

“Night in Bali” – Paul T. Nagano

According to Hawaiian painter Paul T. Nagano the most significant turning point in his career occurred upon reaching sixty years of age, “I transformed from a painter of representational landscapes, purely external observations of Bali, into a creator of introspective and interpretive works.”

Born 1938, in Honolulu and of Japanese heritage, Nagano says, “In Japanese mythology when you reach 60 you enter your second childhood and I think this happened at just the right time for me. I experienced a renewal, and my painting took on exciting new elements.”

No stranger to the mysteries and nuances of Bali, having first arrived in 1984, under the cover of darkness Nagano was shuttled from the airport to the rice fields in Ubud. Rising to a new world bathed in glistening sunlight the next morning, Nagano believed he had found the Garden of Eden.

Since then he has returned each year for two months to paint, however now he rarely ventures out to work on site, the modern development of Bali and its impact on the landscape has seen to this. His watercolour musings are the design of Nagano’s memories fused with the breadth of his imagination.

Night in Bali, Nagano’s latest solo exhibition opened on 18th July at Bamboo Gallery in Ubud and showcases 15 new watercolour works on paper and one acrylic composition on canvas.

Temple ceremonies, performances, vistas of rice fields flooded in water, mountain landscapes and imaginative, complex compositions are all brought to life. His works contain surreal atmospheric elements of Bali depicted under the mystical ambience of the moonlight.

“I am now interested in symbolism, which takes me out of the realm of representational compositions,” Nagano says about work. “I sometimes think that I have lost my sense of gravity as my work has become more spiritual, things within my compositions have begun to float and objects are often rendered out of proportion.”

Moonbeam, 2014, one of the highlights of the exhibition, emphasizes beautifully Nagano’s “anti gravity” methodology, whereby participants in a Balinese religious ceremony along with parasols float upwards, as if drawn by an invisible energy within the full moon’s shimmering beam of light. Figures clutching parasols recede and disappear into a radiant moon.

“My paintings are an amalgam of styles that I am passionate about,” says Nagano. “I began as an Impressionist, then moved into Pointillism and a technique of Japanese painting known as Nanga.”

Introduced to the world of art from a young age, in the early 1960’s Nagano received a classical training in art over a 4-year period from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, USA. He became the director of an art gallery in Boston in 1967 and began showing his work from 1972. He divides his time between Hawaii, Boston, USA and Bali, as well as exhibiting in these locations.

Nagano’s acute sensitivity brings the enchanting nighttime world of Bali to life in all its seductive colors, textures and romantic qualities. For lovers of fine art, and of Bali this exhibition is a must see.

Night in Bali continues through until 9 August at Bamboo Gallery Jalan Raya Ubud



PAUL T.NAGANO Juggler 57'5x38cm
Watercolor on paper 2014



PAUL T.NAGANO Red Moon Bali 57'5X76cm Watercolor on paper 09.2014



PAUL T.NAGANO Red Moon Bali 57'5X76cm Watercolor on paper 09.2014



PAUL T.NAGANO Moonbeam
57'5x38cm Watercolor on paper
2014