

## Balinese Hindu Philosophy in Mandala Painting



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**ABSTRACT:** The combination of art, religion, and spirituality in Bali is closely related and inseparable from each other and is reflected in mandala paintings. Painting is one of the dynamically developing branches of fine arts in Bali, ranging from classical to postmodern or contemporary. One of the unique paintings with an individual style in the middle of a collective culture is the mandala-themed painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan. Hinduism and the community environment inspire him to express his contemplation in the form of paintings. This research focuses on three problem formulations, namely the form of mandala paintings, the factors that encourage their creation, and the meaning of mandalas. This research was conducted using a qualitative method. Data related to the above problems were collected using interviews, observation, literature study, and documentation techniques. Data analysis was sharpened with aesthetic theory, theory of structure and change, and semiotics. These four theories are used to analyze each problem formulation. The results show that the form of mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan is purely an expression of ideas, notions, and personal experiences created freely by combining traditional and modern styles. The combination of the two styles creates new creations that are very distinctive with an abstract-symbolic style. The form of mandala painting includes a combination of line, shape, space, color, and texture. The structure of the painting consists of composition, proportion, unity, balance, rhythm, focal point, and contrast based on the mandala perspective.

**KEYWORDS:** Analysis, mandala, painting, I Dewa Nyoman Batuan.

### INTRODUCTION

The Hindu view of art is the Hindu view of life, life as interpreted by religion and philosophy (Anand, 2019). The artist-craftsmen themselves frequently used yogic techniques to visualize the ideal appearance of each deity to be portrayed (Stutley, 2019). The values of philosophy, religion, and art about the symbolic meaning contained in the aspect of mandala or cosmology underlie many Balinese paintings (Karja, 2020). Art and religion both function in line, similarly, symbolically seeking to offer us into that world, to help us understand the world at hand. The fusion between art and religion is, of course, in partnership (Foley, 2004). A painter I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, born in the village of Pengosekan Ubud in 1934, has reached the peak of his career and succeeded in creating and producing paintings that are the result of a combination of Hindu art and philosophy by using mandala. Mandala, (Sanskrit: "circle") in Hindu and Buddhist Tantrism, is a symbolic diagram used in the performance of sacred rites and as an instrument of meditation. The mandala is a representation of the universe, a consecrated area that serves as a receptacle for the gods and as a collection point of universal forces (<http://www.britannica.com/topic/mandala-diagram>). Initially painting puppetry or wayang, then continued with Hindu religious symbols that are packaged in the concept of the mandala, a combination of traditional techniques with modern styles. The dynamics and creativity of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan developed towards Hindu philosophy, to create paintings in a new form that has its personality and uniqueness. The values of renewal and uniqueness that exist in mandala paintings cannot be separated from the hard artwork of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan in searching for identity and the meaning of life. Through the medium of painting, he expresses himself by pouring ideas freely to communicate his experiences and views on things that exist and occur on this earth based on customs, culture, and universal Hindu teachings in society. The color of the Balinese mandala is in the form of a circle color wheel, each direction has its color, meaning, gods, place in the body, day, and number. The color is related to balancing human emotion and healing psychology (Karja, 2022).

Thanks to his courage to make breakthroughs to make updates in his artworks, is a very meaningful contribution to the creation of traditional painting itself as a painter who is considered capable of finding new things that are the demands and responsibilities of an artist. The paintings created by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan show things that are very different from traditional Balinese painting with a qualified understanding of the teachings and philosophy of Hinduism. These differences can be seen in almost everything, such as the way objects are arranged, the themes raised, the processing of form, content, and freedom in the application of color. Unlike Balinese painting in general, with Pita Maha, and even with Pengosekan painting itself, I Dewa Batuan has its characteristics. It is the uniqueness that gave rise to the researcher's desire to conduct deeper research into his mandala artworks.

There have been many studies on Balinese painting, but no one has specifically examined the mandalas in the paintings of

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I Dewa Nyoman Batuan. This research raises questions: Why is the form of mandala paintings by Dewa Nyoman Batuan significant to study? What are the factors that encourage the creation of mandala paintings? What is the meaning contained in mandala paintings? The purpose of this research is to provide insight into the Balinese people about the painting, especially the mandala painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan. It is hoped that the results of this study can also add to the literature, and understand the form, as well as the factors that motivated the creation of mandala paintings and to understand the meaning of mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan.

