



A SLICE OF THE GODS

GROW INTO ADULTHOOD CEREMONY (MUNGGAH DEHA)

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One general indication of children's transformation into adulthood is when the boys' voice tone grew heavier and irregular (*ngembakin*), and when the girls had their menarche (first menstruation). In Balinese tradition, parents welcome these transitions by organizing grow into adulthood ceremony (*Mungghah Deha*). For the girls, grow into adulthood ceremony called *Ngeraja Sewala*, and for the boys grow into adulthood ceremony called *Ngeraja Singa*.

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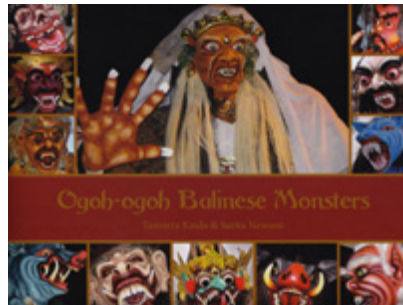
KOMANEKA FINE ART GALLERY

NYOMAN ERAWAN

...Nyoman Erawan's artistic journey makes him one of the artists with an important position in the art development in Bali...

Born in Sukawati in 1958, at Delodtangluk, Sukawati, Gianyar, Bali, Nyoman Erawan is an artist that grew up and was nurtured within a family and community thick with traditions rooted from the values of Balinese Hindu. Sukawati, known as the center of art development in Bali, indirectly has fostered extraordinary art talent within Erawan. His talents were sharpened through formal art education that began in Sekolah Menengah Seni Rupa Denpasar (SMSR, Fine Arts High School), continued to Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta (ISI, Indonesian Art Institute) from 1981 to 1987.

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WHAT TO READ

Ogoh-Ogoh - Balinese Monsters

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A SLICE OF THE GODS

**GROW INTO ADULTHOOD CEREMONY (*Munggah Deha*)**

One general indication of children's transformation into adulthood is when the boys' voice tone grew heavier and irregular (*ngembakin*), and when the girls had their menarche (first menstruation). In Balinese tradition, parents welcome these transitions by organizing grow into adulthood ceremony (*Munggah Deha*). For the girls, grow into adulthood ceremony called *Ngeraja Sewala*, and for the boys grow into adulthood ceremony called *Ngeraja Singa*.

In both *Ngeraja Sewala* (for girls) and *Ngeraja Singa* (for boys), the boys are considered to be married to Goddess of Marriage (*Sang Hyang Semara Ratih*) and the girls to God of Marriage (*Sang Hyang Semara Jaya*). Both *Sang Hyang Semara Jaya* and *Sang Hyang Semara Ratih* symbolize erotic love, handsomeness and loveliness. The symbolic meaning of marriage in these ceremonies is both the god and the goddess now dwell in their hearts, so they begin to take interests in the opposite sexes and the desire to idolize and be idolized. For some time, both the girls and the boys will wander blindly because of their inner conflict and waves of love which are a challenge for them to control.

The grow into adulthood ceremony (*Munggah Deha*) consists of a series of ceremonies, and usually begins with cleanse the negative elements ceremony called *Mebyakala* or *Mebyakaonan* in the middle of house yard (*natah*), witnessed by the whole family. This ceremony is meant to cleanse negative elements (*butakala*) which are not supposed to be present on both ceremonial grounds and the girls / boys who are about to undergo the ceremony.

The next ceremony is meant to cleanse the boys and girls physically and spiritually, called *Mejaya-jaya*, led by a priest, and takes place in *merajan* (small temple in the corner of the house, used as a special praying area). The *Mejaya-jaya* is meant to cleanse the boys and girls physically and spiritually, and of course use many symbolic elements, e.g. various holy water (*tirtha*), *kelungah* water (*kelungah* is a very young coconut), and cleansing prayers from the Priest who led the ceremony. By going through the *Mejaya-jaya*, the boys and girls are expected to have cleaner hearts and minds, ones that stick to the truth. Afterwards, the boys and girls are crowned with tall grass (*alang-alang*) headband and sash of *Tridatu* (string with three colors; red, white and black), symbolizing the hopes that they are free from all forms of obstructions and always be in the protection of God.

