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Gajah Gallery Yogyakarta presents

I Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih – On Beginnings

Opening: 19 October – 10 November 2019

Gajah Gallery presents I GUSTI AYU KADEK MURNIASIH - ON BEGINNINGS, an exhibition illuminating the early works of Indonesian artist I Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih (1966-2006). A testament to the modern Indonesian feminist movement ignited in the 1980s, Murniasih created revolutionary works that expressed her sexuality and traumas of her childhood in a contemporary and meaningful way before her untimely passing in 2006 after a 2 year long battle with cancer. Gajah Gallery is thrilled to announce our partnership and exclusive representation of I GAK Murniasih's estate and artworks. We will be featuring a selection of her seminal works from the 1990s at the Yogyakarta gallery space curated by Mary Northmore Aziz.

Hailing from Tabanan, Bali, a small town in Indonesia, Murniasih exemplifies the feminist convergence in Indonesia just before the turn of the century. Her works depict male and female genitalia, blood, and pain, created in a microcosm of change during what can only be described as a rebellion against the previously traditional values of Indonesia. Wrought with emotion and evocations of suffering, Murniasih created works that helped her communicate, in no discreet way, her struggles with her sexuality and her past.

Born out of both reverence and disgust for her body and its functions, or a perceptive lack thereof, Murniasih used her craft to work through her complicated relationship with her biological functions, so to speak. She was unable to have children after undergoing a surgery in her teens to remove a cyst in her womb, and out of this stemmed her disdain towards her feminine identity and led to her exploration into the sexual desires and functions of women.

Murniasih's works focus on sex and violence, an intimate look into the mind of their incendiary creator and a reflection of the patriarchy and its view of the women who are forced to navigate it. The deviation of these works from the meticulous rigour of traditional Balinese art, the somewhat uncomfortable way that bodies are portrayed in unnatural colours and contortionist shapes in her works points to the conception of a whole new style of artistic practice outside of geography.

Gajah Gallery is proud to exhibit the works of I GAK Murniasih: a truly profound artist, ahead of her time and gone much too soon.

This exhibition opening will coincide with the launch of Jogja Biennale.

ARTIST PROFILE

I Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih

Born 21 May 1966, Tabanan – Bali

Born in Bali, Murni moved to Ubud where she learned the Pengosekan style of painting from painter I Dewa Putu Mokoh in 1987. In 1992, she began revealing to the art world of Bali her extraordinary talent and her discovery of her personal imaginary world and her woman's self. Since 1995, she has participated in numerous group exhibitions in Indonesia and abroad. She has also been exhibited in solo shows at the Seniwati Gallery of Art by Women in Ubud in 1995; in Australia, Italy, and Hong Kong's Fringe Club in 1998. She passed away in Ubud, Bali, on 11 January 2006.

Initially Murni's work was criticized for being 'dirty', 'perverse', and 'immoral', but this is to reduce her work to a crude inventory of sex. Murni painted more than sex, she painted life and the objects and events that were her daily companions. All were treated and deformed at the whim of her imagination with a natural simplicity. In fact, seen from the titles and actuality of her work, metaphors deciphered, what Murni showed us was herself- in her environment and all the aspects of her femininity.

Murni's technique was no less intriguing than her work and world. She followed no preconceived principle of composition. Her creations allude to no predictable pattern- her imagination attached itself to anything and the result pops out, without giving the impression of having been filtered, or repressed by any moral or religious code. Murni carried in her mind and work a symbolic world that was interesting to witness and behold.

Education

1995 Studied at Sanggar Seniwati Gallery; Self-taught Artist

Solo Exhibitions

- 2002 Numthong Gallery, Bangkok
- 2001 Internet Gallery, Japan
- 2000 Nadi Gallery, Jakarta
Estro Gallery Padova, Italy
- 1998 Nokia Gallery, Fringe Club, Hongkong

Group Exhibitions

- 2002 Group Show at Belvedere, 140 Hill Street, Singapore
- 2001 Group Show at Sky Door Art Place Doyama, Tokyo, Japan
- 2000 Group Exhibition of the SENIWATI at Gallery Cipta II, Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta
- 1999 Group Exhibition of the SENIWATI at Nusantara Rain Forest, Vegal Park, Walarode, Germany
- 1998 Group Exhibition, Rudana Museum, Mas, Ubud, Bali, Indonesia