### RESEARCH METHOD

This research method uses qualitative and interpretive methods. Kirk and Miler (1986:9) state that research with qualitative methods is a certain tradition in social science that fundamentally relies on observing humans and their areas and dealing with these people in their language and terminology (Moleong, 2002: 3). The purpose of qualitative methods is to understand the world of meaning symbolized in the behavior of society according to the perspective and interpretation of the community itself. The research location is Pengosekan Village, Ubud, Gianyar, Bali. The data sources used are primary data, informants, namely I Dewa Nyoman Batuan as a key informant, and cultural artifacts used in his paintings. In addition to primary data, also secondary as supporting data in the form of documents, and data obtained from literature studies, in the form of reference books, research reports, magazines, and exhibition catalogues. Data collection is done by observation, interview, and literature study. Then proceed with data processing, editing, and concluding.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I Dewa Nyoman Batuan was born in 1939 in Pengosekan Village, Ubud, Bali. Agriculture was the main source of life at that time, most children as well as I Dewa Nyoman Batuan raised ducks and cows to help supplement the family income. From the sale of duck eggs, he was able to pay for himself to go to school and supplement the family income. In his spare time, he took the time to learn painting from his uncle, I Gusti Ketut Kobot, a traditional painter from the artists' association, Pita Maha generation, whose name is well known in the world of Balinese traditional painting. Sutasoma, one of the stories in Buddhism (Hobart, 1990) was well developed among the artists and became the theme of his first paintings. He liked folklore and religion to guide him to learn about life. In 1954, he graduated from the Public School. He aspired to be a teacher, later he accepted to work as a government employee as a school teacher in Gianyar, graduating in 1959. In 1960 he was appointed as a teacher at SD No. 1 Sayan, Ubud, then married Desak Nyoman Cana, an elementary school teacher in Kemenuh Village, Gianyar.



**Figure 1. Portrait of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan. (Doc: I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, 2008)**

When Mount Agung erupted in 1963, Dewa Nyoman Batuan moved to teach at Lotdunduh Elementary School, Ubud. Suffering, deep sadness, hunger, and poverty plagued the Balinese people at the time, life was difficult, and the salary earned as a teacher was not enough to support three children. Dewa Nyoman Batuan continued to look for ways to survive. In 1964, he tried to start selling paintings to areas where tourists went on vacation, such as Denpasar, Kuta, and Sanur. On July 12, 1970, he and his fellow painters in his village formed an association of painters called Komunitas Seniman Pengosekan (Pengosekan Artists Community), which consisted of 20 members. The aim was to collect artwork together while looking for ways to market their work. Usually, the painters come to one place, gather, and create artworks while inviting children to paint while playing. In these gatherings, children are introduced to traditional painting techniques, high imagination, skill and patience. Thus, the children began to pour their imagination into the medium, painting idolized characters in the world of puppetry. In 1975 Dewa Batuan and friends began to organize exhibitions. At first at home in the Pengosekan Artists Community, then in museums, art centers, and hotel lobbies in Bali, as well as abroad, such as in Europe, Australia, America, and Asian countries.

In between his busy exhibitions, he began to think about painting flora and fauna in naturalist realist form. Besides teaching,

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he is also a very active painter and art entrepreneur who manages his gallery, exhibitions continue such as at Museum Nusantara Delf, The Netherlands, Asian Art Show, Fokuoka Art Museum, Japan (1985), Special Exhibition of Balinese Fine Art, America Line, The Netherlands (1993), Asian Art Forum, The International House of Japan (1995), Teaches of Balinese Art, La Trobe University Museum, Victoria, Australia (1999), and several exhibitions in the country, including a solo exhibition at Museum Neka, Ubud (2002), and most recent at Bentara Budaya Bali (2010). He has also received the Dharma Kusuma Award from the Bali government (1994), the Wijaya Kusuma Award from Gianyar Regency (1995), and an award from the Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia (2008). As a teacher and painter, Dewa Batuan cannot escape the obligations that bind him in the community, namely as deputy village head (1972-1977), village head (1977-1987), and customary head (1987-2000) of Pengosekan Village.

