



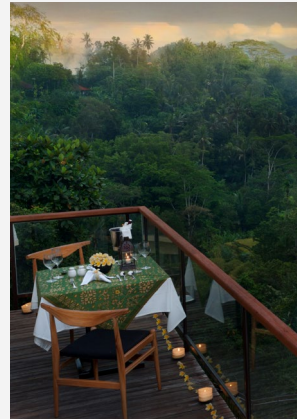
A SLICE OF THE GODS

Traditional Drum Artisans in the village of Padang Kerta

...the quality of a kendang depends on the choice of materials and the techniques of craftsmanship...

Early in 1952, a young man from Padang Kerta, Karangasem, went to the town of Singaraja on the north coast of Bali. Singaraja in those days was known as the birthplace of the *gong kebyar* style of *gamelan* music, which was creating excitement as far as south Bali. The young man was I Gusti Gde Opang, and it was his intention to learn to make *kendang*, the traditional Balinese two-headed conical drum.

[click to continue](#)



KOMANEKA FAMILY

Komaneka: Local In Spirit, World-Class In Quality

...Komaneka gives an experience of both traditional Balinese culture and the leisure of a modern international lifestyle...

Komaneka Resorts are a collection of sophisticated boutique resorts in Bali, with most of the properties located in highland Ubud; a resort by the sea will open soon. Each is carefully created to fulfill travelers' expectations of upscale luxury lifestyle with outstanding value, in a spacious hotel room or villa, surrounded by the natural beauty of Bali and looked after by Komaneka's gracious professional staff to make you feel 'at home'.

[click to continue](#)



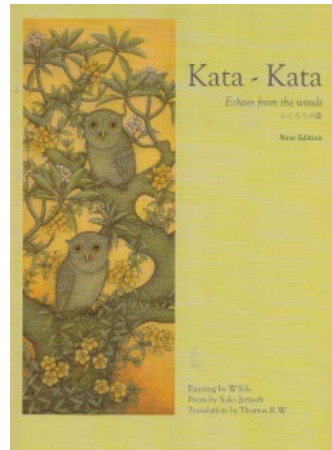
KOMANEKA FINE ART GALLERY

I Nengah Sujena

...his art is a meditative medium to treat various inner problems...

I Nengah Sujena, generally called Nengah, is an artist who was born and grew up in the farming country of the region of Bangli, in central Bali. He was born on 21 January 1976. Although he comes from fertile agricultural lands, Nengah decided to find his way in art, following the example of his grandfather, who was a sculptor.

[click to continue](#)



WHAT TO READ

Kata-kata: Echoes from the Woods

...painting as visual poetry, and poetry as painting with words...

Bali was long identified with peace, its people living in harmony and blessed by the gods. The Balinese lived the values inherited from their ancestors. This meant a lower incidence of crime in Bali compared to other regions in Indonesia: news of theft, robbery or murder was very rare. People left their front gates (*angkul-angkul*) unlocked, and sometimes the gates didn't even have doors. Life was open and gentle.

[click to continue](#)

A SLICE OF THE GODS

**Traditional Drum Artisans in the village of Padang Kerta**

Early in 1952, a young man from Padang Kerta, Karangasem, went to the town of Singaraja on the north coast of Bali. Singaraja in those days was known as the birthplace of the *gong kebyar* style of *gamelan* music, which was creating excitement as far as south Bali. The young man was I Gusti Gde Opang, and it was his intention to learn to make *kendang*, the traditional Balinese two-headed conical drum. The *kendang* is a very important instrument in Balinese *gamelan* music. Played in a 'male' and 'female' pair, the *kendang* is regarded as the leader of the *gamelan* orchestra. But in those days, it was difficult to find *kendang* of good quality. Thus Gusti Gde Opang had to travel far to Singaraja to learn this craft. When he returned to Karangasem, he opened a workshop for making *kendang* in his home village of Padang Kerta.

