

# **WEST**

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**A** CROSSCULTURAL  
**T** INFLUENCES

**WEST**

**BALI KANGIN KAUH  
ARTISTS GROUP  
PRESENTS AN EXHIBITION  
OF OIL PAINTINGS AND  
PASTEL DRAWINGS BY :**

**I NYOMAN SURADNYA  
TJOK. KRISHNA PUTRA SUDHARSANA  
I GUSTI PUTU SUTEJA**

**AT CASA LUNA GALLERY  
JL. RAYA UBUD  
(OPP. PURI LUKISAN )  
U B U D  
FROM 22 rd MAY  
TO 22nd JUNE  
DAILY 10am to 9pm**

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## SAME ROOTS DIFFERENT PATHS



Each of the three artists represented in this exhibition has grown up in Ubud, come in contact with Western ideas and materials, and has had considerable time developing his art outside Bali.

Often it is necessary to move away from something to see it more clearly, and so it is the experience of most Balinese who live or work outside their unique culture, that they are able to appraise it and understand it with greater clarity when temporarily removed from it.

That experience of growing up in a village with such strong traditions and innovations in painting, is something greatly valued by the three, and they are concerned about the changes they perceive in the young people of Ubud. Fewer seem to be interested in the creativity and beauty of art, being more inclined to think that life is about making money. The elevation of economic values is suffocating aesthetics and humanitarian values.

If the meaning of art changes in Ubud, so does the meaning of life. One of the intentions of this exhibition is to stir young people into seeing the intrinsic values and importance of art, in wanting to be artists regardless of the economic and social costs.

It also poses challenges to traditional ways of seeing and thinking, while adhering to traditional motifs and lifestyles.

Art used to be an offering to the gods, so it had to be the best. After that, what happened to it was of no significance, whether it be sold or left to rot.

Offerings form a major part of the works exhibited here, including those paintings which are illusions of the human figure in action. In the traditional manner, the artists see the act of painting as an offering in itself, just as the *kris* maker and dancer consider the act of production more important than the product.

All three painters share an implicit belief in the existence of a benevolent God. They accept the very basis of Balinese philosophy which acknowledges that life is not "perfect"; that perfection is something that man has invented and seeks in vain; that the way to live life is to strike a balance between opposite forces.





Where there is beauty, there is also ugliness. Good coexists with evil, and power with vulnerability. They see the quest for the 'pursuit of happiness' as being futile, bound for failure, frustration, and disappointment, just as the current trend for seeking wealth will be detrimental to the particular character of the village of Ubud.

Instead, they believe that we must learn to accept and appreciate the opposites which pervade every aspect of our lives. Through ugliness, we admire beauty. Through good, we can recognise evil. Even the most powerful are also vulnerable. Giving cannot exist without receiving. Loving and hating can be directed to the same target at the same time. Negative and positive. They are the realities of life.

All three artists have been guided by the intensity of their vision and ambition, seeking a more personal pathway to the meaning of life. This in itself is a constant struggle. A retrospective display would show many changes in imagery in the work of all these painters as they continue to search more deeply into the possibilities of artistic expression. And so it should be for young artists who are constantly discovering unknown worlds and ways of seeing.

Kris, Gusti and Nyoman may all start with the same sorts of materials. They have much the same backgrounds. It is likely that their parents worried about the changes they saw in them as youngsters and the world in which they were growing up. Yet their works demonstrate a diversity of imagery explorations, as yet incomplete, along only three of the many pathways that we all tread through life.

Here their different paths converge momentarily as they share this exhibition, hoping to reach the younger Ubudians, and anyone else who is watching and listening.

Alison Taylor  
( Outhor "Living tradition in Balinese painting" )



# I Nyoman Suradnya

Suradnya has devoted most of his life to artistic exploration in the mediums of batik, water colour and oil painting, but of late, has found that the latter provides him with a more meditative experience.

In recent years he has embraced his religion and its related ritual activities more closely. The offerings that form the basis of some of his paintings help him to feel closer to the Gods who are several representations of the one God or no Gods, though humans are too limited to understand this concept completely.

Offerings, which non-believers see only as pretty decorations, have a powerful effect on Suradnya's well being. The custom of making and presenting offerings, smelling the flowers and incense, watching it waft, pervade and integrate in the air, allows Suradnya to feel closer to God, gives him an inner peace.

This is the same feeling Suradnya has when he paints. To him, it is the process rather than the product which is more personally valuable. Once the work is finished, there is no attachment, the act of worship is complete, and he can part from his work without sentiment or regret. "Does not a chef get pleasure out of seeing others enjoy and consume the product of his creativity and labour?"