The simplest form of Mandala in I Dewa Nyoman Batuan's paintings is dots. A collection of several dots placed in a certain area will have meaning. If the dots gather very tightly in a trajectory, it will form a line. Several lines together can form a shape. Several shapes together can form a space. Dots, lines, shapes and spaces are the basic forms of art. According to the Stone God, the result of his observation and contemplation of life and the meaning of symbols and all forms of science is a mandala. According to his belief, all the contents of nature, both tangible and intangible, originate from tiny particles. These particles exist in infinite space. From this perspective, he made mandala painting his trademark without abandoning the rules of fine art, such as form, beauty, and value. The subject of his paintings is life, which is based on customs, culture, and religious teachings. In connection with this, the overall appearance of his work displays symbolic forms that are full of meaning, a philosophy of life that is worked on decoratively as Balinese painting. The form of his paintings can be seen in terms of theme, elements used, and structure. The theme of the painting expressed through the elements through a certain arrangement structure will give an idea of the identification of the form of the painting.

Dewa Batuan is a creative and idealistic painter. So that what is expressed in his work is certainly something ideal, in accordance with his wishes. The questions that exist in his mind related to life and life in this world are always observed, pondered, and analyzed until finally getting an answer which is then made into a conclusion. The conclusion is that all kinds of objects (animate and inanimate objects), events, and experiences, whether experienced directly or not, that occur and exist in this world are mandalas. This mandala is then used as a concept and theme in every work of art he creates. As conveyed by Dewa Batuan in the following narrative: "I believe that all things in nature, both real and unreal, come from small points, they exist in an infinite space. It is from this belief that I create spherical paintings that are characterized by the shape, beauty and value of each painting. To be easily recognized by the public, each painting I create is called a mandala (Interview, November 18, 2013)

Susanne Langer in Djelantik (2008: 138), says that art is the creation of forms that symbolize human feelings. In other words, what the artist expresses in his work is a symbol of his feelings, something that represents his feelings. The mandala that is used as a basis for understanding life and existence is visualized through his works with abstract-symbolic forms. In order to be more easily recognized by the public, and to reinforce the concepts and themes raised, round-shaped paintings were made. Every theme and title of his paintings begins with the word "mandala". For example, Spherical Mandala, *lingga yoni mandala*, *Tat Twam Asi Mandala*, *rwabhineda mandala*, *contemplating mandala*, *mandala murid*, *mandala guru*, *saya dagang mandala*, *tiga garis sakti mandala*, *tiga bentuk garis mandala*, and so on. The themes raised by Dewa Batuan in his works can be categorized as follows: First, themes related to the teachings of religious philosophy as a symbolic guide to life, as well as his belief in the existence of God as the creator of nature and its contents. Second, themes related to the philosophy of life, customs and cultural traditions in Bali, and third, are about his life experiences from childhood to adulthood to married life. Below are presented Dewa Batuan's works with the themes or titles mentioned above.



**Figure 2. Mandala Lingga Yoni (Doc: I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, tahun 2003).**

**Figure 3. Mandala Tat Twam Asi (Doc: I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, tahun 2003).**



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Figure 2 is a photograph of a painting of the God of Rocks with the title Mandala Lingga Yoni. In Hinduism, lingga-yoni is a symbolic form of purusa-predana, male-female, and masculine-feminine and the meeting between those is a symbol of fertility. According to Gosta Liebert, the phallus is interpreted as a sign of gender, the phallus, a symbol of the principle of manhood (Liebert, 1976: 152). In addition, the phallus is also said to be a symbol of the God Shiva and is usually placed above the genitals, yoni. Yoni here means the symbol of female genitals, as a symbol of the female element. This Mandala Lingga Yoni painting by Dewa Batuan is also accompanied by poetry and the following explanation:

From reality try to believe,  
develop, multiply, and lay eggs,  
Happens because of intimate love,  
From him, God, Purusa, or a man called the Phallus,  
Predana or a woman called Yoni,  
Created nature and its contents. "



**Figure 4. Mandala Rwa Bhineda (Doc: I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, tahun 2003).**

**Figure 5. Mandala Aku Murid (Doc: I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, 2004).**

After I have observed and reflected deeply, on how important communion is for the preservation of nature and its contents. The communion that is based on the body on sacred love, the meeting between lingga and yoni, male and female, and between man and woman gives birth to the next generation. on sacred love, the meeting between phallus and yoni, male and female, between man and woman gives birth to the next generation. The meeting between heaven (rain) and earth (soil) fertilizes the seeds of rice. Because through this meeting, God is present and creates nature and its contents which until now still exist and will continue to exist as long as there is still a union of lingga and yoni (Batuan, 2003).