The next ceremony is communal prayer (*Muspa*), at *merajan* (small temple in the corner of the house, used as a special praying area), praising and thanking the gods for the childhood age that the boys and girls have passed well and safely. The community also prays for the best guidance for the boys and girls in leading their teenage lives so that they are always safe and always walk in the truth. The community also prays to the *Sang Hyang Semara Jaya* and *Sang Hyang Semara Ratih*, as the holy light of God, who will guide both the boys' and girls' love so that they stay safe during their puberty.

The *Natab* or *Ngayab Banten* ceremony ends this series of ceremony. This final ceremony is meant for the boys and girls to deliver their offerings with sincere hearts and receive their blessings. Through *Natab*, the parents & community hope that the boys and girls will increase their thankfulness and gratefulness in conducting all their *yadnya* (offering, sacrifice, donation and helping others); be sincere and grateful in receiving all the blessings given, so that their lives will be filled with sincerity and gratefulness.

For some areas in Bali, grow into adulthood ceremony for girls (*Ngeraja Sewala*), and grow into adulthood ceremony for boys (*Ngeraja Singa*) become rare occasions nowadays. Seeing the development in the (teenage) world, where the temptations for the young ones are more complex recently, e.g. free sex, drugs abuse, it is considered important to conduct this ceremony.

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KOMANEKA FINE ART GALLERY



Painting on Paper #3, mixed media on canvas, 190 x 150 cm, 2011

NYOMAN ERAWAN

...Nyoman Erawan's artistic journey is relatively long and full of media exploration, making him one of the artists with an important position in the art development in Bali...

Born in Sukawati in 1958, at Delodtangluk, Sukawati, Gianyar, Bali, Nyoman Erawan is an artist that grew up and was nurtured within a family and community thick with traditions rooted from the values of Balinese Hindu. Sukawati, known as the center of art development in Bali, indirectly has fostered extraordinary art talent within Erawan. His talents were sharpened through formal art education that began in Sekolah Menengah Seni Rupa Denpasar (SMSR, Fine Arts High School), continued to Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta (ISI, Indonesian Art Institute) from 1981 to 1987. Erawan's introduction with modern academic art from ISI Yogyakarta has provided a big impact on him in understanding art. Erawan's understanding of modern art that he absorbed during his academic years is combined with the traditional values from his childhood within the cultural social life in Bali.

Nyoman Erawan is known as a multimedia artist who works not only on canvases but dynamically explore other media as well. By combining various elements: colors, lines, media / surface and material; Erawan uniquely produced attention-stealing art installation. His Kalpataru piece, produced in 1993, feature a combination of painting and 3-dimensional item using woods, bamboo, ropes, fabric and acrylic paints. This art piece was chosen as the first nomination in the Philip Morris Art Awards competition in 1994. One year later, Kalantaka Mantra, another installation, was featured in contemporary art international exhibition.

Not limited in processing materials in his art installations, Erawan's creativity grows progressively and develops in exploring wider spaces, through installation pieces combined with performances. Since 1979, Erawan has actively joined some theater groups in Bali. This experience has given the basis for Nyoman Erawan to create art projects. His first art project was "Cak Seni Rupa Latta Mahosadi" in 1997, featuring art installation in the form of art performances. One of Erawan's works that grabbed the attention of local and international mass media is an art ritual called "Sikat Gigi" (Toothbrush) which was displayed in Puputan Field, Badung. His "Sikat Gigi" art work displayed in 2001 was Erawan's reaction to resist the social and political condition that happened in Indonesia since 1998, when the Soeharto regime collapsed and the social and political condition in Indonesia was heating up again.



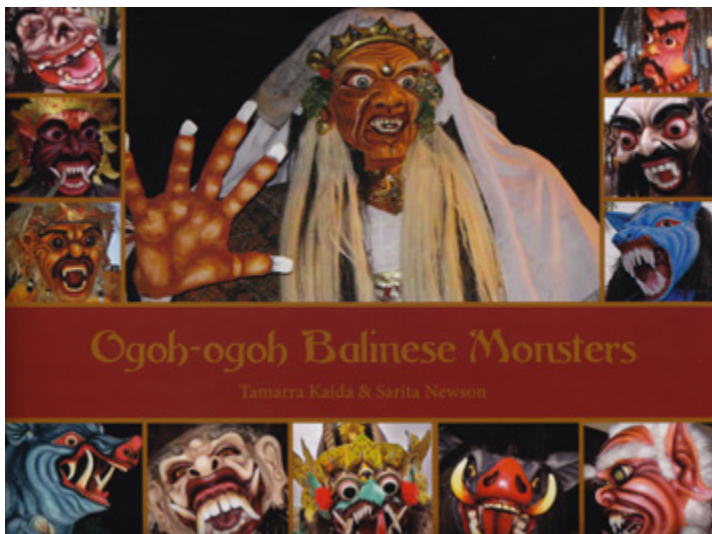
Cahaya di Tengah, Acrylic on canvas, 80X50cm, 2004

