Hatta Award. In 2020, he received the Bali Jani Nugraha Award from the Bali Provincial Government, and Bali Dwipantara Nata Kerthi Nugraha from ISI Denpasar in 2022. Invited to national and international festivals: Borobudur Writers and Cultural Festival (2021), Utan Kayu Internasional Literary Biennale (Winternachten Overzee 2003 and 2009), Winternachten Den Haag (1997), Inalco Paris (1998), Ubud Writers and Readers Festival, Printemps des Poetes (Indonesia-France), Jakarta International Literary Festival (JILF), etc. His award-winning poetries have been translated into Dutch, English, Italian, German, Portuguese, French, and Korean. His book, Batu Ibu (KPG, 2019) won the Top Five for Kusala Sastra Khatulistiwa 2018 and the Book of Poetry Recommended by Tempo 2018, Kota Kita (Sahaja Sehati, 2018) was the Top Five Poetry Books for the Hari Puisi Indonesia (HPI) 2018. Recently, Warih has focused on writing about visual arts and has also been involved in several collaborative projects with visual artists, choreographers and theater directors in Bali, including Made Wianta, Nyoman Erawan, and others. He is also an art critic and curator who curates various national and international exhibitions, including Art Exhibition "Artist from Elsewhere-Two Art Brut Artist from Indonesia" (2014), Mural Exhibition-World Culture Forum in Bali (2016), Ubud Writers and Readers Festival-UWRF (2017-2019), Bali International Literary Symposium (2019), Bali Megarupa (2019 and 2020), Bali Kandarupa Art Exhibition (2021 & 2022), Bali Bhuwana Rupa International Exhibition (2021 & 2022), Festival Seni Bali Jani (2021-2023), etc. Now an editor at Katarupa.id and a poetry column for the Nusa Bali daily.