In the last circle, the deformation of the lotus flower called Padma consists of eight strands, which in Hinduism is a sacred symbol. The shape of the giant tortoise is the basis of the whole lingga-yoni object. In Hindu philosophy, the shape of a giant tortoise wrapped around two dragons is a basic symbol, a foundation to maintain the balance and stability of the universe. The following is Pande Wayan Suteja Neka's appreciation and view of the form and theme of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan's work: "I am the same age as him (Dewa Batuan), we are both teachers. He loved to study Hindu literature and to study things related to traditional medicine, explore the philosophy of Balinese culture and religious teachings (Hinduism), and traditional architecture. Many of his works highlight philosophical values that are full of religious meaning. Dewa Batuan is known for his mandala paintings (Interview with Pande Wayan Suteja Neka, January 20, 2015).

Figure 3, a photo of a painting of Dewa Batuan, Mandala Tat Twam Asi, is a philosophical expression in Hinduism that means that we can respect and appreciate each other to live a harmonious, peaceful, and prosperous life. The concept of tolerance, "I am you, you are me", is the meaning of Tat Twam Asi which is well known in Hinduism, a teaching or norm of life that guides our behavior in everyday life to respect each other. Tat Twam Asi means that hurting others is the same as hurting yourself, and making others happy is the same as making yourself happy. This reflects that Dewa Batuan as a painter really appreciates and upholds human values regardless of background; ethnicity, race, and religion. The following is his statement regarding Tat Twam Asi, as below: "Whatever we say and do to others, that is also what we will get back. If we want love, then give our love to others first. Undoubtedly, we will be loved and cherished. If we want others to speak gently to us, then we should start speaking gently to them first. If we want others to respect us, then we must start respecting others first. That is Tat Twam Asi, you are me, I am you." (Interview, November 26, 2013)

Above the male genitalia are plus (+) and minus (-) signs and a female genitalia sign. The circle surrounding the main

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object is filled with a collection of small dots. The outer circle and background are decorated with waves and angles. The plus-minus (+-) sign presented on the main object is a symbolic form of the concept of duality, the *rwabhineda*. In Hinduism, two different things (dualism) always accompany life and life on this earth, such morning-morning, day-night, good-bad, happy-sad, difficult-happy, male-female, black-white, dark-light, and so on. Dualism, two different things mentioned above, is a fact of life that colors life on this earth. However, if we can control, combine and synergize them, it will give birth to a beautiful, harmonious, and peaceful life. According to Dewa Batuan, the eternal law created by God in this life is duality. Two opposites, good-bad, day-night, dark-light, black-white, and so on. Just imagine, what if the contents of this nature are made the same, meaning that if all humans in this world are black, then their disposition and nature are evil and their beliefs are made the same, namely the same religion. Therefore, God deliberately created differences to make life beautiful (Interview, November 28, 2013).



**Figure 6. Mandala Aku Guru (Doc: I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, 2004).**

**Figure 7. Mandala Aku Dagang (Dok: I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, 2002)**

Figure 6 is a photo of a painting by Dewa Batuan that tells of his experiences and memories during his primary education. Dewa Batuan is very grateful to be able to go to school because many of his peers do not get an education because of the cost. Education for him is very important for the future even though he goes through it very hard. Early in the morning before going to school, he had to herd his ducks to the rice fields. An unforgettable memory, one day before going to school, it rained very heavily. The only shirt she had was wet. Because his desire to go to school was very strong, he borrowed his brother's singlet shirt to wear. Recalling this, Dewa Batuan laughed amusedly, because the T-shirt his brother was wearing was bigger and baggy, as visualized in the painting "Mandala Aku Murid" (Figure 5.). In the painting, in the center of the first-layer circle, there are three figures of siblings lined up. The one in the center wearing an oversized singlet is Dewa Batuan himself, flanked by two brothers (his brother and sister). The experience above, as a merchant who "sells paintings", is of course dealing with a variety of buyer characters that require him to be patient. He does this as best he can with a sense of sincerity, honesty, and friendliness, including exerting various efforts to generate buyer sympathy. The painting "Mandala Aku Dagang" (Figure 7) above, depicts the moments when Dewa Batuan serves tourists who are interested in his artwork. He explains in detail the questions asked by prospective buyers regarding his artwork. It is a special satisfaction if it can make tourists (prospective buyers) understand the artwork. So, not just to buy souvenirs, but because they are happy, interested, and understand the content and meaning of the painting, then they buy it. I am happy and satisfied if there are buyers like that (Interview, November 30, 2013).

