

Art is not just part
of aesthetics, but also
the whole life
of Mansri Trisniawati.

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FEAST FOR THE SOUL





Mansri Trisniawati wearing one of her patola double ikat antique fabric collection, in front of Hanafi's painting at Komaneka Fine Art Gallery



At one of her traditional Balinese compound



Tapis Lampung fabric and antique furniture

the design and construction processes themselves directly. In the social order of Balinese society, *undagi* are the architects of traditional constructions, from *pura*, or temples, to homes and palaces. Their positions are well-respected and considered on a par with priests. One of the most-well-known *undagi* is I Gusti Nyoman Lempad, a Balinese traditional painter and sculpture artist. Wahyu acquired his *undagi* blood from his mother. Although his educational background is in economics, as an *undagi* descendant he naturally mastered construction abilities by diving into work directly at the site.

The combination of a gallery and a resort with the passion of art from both, added to by Mansri's collections of traditional fabric and antique wood, gave birth to a palette of artistic life for the couple. Art pieces do not just decorate all corners of their house, but also all of their resorts. *Bazaar* had the chance to see this while visiting some Komaneka resorts and galleries as well as the residence of Mansri and Wahyu. We had a long conversation with the lady of the house about her *kain* or fabric collection, and even had the chance to join this family's ceremonial procession. It was exactly a week after the beautiful and majestic *Ngaben* and *Nyekah* ceremony held for Wahyu's mother, Srimin Suteja. The purpose of *Nyekah* itself is to purify and elevate the spirit of a dead person to

Art has long been a part of life of Mansri Trisniawati and her husband, Koman Wahyu Suteja. Koman is a son of Suteja Neka, an art patron in Bali and also a founder of the Neka Art Museum. This couple also owns a gallery named Komaneka in the Monkey Forest area of Ubud, which was opened to the public in December 1995, the same time as Made Djirna's first solo exhibition.

It is also from this gallery that the resort group Komaneka was born, and its first property is located right at the back of the gallery. "In the beginning, the place was used as a living space for artists that were holding their exhibitions at the Komaneka Gallery. We then decided to turn it into rented villas and manage them ourselves," said Mansri Trisniawati, beginning her story.

Through Mansri's background as an architect and Wahyu's as the grandson of an *undagi*, the couple handled all



the highest level, so that it can then be placed in the family's temple as a deified ancestor.

The first artwork that caught *Bazaar's* attention was the sculpture of Pande Ketut Taman at Komaneka Keramas, a new property at Keramas beach in Gianyar. Located in the open lobby area, this sculpture is a statement of how this is a resort with its own fine-art atmosphere. Another sculpture by the same artist can also be seen in the warm and cozy lobby of Komaneka Bisma. "This sculpture pictures all the phases of Ketut Taman's life, and is a commission art for Komaneka," explained Mansri. Their closeness to many Balinese artists has granted them this kind of access and its related privileges.

One other piece that is quite iconic is the one found at Komaneka Bisma, which is a wire sculpture by Putu Sutawijaya, hung on the walls of the Seneng Kitchen. There are also paintings in many of the villas and rooms at other Komaneka resorts, some of which are by Hanafi, Made Sumadiyasa, Nyoman Sujana Kenyem, Agus Wijaya, and Wayan Sujana Suklu. Dominated by the genres of abstract and contemporary, these artworks harmoniously combine with elements of antique wood in forms of *gebyok* – a traditional room divider – and furniture, as well as building construction. "We make art as a character of, and part of, Komaneka Resorts. Some of them are private collections," added Mansri.



Details of wooden sculpture by Pande Ketut Taman at Komaneka Keramas resort

Nevertheless, beyond the touches of art at her resorts, Mansri has a more personal concept for her home. Located in the Ubud area, it applies Balinese traditional architectural philosophies in accordance with the Asta Kosala Kosali guidelines. There is the *bale daja* or *bale meten* at the south side, which serves as the residential quarter of the head of family. Then there is the *bale dangin*, which is the holy place where ceremonies take place, such as weddings or baby blessings. A bit to the

back is the *sanggah*, which is the sacred building in the form of a family temple. At the front side, there is the *bale dauh* to receive guests and which serves as the residential quarters of the children. Lastly, there is the *paon* or the kitchen at the south of the house, which also functions to cast out bad spirits.

At this older part of her home, Mansri has placed several photography works by Rio Helmi, a photographer who was once exhibited at Komaneka Gallery. There is

FASHIONABLE ARTSY LIFE



A corner at Mansri's work place



PHOTOS: WIPA SATHYA



Wooden sculpture by Pande Ketut Taman at the lobby of Komaneke Keramas resort

also a painting by Made Wianta and other art pieces from Balinese artists. There are also collections of kebaya and kain fabric, some of which are French lace, Balinese weave, Indian weave that she got from a museum in Zurich, and *prada batik*. At *bale dauh*, she places containers for offerings made of engraved silver, which she has been collecting since 1996. "The best are from Klungkung, because that is where the best silver engraving artists are from. My favorite is the one with *wayang* engraving; also the one made from wood coated with genuine gold leaf made in the Tegalalang region," explained Mansri.

Moving to the more spacious building compound where they currently live, there is a special building used as Mansri's office. The building is not very large and has only one room in the form of a neatly designed antique *joglo* house. On one side,

there is a credenza with various wooden sculptures on top, and there is a work desk in the middle of two glass cabinets with even more fabric collections. This is Mansri's happy place where her beloved fabrics are placed. She passionately revealed stories of the origins and the processes of the fabrics: Sumbanese fabric, a batik fabric of Elizabeth van Swellen, *songket*, Balinese weave, and *ikat cepuk*. "Fabrics are my therapy. Every night before retreating to bed I like to take a look at my fabric collections and admire each one. It feel so happy looking at them," she beams.

Other than artworks and wooden antiques, fabrics are also an element of art that give Mansri a lot of satisfaction. For her, a life surrounded by art truly has meaning, because art is the feast for the soul. ■



Painting by Made Wianta