

Kunsthall Stavanger



Citra Sasmita. *The Rites of Creation* (2025)

PRESS RELEASE

18 February 2026

Citra Sasmita
12 March – 16 August 2026

Opening: 12 March, 6pm

KUNSTHALL STAVANGER ANNOUNCES CITRA SASMITA

Kunsthall Stavanger is proud to present *Who Stole the Sky*, the first solo exhibition in the Nordic region by interdisciplinary Balinese artist Citra Sasmita. For the Kunsthall, Sasmita has created a new body of work that unfolds as a multisensory meditation on ancestral memory, humanity's relationship to nature, and spirituality. The exhibition will showcase traditional Kamasan paintings, textiles, and sculpture, and features an immersive installation in which Balinese culture and techniques are reinterpreted through a feminist lens. The exhibition proposes art as a ritual space that invites viewers to encounter history, cosmology, and the body, not as separate realms, but as deeply entangled.

Sasmita is a self-taught artist with a background in physics, illustration, and poetry. She trained with traditional Kamasan painters and priestesses and is one of only two women globally to have been taught this technique, which has historically been passed down through male lineages. Her practice engages with ancient Balinese myths, rituals, and iconography while reinserting female narratives into histories from which they have long been excluded. Through this reclamation, Sasmita also confronts the enduring effects of colonialism on land, education and belief systems, and artistic production, reimagining tradition not as a static inheritance, but as an evolving and critical force for transformation.

Who Stole the Sky is an invitation to reconciliation: between humans and nature, creativity and devotion, tradition and contemporary practice. Sasmita reminds us that art is not merely a commodity, but a condition of being human. 'Our religion is art,' the artist notes. 'We need to keep creating art to be human.' In this exhibition, art becomes a shared ritual space that asks us to remember, to sense, and to imagine new ways of living together with our human and non-human relations.



Citra Sasmita Artist Portrait. Image courtesy of Citra Sasmita. Photo by Gus Agung, Niskala Studio

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Citra Sasmita (b. 1990, Bali, Indonesia) is a self-taught artist. She studied literature and physics and worked as a short story illustrator for the *Bali Post* before developing her artistic practice. Sasmita focuses on unravelling the myths and misconceptions of Balinese art and culture, while shedding light on the Dutch colonial history which shaped notions of authenticity in Bali. Sasmita employs the Kamasan painting technique, which originated from a small village in Klungkung, East Bali in the 15th century and is traditionally practised exclusively by men to narrate Hindu epics. She engages with it as a reclamation of female agency. In recent years, Sasmita has expanded her practice to include sculpture and installation, incorporating various materials such as braided hair, antique wooden pillars and ancient textiles to create her universe of empowered and divine cosmology.

Her work has been shown in several notable biennales and triennales such as *ALOHA NŌ*, Hawai'i Triennial (Hawai'i, 2025), *to carry*, Sharjah Biennial (United Arab Emirates, 2025); *Precarious Joys*, Toronto Biennial of Art (Canada, 2024); *After Rain*, Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale (Saudi Arabia, 2024); *Ten Thousand Suns*, 24th Biennale of Sydney (Australia, 2024); *Choreographies of the Impossible*, 35th São Paulo Biennale (Brazil, 2023); *The Open World*, 3rd Thailand Biennale, Mae Fah Luang Art and Cultural Park, Chiang Rai (Thailand, 2023); *Garden of Ten Seasons*, Savvy Contemporary, Berlin (Germany, 2022); Kathmandu Triennale (Nepal, 2021-2022); *ARTJOG MMXXII, Time To Wonder*, Jogja National Museum, Yogyakarta (Indonesia, 2021); and the Biennale Yogyakarta (Indonesia, 2019). Recent solo exhibitions include *Into Eternal Land*, Barbican The Curve, (London, 2025); *Atlas of Curiosity*, Yeo Workshop (Singapore, 2023); *Ode To The Sun*, Yeo Workshop (Singapore, 2020); and *Tales of Nowhere*, Museum MACAN, Jakarta (Indonesia, 2020).

ABOUT KUNSTHALL STAVANGER

Kunsthall Stavanger is a leading space for contemporary art, committed to fostering bold artistic experimentation, critical discourse, and meaningful encounters. Since its founding in 2013, the Kunsthall has emerged as a vital site for contemporary artistic production and mediation.

For press inquiries, high-resolution images, or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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