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BEB-24

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21 February 1984

Dear Peter

In 1597, eighty-seven years after the Spice Islands were discovered by the Portugese, Dutch ships under the command of Cornelius Houtman dropped anchor near the island of Bali. So warm was the welcome from the local ruler, so abundant the hospitality of the local populace, that many of Houtman's crew refused to leave; it took him two years to round up enough crewmen to sail back to Holland.

It took almost another three and a half centuries for the rest of the world to make good Houtman's discovery. Today, a bare fifty years since the word got out, Bali suffers from an annual tourist invasion so immense, so rapacious, it threatens the island's traditional culture with complete suffocation. Today, tourist arrivals total around 350,000. By 1986 the numbers are expected to top 750,000. Not long afterwards, the Balinese will be playing host to almost a million tourists a year. This on an island of only 5,632 square kilometers (2,095 square miles) with a resident population of almost three million.

As Houtman and others found out, Bali is unique. In the fifteenth century, before the first known Western contact, Bali had been the on-again, off-again vassal of eastern Java's Majapahit empire. By the sixteenth century, however, Majapahit was decaying and finally fell under the advancing scourge of Islam. Seeking refuge, the upper-caste Hindu rulers of Majapahit, the aristocracy and priesthood, fled to their former colony, transporting the cream of Indic Javanese culture with them. The resulting syncretic melange of Javanized Hinduisim and Balinese animism flourished on the little island: the gods of the Hindu cosmos proliferated, metamorphosized and made their home on Bali's Mount Agung volcano, erupting if angered, quiescent if appeased; the demons, just as prolific, infested the graveyards, the impure places, the seas, feeding on refuse and decay, causing sickness and catastrophe. These sacred and chthonic worlds regulated the lives of the Balinese, exacting tribute, entertainment and ritual, delivering food, life and health in a complex, interwoven net of calendrical cycles that determined the auspicious or untimely nature of every human event. Art, dance, music and drama were as much a part of the net as eating and sleeping, birth and death. All were necessary, basic to existence. Sustained by the pleasant tropical climate and one of the most efficiently organized wet-rice agricultural systems on earth, Balinese religious and creative activity evolved, intertwined, invioluted and prospered.

The descendants of the original Majapahit aristocracy were the patrons of this activity. Proliferating, spreading, staking out their own claims, this crazy-quilt patchwork of warring fiefdoms sponsored festivals, musical competitions, cock-

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fight, dance-dramas, new gamelan instruments, better costumes, more elaborate temples, a continuing seesaw competition of prestige, favor and intrigue. The Brahmana priesthood guided the activity, determining auspicious days, administering rites, concocting magical formulas. Underneath, the peasants, engines of creativity, provided the necessary energy and labor.

Such was Bali at the close of the last century, the final period of autonomy for the island. The Dutch, once mere merchants, by now controlled most of Indonesia, including the former Balinese colony of Lombok. Some of Bali's princes too were in the Dutch thrall. But it was not until 1908, after a series of bloody campaigns, that Bali was finally incorporated into the Netherlands East Indies. The price was heavy: most of Bali's major royal houses were annihilated by the Dutch guns; rather than face capture and exile, most chose puputan, a suicidal fight to the death. Only the minor aristocracy remained to become puppet regents of the colonials.

Still Bali remained obscure, exciting only the interest of scholars, merchants, and occasional curiosity seekers until 1931, when a group of Balinese dancers, musicians and artists were brought to the Paris Colonial Exhibition by the KPM shipping line. The Exposition whetted the public appetite; the books and films that followed made them ravenous. This was the decade of anthropologists like Stutterheim, Belo, Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead. This was the era of artists Walter Spies and Rudolph Bonnet. This was the time of painter Miguel Covarrubias, musician Collin McPhee and other scholars. This too was the beginning of the end, for in the 1930's the first tourist boats arrived.

Early tourism on the island was sporadic, flickering out during World War Two, sputtering along throughout the forties and fifties, finally gaining momentum after the Indonesian political upheavals of the mid-1960's. The Balinese quickly learned the monetary value foreigners attached to their music, dance and art--money they needed since royal patronage had declined and banjars (village wards) had been forced to shoulder more of the financial burden of the gamelan ensembles and dance troupes. Since much performance activity was religious, however, and closely linked to the convoluted Balinese calendar, new dances had to be crafted that could be performed any time, any place. Secularized versions of sacred and semi-sacred dances, composite genres stripped of sacralia, these new dances filled the need for fast-moving, easily-understandable, hour-long performances that could be performed on-call at hotels or other tourist destinations.

