



Andreas D. Arditya

THE JAKARTA POST/JAKARTA

She may have spent her formative years in London, but British artist of Balinese descent Sinta Tantra regularly returns to Bali every year to visit her ancestors' land.

I try to always visit my *kampung*. It's so different from London. I need that difference in my life," said Sinta, who was born in New York to Balinese parents.

In town to prepare for her participation at the upcoming 2013 Indonesian Contemporary Art & Design (ICAD) event being held in late August in Kemang, South Jakarta, the artist is renowned for her site-specific murals and installations.

Her works have included a public commission titled *Greater Reality of Elsewhere* in Swansea, Wales, and the solo project *The Eccentricity of Zero* in London.

Greater Reality of Elsewhere features abstract spreads of geometric color with two giant golden palm trees on the skin of a theater company building.

It has been described as a work that induces an ambiguous imagery that reflects Sinta's Balinese origin and Western upbringing.

The Eccentricity of Zero is a sculpture of two circular glass panels overlaid with geometric and colored sections, installed in a formal garden with trimmed hedges, flowers and framed seating from May to November.

About the glass sculpture, Sinta said it played upon the idea of the garden labyrinth, of chasing lovers, of veiled flirtations and that which was left unsaid, with the round glass panels acting like a fluid screen where organic and artificial structures were contained, heightened and liberated from themselves.

Besides preparing for ICAD, she was also in Jakarta to discuss a project in the city and also to meet with artists, curators and journalists from around the archipelago.

"I can't reveal much about the project, other than it's still in discussion," said Sinta, who obtained her master of arts degree from the prestigious Royal Academy of Arts in London.

Sinta said that she has had pleasant times meeting with artists and curators in Yogyakarta.

"I really love Yogyakarta a lot more than Jakarta. People seem to be more on the outside there. Yogyakarta definitely has a more outdoor culture; in Jakarta, people spend more time compartmentalized indoors," she said.

In Yogyakarta, Sinta has taken interest in works by Bob Sick Yudhita, a well-known local artist whose style of painting has a lot of layering and plays with colors.

"I find his work really exciting. It seems so fresh compared to other Indonesian artists. His is very joyous, surreal. I'd love to do a collaboration mural with him," said Sinta, adding that Bob reminded her of American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat.

Sinta said that she has just started to make connections within the Indonesian art scene.

"I guess I'm still seen as a bit of a foreigner; I still have to earn their respect. I'd love to partake, create and be part of the right shows," she said.

Sinta told about how she was making connections through weird and quite random ways, thanks to the online social service Twitter.

"Culture seems to feed me emotionally and creatively. I have a constant need to see art, otherwise my brain turns to jelly. I need culture to stay enlightened."

"I've just recently signed up for Twitter and was quite surprised that there are a lot of people, especially Indonesians, who want to connect through it," she said.

"I don't think you'd network through Twitter in the art world, but I've gotten mentions from curators in Indonesia and also from all over the world."

The new medium, she said, has opened up a few doors through which she has walked to meet new people.

"It's quite random in a way. I wouldn't have met these people through friends or even through Facebook. I think Twitter has changed the way I network," she said, adding that she was still trying to figure out how to fully utilize online social tools.

Outside of art, she confessed that she does not really have hobbies.

"I wish I could say I collect stamps or train sets, but no," she said, shaking her head with a little laugh.

"As an artist, work and play are kind of the same. I like exploring the city, visiting art museums or exhibitions," she said.

"Culture seems to feed me emotionally and creatively. I have a constant need to see art, otherwise my brain turns to jelly. I need culture to stay enlightened."