

Wayan Novi's Landscape

of Memories

A solo exhibition by Balinese artist Wayan Novi Curated by Ignatia Nilu 24 January – 15 April 2018 Wayan Novi (b. 1989, Angsri, Bali, Indonesia) is a young Balinese painter who lives and works in Yogyakarta. His work is known for its persistence in manipulating the eye's insensitivity in examining the details of collection of dots that evoke the impression of imaginative natural landscapes. By merging the conventions of landscape, still-life, abstract, and pointillist painting, Wayan's works depict the deformation of the naturalistic landscape painting style that he learned from the culture of his homeland. Though the subjects of his artworks develop from memories of the beauty of nature, his expertise in using dense, pointillist compositions and hallucinatory colour gradations reinvigorate the traditional values.

Wayan Novi's exhibition, titled Wayan Novi's Landscape of Memories, consists of eight paintings and one installation. These paintings start with depicting traditional approaches and forms. Then, Wayan translated these forms that came from his imagination into ornamental deformations. He painted landscapes as the recording of his memory, the ones from the natural scenery of his childhood. With the intention of creating a new form of still-life painting, Wayan creates compositions with the techniques of abstraction, such as dots and matrixes of lines.

Wayan's landscape paintings share a decent and wise story, a step closer to the reality and a mirror of the demographic landscape in his hometown of Tabanan. The fascinating laid-back landscapes consisting of green land and a living ecosystem ask for an accuracy to absorb the aesthetics of form, dimension and a consciousness of the reality of life. By revoking his identity, born as a Balinese who witnessed a complexity as the everyday scenery, relics, ornaments, colours, compositions and rituals teach him to deal with various sceneries of life.

The other part of this series is an installation consisting of objects built from the traditional table wares, especially the sets of water vessel like kettles, mugs, and bottles. Indonesian people, especially in the countryside, use these objects to drink water. Wayan encountered these objects used by the farmers in Angseri, a farming area with a beautiful natural landscape. Its condition depicts the ideal picture of the agrarian society in Indonesia. The people in Tabanan rely on nature for their survival.

We can also visit a precise memory of Wayan's family traditions deformed into layers of nature collages. He loves telling people the way he lives through observing the details of everyday scenery and bounding with nature as his guardian. That's how he adores the simple, and yet memorable, icons of mountain, land, rice fields, flowers, trees, cactus, dogs, sunny-bright nature in our everyday life.

As an act of stylisation of his favourite sceneries and the simple yet honest stories about a portrait of contemporary Balinese society, Wayan Novi's paintings and objects are also another way to explore the power of Indonesian nature as an art identity.

When I started collecting seriously late last century, I said, "It's as if we are in Paris one hundred years ago and we can meet the Impressionists and buy works within our budget". Then over the years, some of our friends came to us and asked, "How do we go about collecting?". This led to the opening of Art Porters Gallery. Showcasing Wayan Novi, I feel like it's all coming together — and that the works we show will be in the museums of tomorrow.

— Art Porters Gallery co-founder Guillaume Levy-Lambert

Paintings

with stories from Wayan Novi







This picture is a translation of the symbols of our family tradition that grows from the culture of agriculture. It is a reminder of the passion implanted in us for the perseverance of caring for life. Flowers are icons that I borrow from memories of childhood.

Blossoming memories (Kenangan yang Tumbuh)
2017
HI50 x WI40 cm
acrylic and ballpoint on canvas