Such new creations, linked to the tourist calendar, did not replace but supplemented more traditional dance forms, which were themselves undergoing continuous change and refinement. Fluid, not rigid, traditional Balinese dance had long been characterized by innovation, modification and external borrowing. Legong, one of the best known secular temple dances, is itself an adaptation of the now-extinct nandir and displays a vocabulary of movement borrowed from the sang hyang dedari trance dance. Janger, a secular dance-drama that has known many periods of island-wide popularity and disfavor on Bali, employs an eclectic costuming that includes a Balinese-style collar, a beret, sunglasses, short trousers, knee socks and tennis shoes, items that originated in stambul, an antecedent Javanese dance form. Janger

singing incorporates sounds borrowed from the Western solfeggio. The product of indigenous genius, such dances are popular with both Balinese and tourist audiences. The newer tourist genres, on the other hand, are usually of scant interest to locals, except, of course, for their money-making potential

Walter Spies was the catalyst for one of today's best-known Balinese tourist entertainments, the kecak or monkey dance. Spies requested the dancers of Bedulu\*, a village in southern Bali, to devise a new kind of performance accompanied solely by the type of choral chanting used in the sang hyang dedari exorcism-rite. This complex, rhythmic "chak chak chak" pattern sung by perhaps a dozen men, accompanies and sustains the entranced movements of specially selected pre-adolescent girls. This sacred ritual is an extraordinary event, not part of the regular Balinese calendar, and is usually performed to ward off epidemics and other catastrophes. Plucked from this sacrosanct milieu, the kecak chorus was expanded and elaborated to a hundred or more chanters sitting in concentric circles around a lamp-lit performing area, where dancers enacted an episode from the Hindu Ramayana epic. Hanuman, the monkey-god, is an important character in this story; the kecak chorus serves both as accompaniment and as symbolic representations of Hanuman's monkey army. The Bedulu creation, instantly successful, rapidly spread to other villages and was soon a de rigeur event for visiting tourists anxious to see "temple dancing." As in most Balinese art, changes initiated or popularized in one area quickly spread throughout the island. Thus, in 1969, when Singapadu villagers modified their kecak performance to include new costuming, an enlarged musical repertoire and the entire Ramayana tale (changes initiated by students returning home from their studies at the government dance college in the Balinese capital city, Denpasar), the updated version was quickly adapted in other villages. Tour agents participated in the evolution, threatening to keep their clients from villages that refused to incorporate the new innovations. Authenticated by years of weekly performances the kecak eventually came full circle: in 1983 during the annual Galungan festival, kecak was performed for a primarily Balinese audience at the pura dalem (cemetery temple) of Padang Tegal's "monkey forest," a fitting venue, even by local standards.

Other dances were soon secularized and performed for profit. The now-famous Barong and Rangda dance is, in fact, a secularized version of the Calonarang dance-drama. Subject of Margaret Mead's film, "Trance and Dance in Bali," Calonarang occurs both in dance and the wayang kulit shadow puppet theater. The ritual, used to neutralize evil sorcery, is considered particularly dangerous by the Balinese: performing partially in the village cemetery, Calonarang participants invoke leyaks (witches), feign death, challenge local magicians to do their worst, and in some versions attempt self-stabbing with magically-charged keris. Performed often in the villages of the Batubulan area, Calonarang was very popular with early tourists to Bali. In 1948, at the request of Denpasar's Bali Hotel, a new hour-long tourist dance was crafted from the basic Calonarang format, retaining the masked witch-protagonist, Rangda, and incorporating an opponent, the magical Balinese lion, Barong. Between these polar opposites is woven a dance-drama story taken from the Hindu Mahabharata epic. Plot, music, and choreography are designed for tourist appeal and attention-span, as is the simulated self-stabbing that ends the performance. The drama has proven immensely popular and is performed in Batubulan and other villages on a weekly basis. Souvenir audio cassettes are hawked to tourists after most performances.

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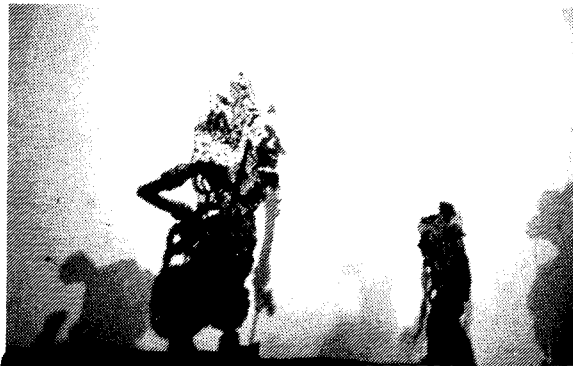
\*see map on page 18



1. Legong dancer, tourist performance, Ubud.



2. Condong (maidservant) as a "bird of ill omen," legong dance, tourist performance, Ubud.



3. Characters from Calonarang epic as depicted in a wayang kulit tourist performance, Ubud.



4. Baris, a warrior dance for males, is based on military manoeuvres. Tourists most often see solo Baris, a storyless study of a warrior, here performed by one of Ubud's outstanding dancers, Anom.