From that time on, Gusti Gde Opang became known as a leading maker of *kendang* in Karangasem. His fame was greatest during the 1970s and '80s. Customers came from all over the regency, from such villages as Seraya, Sibetan, Sidemen, Besakih, Kubu, Tianyar, and others. Some came from outside Karangasem, from Singaraja and Klungkung. In the 1980s, his *kendang* went as far as Japan, Germany, and Switzerland. But economic turmoil in the global economy at the end of the



1980s affected the demand for *kendang*, and the workshop suffered a decline, which was severely compounded after the terrorist bombings in Bali in 2002 and 2005. Orders dwindled to an average of only four pairs of *kendang* a year, with most of the work being repairs.

Gusti Gde Opang died in 1992. He had a number of students, among whom were his son I Gusti Gde Putu and his grandson I Gusti Ngurah Gde, as well as his son-in-law I Nyoman Kawi who had worked with Gusti Gde Opang since 1987. After Gusti Gde Opang's death, the workshop was run by Gusti Ngurah Gde and I Nyoman Kawi. Gusti Ngurah Gde kept up the business until 2006 when he took up other work. After a two-year hiatus, I Nyoman Kawi revived the workshop in 2008 and continues up to today.

According to I Nyoman Kawi, there are only two places in the regency of Karangasem with *kendang* workshops, and one of them is "here" in Banjar Pande, Padang Kerta. The *kendang* handicraft industry is beginning to rebound. Products and customers originate not only in Karangasem, but also in Tampaksiring, Gianyar and in Denpasar. The busiest seasons, he says, are in the Balinese months of *sasih kapat*, *kalima* and *kadasa* on the ritual calendar.

I Nyoman Kawi says that the quality of a *kendang* depends on the choice of materials and the techniques of craftsmanship. The materials are 1) wood, for the body (*pelawah*) of the *kendang*, such as jackfruit, mahogany, *kendal*, *jempinis*, *taab*, *durian*, *belalu*, and *suar*; 2) cow hide leather for the different-sized ends of the drum (*muar* and *wangkis*) and for string; 3) bamboo for the frame (*sebeh*).

The *kendang* maker's tools include chisels, hammer, *tangge* (file), *pengutik* (small knife) *cantik* (plane), sand paper, *jangat*, ruler.

The process of making a *kendang* begins with making the *pelawah* from solid wood, in the following steps: 1) *ditampis*, to make the appropriate length and diameter according to the type of *kendang*; 2) *mongpong*, to hollow out the wood; 3) *meserut luah*, using a plane, to refine the outside of the wood; 4) *mekeruk tengah*, to scrape the inner part of the wood to obtain a hollow sound; 5) sanding and refining the surface of the wood.

The second stage is to work the cow hide. Among the steps are: 1) the dried leather is cut to size (*nare*); 2) any remaining hairs are cleaned using kitchen ash and bamboo; 3) the inner surface is scraped with a plane; 4) making leather string, with long thick leather that is worked with a plane.

The next stage is to put the leather on the drum. Before the cow hide is put on the drum body, it is soaked in water for two hours, then squeezed. Then it is placed on the bamboo frame and

attached over the openings at either end of the *pelawah*. Cow hide strings (*jangat*) are mounted transversely and tightened, then set to dry.

The fourth stage is tuning or adjustment (*penyetelan*) to achieve a harmonious sound appropriate to the type of *kendang*. This is done by loosening or tightening the leather strings. The fifth and last stage is finishing, which may include a cloth cover and straps to enable the drum to be played while standing or walking.

As mentioned above, the *kendang* usually comes in a male (*lanang*) and female (*wadon*) pair, except for the single *kendang bebarongan*. *Kendang lanang* and *wadon* are known by their *suwer* size, shape, and sound. Here follows a list of different types of *kendang* according to the diameter of the drum heads (*muar* and *wangkis*):

1. *Kendang Beleganjur*, muar 28-29 cm, wangkis 26-27 cm
2. *Kendang Legong*, muar 24-25 cm, wangkis 22-24 cm
3. *Kendang Kebyar*, muar 30-32 cm, wangkis 28-30 cm
4. *Kendang Bebarongan*, muar 27 cm, wangkis 25 cm
5. *Kendang Geguntangan*, muar 22-23 cm, wangkis 19-21 cm
6. *Kendang Angklung*, muar 18-19 cm, wangkis 16-17 cm
7. *Kendang Tambur*, muar 65-70 cm, wangkis 63-67 cm