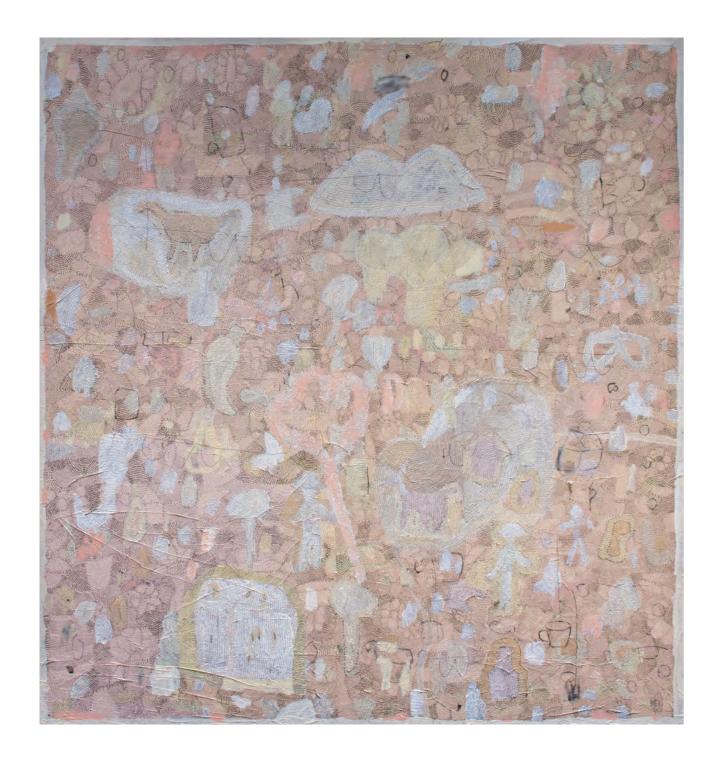


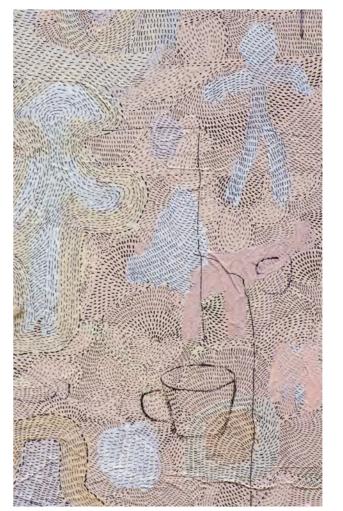




Here I juxtaposed the landscape and a self-portrait – the former as a backdrop is a recording of the homeland where I was born and grew up. This landscape is actually a portrait of myself – interrelated and inseparable.

The origin of self (Asal-usul diri)
2017
HI20 x WI00 cm
acrylic and ballpoint on canvas

