



cover story SINTA TANTRA





Sinta Tantra

UK-based but of Balinese descent, Sinta Tantra returned to Indonesia in November for her first solo exhibition in the country. Presented by ISA Art Advisory, the event showed a classic collection of Sinta's paintings, which are characterized by geometric abstraction and loud colours. She chose a particular painting from her show for our front cover this edition.

STORY BY Natasha Gan
PHOTO BY Bagus Tri Laksono

Why did you choose “Tabuh Tabuhan in Prussian (Colin McPhee)” for our front cover?

[The painting] is in a new style that I've been developing. I've been known for colourful, bright works, but for the past six to eight months I've been working on a style that is more linear and minimalist.

Where do you get your inspiration from?

Quite often: music and literature. I like how they can add another layer to my work. My recent show 'A House in Bali' was named after a book by Colin McPhee. It's set in Bali during the magical period of the 20's and 30's. I

always imagine that period to be very glamorous, and avant-garde in a way. People looked forward to the future with optimism. Fashion at that era is also an inspiration.

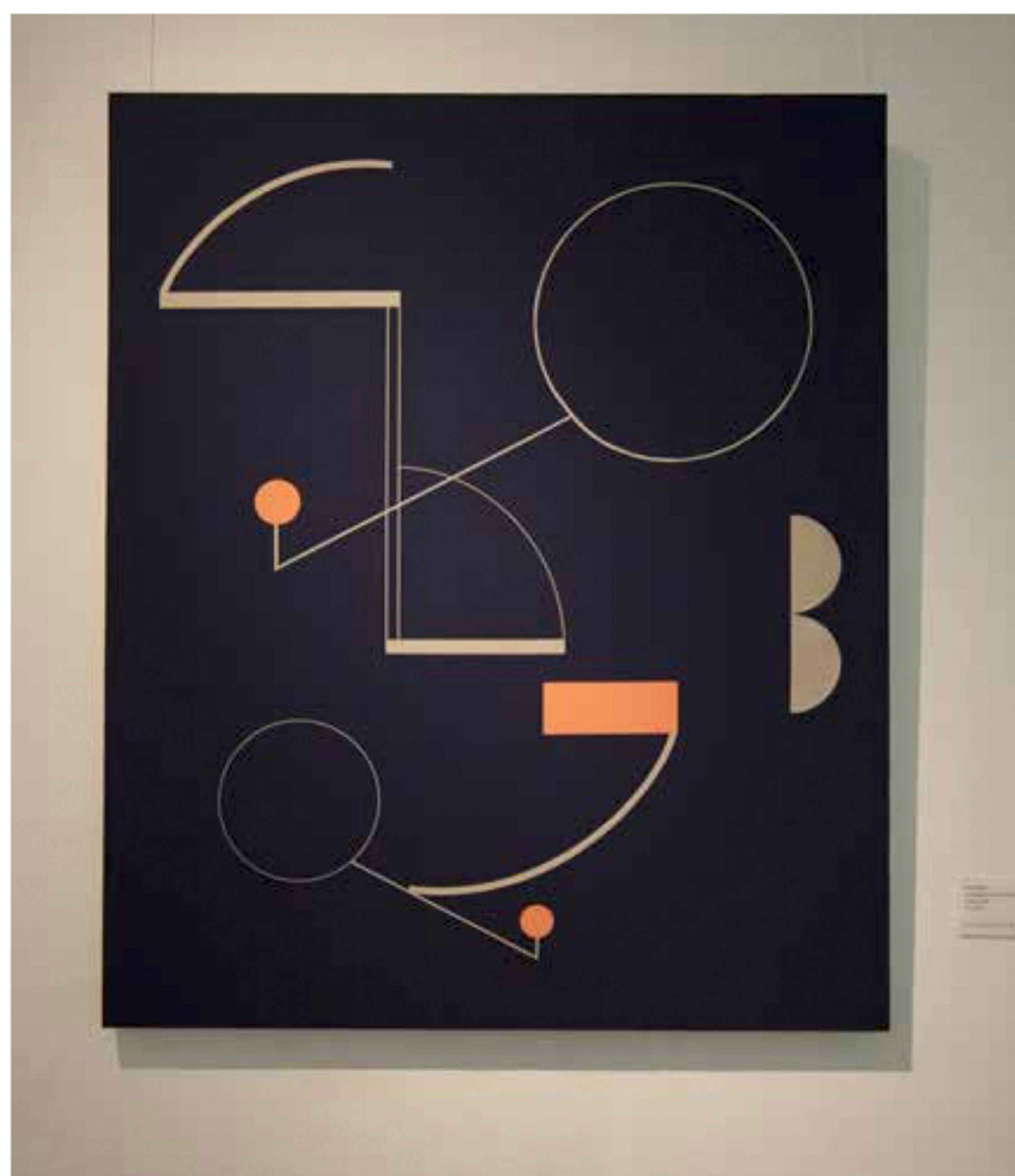
Are there any artists whose works you especially admire?

From the West, I would say Sol Lewitt. His works are conceptual and rather graphic, much like mine. When you buy one of his oil paintings, you don't just buy the painting; you also buy the instructions on how to do an oil painting. Learning the idea of reducing a painting to a set of instructions that anyone – not necessarily an artist – can do anytime, anywhere, helped me think outside the box and showed me how flexible the concept of a painting can be.

On the Indonesian side, Nyoman Lempad is quite fascinating. He drew traditional Balinese stories that are very clean and with a lot of whitespace around them. He trained as an architect and sculptor, so his understanding of space before he went into 2D drawings came from a more architectural background. I'm the opposite.

Have you considered expanding to other streams of art?

I do create some sculptures. I collaborated with a friend of mine, Nick Hornby. I dip my toe into different forms of art, but I really enjoy walking the fine line



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between 2D and 3D and seeing how far you can stay between the two.

I think you can experiment more with public artworks. With a painting, you can either be very quiet or very loud. With artworks, there's sort of an expectation for it to compete with its surrounding.

Walk us through your creation process. What does a day in the life of Sinta Tantra, the artist look like?

The thinking and the doing happen at the same time. The concept also happens as I make art. I usually start everything on the computer and I translate that into a physical space, like a canvas. I'm interested in a pre-internet art and a lot of my work is nostalgic; it's daydreaming into the past and what that would have been like.

What's next on your agenda?

I've never had my works displayed in a museum space and that's one area I would love to explore. It's the purest white cube that you can be in as an artist. I also want to be able to foster more links between here [the UK] and Indonesia. I want to work there more. ¹⁰