He does not start with an image of a finished product in his mind, but just allows himself to become absorbed in the act of painting, so that his works evolve organically. He becomes lost in the sense of doing, and nothing else exists.

Elements like space, form, colour relations, balance, texture are there as he works, but operating at a subconscious level. There are no conscious, intellectual decisions, rather an intuitive response. Says Suradnya, "the journey is more exciting than the arrival." He becomes "possessed", absorbed in the world of the spirits and creativity, sometimes forgetting that the hand moving the brushes from palette to canvas, swirling, stroking, mixing, stabbing, belongs to him, so intense is his transformation.

The strongest influence from within his own culture comes from the **lontar**, the sacred writings inscribed on strips of bamboo. These are the source of all ritual.

From these come the more accessible **tumbal**, inscriptions drawn on to the white cloths which are seen attached to buildings in Bali. For Suradnya, the **tumbal** can be a springboard, amulets which restore his self-confidence.

Fears, manifestations of the unknown, subside as he takes on some of the dignity of the **tumbal**. Like the offerings, this dignity can only be seen by those who understand their significance.

He believes that illness is caused by conflict between forces which make the body vulnerable to attacks of black magic, and it then creates chemicals which harm it.

The **tumbal** has the power to reverse or cleanse the cause of the illness. Black magic cannot attack people who believe in the power of the **tumbal** because it is strong light.

The nature of light is such that dark and light cannot coexist, as one alters the other. Thus, if the light symbolised and held by the **tumbal** is strong, then the darkness of black magic cannot have any effect. Part of this light is also found in universal love, another force that Suradnya believes can solve many of the world's problems. Light is love, love is God, God is love.

The forms used on the **tumbal** are representations of parts of the human body and, in fact, what they say is that humans have incredible powers to protect or harm themselves. These parts of the body represent a form of bio-electrics, a psychosomatic power.

While intelligence can allay irrational fear, it is limited as you can't always control your heart or your imaginings. A rope can seem like a snake in the dark. Intelligence and spirit are quite separate. The power to control your life comes not from intelligence but an inner confidence to do so, an enlightenment.

Even though the **lontar** are sacred writings, their use in these paintings has no sacred implication. They are the works of an artist with extensive experience of the West reaching out to his own culture.

In terms of Western culture, Suradnya has a particular admiration for the works of the Austrian painter Gustave Klimt. From these Expressionist works, with their mannered linear construction, he derives great pleasure from the feeling evoked, the composition, and the way space creates form and form creates space. He also values **sumi-e** painting for much the same reason, in that the space is an integral part of the painting.

In spite of his strong spiritual philosophy, he avoids being dogmatic in both artistic and spiritual belief as he thinks such fixation destroys creativity and limits the possibilities available to the artist.





## I NYOMAN SURADNYA

Born in the village of Ubud, in the foothills of Bali, a village rich in its tradition of painting, I Nyoman Suradnya surprised and disappointed many when he chose to express himself in the art of batik painting, traditionally a Javanese preserve.

I Nyoman Suradnya displays a great variety of styles and processes as he constantly searches for new modes of self-expression through the use of media, motifs and colours, passions.

His works are in private collections in the United States, Japan, France, Germany, England, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, New Zealand and Australia and have been purchased by I.B.M. and published in Time magazine, The National Geographic magazine and various international publications.

His spontaneity is evident in all of his work, whether batik paintings, watercolours, oils or drawings. Although he made his mark with his batik paintings, transforming the medium with his own personality which makes his work stand apart from others he has in recent years concentrated on the more traditional Balinese media of oils and watercolours without this in any way having diminished the power of his expression.

- 1970 - 1973     Studied oil painting, water colour and drawing at Sekolah Seni Rupa, Ubud
- 1975           Studied batik painting in Yogyakarta
- 1977           Exhibition at Aladdin Gallery, Sydney, Australia
- 1981           Exhibition at Galerie de Genève, Milan, Italy
- Artist in residence at Bondi Pavilion, Sydney, Australia.
- 1982           Conducted a Series of workshops and classes in the art of batik painting
- One - man exhibition at Waverly Municipal Library, Bondi Junction, Sydney
- 1983           Group exhibition at the Ubud Museum of Art, Puri Lukisan, Ubud
- One - man exhibition at Nusa Dua Beach Hotel, Nusa Dua, Bali
- 1984 - 1985     One - man exhibition at Bali Oberoi Hotel
- 1987           Exhibition at ISLA Centre of the Arts, Guam University
- Guest lecturer at John Kennedy Hall, Guam University on "The Connection Between Art, Religion, Tradion and Culture in Modern Balinese Society"
- Exhibition at Bali Oberoi Hotel
- 1988           Exhibition at Tanjung Sari Hotel, Sanur, Bali
- 1989           Group exhibition at Gallery Balance, Osaka, Japan
- 1990           Exhibition at La Foret Museum, Tokyo, Japan
- 1992           Exhibition at the Singapore Art Fair, Singapore