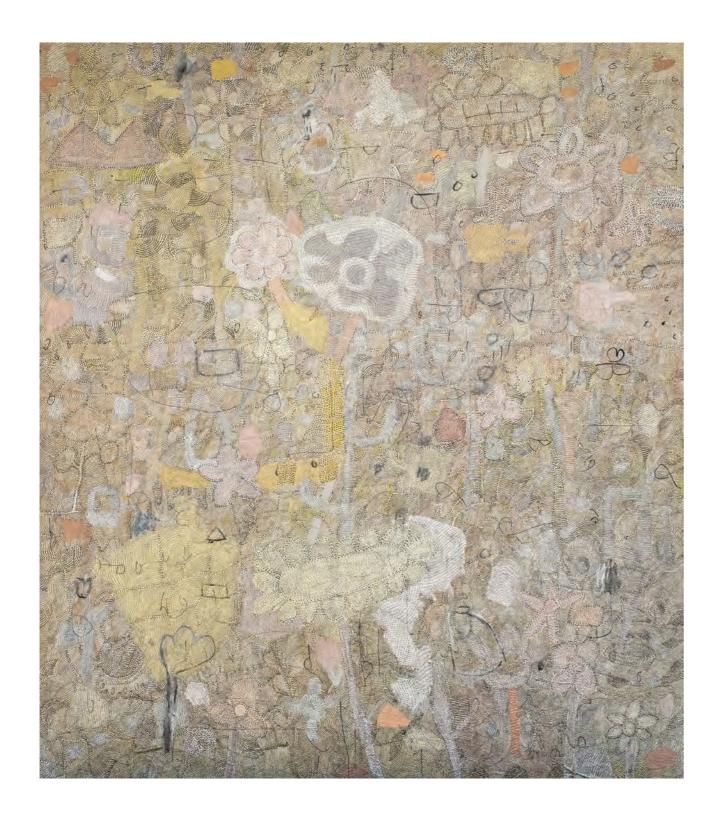


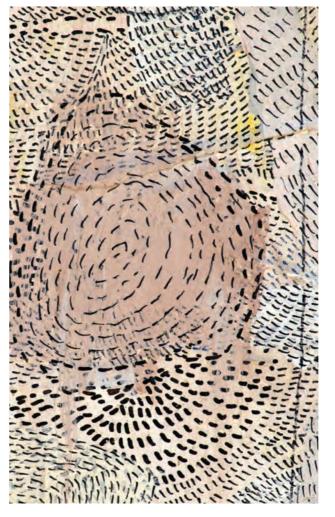


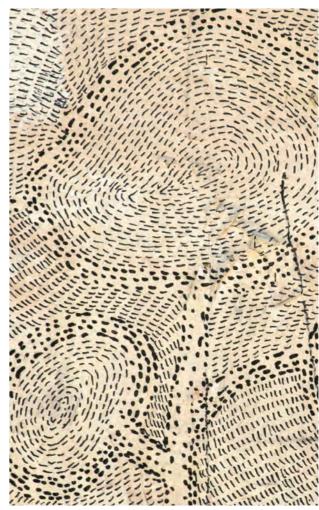


Featured is a popular icon that is closely associated with my hometown, and at the same time an image that symbolises the international community from Indonesia. This work is a collection of popular icons found in the suburban landscape.

Pilgrimage to my hometown (Pulang ke rumah) 2017 H160 x W150 cm acrylic and ballpoint on canvas







This is a visualisation of the spirit present at home, with my family, and in my hometown. Pieces of these memories are the impetus for me to develop in a better direction; like flowers and buds that grow and bloom.

To grow (Aku Ingin Tumbuh) 2017 H160 x W140 cm acrylic and ballpoint on canvas







These cutlery are no longer popular today. They relate strongly to rural life – jugs, enamel cups and oil lamps. They are present as a sign of the returning age to understand the value of goodness.

Story from the past (Kisah dari Lampau) 2017 H127 x W145 cm acrylic and ballpoint on canvas

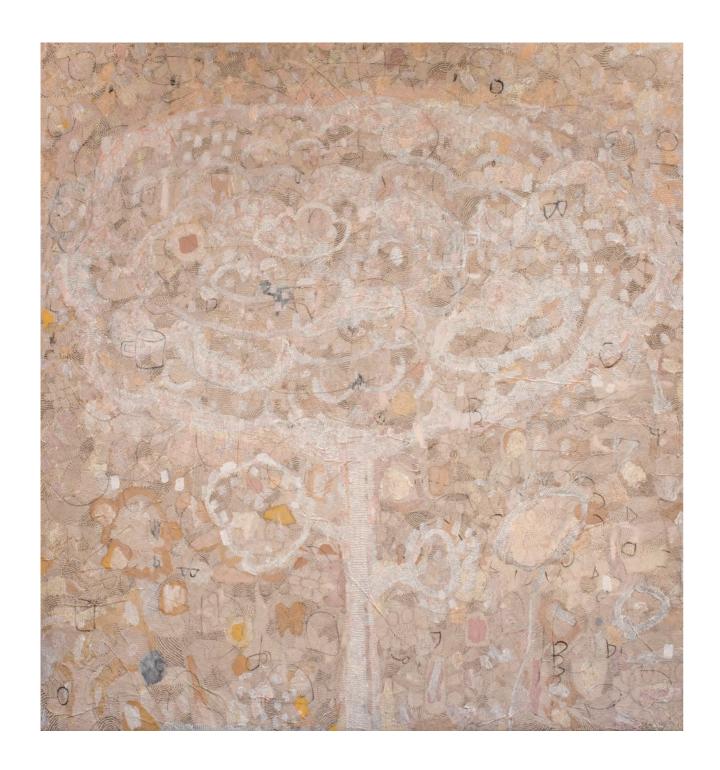






Chickens are domestic animals that have a relationship with a particular social narrative. They also signal the start of a new day and the spirit to work hard.

Sun-bathing my sunshine (Bermandikan Sinar Matahari Pagi) 2017 HI50 x WI40 cm acrylic and ballpoint on canvas







In our family, a method of understanding the philosophy of life is introduced through the behaviour of nature. Like the trees and strong branches, they teach us to grow strong and firm in life.

To grow up and strong (Tumbuh menjadi besar) 2017 H160 x W150 cm acrylic and ballpoint on canvas







The center emergence of a volcanic visual accentuation in this piece affirms my longing and nostalgia for the mountains, while emphasising that ecosystem mountain guards are important, especially in the cycle of agrarian culture.

At the peak of life (Puncak Kehidupan)
2017
H160 x W150 cm
acrylic and ballpoint on canvas

23

22

Objects

These objects are a repositioning of the icons residing on the paintings – to bring back historical imagery through materialistic forms.