Original Article by : Wayan Agus

English Translation by : Diana Darling

Photo courtesy of :

Edy Saputra (flickr.com/photos/edysaputra)

Medi Irawan Poerwito (flickr.com/photos/medd)

[back to Top](#)

KOMANEKA FAMILY



Batukaru Restaurant, Komaneka at Tanggayuda

Komaneka: Local In Spirit, World-Class In Quality

Komaneka Resorts are a collection of sophisticated boutique resorts in Bali, with most of the properties located in highland Ubud; a resort by the sea will open soon. Each is carefully created to fulfill travelers' expectations of upscale luxury lifestyle with outstanding value, in a spacious hotel room or villa, surrounded by the natural beauty of Bali and looked after by Komaneka's gracious professional staff to make you feel 'at home'. Komaneka gives an experience of both traditional Balinese culture and the leisure of a modern international lifestyle.

Ubud brims with temples, small palaces, galleries, museums, spas, shops, and culinary experiences from market stalls to first-class restaurants. Under the patronage of the ruling noble family, Ubud's traditional Hindu Balinese rituals are among the most splendid on the island, and its traditional musicians and dancers are among the most renowned.

The nearby village of Keramas is a very old community with royal ancestry. The village is unspoiled by over-development and has a rich local cultural life. Its classical Balinese opera troupe is famous all over Bali.

Komaneka is a family-owned business, founded, designed, and run by a young couple from Ubud. It all began as a fine arts gallery, specializing in high-end Balinese and Indonesian art. Rooms were added as an artists' residence. But it soon attracted visitors, and the founders decided to make Komaneka a hotel, today known as Komaneka Monkey Forest, named for its address on the famous shopping-and-eating street Monkey Forest Road, which stretches from the main Ubud



Main Swimming Pool, Komaneke at Bisma

palace at the center of town to a sacred monkey forest at its southern end. The Komaneke Fine Art Gallery remains one of the most important in Bali; and the hotel, which has been recently renovated, is still a tranquil oasis in shady gardens.

Next came Komaneke Tanggayuda, beautifully situated amidst five hectares of tropical forest at the edge of a neighboring village, with views to a sacred volcano. Komaneke Bisma, also on five hectares of

forest, is remarkable for its vast unspoiled views near the center of town. The youngest resort is Komaneke Rasa Sayang, also on the Monkey Forest Road, offering an exceptional serene oasis in the bustling center of Ubud and picturesque Monkey Forest Road.

Komaneke at Keramas, to open in 2017, is the fifth and newest in the collection of Komaneke Resorts boutique hotels with a 360-degree view that includes the Indian Ocean and the neighboring island Nusa Penida, living rice fields, and the glorious Mount Agung, Bali's highest and holiest volcano. Devotees of Komaneke Resorts will be happy to find the same warm and gracious Balinese hospitality that makes the resorts consistent winners of top travel awards with 5-star comfort. All villas have private pools and unrestricted views of the sea — on a sprawling 4-hectare property that comes right to the edge of a beautiful black-sand beach. Komaneke at Keramas is a about appoximately 30-minute drive from Ubud, 15 minutes from Sanur, and 55 minutes from Ngurah Rai International Airport.

Komaneke is a way into the magical world of Bali. Its hospitality arises from the Balinese Hindu practice of treating their gods like honored guests, with offerings of food, flowers, music, dance, and splendor. For this reason, many ordinary Balinese are accomplished dancers, musicians, and artists. The staff are happy to share with resort guests their skills in wood-carving, dancing, and making offerings, with free classes every afternoon. Komaneke also introduces the rich and savory world of Balinese and Indonesian cuisine. Guests are welcome to move freely among the resorts — perhaps going for swim at Bisma, breakfast or afternoon tea at Tanggayuda, a spa treatment at Rasa Sayang — making expanded use of the invitation to let Komaneke be 'your home address in Ubud'.