"*Tiga Bentuk Garis Mandala*". In this work, Dewa Batuan only displays three-line shapes purely, not showing any issues, shapes, or anything else. The three lines include a straight line, a curved line, and an angled line. Each line shape is arranged and occupies a different space in a large circle. In the middle of the large circle, three small rooms are divided as the center point, which also houses the three types of line shapes mentioned above. Returning to the large space where each line shape is presented with geometric patterns, among others, a circle or small circle pattern on the curved line shape space, a rectangle pattern on the straight-line shape space, and a triangle pattern on the angular line shape space. This is done to explain the function of the three lines (Figure 8).



**Figure 8. Mandala Tiga Garis (Doc: I Dewa Nyoman Batuan, 1998).**

### **Elements of Mandala Painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan**

The elements of line in painting are the main elements, in art it does not only consist of chunks of mass, but the mass and contours of lines as the beginning of expressions and ideas in works of art. So fundamental to line, for both art and life, is that the clearer, sharper, and stronger the line, the more perfect the work of art, and the less clear or sharp the line, the weaker the imagination, imitation, and carelessness. The line that is the result of a painter's stroke reflects the strength of his imagination and skill. In Dewa Nyoman Batuan's painting style, the presence of lines is very clear, in addition to emphasizing the shape or field, it also provides accent and emphasis on the highlighted object. Thus, the line in the mandala painting style of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan has the main role to express his emotions according to his experience. The nature and character of the lines in his works adjust to the place. This means that in which place, and in what form, strong, soft, firm lines are needed, and so on. So that all forms, properties, and characters of lines can be present in his artworks. Likewise, with the use of color, color is one of the most important beauties in every work of art, especially painting. Color can provide symbolic meaning and aesthetic value that are integrated into a painting as an expression of the artist's personality. Since the discovery of the colors of the rainbow by physicist Sir Isaac Newton, it has been revealed that color is one of the natural phenomena that can be studied and developed further and deeper. Color is not just a visual element that has been used by painters from ancient times until now. Because through this historic discovery, the impact is very broad and transcends other disciplines. The colors he uses are pigment colors, which can dissolve in liquid solvents. The solvent can be water or oil. In this case, the types of pigments can be classified into two, pigments made from natural materials, such as animals, plants, soil, insects, and shellfish called organic pigments. Furthermore, pigments derived from artificial materials in the form of raw materials or chemically processed mining materials are called inorganic artificial pigments. Painting artists in the past usually preferred natural pigments to artificial ones.

Color in Balinese tradition has its own meaning, different from the Western approach and knowledge of color. In Bali, colors have symbolic meanings based on Hindu traditions. The value will distinguish the quality of the level of brightness. White has the highest hue and is the first color to be counted because it is located in the east of Bali Mandala. Black has the lowest hue; no other has a value as dark as black. The value gives a different effect to the color. If you want to make lighter color, just add white otherwise, if you want to make darker color, just add black. Also, using a bright hue will increase the size of an object. For example, a narrow room with walls painted red will feel wider than it actually is. White or other bright hue will reflect a bright or vibrant impression, while black absorbs color and reduces size. However, strong contrasting values have the power to attract attention, but if not used wisely, can have a confusing effect. Furthermore, the concept of black and white in Bali is called *rwabhineda*, which is a symbol of dark and light. In terms of the application of dark, black is used, while for the application of light, white is used. The black color symbolizes ugliness and the white color symbolizes goodness. Other colors in the Balinese color circle are applied *Nawa Sangga*, or *pangider bhuwana* (Balinese Cosmology) colors (Karja, 2020).