Reposition (Reposisi)
2017
variable sizes
acrylic on galvanised zinc



Reposition (Reposisi) I





Reposition (Reposisi) II



Reposition (Reposisi) IV

Through the curatorial process in 2017, we found that the works presented in this exhibition are the result of an approach used by the artist, Wayan Novi, to articulate the memories and experiences of his hometown. He tries to put the memories of goodness to be reborn in a series of narrative visual forms of Wayan Novi's Landscape of Memories.

Observing Wayan Novi's works in this series reminds me of a perspective of Helenian aesthetic, especially through the Seneca statement: "All art is an imitation of nature". The novelty of the Helenian thinkers lies in the focus of the analysis about one type of mimesis, i.e. mimesis over what is non-actual. In that sense, the Helenian framework does not see the artist actually creating "out of nothingness", but assembling a new possibility of the actual reality. The series of Wayan Novi's works in this exhibition is a reenactment of the memory of nature. More specifically, the image of nature he describes is the recording of form, atmosphere and other special matters related to the identity of self and family as the origin of a culture. Furthermore, it is the cultural values that produce the values of virtue, the value of philosophy and the social values that bring us to grow as a modern civilised society.

The other perspective, especially the stoics², sees the function of beauty as a function of kindness. This is in accordance with the antique aesthetic perspective, where beauty is the matter of reality itself, not just an opinion about it. From here we can see that, the reality of the beauty of nature is an objective value that everyone accepts, and Wayan Novi is not an exception.

Memory Collages as Forms of Consciousness

Through the conversations done during the preparation process of this exhibition the artist chose to present the daily narratives as the subject of his work. He chose this because surely he is fluent in his daily narrative and it was born from his body and thought experience. This solo exhibition is an opportunity he takes to investigate his identity as well as discovering the aesthetic practices he's been following so far. Several scenes of life experiences are scattered in his paintings. One of such experience, related to the agricultural culture, is an experience represented by a crowing cock in the morning. Chicken as an icon that he borrowed to evoke the atmosphere at home. In Angsri, the crowing rooster is a sign that most people use to recognize time, as seen in Sun-bathing my sunshine. In another painting, At the peak of life, we can see a mountain as an accentuation of the main composition of the painting. The mountain, as a common form found in the tropical lands, is also a symbol attached to his hometown located in the mountains. We also encounter pieces of scenery and ornaments that refer to the atmosphere in his village. These are then sewn into a single unit.

On the other hand, this practice relies on the memories of consciousness and the sub-consciousness, where this field of immanence will actually find forms gained from the social experience. Expressing the natural beauty that he likes and freezing the pieces in one frame is a real stylization step.

Memory, Rites & Behaviour

Observing the works of Wayan Novi leads us to encounter the repetitive acts, like what we find when we look at the work of Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama, especially her findings of nets of dots. Wayan Novi created a constellation of points; a coordinate to represent his passion for stories from his childhood, stories that represent a distinctive social situation and are inherent to the people living in the area of Angsri. They represent the life stories of an agrarian society where most work as farmers, and important issues for them are, the meaning of mountains, sun, land, animals and awareness of the balance of this ecosystem. A great cosmic balance relates to the small world of its people. They also represent the stories that occur almost in the majority of agrarian societies in Indonesia.

The transfer of these stories is shaped through a spontaneous, intuitive, abstractive pattern, liberating the spirit of his childhood in the painting as well as the object. Besides that, the repetition of lines and shapes, is the key composition of his works. Repetition is an artistic practice that Wayan learned from his family, especially the value of perseverance. The complexity of his artistic behavior is also a reflection of his subconscious that is used to seeing ornament as tradition in his culture.

Accentuate, Icon & Symbols raised

Each of Wayan's paintings evokes almost identical impressions. It has become one as the identity of his work. But if we look closely, we will find several different affirmations in each of his works. Let's say that every painting has a confirmation of its main form, such as mountains, soil, rice fields, trees, flowers, cactus stems, sunflowers, goats, dogs. Accentuation of this form at the same time became the forms of story told through the piece of work. Each painting represents a part of the story and when we put them together, it becomes a whole landscape — the landscape of the hometown, the social landscape and also the landscape of memories that shape him as a human being. This work becomes a spiritual process for the artist and manifests as an immanent space shared with the public to recognise the self, a capacity to grow and progress towards the future through forms of beauty, not only as a visual but also in social values and philosophy.