Permanent exhibition at his home and studio : Jalan Gautama, Ubud ( phone : 95415 )

" In Nyoman Suradnya's works there is an urge to bridge the gap between the Balinese tradition ... and Western understanding. Our World is becoming more and more a 'Global Village'. Ideas in the 20th Century are more transferable than ever before in the history of mankind. His efforts towards this unity are therefore to be encouraged for the freedom it promises. "

John Olsen, Austalian artist  
Bali, 1987



# Tjok Krishna Putra Sudarsana

Kris sees art and life as being synonymous. He believes that his paintings are offerings to God because of the need for self discipline and the subjecting of oneself to a force or urge which seems to be a separate entity.

He maintains a strong belief in the existence of a good God who has created Man and given him the right to choose. It is man's limitations which render him so capable of acting stupidly and violently.

Kris grew up in an environment where art was an important and integral part of life. Influenced by the work of his grandfather, and I Gusti Putu Suteja's grandfather, Lempad, he wanted to go to art school, but his mother advised him against it for fear that he would be poor later on. Instead, he went to University Udayana to study English Literature.

In 1976, he chose to go to Australia to escape the privileges of his birth into the second, princely, caste to prove that he could stand on his own and carry out work in the form of hard labour which might demean him here in Ubud. He moved throughout Australia, from Sydney, to Melbourne, to Adelaide, to Perth, to the Cocos Islands, finally returning to Bali where he has resided with his Australian wife, Cathy, and two daughters for the last two and a half years.

In some ways, this represents a return to the old bonds of privilege and duty, as some Balinese feel uncomfortable if they see him carrying out tasks unbefitting to one of his cast. Kris believes that it is not birthright which breeds respect, but respect itself, and he hopes that this will be his experience in future.

The respect for his own urge to paint has led to where he is now, pursuing a form of self - expression that he ignored nearly twenty years ago.

When he first began painting, he felt a void. Something was missing. Eventually he realised that he was concentrating too much on the physical aspect of the motif, neglecting what was in his own mind. He soon recognised the power of colour in affecting his psyche, and he realised that he must give way to its demands on him.

He is excited by colour and the ways it can speak out on a canvas, and has moved beyond the limitations of physical appearances. To him, colour is more than just light. It is the source of all power and all too closely linked to emotion. It is feeling itself.

The colour he uses most is yellow, the representation of faith and optimism. The closest to light. The source of spiritual power. It has become central in his search for a style that fits the characteristics of Balinese attitudes and atmosphere.





Balinese culture is full of spirits and magic, of power in the greater spiritual world. This is what Kris seeks to convey in his works as he draws mystic veils of circles over the images, diffusing them, integrating them with a spiritual force. He has realised the power of an artist to overcome the limitations of time, space and sequence, and now he can show images on canvas that reach beyond the bounds of time and space, ones that both come and go at the same time. These images are an expression of human nature rather than an imitation of its temporal, physical appearance

Kris wishes he knew what 'art' meant, apart from life, let alone what is 'good' or 'bad' art. He is not fettered by rules and regulations laid down in art schools and feels freer to explore without these limitations. Yet he constantly explores galleries, publications, anything which contains artistic imagery, so that his work is not totally isolated from the world of art. He is also excited by the works of the Australian painter, Lloyd Rees, whose ethereal evocations of form reach closely to his own understanding of reality.

Kris is concerned about the way Ubud's young people's priorities are changing as they are bombarded with Western culture from the television and cinema screen, often imitating a way of life and attitude which is inappropriate for Bali, and often antisocial, even in the West. The limited knowledge and dearth of experience of these young people can lead them to misinterpret the 'real life' images which are brought to them, sifted through the teeth of the artificial world of American show business.

Kris can't change this, but he hopes that they will come to appreciate other values, and other ways of viewing and living life. He believes that they should be using their modern minds to polish past practices so these remain relevant to their own lives. But first, they must know what these practices are. Here he presents them with an alternative way of living and working, and hopes that it might influence someone to continue those artistic traditions which have been so important in Ubud.

Tjok Krishna Putra Sudharsana  
Born : Denpasar 22 - 3 - 1956  
Studied English Literature at UNUD UNIVERSITY BALI 1976 - 1980





I Gusti  
Putu  
Suteja

Gusti is driven to paint by an energy born of his religious beliefs. His paintings are the products of his religious activities which include the production of temple ornaments, cremation towers and other related artifacts.

