

## WAYAN SIKA



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Balinese artist/ gallerist Wayan Sika grins as he contemplates his new found freedom. “On Friday 1st October 2010, after a 34 year association lecturing part time at ISI (Institute of Fine Arts) Denpasar, I have decided to retire.” Sika, like many Balinese dedicates himself to his community; however, the breadth of his accomplishments defines him as truly unique.

“My father was a renowned wood carver, many students came to his studio to study under him. For me this was a wonderful learning environment and I too became a good wood sculptor.”

Born in the village of Silakarng, Gianyar, Bali in 1949, formal art education began in SSRI (School of Fine Art Indonesia) in Denpasar, followed by 4 years studying painting at the Academy ASRI of Indonesian Fine Art in Yogyakarta. “I had become a competent sculptor and then I developed a strong desire to paint, I also wished to broaden my creative skills.”

In 1970 along with Nyoman Gunarsa, Made Wianta and other students at the ASRI, Sika founded the Sanggar Dewata Indonesia (SDI) artists Foundation. These artists were young and dynamic, they loved to experiment with new techniques and aesthetic concepts. This was the prerequisite for artists who were invited to join this avant garde collective.

After finishing his studies in Yogyakarta, Sika returned to Bali. Married at age 24 to lady from Yogyakarta with royal ancestry, he began a family and focused his energies on a furniture production business. “I specialized in creating individual, Fine Art pieces of furniture for the discerning buyer that featured wood carving in the Renaissance Rococo style. The business quickly grew to employ more than 100 wood carvers. Indonesian government ministers from the Suharto era acquired this furniture for their homes and offices. All the while during this period I found time for my passion, I continued to paint.”

In 1982-83, Sika was summonsed by the government to go to New Zealand and produce furniture for the Indonesian Embassy. Then in 1986 he travelled to Switzerland where he worked creating expressive carvings and bronze statues until 1987. He received an order in 1989 from a Museum in Basel, Switzerland to make a Barong (the Balinese sacred ceremonial artefact that represents universal benevolence) for their collection. It was during this period when the head of the Christ of Merian Foundation saw his paintings and invited him to join their program of International Exchange Artists. Sika’s premiere solo exhibition in Basel in 1989 was sold out. This then provided the personal belief required and he devoted more energy towards his painting. “This was an exciting period, there was a momentum and my painting was improving, however, I had to return to Bali, my family required my attention and so did my furniture business.”

“It was difficult for the SDI artists to find a location to exhibit their work in Bali and for this reason I founded the Sika Contemporary Art Gallery in Campuhan, Ubud as an exhibition venue. The gallery opened in 1996, at the time of the 25th anniversary of the formation of the SDI artists’ foundation.” This non sales orientated gallery specializes in providing space to support regular exhibitions by talented young artists from Indonesia and around the world. The gallery has become a prestigious site with a reputation for showing work with a high level of creativity and innovation.



'Consent' 2009, 300cm x 200cm.



'Damai dari Bali' (Peace from Bali).  
2009



'Dewi Rati' 2009, 150cm x 200cm



'Kasi Cinta' (Give Love) 2008,  
150cm x 200cm



'Krishna Narayana' 2009,  
300cm x 200cm



'Mandala' 2009, 200cm x 200cm

Sika was asked by the Christ of Merian Foundation to select Indonesian artists to travel to Switzerland, to be individually sponsored by the foundation for 3 months. This allowed the artists to exhibit in the cultural museum in Basel and be exposed to galleries from London, Holland and Germany. Under Sika's recommendation Nyoman Erawan, Made Budhiana, Made Djirna, Edi Hara, Made Wianta, Ketut Pandi Taman and Putu Sutawijaya all had the opportunity for international exposure. Today they are considered to be some of Indonesia's finest contemporary art talents.

In 2001 Sika chose to step aside from the foundation and reassess his personal focus. "I had received a calling to dedicate myself to my spiritual journey. As an artist this was to have a profound affect and my work became more symbolic rather than a focus on harmony and composition." He continued to organize group and community exhibitions as well as curating exhibitions and writing in books, catalogues, magazines and newspapers. His actions were also relevant in the development of new schools and kindergartens in Bali. Sika had a series of health problems that saw him comatose on 3 occasions. once in 2003, again in 2006 and finally in 2009, when he hovered close to death for many days. On this occasion he received visions which inspired his most recent paintings.

The latest event at the Sika Contemporary Fine Art Gallery, from the 16TH- 24TH of October 2010 was the titled 'The Truth, Compassion and Tolerance Art Exhibition. This show depicted the real current calamity of mankind, reflecting the conflict between good and evil, namely the systematic persecution of the Falun Dafa spiritual movement disciples by the Chinese Communist Regime. The powerful realism paintings featured by international artists re enforced on one hand, the state of beauty of the Falun Dafa movement and on the other, the horror it is confronted with in China. Since 2004 this exhibition has been shown in more than 40 countries and 200 cities. A recent forum at the Gallery on moral education in art was attended by more 250 people.

During the past 40 years Sika has been given many paintings by international and Indonesian artists that he has met and helped during his lifetime. His personal art collection is now of a museum standard and quantity.

The artist nowadays paints purely on the prompting of his intuition. Sika's paintings produced during the last 8 years have been characteristically mixed media works on large 2 x 3 meter canvases. The symbolic images are purely of a spiritual nature. These works include written text on cloth conjuring up the movement and essence of Tibetan pray flags, figures in the style of Hindu deities, large lotus flowers and his channelled mantra's written in Sanskrit text. The predominant colors are gold and white. He delicately layers films of coloration giving the works an ethereal sense. The Balinese live in an intermediate world between that which is human and the realm of the Gods. Sika's creativity originates from a divine source.

His wish now is retire from the Sika Contemporary Fine Art Gallery and to focus solely on his spiritual development. Sika's dream is to manifest an art foundation to oversee the management and future of his Gallery and its commitment to avant-garde young artists. Acting through the integrity of his open heart, Wayan Sika has established himself as the most influential Balinese artists of his generation and historically one of the most significant Indonesian Contemporary Fine Art identities.

The Sika Contemporary Fine Art Gallery is located on Jalan Raya Campuhan, just up the road from Bintang Supermarket.

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