[back to Top](#)

KOMANEKA FINE ART GALLERY



Sedia Payung Sebelum Hujan, Acrylic on canvas, 180X145 cm, 2011

I NENGAH SUJENA

I Nengah Sujena, generally called Nengah, is an artist who was born and grew up in the farming country of the region of Bangli, in central Bali. He was born on 21 January 1976. Although he comes from fertile agricultural lands, Nengah decided to find his way in art, following the example of his grandfather, who was a sculptor.

Nengah began to embrace art seriously when he went on to study art at the art institute ISI Yogyakarta in 1996. The early years of his studies were marked by the political upheaval surging over the Indonesian nation. In 1998, Soeharto stepped down as president after 32 years. The change of government blew a wind of freedom throughout the population, whose rights of expression had hitherto been very strictly limited. Artists found a wide-open space to express their views through their art. During this time, art was carefree and dominated by social and political themes. This may be seen in the early works of Nengah Sujena.

Many of the works of Nengah Sujena in the period before and early 2000s feature themes that are light-hearted, depicting the world around him. One example is two buskers playing music in a festive party atmosphere with many figures. But some of his work appears to reflect an inner mood. Nengah uses dark, cold colors, which imply depth and interiority. On the canvas, there are a number of figures or figures made with stylized shapes, bent, curved. There is also a very strong



Mendung, Acrylic on canvas, 140X150 cm, 2015

ornamental tendency, such as a repetition of patterns and shapes, presenting lines and spots that create a decorative effect on the figures.

Once he had finished his studies at ISI, Nengah decided to stay on in the city of Yogyakarta. He says he found this city of students highly conducive to creative work. There was always all sorts of artistic activity going on. During his sojourn in Yogya, Nengah was very active in participating in group art exhibitions. He also joined exhibitions in major cities around Indonesia as well as abroad.

These brought him a number of prizes and awards. In 1998 he was a finalist in the Philip Morris Art Awards Jakarta. The next year he was among the top five in the Nokia Art Awards Jakarta. In 2000 he won the Merit Awards of Asia Pacific Nokia Art Awards in Singapore, and in 2003, he was among the top ten for the Pratisara Affandi Adi Karya.

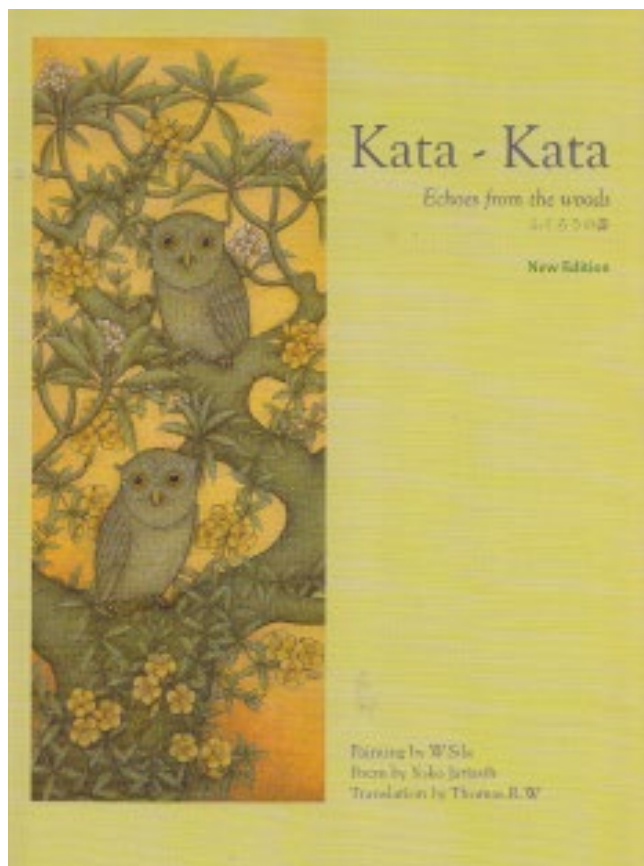
Nengah remained in Yogyakarta until a devastating earthquake in 2006, which killed thousands of inhabitants. This forced Nengah Sujena to flee to his native land in Bali, where he has decided to stay.