Furthermore, the internal colors in Dewa Batuan's works are the result of his personal processing. The external color in Dewa Batuan's works is minimal, even if there is only a stylization of the shapes of flowers and leaves, the color is slightly adjusted to the original as seen in his work entitled *Flower Mandala* below. The shapes have diverse characters that depend on position, line direction, dimension and rhythm. Some shapes can be engineered into an arrangement that can give a different and even fascinating



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impression. In essence, shapes have two dimensions: length and width. When arranged to intersect each other through a point or line, the new shape formed will have three dimensions, such as length, width, and height, and can create a sense of awareness. The beauty of the shape can be approached through the elements of proportion, color, texture, and the shape behind it, while enjoying the beauty of the shape can be achieved through visual observation. First of all, what is seen is the object as a whole, then combined with the feeling, which is evoked by vision, finally comes to the appreciation of each part.

The texture is the impression of the smoothness and roughness of the painting surface or the difference in the height and height of the painting surface. The texture is also a visual hue that emphasizes the character of the object being painted. There are two types of texture, the first is real texture, which is a surface value that is real or in accordance with the appearance and value of the object. For example, a painting shows a rough texture, when the painting is touched, it will feel rough according to the texture of the object. Secondly, pseudo-texture gives the impression of roughness due to the painter's mastery of dark and light techniques, when touched, the roughness is not visible, or even very smooth.

The composition of I Dewa Nyoman Batuan's paintings is obtained through the processing and arrangement of objects arranged in accordance with the concept of mandala. In general, the main object, as the subject matter, is placed in the center surrounded by the forms of supporting objects according to the circular pattern. As the focal point in his work, besides being placed in the middle, it is also reinforced with striking and brighter coloring, giving the impression of contrast. Proportion means comparison, and proportional means balanced or comparable. Thus, the proportion can be interpreted as a comparison, an object between one part and another comparable part. The proportion in Dewa Batuan's painting is not only seen in the shape of the object but also in the filling of space. Space-filling is the comparison between the object created and the size of the available field. It seems that he really understands the importance of space, although his works are made in a decorative style, the impression of space is very clear.

In the artwork, rhythm is a condition that shows the presence of something that occurs repeatedly and regularly. This regularity can be the same distance; as in fine art, or the same period; as in music, the universe has given many examples that contain color, which is rhythmic. The rising of the sun every 24 hours, the appearance of the full moon and new moon, and flow of the sea, and so on. In the biological life of creatures in the world, many things are rhythmic: breathing, heartbeat, the arrival of menstruation in women, as well as flowering and fruiting seasons in plants, which occur regularly. (Djelantik, 2008: 42).

The rhythm in Dewa Batuan's paintings often appears with repetitive shapes and motifs. This can be seen in some of his works entitled: *Mandala Mata*, *Mandala Padma*, *Mandala Sri Sedana*, *Mandala Biru*, and several others work. Balance is one of the basic principles of fine art. Artworks must have balance to be pleasing to the eye, calm, not one-sided, not disturbing, and not lame. Just as if we are near a tree or building that is tilted, it will collapse, which means it is in a state of imbalance, our feelings are unpleasant, not calm, restless, and afraid of falling. Similarly, a work of art that is unbalanced will be unpleasant to look at and disturbing.

Most of Dewa Batuan's paintings display a formal balance. This is due to the shapes and motifs of the objects that form the basis of his artwork. The focal point is also called the center of interest. The focal point aims to direct the attention of people enjoying the artwork. The focal point is also called dominant which is the focus of an arrangement, the center around other aesthetic elements. In Mandala paintings, this cannot be ignored because this focal point directs the viewer toward the most important part of the arrangement. The center refers to the principles for creating unity in various visual phenomena. The center can be achieved in several ways; by size, the largest shape will be seen first; by color strength or color contrast, on a surface with light colors will be the center of attention on a dark surface; through a place, observation will first be directed at the center of the visual area; using convergence, focusing attention on a single point; through exclusion, a rough texture will be very prominent on a smooth surface. Through the methods mentioned above, we can avoid boredom or a monotonous view of the artwork.

