

# Preserving Legacy

The Bali 1928 Archive collaboration is taking the first step in documenting the cultural artifacts of Bali's royal palace.



**Mythical creature:** This unvarnished wooden statue of a Balinese dragon is part of the Puri Gerenceng collection.

Courtesy of Bali 1928 Archive



**Dusting off:** A student cleans an unvarnished mask.

JPI/Wayan Juniarta

## I Wayan Juniarta

THE JAKARTA POST/DENPASAR

**A**nak Agung Yoka Sara, one of Bali's most prominent architects and impresarios, is not known as a morning person. His most industrious period of the day is usually late at night when he engages in nocturnal discussions with the island's young talents through the ongoing progressive art series SPRITES, or the garbage education movement, Malu Dong.

Yet, on a recent Sunday he enthusiastically greeted the arrival of the morning. Dressed in a simple traditional Balinese sarong and with a burning cigarette between his lips, he emerged from a rustic stone gateway that separates the inner and middle courtyards of Puri Gerenceng, a royal palace in west Denpasar.

In his right hand was a red dragon-head mask and in his left an unpolished wooden statue.

There was a big smile on his face as he approached I Made Bandem, a senior art professor and one of the island's most influential scholars, who was waiting on the veranda of the palace's rustic yet majestic, colonial-style reception hall.

"This one was carved by my great grandfather," Yoka proudly said as he handed over the red dragon mask to Bandem, who said he immediately took a liking to it.

The late Anak Agung Made Gde, Yoka's great grandfather, was a famous artist and carver, one of the brightest stars ever produced by Puri Gerenceng. During his time the royal palace, which served as the defensive bastion for the larger Puri Denpasar in the east, was also a thriving school for the region's aspiring mask performers and carvers. The Puri Denpasar royal palace was razed to the ground in 1906 during the historic Puputan Badung battle against the Dutch.

"This dragon mask is usually placed on the top of the 'Janggan kite' as its head," Yoka added, referring to the most majestic of Bali's traditional kites.

With flowing tails that could reach dozens of meters, Janggan kites are a breathtaking sight to behold on the vast blue sky of Bali. The record for the longest tail is currently held by Nagaraja, a Janggan kite created by the youths of Dangin Peken hamlet in Sanur: Their kite had a 234.5-meter-long tail. Gerenceng is known as a Janggan-making region and Yoka played a pivotal role in the 2013 production of the documentary movie, *Janggan: Harvesting the Wind*.

Bandem took a ruler and began measuring the dimension of the mask as his son, Marlowe Bandem, the coordinator of the Bali 1928 Archive and Repatriation Project, typed the results of the measurements.

Later on, two photographers from STIMIK STIKOM Bali, an information and technology college Bandem co-founded that is one of the principal institutions behind Bali 1928, took detailed shots of the mask from multiple angles.

"This is our first step in documenting and digitalizing the art collection of the royal palaces in Bali. We truly appreciate that members of the Gerenceng royal family have warmly welcomed this initiative," Bandem said.

"Hopefully, through this initiative we will be able to build a digital database of these prized collections that the general public

— scholars and art lovers — could easily access."

Bandem stressed that access is very important for enhancing the cultural conservation and revitalization efforts. Wider and easier access would yield stronger public participation.

Yoka revealed that Puri Gerenceng has a collection of about 80 masks and statues, as well as a gorgeous and historically important gamelan set.

Anak Agung Ngurah Adi Ardhana, a rising star in the Bali Legislative Council who also hails from Puri Gerenceng, praised the initiative and urged the other royal families on the island to follow suit.

"In the past, the royal palaces were the centers of the island's art and culture; thus, we have the responsibility to educate the present generation of Balinese on the historic artworks and art forms bequeathed to us," he said.

There are several important royal palaces in Denpasar, including Puri Satria — seen as the successor of Puri Denpasar's lineage — Puri Pemecutan, Puri Jro Kuta and Puri Kesiman. All possess art collections of considerable size.

Marlowe Bandem stated that the initiative was the logical extension of the Bali 1928 project.

"Through Bali 1928 we have repatriated significant numbers of Bali's cultural artifacts from individuals and institutions abroad. Through this new initiative of documenting collections in royal palaces, we attempt to build a more comprehensive picture of our cultural legacy," he said.

Spurred by the research of American ethnomusicologist Edward Herbst on historic recordings of traditional Balinese music and vocal music made in mid-1928 by German record company Odeon and Beka, Bali 1928 is an international collaboration involving STIMIK STIKOM Bali, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and Arbiter of Cultural Traditions aimed at acquiring and restoring those historical records and bringing them back to Bali.

It has published five volumes of CDs and DVDs of Herbst's research and the remastered music of Odeon and Beka's 111 discovered vinyl records.

The project has also managed to secure photographs and a total of six hour-long pieces of movie footage shot by some illustrious westerners, including Colin McPhee, Miguel Covarrubias and Rolf de Mare, of the island's landscape, art performances and rituals in the 1930s.

