

## MAHA ART STUDIO

During the course of 2010 -12 the Indonesian modern and contemporary art world ventured into its most challenging times of the modern era.

Art market forces created confusion and then a downturn in the market effected sales at both auction houses and galleries. Then earlier this year paintings of questionably authenticity by Indonesian masters appeared on public display in a prominent collection which created great uncertainties within, as well as reflected poorly upon the Indonesian art world.

In her recent document, 'Art Mystery or Art History', S.E. Asian Art Historian Helena Spanjarrd stated, "The Indonesian art world is too much obsessed with buying and selling. Where is the educational aspect?"

"To develop a healthy art climate in Indonesia, perhaps it is time for the Indonesian art world to reflect on the gaps in the infrastructure?" she continued.

The need to create infrastructures that include a future vision and mission based on shared community values is the most responsible and practical solution. This will stimulate and create a more positive future for this large sector of the Indonesian community, that has been largely ignored by the Balinese and Indonesian governments.

The Maha Art Studio is a new facility centrally located in Renon, Bali that supports the sovereignty of independent creative expression. This is an open space, in a neutral environment free from the hindrance of commercial structures and demands.

The venue is the vision of Balinese art lover and Gallerist Mr. Agus Maha Ushada. "The Maha Art Gallery began in 2008 in the golf club house at the Bali Beach Hotel in Sanur. After several years of successful exhibitions and interaction with artists it became clear to me that a larger multi purpose art venue and exhibition space would better serve the community," said Mr. Agus.

"I have closed the gallery to focus on this new project. Maha Art Studio's emphasis is to serve the community and future generations, with a much needed infrastructure venue to nurture creative ideas and projects. The venues comfortable, harmonic ambience will inspire creative interaction between artists and the public in an effort to strive for new artistic territory," said Mr. Agus.

Local artists and members of the community are encouraged to collaborate and organize their own art events, rather than the management team of the Studio. Cross cultural events with an emphasis on connecting and educating school children and youths will become a high priority.

Born in Tabanan, Bali 1960, Mr Agus' early creative passions were music and theater and he was inspired by his father, traditional musician, Putu Joni, who was the first musician to record traditional Balinese music in the early 1970's.

His decision to focus on a career meant he then had little time to pursue his own creative expression, however he continued his support of artists and exhibitions indirectly.



The Bamboo Studio, Maha Art Space



Wayan Suja  
Dicourse in Green 2012, oil on canvas, 120x150cm



Djirna Massa 140x200cm oil on canvas 2011



Move For The Rain  
Ida Bagus Purwa, oil charcoal  
on canvas, 150x130 cm, 2012



The New Sphinx  
Wayan Kun Adnyana, 2011,  
145x155cm, ink acrylic on  
canvas



Tree House  
Nyoman Sujana Kenyem, 2012,  
acrylic on canvas, 140x140cm

In celebration of the grand opening of the Maha Art Studio, the exhibition “HeHe – Here We Ar(t)e, Here We Ar(t)e The Same” opened on the 26th November, continues until the 10th December 2012. It showcases the work of 14 talented contemporary fine artists from Indonesia and is curated by Arief Bagus Prasetyo.

Exhibiting artists are Ida Bagus Puspa, Ida Bagus Purwa, Ida Bagus Indra, Ida Bagus Tilem, Gusti Nengah Ardana, Wayan Suja, Wayan Kun Adnyana, Nyoman Kenyem Sujana, Dewa Ardana, Nyoman Suarnata, Cundrawan, Tien Hong, Reno and Tri Wahyudi.

Highlights of the exhibition include the technical prowess of two Balinese artists who express their talents in the realism genre. Gusti Nengah Sura Ardana is an art lecturer at the Singaraja University who depicts elderly Balinese women composed within painted wooden window frames. His painstaking attention to detail reveals every wrinkle and imperfection of the subjects aged and weathered face in his work “Guratan Makna” oil on canvas, 2012. The skin tones are highly realistic and the melancholy emotions of the facial expression may be easily sensed by the observer.

Ida Bagus Puspa is a senior artist from Sangeh, central Bali and is a master technician. His composition in oil, “Mengejar Impian” (Chasing The Dream), 2012, of a student studying in a dark room with artificial light focussed upon his work books and glancing the subject’s face, highlights brilliantly the skin tones of the subjects hands and white of the paper in dramatic contrast to the dark background area. This is an excellent study of darkness and light.

Wayan Suja’s semi abstract oil painting “Discourse in Green” (Work In Progress), 2012, reveals the image of the face of a Balinese beauty in traditional headdress printed on plastic wrapper which has been crumpled up and then straightened out to emphasise the distortion of the image.

Bali’s environmental magnificence is being severely compromised by the onslaught of globalisation and modern urban development. The subjects red lipstick contrasts powerfully against the green and blues, while the variation of greys within the composition also accentuate the gloomy narrative.

The indoor gallery within the Maha Art Studio is a large air-conditioned room that functions specifically as an exhibition space and with its large central table, as a meeting and arts discussion venue.

The Bamboo Studio is an outdoor annex utilizing modern architecture and features curved roof sections supported by large bamboo posts and beams, as well as open central and rear garden areas. Its open planning boasts over 200 square meters of floor area, 80 meters of wall space, ample natural and artificial lighting and a lush tropical background. This attractive multi purpose facility allows the soothing essence of nature to provide an inspiring atmosphere for creative interaction.

“It is my wish to contribute to the creative spirit of Bali by developing a dedicated space to hold meetings and art activities for a new era of contemporary artistic expression that I trust will become internationally recognized among art communities and the public,” stated Mr Agus.

The next event at Maha Art Space will be another group exhibition with leading Balinese artist Made Budhiana and 7 other artists opening 12th December 2012.

With a list of planned activities for 2013, as well as a support program for local artists to exhibit abroad, the Maha Art Studio will no doubt make a positive future impact upon the art communities of Bali.

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