5. Barong Ket, the dragon-lion, posing for the cameras at a Batubulan performance of the Barong and Rangda tourist entertainment.

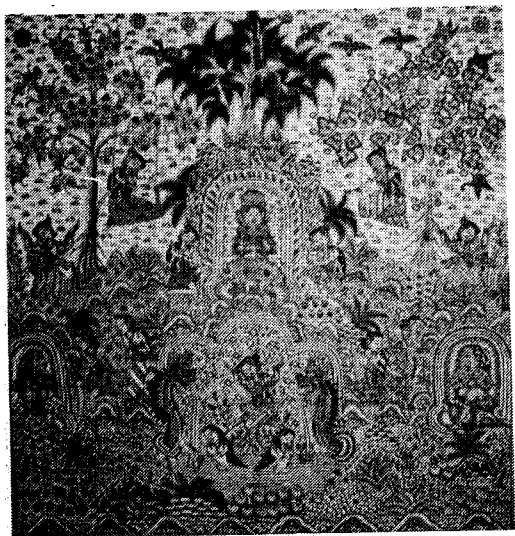


Though Walter Spies was an important force in the evolution of modern Balinese tourist dance, he is best known for his contributions to Balinese art. Based in Ubud, a small village in the Balinese foothills about 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) from Denpasar, Spies painted dream-like, surrealistic scenes of Balinese life and landscape in oil on canvas. Together with the figure painter and portraitist, Rudolph Bonnet, Spies encouraged (but did not teach) a few young Balinese friends to paint with Chinese ink on paper. More versatile than the traditional palm-leaf etchings and cloth-drawings, the new medium was an instant success, and was quickly assimilated by other young painters. Some painted the myths and epic stories traditional in Balinese painting. Others, perhaps inspired by Spies example, began experimenting with landscape. Virtually all were men, the group usually associated with Balinese painting and sculpture (women, conversely, have a near monopoly on weaving, plaiting, and the production of lamaks, the decorative palm-leaf offerings made for Balinese festivals). Older artists, like I Gusti Nyoman Lempad, were also influenced by Spies and Bonnet. They too began experimenting with ink on paper, but, long trained in the traditional representational conventions of the island, remained closer to orthodox mythological imagery than their younger colleagues.

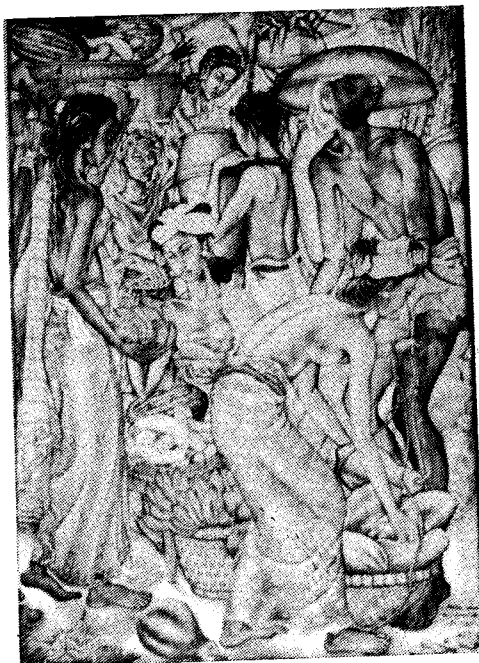
Soon, watercolors were introduced and combined with Chinese ink. Different villages became known for their idiosyncratic styles, a manifestation of the social cohesion and group orientation displayed by all Balinese, artists or no. Ubud became synonymous with pastoral landscapes, occasionally combined with traditional narratives or mythology. Batuan developed a very different approach: sombre, sometimes nightmarish miniatures only lightly touched with color. Sanur, a coastal village six kilometers (3.7 miles) south of Denpasar where the Western artists Le Majeur and the Neuhaus brothers were in residence, was less prolific than the upland villages near Ubud, but for a brief period became known for its marine subjects. Change, metamorphosis and abstraction also appeared at this time in Balinese wood sculpture and goldsmithery, arts that came to be centered in the villages of Mas and Celuk, respectively. Spies is alleged to have had a hand here as well.