Erawan's abstract paintings initially feature more strength in visual elements, e.g. lines, colors, media / surface, and textures, by combining symbols taken from Balinese tradition. However since 2009, pictures of faces and bodies appear on his abstract paintings. Through expressive line scratches and exciting colors, Erawan's faces and bodies burst with various poses and expressions. "Bodies are pictures of "jiwatman", or bodies connected to the souls trying to express one's realization as "atman", souls created by the sparks of lights from the Creator. According to Erawan, images of himself in his paintings also represent an understanding of the condition of human bodies in their solemn pose before the universe. The Books of Upanishad have shown the truth on where and how the soul resides in the human bodies. Through his paintings, Erawan gave a message of introspection to human beings so they can purify themselves in enduring their lives.

Nyoman Erawan's artistic journey is relatively long and full of media exploration, making him one of the artists with an important position in the art development in Bali.

View Nyoman Erawan art works at Komaneka Fine Art Gallery

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WHAT TO READ

Ogoh-ogoh - Balinese Monsters

...Big and tall puppets with fangs on their spine-chilling faces fill the streets...

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On the previous night, the villages and cities all over Bali look tense and eerie. Big and tall puppets with fangs on their spine-chilling faces fill the streets. The *Ogoh-Ogoh* is paraded around the streets, accompanied with dancing and the vigorous and vibrant *Belengajur* music (*Beleganjur* is considered similar to marching band music). These terrifying puppets are called *Ogoh-Ogoh*.

It is vital for *Ogoh-Ogoh* to always be present in the *Pengerupukan* ritual. *Ogoh-Ogoh* is a representation of negative energies in life. Through the the *Pengerupukan* ritual, all the negative energies will be neutralized into positive ones which can give kindness to humans in the coming years.

Ogoh-Ogoh becomes a creative media for the Balinese young generation, who usually make them in the traditional community, the *banjar* (village). The themes or forms are usually based on traditional stories or Hindu mythology. The *Calonarang* story brings *celuluk / leak* (evil spirit) figures, called *Rarung*, who devours babies to increase its magical powers. Then there is also *Rahwana*, the 10-headed giant from the *Ramayana* story, and other fantasy figures depicting images of *Butha Kala* (supernatural demons representing the dark side – Hindu belief) or other supernatural beings who rule the underworld.

In its development, *Ogoh-Ogoh* varies in their forms and shapes. Many people create *Ogoh-Ogoh* as parodies of the reality or phenomenon being discussed in the middle of Balinese community, e.g. corrupt officials, thin gamblers, drug addicts, sexy prostitutes; all these mirror modern community crimes. This is interesting, a critic conveyed through creative media, funny, surprising and original ideas, done with high level of skill / technique.

This book entitled ***Ogoh-Ogoh: Balinese Monsters*** features very interesting visual language, presented with spectacular pictures, the results of Tamarra Kaida's photo shots. Through her work, Tamarra was also successful in exposing the humanity side: humans' faces with their dimensions of various feelings: attracted, fearful, worried, tense, and at the same time excited.

The captions on the photographs provide enough details on how *Ogoh-Ogoh* was made, what it symbolizes, who made it, and the symbols portrayed in the *Ogoh-Ogoh* itself. The captions also identified the characters of the *Ogoh-Ogoh*, whether a god, a demon or a Western villain. Sarita Newton's writing also discussed the Balinese calendar system, the background story of culture and history behind the rituals prior to the *Nyepi*, the origin of the parade, and provide very good and detailed explanation about the traditions and customs of the Balinese community during *Nyepi*, people refrain from desires and activities during the rituals in welcoming the *Çaka* New Year.

Together with Sarita, Tamarra has produced one publication style which not only feature one of the newest and most interesting forms of art, but also covers minutes on the study of the meaning of life which will keep on developing in Balinese contemporary culture.

This book could be found at Komaneka Fine Art Gallery.

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