



# Spirit Behind the Colour

*Amalia Amini*



**"Spirit Behind The Colour I"**



SWEET DREAM I, 90 x 90 cm, oil on canvas

**"Spirit Behind The Colour II"**

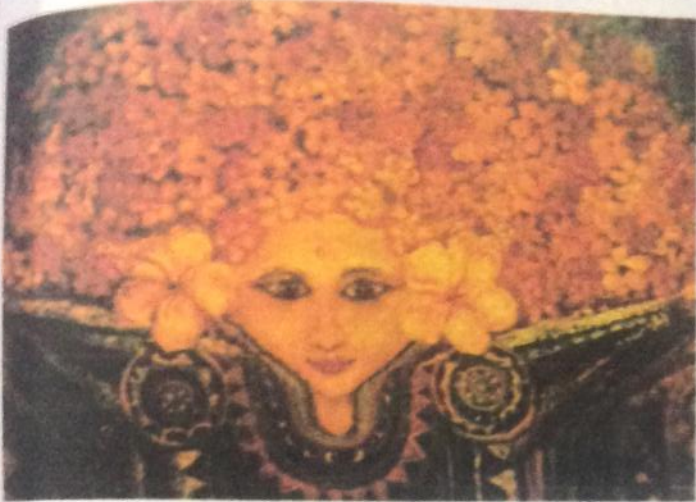


**Persiapan Pameran "Spirit Behind The Colour III"**





# WOMEN ARTISTS OF BALI, UNITE!



"The idea was to expose the world to the long understated brilliance of independent women artists resident in Bali. To train and encourage young Balinese girls with obvious creative gifts. And to provide income for women with talent but neither the time nor facility to market their art". This is the philosophy behind the establishment

of Asia's first art gallery which deals exclusively with women artists resident in Bali, whatever their cultural or national background —Seniwati Gallery of Art by Women.

"Deals exclusively with women artists" may sound very "political" but what is not political nowadays? The issue of gender is certainly a political issue, especially in the realm of art, long believed to be a purely "beauty is a joy forever"-kind of romanticism. As with other aspects of our daily life, art is also a reality in which the idea of "survival of the fittest" counts. Selections are made and power is created and kept safe from diminishing.

"A famous expert on Balinese art told me that there were no women artists in Bali because the Balinese women have no sense of colour and they don't like to get dirty," British-born founder of the Seniwati Gallery of Art by Women, Mary Northmore, said to me recently at the Gallery. Whoever this famous "expert" was, he certainly was making choices by making his biased statement.

He makes us wonder whether he had truly lived in Bali or had ever seen any religious festivals here where most of the decorations are made by Balinese women. He certainly never saw a ricefield in Bali where women go dirty planting or harvesting the paddy.

Fortunately Ms. Northmore didn't believe him but started searching village after village for women artists. She did find them, and there were many of them, young and old. Being a Balinese woman, many of these artists are so busy with family and community obligations that it's hard for them to find time to paint.

The "lucky" ones were those who had artist fathers or husbands. By helping their artist fathers or husbands with their work, these women got more opportunities to paint. Encouragement by artist husbands was also important in stimulating the women to keep on painting, as was the case with Dewa Bian Raka, one of Bali's first woman artists. She and her famous late husband were friends of Rudolf Bonnet who together with Walter Spies were responsible for the creation of Bali's modern art. With her husband's encouragement, Dewa Bian Raka was able to make time to paint, "two hours a day".

Another woman was caught by her artist husband "stealing" his materials for she couldn't get it any other way. But this discovery only made him delighted and he then encouraged her to keep on painting.

Ms Northmore however believed that there's no systematic discrimination or disempowerment of women in Bali but only a dis



Koleksi By Women Gallery

