

WIRANTAWAN'S COSMIC EYE



Profile of Putu Wirantawan

Rarely in Bali does the observer get the opportunity to experience art of such a unique and “other worldly” quality as presented by contemporary Balinese artist Putu Wirantawan.

On exhibition at the Bentara Budaya Cultural Center, Bali from January 31st – February 1st 2013, “Wirantawan’s Cosmic Eye”, is a soulful odyssey that at a glance overwhelms with sophistication, yet is accentuated in mystery.

Wirantawan draws on the fundamentals of surrealism and abstraction art. His exposition of compositions in pencil and ballpoint pen on paper, enhanced with a touch of color, are an extraordinary arrangement of works that read like an eccentric, yet fantastic visual diary.

“What manifests into larger compositions begins as a simple sketch,” says Wirantawan. “The sketch is essential because from there my imagination becomes hooked and then ideas flow between my conscious and the subconscious mind.”

The importance of sketching and the ability to construct form and proportion is the most rudimentary skill that artists must accomplish to successfully communicate their ideas. On display are numerous works as well as folders containing vast quantities of sketches, highlighting Wirantawan’s creative process and devotion to this discipline.

“Many of my ideas come from the simplest of objects or from observations of the atmospheric, such as the elements of sunlight, fire, water and smoke. The subtle dance of smoke from burning incense ignites my imagination and I then transform the shapes I see into something new.”

The underlying structural content of Wirantawan’s work is based on the principals of sacred geometry, whereby sequences of lines within harmonic ratios creates codes and symbols that resonate with the subconscious mind. He often utilizes the circle, which is nature’s perfect symbol, appearing like floating disks, planets and glowing orbs with auras radiating light.

“Geometry is the essence and structure of all natural shapes on earth and in the solar system. All cycles of life and natural phenomena follow a repetitive circular order of birth, death and then rebirth,” says Wirantawan.

These geometrical symbols he uses are governed by a mathematical ratio known as the Golden Ratio, first devised by the ancient Greek mathematicians defining an invisible order that regulates the 3 dimensional proportions of the earth plane. These harmonic proportions were used in the design of sacred buildings in ancient and renaissance architecture to produce a spiritual energy that is believed to facilitate connectivity with a higher universal intelligence.

This may help to explain the soothing and peaceful feelings the viewer experiences while engaging in “Wirantawan’s Cosmic Eye.”

Many of Wirantawan’s abstract forms suggest architectural structures while a few have flowing lines reminiscent of landscapes with valleys and peaks. Objects are often compartmentalized and segmented into which he creates small imaginary worlds with an exceptional care to detail. “Deep Spirits” 2009 and “Soulscape II” 2010 suggest futuristic cities that may exist in the far reaches of the galaxy or are future colonies on earth.



Putu Wirantawan Anugrah 2007,
80x140cm, pen + pencil on paper.
Photo Richard Horstman



Putu Wirantawan Deep Spirits
274x205cm, pen,pencil on paper, 2009
Photo Richard Horstman



Putu Wirantawan Detail of Terbaran
Energi Sejati



Putu Wirantawan Soulscape II 2010,
pen pencil on paper, 120x200cm
Photo Richard Horstman



Putu Wirantawan Detail of Mental Spirit



Putu Wirantawan. Detail of Terbaran Energi Sejati 2 - Photo Richard Horstman



Putu Wirantawan Terbaran Energi Sejati 2008-2012, pen+pencil on paper, 9 panels 2915x1260cm - Photo Richard Horstman



Putu Wirantawan, Gugusan Citra Batin 1236011, 2011, dimensions variable, pencil + pen on paper - photo Richard Horstman

In works such as “Gugusan Citra Batin 1236011, 142012010 & 1610012” (2010-2012) Wirantawan groups together numerous compositions, rendered on paper then fixed on board and positioned across the walls. From small circular shapes, (7x7cm) to larger forms spanning more than a meter, he creates “stories” that can be collectively read as one flowing “soul-landscape” spanning more than 20 meters along the walls. The abstract nature of these works confirms that the human imagination is unlimited and has access to the infinite. These works are both beautiful and compelling at once.

The coloration of Wirantawan’s works contains the most basic of all visual dualities – black and its interrelationship with the color white. The impact of color psychology, the advancing nature of the white upon black creates dramatic depth of field. Some imagery simply morphs from light to dark and flows in and out of indiscernible surrealistic forms.

His monumental “Tebaran Energi Sejati” (2008 – 2012) features 9 compositions (2915 x 1260 cm) emphasizing the Yin/Yang color association. Within these compositions Wirantawan’s white objects appear to be projected up and out from the darkness of the backgrounds like “esoteric transmissions from the galactic core”.

Wirantawan, born 1972 in Negara, Jembrana, West Bali first studied art at the *Indonesian Academy of Arts (ISI)*, Denpasar graduating in 1993, and at ISI Yogyakarta 2005. He has won a series of awards and honors, including nomination as one of the 10 best Indonesian artists in 2000 *Philip Morris Art Awards*, as well as being a finalist in the International Triennial “Print and Drawing” in Bangkok, Thailand 2008 and again in 2012. He has been regularly exhibiting in Indonesia since 1993 and “Wirantawan’s Cosmic Eye” is his seventh solo exhibition.

“In 2003 I became frustrated and unable to develop my imagination to other forms of figurative and abstract painting with oil paint, acrylic and watercolor. I then realized my solution was to return to the basics of sketching.”

“Drawing is soul therapy for the mental burdens resulting from problems in daily life,” Wirantawan says. “It is a flexible and spontaneous technic, it can be done wherever and whenever and is not affected by the material drying quickly or still being wet. Drawing nurtures new spirit that enables me to feel free to explore my flowing ideas.”

Here in Indonesia, Javanese artist Sutjipto Adi pioneered the use of sacred geometrical structures set within a cosmic format in his landmark compositions of the early 1980’s, however Wirantawan’s works are more surrealistic and subtler to the eye.

Though his works are devoid of traditional Balinese aesthetics there remains a relationship to the Hindu Buddhist philosophical view of the universe. Within the context of contemporary Balinese art Putu Wirantawan has developed a dynamic individual style that clearly stands alone.

Wirantawan’s Cosmic Eye.
Bentara Budaya Cultural Center.
Jalan Prof. Bagus Mantra, Keramas Bali.



Wirantawan's Cosmic Eye - Bentara Budaya Cultural Center Photo Richard Horstman



Putu Wirantawan Terbaran Energi Sejati 2008-2012, 9 panels 2915x1260cm pen,pencil on paper Photo Richard Horstman