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By Shintya Felicitas

COLORFUL HAPPINESS

British-based Indonesian artist **Sinta Tantra** hold her solo exhibition "A House in Bali"



Last November, British-based Indonesian artist Sinta Tantra, 38, held her solo exhibition "A House in Bali" at the LAFLO showroom in Jakarta. Known for her geometric abstractions and signature bright color palettes, Sinta created an iconic mural on LAFLO's staircase especially for the event, as well as specially designed Johnny Walker bottles showcased at the exhibition. The exhibition's title is drawn from Colin McPhee's 1946 book, "A House in Bali." As a young Canadian composer, McPhee traveled to Bali during the



1920s and 1930s, where he discovered gamelan music and attempted to capture its abstract sounds in Western musical notation. He also depicted, in one of the earliest Western books on Bali, the remarkable richness of Balinese culture, spiritual values and hedonism.

Born in New York to Balinese parents, Sinta was brought up in both Britain and Bali. Her work draws inspiration from her heritage and adopted home of London. Sinta's eclectic combination of Eastern and Western culture provides her with a unique perspective to interpret gamelan through her canvases and murals. "Growing up in London, my Balinese father daily played gamelan music on the cassette player at home. For him, it was a way to trans-

talent and understanding of visual rhythm become palpable when each circle finds its place, each line the perfect angle.

A graduate of the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London and the Royal Academy Schools London, Sinta emphasizes that her style was built up over the years. When she was still studying, she faced stereotypes about Asian women artists. "My lecturers and fellow students expected that I would create something cute and feminine, in small sizes. I try to remove the stereotypes, so I consistently create abstract and structured paintings," says Sinta.

The character of her art is always open for interpretation. "I want people who see my artworks create their own narrative



"People say my art makes them happy, but also one time I saw a woman cried seeing my work,"

port himself back to the small village where he grew up and immerse himself in fond memories," she recalls.

According to McPhee, both gamelan and jazz are percussion led, and in this new series of paintings, Sinta is aiming to draw a stronger focus on a sense of rhythm, using lines and colors to represent a sort of musical notation on the canvas. The geometrical forms dominating Sinta's paintings are inescapably contemporary, yet the carefully selected colors are meant to transport the viewer to Bali of the past, as described in McPhee's book. Faithful to her style of geometric abstraction, Sinta presents surprise with a fusion of muted and striking colors side by side. Her



from it. I give freedom for the audience to translate my works. I love it when people have a connection with my art. People say my art makes them happy, but also one time I saw a woman cry after seeing my work," she says.

Sinta's career came into prominence from her site-spe-

cific works in the public realm—combining the disciplines of painting, design, art and architecture both inside and outside galleries. Her works have been commissioned all over the world, including in Australia, France, Germany, Netherlands, U.S., Hong Kong, South

Korea and Indonesia. Her most notable public work includes the 300-meter painted bridge in London's Canary Wharf titled "A Beautiful Sunset Mistaken for a Dawn" for the 2012 Olympics.

She is involved in many international group shows as well, the recent ones being "High Noon" at Italy's Accademia Belle Arti di Rome and "Quotidian" at Shanghai's Pearl Lam Gallery. The young artist has also received many awards, including the Bridget Riley Drawing Fellow at the British School at Rome this year. However, she still has a dream to achieve: to commission her public art in Indonesia. "It would be nice to paint the side-track of the Jakarta Light Railway Transit," she smiles. **FL**