In 2007, now settled in Bali, Nengah held a his first solo exhibition, at Komaneka Fine Art Gallery in Ubud. The show was entitled Songs of Solitude.

Nengah continues to dig deeper into themes from his own inner life. He says there are no political messages in his work. He wants only to bring forth the sounds of his heart. He uses a number of signs as a visual language — for example, green leaves on the lips of a white figure blocked with a black background, or a leaf over the head of an elephant. The forms displayed on the field of the canvas are very simple and look increasingly minimalist. One could even say his work is leading to the abstract. He admits that his art is a meditative medium to treat various inner problems, as if he has a dialogue with his conscience. In 2012 he held his second solo exhibition, Love and Peace, in Tobin Ohashi Gallery in Tokyo.

Although Nengah Sujena is a Balinese artist, his works show nothing of the characteristics of Balinese art. He has worked to free himself from the forms that identify his work as Balinese.

View Nengah Sujena art work on Komaneka Fine Art Gallery website.



Kata-kata:

Echoes from the Woods

...painting as visual poetry, and poetry as painting with words...

Bali was long identified with peace, its people living in harmony and blessed by the gods. The Balinese lived the values inherited from their ancestors. This meant a lower incidence of crime in Bali compared to other regions in Indonesia: news of theft, robbery or murder was very rare. People left their front gates (*angkul-angkul*) unlocked, and sometimes the gates didn't even have doors. Life was open and gentle.

But lately Bali feels much changed. As tourism grows increasingly intense, negative excesses are appearing, such as rapid urbanization and fierce competition that pushes people to try all sorts of means to survive. Moreover, advances in information technology are triggering changes in the character of the present generation of Balinese. As in other places around the world, Bali is experiencing globalization. Everything is open. Communication and access to information is very free. The internet penetrates all aspects of life, from town to villages, from the coast to the mountains, people of all ages surf the virtual media. News, trends, and cultures from other parts of the world rush in, milling, chasing each other, dancing on the screen of mobile phones. This in-pouring of information and learning through social media can indeed broaden people's experience, but it also brings threats to the younger generation.

In earlier times, the character of young people in Bali was intensively cultivated within the family and community. Perhaps people still remember when grandparents and elders told folktales before bed — stories such as *Meng Kok* and *Siap Selem*, *I Bawang* and *I Kesuna*, *Timun Mas*, *Men Cubling*, and so on. These tales were very effective in instilling moral values and messages full of guidance. But unfortunately this tradition has faded and may be becoming extinct.

Similarly, arts performances held in conjunction with religious ceremonies taught good values. Stories of love and heroism are found in the dance dramas of *Arja*, *Legong*, the *Ramayana* ballet, and other. So, too, the singing of holy poetry during traditional rituals. Classical painting in temples illustrated stories depicting the values of kindness and integrity. But these arts are beginning to be eclipsed by television and online entertainment.

The book *Kata-kata* ("Words") recalls the older Balinese traditions of learning. This book is a collaboration between a Japanese poet and a Balinese painter, with twenty-five poems and twenty-five paintings in the style of Ubud. The poetry is the work of Yoko Jatiasih, who was born in Tokyo, while the paintings are by the traditional Balinese painter Wayan Sila. Their collaboration is particularly interesting, not only because these two artists come from different countries and cultures, but for the difference in their mediums. These differences create a beautiful complementarity — painting as visual poetry, and poetry as painting with words.

Through the beauty of art, we are invited into self-contemplation. There is a character named Sila, described as a magical owl. This character becomes the central figure telling a tale about universal experience, served lightly and simply, so easy to digest.

Kata-kata is an inspiring book. It will appeal to lovers of both poetry and painting, and to all who delight in fantasy.

BOOK REVIEW

Kata-kata: Echoes from the Woods. Painting by W. Sila, Poem by Yoko Jatiasih, Translation by Thomas R.W, Owl House, Bali, 2004, 55 pages.