



## Arsenic Fantasy

### Sinta Tantra

Nov 15 - Dec 15, 2009

A Solo Exhibition By, Sinta Tantra

"This exhibition marks a truly important point of my career. Although I have exhibited internationally in the past, it is the first time I'm showing work in Indonesia. I have quite an eclectic background; born in New York, our Balinese family lived in Indonesia, Singapore, America and the UK. Growing up I developed quite a strong affinity to Bali, considered it as one of my many 'homes' and quickly learnt that 'identity' was neither fixed nor stable. 'Identity' was not about where you lived or about 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 relation to a globalised economy."

Sponsored by the British Council UK, London based artist Sinta Tantra, acclaimed for her public artworks and installations, stages her first major international solo show this November in Indonesia's prestigious Gaya Art Space. The exhibition explores ideas surrounding fantasy and identity; simultaneously celebrating as well as deconstructing surface surface sheen, seduction and faith in artifice.

"Over the years Bali's popularity as a tourist destination has meant that it has been seen by many Westerners as an exotic island or 'paradise'. Though this may seem idealistic from the first, there is also a danger of it being politically misinterpreted as playing the submissive role or 'other'. I wanted to pierce that stereotype, subvert it and make use of an oxymoron within the title. 'Arsenic Fantasy' plays with the idea of a dystopia derived from decadence, excess and hedonism - in short, a cocktail of poison / pleasure."

Inspired by the visuals found in flags and graphic logos, Tantra dramatically transforms the gallery with a series of monumental murals. The dynamic arrangement of motifs and seminal graphics of dancing figures, palm trees and batik inspired patterns establishes a sense of nostalgia and nationalism. Overall, there is an outward and optimistic tone in Tantra's work reflected in the playful use of space and command of visual imagery.

"I'm interested in scale, placement and materiality - 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 - responding 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."

Arsenic Fantasy develops further the themes examined in Tantra's past work. The delight in surface image, the porous boundary between pictorial and physical spaces, the ideas of spectacle, submergence and superabundance. The show also represents several departures for the artist, primarily her move away from brighter colours and vibrant tones. The use of a more refined palette has developed new pictorial depths in Tantra's work, enabling an elegance held in tension with the allure of her updated visuals and a confident use of scale.

Sinta Tantra's acclaimed work in the UK has included public art commissions for the Southbank Centre, Camden Council and Transport for London. She has won numerous awards for her work, including the prestigious £8000 Deutsche Bank Pyramid Award, the Henry Moore Postgraduate Award and the Westminster's City Council Civic Award. Graduated from the Slade School of Fine Art and then the Royal Academy of Arts, Tantra's first international solo show in Bali received a grant award from the British Council. Her work has recently been acquired by the UK Government Art Collection and future projects include a solo project with Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston University in London. For more information and images of work please visit [www.sintatantra.com](http://www.sintatantra.com)