The significance of the offering is expressed quite differently in the works of this painter. The offerings, *sajen*, are transformed into texture and colour, drawn from his observations at temple ceremonies. These have been absorbed into his mind and then reappear in his mind as a clear image to be fixed on canvas. Unlike Suradnya, he has a clear vision in his head and sets out to manifest it on the canvas.

As well as the textured representations of offerings, Gusti also likes to work in watercolours because of the speed and spontaneity it offers. While the same energy is apparent, there is a difference, a lightness and fluidity which cannot be expressed in his oil painting which takes much longer to produce because of the technique used to build up the texture.

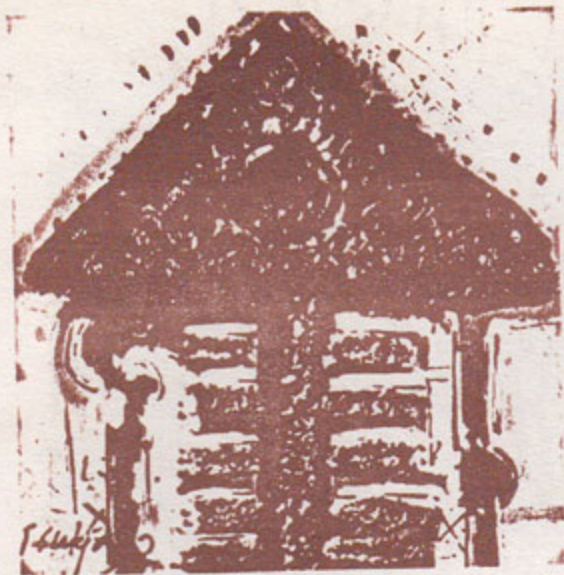
Gusti is the grandson of the great Lempad, whose style is characterised by delicate, confident linear and tonal drawings which depict scenes of daily life, or episodes from the epic Hindu tales, the Mahabharata and Ramayana. His early schooling was in this style, one which he still practises occasionally today.

He chose to continue with his art studies in Yogyakarta, and when he arrived there, he was surprised and confused. He had to start over learning modern methods and ideas. The understanding and experience of draughtsmanship laid down as a child was a solid foundation on which he could build, and so it did not take him long to absorb and conquer the new skills and ideas.

Gradually, a whole new world opened up to him as he was made aware of work of Western painters, favorite amongst whom was van Gogh. The form, colour and vitality of his paintings served as a springboard of potential for Gusti. At this stage, he was just becoming familiar with abstract art but had far to travel in his learning about art before he could appreciate and express himself in this manner.







He spent eight years in Yogyakarta, teaching at High School for four years and continuing to develop his own style along more international and global lines.

He tries to express traditional motifs in a modern way with particular emphasis on the activities of the temple and is, in fact, using a modern mind to polish past practices so that these ancient ornaments are brought into a modern context and made relevant to the present in more than one way.

Though Gusti chooses to depict fragments of temple ornaments, he tends to elevate them in two ways. Firstly, by drawing our attention to the more mundane, simple details and, secondly, by raising them in the air. There is a feeling of looking up at these textured renderings.

He has a rich traditional heritage of childhood steeped in art, and a formal training that has provided him with a breadth of understanding of the diversity of painting and drawing. This, combined with his experiences and knowledge of teaching, suits him well to take up his position as Curator at Puri Lukisan, the Art Museum in Ubud, in July. It is here that many of the significant paintings produced by artists who were either born or chose to live in Ubud can be found.

It is fitting that a descendant of Lempad, a young man who maintains his strong religious beliefs in balance with modern ideas and materials, should take on the responsibility of caring for this artistic heritage.

Born : Ubud 1960  
Address : Br. Taman, Ubud.  
Contact Address : Studio Gallery Suteja Jln. Dewi Sita, Ubud

Started painting when he was at the Primary School and continued right through to 1977 as a student of art at the school of fine art in Denpasar and finished his degree in art in Yogyakarta at the Institute of Fine Art ( ISI ) in 1987

Career years :

1977	Exhibition of paintings in Australia
1982 - 1987	Group Exhibition by Sanggar Dewata in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Denpasar
1982	Group exhibition by Ubud traditional artists at Puri Lukisan Ratna Warta, Ubud.
1983 - 1987	Exhibition at Taman Budaya - Art Centre Denpasar
1984	Group exhibition by Group 81 at Karta Pustaka, Yogyakarta
1985	Group exhibition by Sanggar Dewata Indonesia at Taman Budaya Denpasar
1987 - 1988	Group exhibition in Singapore, Nederland
1991	Group exhibition at Oberoy Hotel, Kuta
1992	Group exhibition at the Art Centre, Taman Budaya, Denpasar.



PERPUS  
Yayasan S