

I Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih Dyslexia Friendly Exhibition Notes

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Feels Strangely Good, Ya?

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27 Sep 2025–11 Jan 2026

The late Balinese artist I Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih 'Murni' (1966–2006, Bali) was a prolific, largely self-taught artist who created a vividly raw body of work that is both confessional and confrontational, humorous and surreal in its nature.

Born in 1966, Murni's early life was shaped by displacement and hardship. Despite resistance from Murni, her family sold their land and rice fields to relocate to South Sulawesi under the Indonesian government's transmigration programme. This resulted in upheaval in Murni's life and disrupted the family's sacred connection to their land. Following the move Murni worked in various roles such as a domestic helper or a seamstress.

In the 1990s Murni moved to Ubud in a return to her beloved Bali, for a time working at a silversmith before marrying a soldier. Due to health complications Murni was unable to conceive and the relationship with her husband failed, prompting her to file for divorce – unprecedented for the time. In 1994, after four years, a divorce was granted and Murni began working at the house of the Italian painter Edmondo Zanolini

'Mondo' (b.1951), who later became her life partner.

At the time, Mondo was apprentice to renowned Pengosekan painter I Dewa Putu Mokoh 'Mokoh' (1936–2010), to whom Murni also became an apprentice. This was a key moment in establishing a foundation for her later creative output. While Murni initially absorbed Mokoh's formal qualities her work rapidly diverged in tone and form, revealing a raw, deeply

personal and often emotionally charged inner world.

At the heart of her vision was an understanding of life force as an essentially sexual energy – one that permeates everything. In her home she surrendered to that energy, painting day and night, often waking in the middle of sleep to sketch her dreams, following the subconscious stream of images that demanded to be seen. Drawing from all her lived experience, her traumas and joys,

and using fragments of her dreams, psyche and subconscious she made her life art, and art her life. Her work was liberation, a way of reclaiming the female body. It challenged taboo subjects of female sexuality, desire and power.

Her curious, naturally unconventional and humbly rebellious nature drove Murni to continuously develop her practice and acquire new skills – woodcarving, mask making and soft

sculpture. In her life, as much as her transgressive visual language, she lived balancing between what was socially understood as feminine and masculine. As described in *I See Myself Floating: the art and life of I Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih*, Murni's best friend Suarniti recalls that 'when Murni longed to dance, she learned the baris: a pre-hindu ritual dance that was typically performed not by girls, but boys'

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At a time when the female body was often portrayed as merely a muse, or was erased from cultural visibility, Murni painted it unapologetically as the subject.

Instead of mirroring the painful patriarchal reality, Murni intuitively muted and merged motifs sourced from her subconsciousness and re-dreamed lived experiences. In her work, fragments of sometimes painful bodily and subconscious memories merge in half-animal and half-object hybrids. The line

between oppression and liberation
constantly fluctuates through

Murni's use of playful imagery and
bright colours. The titles teased
and provoked – they dance with
absurdity, desire, and sound. **Murni**
passed away in 2006 at the tender
age of 40. Her works remain
ageless and pulsing with urgency.

RELATED EVENTS

WALKTHROUGHS

Wed 1 Oct, 12pm

Welcome Walkthrough

Explore the exhibition with our
team and community partners,

Manjit Sahota, Poets Against

Racism and Anna Ball, HEAL

(Hostile Environment, Art-fuelled
Living) followed by refreshments
and conversation in the café.

Wed 8 Oct, 1pm

With Annie Jael Kwan, curator and
researcher.

Wed 22 Oct, 1pm

Curators' Walkthrough

Join Nottingham Contemporary's curators for a tour of our autumn exhibitions.

Wed 10 Dec, 1pm

With students from the BA Fine Art

course, Nottingham Trent University

12.30 Talks

**12.30pm every Tue, Thu and Sat,
starting Tue 7 Oct**

**Join one of our friendly Gallery
Assistants for a short exploration
of one of our current exhibitions.
For more details visit our website.**

Thu 2 Oct, 4.30pm

Teacher CPD Session

**An art-making and practice-sharing
session in our galleries. For
educators of all stages.**

LISTENING SESSION

Wed 3 Dec, 7pm

Listening Session with Rahel

Stephanie,

weaving together music, personal
storytelling, and cultural context,
exploring themes from Murni's
work between tracks.

FREE FAMILY ACTIVITIES

October Half-Term: 21 Oct - 30

Oct, Tue, Wed & Thu

Explore the themes in the
exhibitions through making and
play.

Mon 6 **O**ct, 10 **N**ov, 15 **D**ec

Early Years **S**ensory **W**orkshops:

We **A**re **W**onderlings

Explore the world through sensory
free play in a safe and
stimulating environment.

OTH**E**R **E**VEN**T**S

Thu 2 Oct, 7pm

111

Three live performances rooted in the expression of Louis Carnell's collaborative record. Featuring Louis Carnell, Wu-Lu, Li Yilei, Juliana Day & Tom Harris.

Wed 8 Oct, 6:30pm

**Tender Stones by Lucy Suggate
with Cool Company**

Live performance exploring the transferable properties of stone, petrification, heaviness and

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tenderness, presented as part of
Nottdance 2025. Suitable for all.

Fri 10 - Sun 12 Oct

Print Fair Contemporary

Over 35 stalls showcasing a wide
range of printmakers, illustrators
and artists.

Wed 15 Oct, 7:30pm

Mōnad by Alexandra 'Spicey'

Lande with MC Jai Nitai Lotus

A contemporary dance performance
exploring how we approach
different incarnations of the same
life, presented as part of
Nottdance 2025. Suitable for ages
18 and over.

Sat 25 - Sun 26 Oct

Festival of Resistance

Join us for a special weekend of
community celebration and
solidarity. Meet community groups
and activists, take part in talks

and creative workshops and be part of the action.

Sat 1 Nov, 10:20am & 1:30pm

**The Show for Young Men by
GuestHouse Projects**

A funny and tender contemporary dance performance that considers the complexities of modern-day masculinity, presented as part of Nottdance 2025. Suitable for ages 8 and over.

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Tue 4 Nov, 6.30 p m

Jarman Award 2025

Jarman Award Touring Programme

**2025, followed by an in-conversation
with Morgan Quaintance.**

Fri 5 - Sun 7 Dec

Craft Fair Contemporary

40 stalls from independent

**designers and makers showcasing a
variety of specialisms.**

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For more information about the exhibition, related events and learning programmes, visit nottinghamcontemporary.org or scan here:



COLOPHON

We are grateful to all those
whose generosity made this
exhibition possible.

Headline **S**upporter: Gajah Gallery

Publication **S**upporter: Tanoto Art
Foundation

The **M**urni **E**xhibition **C**ircle:

Natasha **S**idarta, Galuh **S**ukardi,

Raja **U**mar **J**amalullail (The

MENAEA **C**ollection)

and those who wish to remain
anonymous.

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The exhibition is curated by
Salma Tuqan and Katie Simpson,
assisted by Klara Szafrńska.

Exhibition graphics by Waste
Studio.

If you would like a quiet space to
reflect during your visit, please
visit Gallery 0 (room adjacent to
Gallery 1). If you would like to use
any alternative forms of
interpretation, we have a range of
accessible versions on our Access
Wall beside Reception or alongside
the wall text in the exhibition.

**Nottingham Contemporary is a
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on the generosity of our visitors,
partners and supporters.**