"As part of bringing this wealth of historical information back to the Balinese, we have organized 35 public screenings in schools, community halls and public events across the island and have dedicated a room at STIMIK STIKOM Bali as a permanent exhibition venue for Bali 1928," Marlowe said.



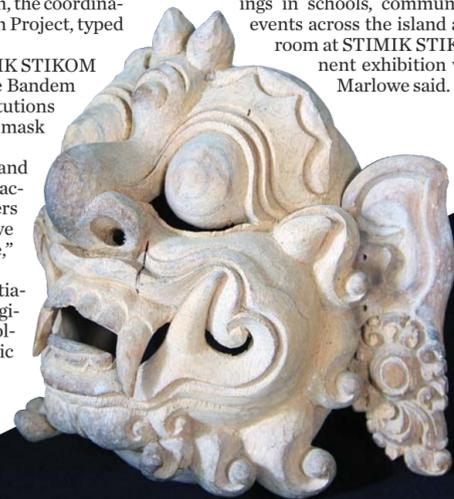
**Morning chat:** Yoka Sara (left) gestures as he explains the movement of the Janggan kite to Made Bandem.

JPI/Wayan Juniarta



**Legacy:** Two dragon masks underline the role of Puri Gerenceng as a school for aspiring performers and carvers.

Courtesy of Bali 1928 Archive



**Work in progress:** This unfinished mask of a giant is one of around 80 masks and statues in the Puri Gerenceng collection.

Courtesy of Bali 1928 Archive

## GUESS WHAT?

### Bong urges new rules over Netflix movies at theatres

**SEOUL:** A top South Korean director called Wednesday for new rules on screening Netflix films in cinemas as local chains boycott his blockbuster over the United States streaming giant's online policy.

The movie *Okja*, directed by Bong Joon-ho, sparked controversy at this year's Cannes film festival over Netflix's policy of releasing its movies in cinemas and online on the same day.

The policy drew angry protests from cinema owners in France, which does not allow online streaming until three years after a film's release in movie theatres.

Bong said he pushed for the general release of *Okja* in cinemas due to his "artistic ambition" to make it available across many platforms, but he found the arguments from both sides "understandable."

"I think that *Okja* will pave the way for efforts to establish new rules and regulations over screening of Netflix movies in theatres," he said. — AFP



AFP

### Ashanty wants to grow old in Bali

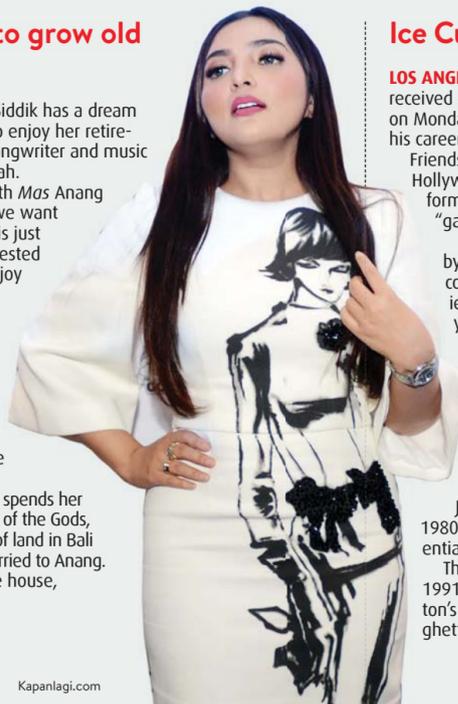
**JAKARTA:** Singer Ashanty Siddik has a dream of having a house in Bali to enjoy her retirement with her husband, songwriter and music producer Anang Hermansyah.

"I want to grow old with *Mas Anang* in Bali. If God's willing, we want to live there because it is just different from the congested Jakarta. We want to enjoy its quiet atmosphere," she said as quoted by *kompas.com*.

The 32-year-old singer said she likes the idea of going to places by motorcycle and wearing sandals while at ease in Bali.

Ashanty, who often spends her vacations on the Island of the Gods, said she bought a plot of land in Bali shortly after she got married to Anang.

"We haven't built the house, though," she said. — JP



Kapanlagi.com

### Ice Cube gets Hollywood star

**LOS ANGELES:** Rapper-turned-actor Ice Cube received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on Monday and thanked everyone who helped his career in music and movies.

Friends and family attended the ceremony on Hollywood Boulevard, including Dr. Dre, a former fellow member of the seminal "gangsta" rap group N.W.A.

"You know, you don't get here by yourself and when you're coming up doing music, movies, just trying to be creative, you never figure you'll be on the Hollywood Walk of Fame one day," Ice Cube said.

"So today is not really about Ice Cube, it's about all the people who helped me get here," he added.

Ice Cube, born as O'Shea Jackson, found fame in the 1980s alongside Dr. Dre in the influential West Coast rap group N.W.A.

The rapper began acting in movies in 1991 with a starring role in John Singleton's film about life in a Los Angeles ghetto, *Boyz n the Hood*. — Reuters



AFP