

Hanafi – Migrasi Kolong Meja

The world in which we inhabit is abstract and difficult to understand until in which time that the mind begins identifies and to discern.

In viewing art when we are confronted with abstract images, such as that non-representative of reality, seemingly void of logic or lacking beauty, and at the expense of any apparent painterly skill, they may be easily dismissed as having little or no value at all.

On the contrary, abstract art is an expression designed to represent something more than what is apparent on the surface. It is a search for what lies beyond the object. And in the case of Hanafi, one of Indonesia's foremost abstract painters, art is much more than skin deep.

At the Komaneke Fine Art Gallery in Ubud, Hanafi's exhibition "Migrasi Kolong Meja" opened on the 22nd December and continues until 22 January 2014.

The inner being, or the subconscious mind is programmed with a unique language of symbols and colors. Art has an essence and a mysterious ability to connect to the inner being – by talking directly to emotions and feelings.

The word man is derived from the Sanskrit – Manas – the consciousness that can reflect on itself. And in this process of contemplation and self reflection of the works in this exhibition, it is Hanafi's sensitivity that may be perceived, and comes shining through.

Balinese contemporary art has its own unique story of abstract art, whereby artists such as Wianta, Sika and Erawan in 1970's began to bring to life symbols from their Balinese Hindu heritage into a new form of Indonesian art. However Hanafi's story is different.

Hanafi, (b.1960, Purworejo, Central Java) was educated at School of Fine Arts Indonesia (SSRI) Yogyakarta, 1976–79 and he currently resides in Depok, West Java. A few years ago while visiting his studio, a few hours from Jakarta we discussed the theme of this exhibition.

"Migrasi Kolong Meja" is reflective of his feelings about the culture of corruption that pervades the highest levels of business, administrative and political authority in this country. It raises the question of bribery that usually occurs underneath the table without social formalities above it.

Two works positioned along side each other in the gallery offer up to vastly different opportunities to experience Hanafi's creativity.

"Migrasi Kolong Meja #10" is characterized by open plains of soft white with a few dashes of grey and yellow sparingly applied, and some simple yet crude lines depicting boxes. This work allows a freedom to explore the large spaces of the 200 x 200cm canvas, with only a few interruptions in color disparities and form to hinder the eye and mind in its "light and breezy" journey across the composition.

While "Migrasi Kolong Meja #14", perhaps the most powerful work in the exhibition, is a departure, and a work of complete contrast. The painting is dark and moody, yet vibrant and alive. He offers 3 structures, objects of contemplation for added consideration. The work becomes extraordinarily complex in its coloration and the subtle interrelationship between the various hues – browns, deep ochers, touches of deep blue, red and green.

These works are purely spontaneous expressions by the artist- an authentic emotional process that is deeply personal to Hanafi – while we engage in these works somehow feelings unfold before your eyes.

Another notable feature of the exhibition is new works on paper applied to board. The application process has contributed to the wonderful textures, akin to valleys and planes highlighted by the gallery lighting, adding to the visual impact of the work.

“Migrasi Kolong Meja #21” is a work of unique character and a definite highlight. The fusion of lengths of timber of equal portions, yet varying slightly in the rich natural grain becomes the “table” and the subject. Upon the bottom portion of the work he creates a open draw, complete with brass handles and a hessian sack stuffed inside, in grey and black paint he implies an abstract image of a table above. Hanafi here emphasizes the practice of money being placed under the table.

Abstract art is an avenue for artists to explore and bring to the attention, or life an essence that mysteriously seems to live in an internal non-visible world. The works encourage freedom of the imagination while not having to reference the “known” and for those with the patience and willingness to observe objectively the rewards are many. An intimate personal journey is on offer.

Besides the serious issue of corruption brought to our attention, driven by the responsibility of an artist committed to communicating to and with the community, Hanafi confirms that there is more to the physical world than meets the eye.

“Migrasi Kolong Meja” – Hanafi continues through to 22 January 2014.
Komaneka Fine Art Gallery. Jalan Monkey Forest Ubud Open Daily. Ph: 03614012218



Migrasi Kolong Meja 14 Hanafi, Acrylic on canvas, 175x195cm.



Migrasi Kolong Meja 18 Hanafi 2013, Acrylic on canvas



Migrasi Kolong Meja 1 Hanafi, Acrylic on paper. 2013, 100x100cm.



Migrasi Kolong Meja 21 Hanafi, 2013, Acrylic and Wood, 210x200cm