

MADE DJIRNA

Exploring Balinese artist Made Djirna's cavernous studio conjures up notions of a journey into an inner sanctum that is vibrant and fascinating, yet is equally as powerful and confronting.

Djirna is a collector of all manner of cultural artifacts, naturally formed shapes and unusual objects, which he then converts into intriguing installations. Typically, his lively yet simplified and raw figures reflect the primitive tribal arts. He constructs enormous "shrines and altars" from old timber, sculptures and rocks, complete with fire and abstract painted deities which are infused with a sense of ritual and resonate with spiritual energy.

Within the National Gallery of Indonesia, Djirna recreates the unique essence of his home studio by placing his installations within small rooms and in confined corners. He succeeds in allowing the audience a greater sense of the creative world of one Indonesia's finest contemporary artists.

"My concern is to express reflections that go far deeper than what we can know with our pancaindra (eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin). All of my work is a process that goes hand in hand with the demands of my soul. It is essentially a spiritual process taking visible pictorial shape," says the artist.

Djirna is a versatile artist who loves to experiment with new materials, techniques and styles. From 2010 onwards he reinterpreted his method of producing his paintings and these new works are highlighted in his exhibition - "Ubud 1963, (Re) Reading The Growth of Made Djirna", at the National Gallery in Jakarta. The exhibition began on the 24th November and continues 5th December 2012.

In this, Djirna's eight solo, retrospective exhibition, observers may take a brief sojourn through his creative development and witness the metamorphous he has undergone.

"Mengenang Pyramid" (To Reminisce About the Pyramid) 1994 and "Kabut Hitam" (Black Fog) 1994, two early works are memoirs of his childhood experience of 1963. Both paintings are rendered in darkened acrylic hues with traces of red and white. These bleak abstract works convey anxiety and distress, evident in the facial expression in "Pyramid" and the tension created by vigorously scored details into the body of the work. "Kabut" suggests architectural objects overcome by thick black clouds and bright red denotes volcanic flows and the horror of such a scenario.

Within his curatorial essay, senior Indonesian curator Jim Supangkat begins by describing the extraordinary events of 1963 that had a catastrophic impact on Bali, as well shaping the formative years of a young Made Djirna who with his family was living just north of Ubud.



Acrylic on Canvas 200x300cm
2012



Benang Merah Bali Basel (The
Red Thread From Bali to Basel)
Made Djirna 1993 mixed media
on canvas 145 x 245cm



Cerita Made Djirna 2011 mixed
media on canvas 295 x 485cm



Djirna Massa 140x200cm oil on
canvas 2011



Mount Agung in Karangasem, East Bali, the islands spiritual pinnacle, began its process of tremors in January, volcanic eruptions started in March and again in May and tremors then continued until its final blast in January 1964. This was an unprecedented year with extensive infrastructure damage, crop failures, wide spread famines and many deaths, putting an immediate halt to tourism in Bali.



Gajah Genit (flirty Elephant)
Made Djirna 2012 mixed media
on canvas 260x400cm

Made Djirna was born in Kedewatan, Ubud in 1957 and was just 6 years old at the time of this event. He later went on to graduate from the Faculty of Fine Art and Design at the ISI (Indonesian Institute of Art) Yogyakarta in 1985 and spent 10 years living in the cultural capital of Java. He actively exhibits his works locally and internationally and is a member of the respected SDI, Sanggar Dewata Indonesia association of modern artists.



Installation by Made Djirna
mixed media various
dimensions 2012

In amongst Djirna's captivating new works exhibited in the National Gallery, "Gajah Genit" (Flirty Elephant), 260 x 400 cm, serves as a metaphor of a power crisis in the face of change. Djirna communicates the damages inflicted by power and domination via deforestation. Posing in jest, the "flirty elephant" stands confidently in defiance. Yet also he depicts a ruler's demise by placing the image of a vulture on the elephant's head, and he also symbolizes the dawn of a new era by depicting a dove on a stump of a tree. This intelligent work in rich blues, reds and greens is infused with humor that helps to resolve the seriousness of the alarming reality we face.



Memory From The Past Made
Djirna mixed media installation
variable dimensions

On his mixed media canvases of huge proportions (up to 350 x 400 cm) Djirna first applies a thick base of texture into which he scores his vast narratives, then adds color in rich metallic paint and finally contains all the characters within black lines. In a style reminiscent of the traditional Balinese paintings with the narrative covering the complete expanse of canvas, Djirna's works take on modern narratives and issues that for the artist are very close to home.

His recent use of metallic paints adds a wonderful luminous dimension, particularly when highlighted by artificial lighting. They are aesthetically spectacular not only because of the dynamic coloration, yet the scale of the works simply overwhelms. Some have taken Djirna more than 3 months to complete.



Wajah Wajah Mengambang
(Floating Faces) Made Djirna
2008 oil on canvas 295 x 380cm

In "Metamorfosis" (Metamorphosis), 260 x 400 cm, 2012, two lovers embrace in the forest surrounded by hundreds of brightly colored butterflies, on the trunks of the trees are numerous large caterpillars. What may appear to be a simplistic narrative denoting change reveals the reality that life is full of paradoxes. Butterflies are nature's symbol of grace, yet they become caterpillars which are destructive and are seen as pests. This is a creation of unsurpassed wonder and beauty and it is here that Djirna's brilliance shines through.



Mixed Media Installation by
Made Djirna various
dimensions

The artist's earlier works are categorized by naïve figurative and abstract expressions often rendering thick chunks of paint to create ambiguous forms with faces that reveal the darker emotions of the human experience. His strong earthy figures are a reminder of the past when life was simpler and with a greater connection to the environment.

What has remained consistent throughout the evolution of Djirna's career is the sense a unity within the collective experience and importance of the personal process while learning to endure the dualities of life.

"Through the personal development that is achieved by the inward journey of self-discovery, compassion, understanding and healing, we gain wisdom and strength. These are the tools which will support us during the journey of life."

Made Djirna's expressions are intimate, honest and expose the heart felt emotions of the human experience. And they convey a profound sense of authenticity.

"Ubud 1963, (Re) Reading The Growth of Made Djirna",
National Gallery of Indonesia.
Jalan Medan Merdeka Timur, 14. Jakarta.