### Factors that Driven the Creation of Mandala Painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan

Observing Dewa Batuan's works in the mandalas is the actualization of an artist in expressing himself. His emotions and expressions in his works are an overflow and a pile of experiences that are poured freely with the mandala frame both related to tradition, society, culture, religion, and politics. This is evidenced by how high his belief in the existence of God is, always manifested in each of his works both through forms and symbols that are general in nature as the personification of God, and in other forms and symbols that are personal in nature. He was born in an environment where the community was very strong in maintaining traditions and customs and obeying religious teachings. Since childhood, in addition to helping his parents in the rice fields, he was also given the task of making small offerings, this task was carried out every day in turn with his siblings according to the time they had.

Another activity related to religious activities is prayer. Prayers are performed on certain days; full moon and new moon, ceremonies at the temple, holidays, and other important days. All activities related to religion that he had undertaken as a child, even though he did not understand the meaning and purpose, were very instrumental in shaping his character and mentality in his life journey. The experience of being a leader in his village made Dewa Batuan inevitably have to master the instructions and rules in tradition, custom, and religion because he was a leader who was required to be qualified. The experiences mentioned above shaped him into a very religious person. This is evidenced by the emergence of several of his works that always feature something related to the value and meaning of religious teachings as guidance and self-awareness in this life. The natural environment and the

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surrounding community play a significant role in an artist's artwork. During his childhood, he could still see and feel how beautiful nature was where he was born in. Development in the field of tourism such as buildings; hotels, villas, kiosks, art shops, galleries, and other buildings are still very rare.

There is only a vast expanse of rice fields with various types of birds flying freely, some are busy pecking at their prey in the middle of the rice fields with their unique movements. Therefore, many paintings at that time featured themes of natural beauty and images of people upholding the principle of togetherness in traditional and religious ceremonies, the atmosphere before feast days, rice harvesting, and other forms of togetherness. In addition to the natural environment and society, the interaction between local painters and foreign painters at the time, Walter Spies and Rudolf Bonnet, provided much motivation in developing painting themes, from wayang to nature and daily life themes. Regarding the explanation of the theory of change above, in line with the times, many changes have occurred, both changes in environmental conditions and changes in human attitudes. Dewa Batuan as an individual and social being who also interacts with other members of society cannot be separated from the influence of social changes that occur. As a painter, he also experienced this, from painting wayang, then painting the beauty of nature (flora and fauna) to finally producing works that lead to religious symbolic abstraction.

Visually, Dewa Batuan's works look the same as other traditional works of art in Ubud, so ordinary people as connoisseurs of works of art appreciate them flatly. This is very natural because ordinary people do not see anything strange and follow what they have seen and considered good. Public protests will arise when they see something deviant including in the art world, especially those related to traditional arts. Unlike the community of art lovers, observers, and collectors, they see something else that does not exist in traditional paintings in general in their artworks. Although at first glance they look the same, the personal strengths of their principles and concepts in viewing and collecting art are different. Responding to life based on very strong religious teachings are visible in his artworks, all of which are in the form of mandalas. Behind the visual forms, both real and abstract, are the philosophical values of life that need special deepening and appreciation to know.

Dewa Batuan is one of the artists who have high sensitivity to anticipate and respond to phenomena that occur due to tourism. From reading the existing phenomena, he was able to respond well to the tastes of tourists who came to his area, Ubud. In the 1970s he started the flora-fauna painting developed by his community who were members of the studio he founded. This painting became a favourite of tourists in the 1980s. Everywhere painters around the Ubud area at that time made the same painting, flora-fauna painting, finally, there was a mass product as well as the cause of the collapse of the value and quality of the painting. The down part is overproduction, which transformed the value from fine art to tourist art. Against this incident, he did not stop there, he returned to his original task. Long before started flora-fauna painting, he had already thought of raising the subject matter "mandala," as a concept and central theme in his artwork relates to religious symbols and philosophy.

### The Meaning of Mandala Painting by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan

According to Shipley in Kutha Ratna, (2007) the terms used for the word beauty, are beauty (English), and *beaute* (French). Beauty and *beaute* themselves come from Latin which means something good, namely *bellus* which is also derived through *bonus*, *bonum*, which means something good, good nature, virtue, and virtue. It should be noted that beauty is etymologically related to *benefit*, which means useful and beneficial. In Indonesian, the word beauty not only has the meaning of beauty as above, especially after becoming a derivative word, to heed but also means to take care of and to pay attention to. So, both the first and second meanings apply the subject's attention to the object. The meaning in question is very close to the proposition. The first step to gaining an understanding of beauty is to love or pay attention. With the above statement, to find out more about something that is said to be good and contains goodness, usefulness, and beauty, there must be steps and actions to heed, pay attention to, and most importantly a sense of love which then raises the subject's attention to the object. The mandala paintings by I Dewa Nyoman Batuan are the objects targeted in the writing of this article to find out in depth the extent of the aesthetic content that exists and its benefits for the subject, especially for the author as a party who cares about its existence.