¹Helmenic periods, sejarah estetika: 77,2016

² The Stoic school was founded by Zeno of Citium (334-262 BC) and is often perceived by Hellenists as the successor to Plato's tradition of thought, for example by Antiochus of Ascalon (130-68 BC). The Stoics hold that the universe is arranged rationally and composed entirely by matter driven by the law of cause and effect. Aesthetic History, Martin Suryajaya, p: 80, 2016

Wayan Novi (b. 1989, Angsri, Bali, works and lives in Yogyakarta) is a young artist recognised for his persistence in manipulating the eye's insensitivity in examining details, though the implementation of a collection of dots that creates an impression of his imaginative natural landscape. His works are a marriage of folk art and pointillism, born as a deformation from the tradition of still-life painting which has been his vision since childhood.

The development of Wayan Novi's artistic practice grew alongside the rapid development that occured in Bali; both became inseparable. His pictures develop from the memory of the beauty of nature as subject matter. The peculiarity of his work is the stylization or the composition of nature in a painting, and his expertise in creating density on a flat canvas, resembling a form of hallucination via the colour gradations.

Selected exhibitions

2017

Group show #2 November on paper at Bale Banjar Yogyakarta
Group show with Art Porters Gallery at Art Expo Plus Malaysia 2017
Group show with Art Porters Gallery at Art Stage Jakarta 2017
Group show Upgrade at Lorong Sankring Yogyakarta
Group show Terang busan at Djoko Pekik Yogyakarta
Group show with Art Porters Gallery at Art Stage Singapore 2017

2016

Group show with Art Porters Gallery at Art Stage | akarta 2016 Group show with Art Porters Gallery at Affordable Art Fair 2016

2015

Adu domba #2 at Sangkring art project Yogyakarta Mo Indie Bali at Indie Art HouseYogyakarta Ada Budi di Dalam Dirimu collaboration with Robert Khan at lawas cafe Yogyakarta

2013

Personalitas Dalam komunitas at Bentara Budaya Bali Taksu Sketsa SDI exhibition with Sanggar Dewata Indonesia, UPT Galery ISI Yogyakarta

2012

Exhibition with hitam manis group at Sangkring Art Project Yogyakarta Vibrant Vision Of Lempad at Sangkring Art Space
Festival Salihara with Hitam manis at Salihara, |akarta Secangkir Kopi with palang group at Sangkring Art Project

2011

GOENAWAN 70th with Hitam Manis at Semarang gallery

"Solo exhibition" sanggar dewata Indonesia di galleryi isi Surakarta – motoring art with Hitam Manis at National Gallery

ntuisi inauguration exhibition isi at logia National Museum

2010

|OG|A ART SHARE at |ogja National Museum – D'TEXT at UPT Galeri ISI Yogyakarta Majapahit Dalam Seni Rupa Museum Trowulan , Jawa Timur – Tales From The Street Griya Santrian, Bali

Exhibition with Hitam Manis, Art Mall, Bazzar Art Jakarta

Exhibition with Hitam Manis Kompetisi ICC Pandaan, Surabaya – Exhibition with Hitam Manis FKY

Gempar Drawing Lovers # 2 at UPT galery ISI Yogyakarta

2009

Exhibition with DAKSINA group at Sudana ubud galery Bali

RAI GEDHEK with Hitam Manis at Bentara Budaya Yogyakarta, Bentara Budaya |akarta, Orasis Surabaya, Malang Archive Library

| logja | amming Biennale x with Hitam Manis, Yogyakarta PETRUK NAGIH | AN | I at Bentara Budaya Yogyakarta — Exhibition BAZAAR ART | AKARTA, with Hitam Manis at Pacific Place | akarta

2008

SHERING at Sanggar Dewata Indonesia office, Yogyakarta Sketch Exhbition at Katamsi alley ISI Yogyakarta Water Colour Exhibition at Katamsi alley ISI Yogyakarta A writer, curator, researcher and arts and cultural educator, Nilam Agusta Nugraeni — known as Ignatia Nilu, studied International Relations at University of Pembangunan Nasional (UPN), Yogyakarta. She began her career as an archivist and art journalist at Indonesian Visual Art Archive (IVAA) where she worked on a book series 'Seni Rupa dan Gender (Visual Art & Gender)'. In 2011, she joined Langgeng Art Foundation, and co-founded alternative space SaRanG Building in 2014. Since 2015 she has been part of the curatorial team at ArtJog. She has been an independent curator since 2012 and writes monthly essays for visual art in various media. She is also working with her collective Kongsi Benang to educate and empower females and children using fiber art practice.

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