

Arsenic Fantasy
Installation by Sinta Tantra
At Gaya Art Space, Jl. Raya Sayan, Ubud. Tel: 979252

Sponsored by the British Council, London based artist Sinta Tantra, acclaimed for her public artworks and installations, stages her first international solo show, 'Arsenic Fantasy', at Gaya Art Space. The exhibition explores ideas surrounding fantasy and identity. Born in New York, Sinta's Balinese family lived in Indonesia, Singapore, America and the U.K. Growing up she developed a strong affinity to Bali, and considered it one of her many 'homes'. Sinta quickly learnt that 'identity' was neither fixed nor stable. 'Identity' was not about where you lived or where your parents came from. Rather: "it was about developing a series of differences. Establishing a role in the world that was culturally constructed, wholly transient, and constantly changing in relationship to a globalised economy".

Over the years Bali's popularity as a tourist destination has meant that it has been seen by many Westerners as an exotic 'paradise'. Though this may seem idealistic, there is also a danger of Bali being misinterpreted as playing the submissive role. Sinta wants to pierce and subvert that stereotype. 'Arsenic Fantasy' plays with the idea of a dystopia derived from decadence, excess and hedonism. Inspired by flags and graphic logos, Sinta transforms the gallery with a series of massive murals. The arrangements of motifs, and the graphics of figures, palm trees and batik inspired patterns, create a sense of indulgence and nationalism. There's an optimistic tone in Sinta's work, reflected in the playful use of space and her excellent command of visual imagery.

"I'm interested in scale and placement", Sinta says. "Creating a design which wraps around the walls of the building. Encompassing the space as a whole, taking charge of its architecture, form and layout. It's important for me to direct the audience towards a visual as well as physical journey. My installations are always about space. Reacting to a space, making our bodies aware of space, enabling us to question how space affects us, from the inside out and not from the outside in".

Being inside Sinta's installation is similar to being inside a gigantic elaborately wrapped Christmas present. Her use of imagery, color and line only intensifies this festive and celebratory sensation. 'Arsenic Fantasy' delights in surface image, and the exploration of the boundary between pictorial and physical spaces. Great ideas concerning spectacle, scale, and superabundance are beautifully presented.

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