Dewa Batuan's other works also feature symbols of God that are commonly known and understood by Balinese Hindus, both in visual form as well as in meaning, philosophy, and function. These works include paintings entitled *Mandala Tri Sakti*, *Mandala Saraswati*, *Mandala Padma*, and so on. Adding to the above explanation, Anak Agung Gde Rai, owner of the ARMA museum said: "I was with Ajik (Dewa Nyoman Batuan's nickname) selling paintings for quite a long time from the 1970s, I really understand his paintings and character. Hardworking, tenacious, assertive, and progressive. His mandala paintings have symbolic and abstract meanings. Religious values, customs, and Balinese culture are the main themes of his works" (Interview with Anak Agung Gde Rai, January 20, 2015).

Hinduism is the most dominant element and also the spirit of Balinese culture. Hinduism is the main source of value that animates Balinese culture. Every result of Balinese cultural creativity, including art, cannot be separated from the bonds of Balinese noble values, especially aesthetic values derived from Hinduism (Dibia, 2003: 91). Following the narration of I Ketut Kebut, a Pengosekan traditional painter about the painting of Dewa Batuan as follows, *rwabhineda*, is a teaching about the philosophy of life that recognizes the existence of two different things that color life in this world. This term is an understanding of dualism that is mutually opposite, but its existence cannot be separated, because it is an eternal law of nature. Through this work, he wants to convey that difference is very important. *Rwabhineda* is a variation of life that will reflect beauty and prosperity, such as the existence of day-night, dark-light, male-female, east-west, north-south, good-bad, rich-poor, and so on.



## Balinese Hindu Philosophy in Mandala Painting

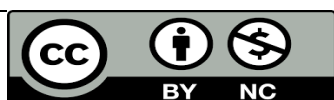
*Tat Twam Asi* consists of the words *Tat* which means that, *Twam* which means you, and *Asi* which means is. So, *Tat Twam Asi* means I am you, and you are me, which implies tolerance that humans are equal. That is, both have the same value and come from the same source, which is equally God's creation. Hurting others means hurting yourself, helping others means helping yourself, respecting and appreciating others means respecting and appreciating yourself (Parisada Hindu Dharma Committee, 1991: 51). Through the artwork with the title "*Tat Twam Asi*" Dewa Batuan makes all creatures on this earth aware, especially humans as God's most perfect creation to live side by side, in harmony with each other, with the environment and most importantly always remember God as the creator of nature and its contents.

### CONCLUSION

I Dewa Nyoman Batuan's Mandala paintings contain aesthetic, symbolic, religious, renewal, and socio-cultural meanings. The necessity of aesthetic value content in artworks is because the realization process is based on a sense of pleasure, sincere, without pretension, purely only to please the tastes of artists and others outside themselves. This is also the case with mandala paintings, in addition to satisfying and arousing the pleasure of the painter, it also arouses the pleasure of other people or viewers. The symbolic meaning in mandala paintings is very strong because the objects are visually realized in the form of symbols. The symbols displayed are dominated by religious nuances and teachings. Thus, mandala paintings contain symbolic and religious meanings. He is one of the many traditional painters who are able to create new values, at least as a creator, he is able to realize ideas in his work with a style that is very different from traditional painting. His works are completely new, and unprecedented, but do not leave the characteristics of the tradition itself. Thus, the works of art created by Dewa Batuan contain the meaning of renewal. Without realizing it, directly or indirectly, the social and cultural environment in which the artist lives has an important role in directing and determining the direction of the artwork produced, both ideas, concepts, and visual forms. Dewa Batuan from birth until the end of his life lived in a social and cultural environment based on the same traditions and beliefs, the traditions of Balinese life based on the teachings of Hinduism. He passed away on February 14, 2014, and was known as a reliable mandala painter.

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