

## WAYAN SUARMADI



Profile - Wayan Suarmadi

When I recently met Balinese painter Wayan Suarmadi at his gallery I immediately had to retreat out the back to the solace of his studio. I sat down, took a breather and tried to unwind from the midday heat, profuse tropical humidity, and the denser Ubud traffic.

Slowly I began to adjust my eyes and then carry out surveillance on my immediate surroundings. I liked what I saw.



For me there is no vista more peaceful or perfect to observe than when I gaze out over azure skies and at that distant line where the horizon meets the deep blue sea. It seems that the very same scenario has touched Wayan too.



I began to feel myself relax, I take a sip of water and then proceeded to recline. In Wayan's studio were various large compositions depicting seascapes. He is passionate about creating beautiful landscape paintings, with blues and soft whites that radiate with powerful soothing qualities. It's true color can influence our thoughts and feelings to an extraordinary degree.



Wayan did not attend an art institution, so like many of the local painters he initially learned through a simple practice, that of a child mimicking his elders and others within the family clan. He was inspired to learn by his great grandfather Wayan Gerudug and grandfather Wayan Durus who were both distinguished painters. Born in 1975 in Denpasar, Wayan's heritage is from Ubud - the epicenter of Balinese modern traditional painting.

"From the outset painting to me was a hobby," says Wayan. "I love the traditional style, however I prefer not to practice it. I became driven to follow my intuition and work until finally I arrived at a style that fulfills my creative needs. I have been exhibiting my work since 1992 and I like to offer my experience to an audience. Who knows, they may like it as well?"



"As it so happened these works appeal to me as well as other people. I never set out to find a market for my paintings, I am grateful that the market has found me."

"I used to depict flowers and waterfalls within my compositions, however in 1998 I began to experiment using sand. I was trying to recreate the sea shore and I wanted to include natural elements to build textures and to add to the aesthetic appeal," he says.

"I was, however, to encounter technical challenges. After about a year I successfully found a manner in which I could blend sand and acrylic fixatives that would adhere to the canvas, allowing a flexibility that enabled the paintings to be rolled without cracking."

In 2007 Wayan began painting polar landscapes purely from his imagination. "I am very accustomed to the tropics; rice fields, lush jungle and mountainous areas and the coastline of Bali. However, I became interested in landscapes from the cold arctic regions. I wanted to experiment and to see how I felt with my achievements."

"These works resonated with a buyer from Europe, and soon he became a regular collector of mine. In 2012 he invited me to accompany him on a trip to the Arctic. It was so very different to what I imagined, especially the sky. The blues, greys and whites were unique. Something you only find in those regions. The sky was as overpowering as the landscape."

Wayan affectionately recreates images of nature that impact upon him. "I enjoy fishing and have a special appreciation for the ocean and the coastline of Bali. This is why I love to paint seascapes."

His broad canvas' are generally void of details and fundamentally minimalist in style. Wide plains of color, the blue of the ocean and the sky unite in perfect harmony. He includes the faintest of white clouds, and a touch of white foam as waves gently wash upon the shore. As the subject Wayan will paint a small boat or a fisherman at the waters edge.

One thing is clearly evident, when he includes people they are in minute proportions.

"We are a part of nature, yet next to its power we are almost insignificant. My work is in reverence of nature and the Gods. Mother Nature is almighty and the Gods are omnipotent," Wayan says.

In Ubud art shops appear one after another and the commercial galleries seem just as ubiquitous too. The amount of art for sale is almost never ending. Within the commercial art market exist many different genres of painting for the public's perusal. If we travel the street of this tourist mecca our eyes become saturated with paintings, and what's more, sculptures and handy craft.

At times it may be difficult to determine what is good art and what works lack inspiration. What constitutes good art is a personal, and the decision is entirely up to you.

I wonder how many artists live in Ubud? In truth it is impossible to say. How many artists are able to carve out a profession, doing what they love, as in the case of Wayan Suarmadi?

By being dedicated and willing to experiment he has found methods to construct beautiful, powerful landscapes. And what's more Wayan has discovered his true passion too. Therefore it is by no coincidence that he has successfully created his own niche within the increasingly competitive commercial art market.

"My feelings determine my creative expressions, and I do feel strongly about the natural environment," he says. "And it is important that we pay homage to and safeguard our environment."

"When we truly learn to respect and honor Mother Nature, she will in turn reveal deeper levels of beauty, as well as her secrets too."