In time, name artists emerged in all these fields and joined with Spies and Bonnet to form the Pita Maha, an organization that acted as a forum for discussion and an intermediary for sales in Bali and abroad. World War Two extinguished this artistic florescence. The flame was never quite rekindled. Spies was killed during the war. Bonnet returned, introduced canvas and tempera and in 1956 helped to found the long-hoped-for Puri Lukisan, a collection of the best examples of Balinese art and sculpture from those first years of frenzied artistic activity. Bonnet died in 1978, as did his famed Balinese colleague, Lempad.

Tourists were enthusiastic over these new representations of Balinese life and myth and responded with cash, a pittance for the foreigners, a fortune for locals considered lucky to make a few dollars in a month's subsistence farming. As in all cultures, monetary success and fame bred imitation, often by hack artists with little skill, less creativity. Not long after the tourists began buying Balinese originals, trinket stalls appeared selling mass-produced versions of the more popular work, cheek-by-jowl with their unconsecrated Barong and Rangda masks, miniature Balinese dancers, and similar bric-a-brac. Often shoddy, such work was cousin to the stale,



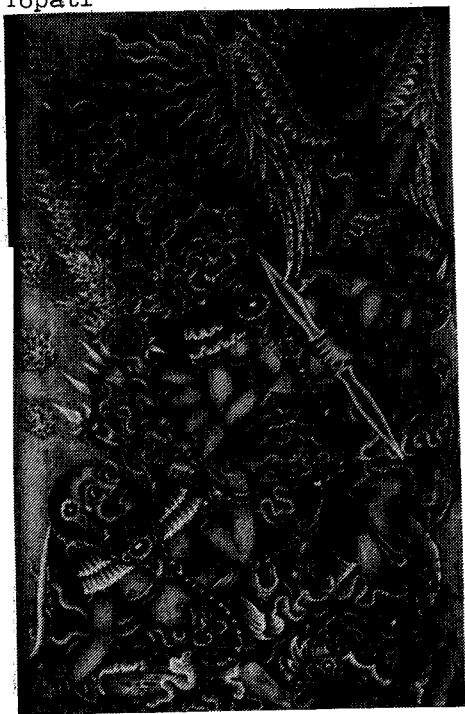
6. Arjuna Wiwaha, a traditional Balinese tale rendered in the old, drawing-on-cloth technique using wayang kulit iconography. Often called the "tantric" style today, such work is more purely decorative and graphic than the Westernized "wayang" style. This particular painting is contemporary, painted anonymously for the Sanggraha Kriya Asta handicraft center, Topati



7. Ubud Market, a classic, "Ubud-style" painting by Anak Agung Gede Soebrat, Padang Tegal, 1955. Puri Lukisan.

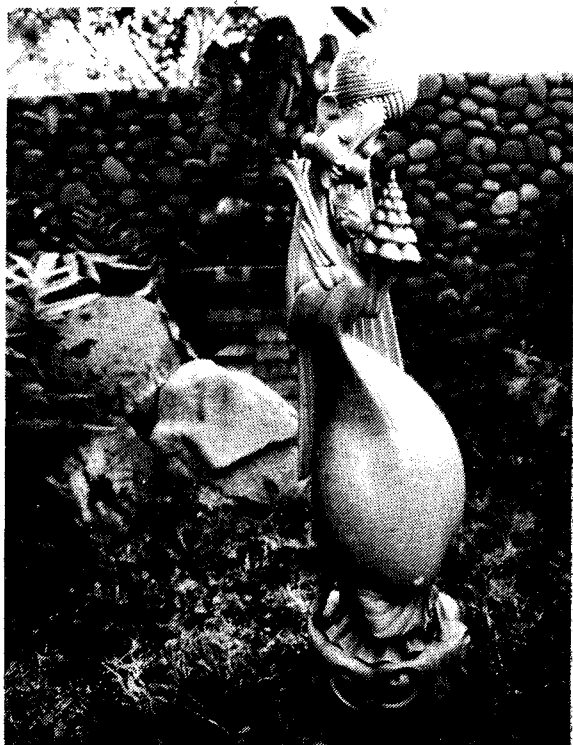


9. Potong Padi (cutting rice), Ubud style, Ketut Liyar, Pengosekan, 1956 Puri Lukisan.



10. Krishna becoming a giant, wayang style, I Gusti Ketut Kobot, Pengosekan, 1934

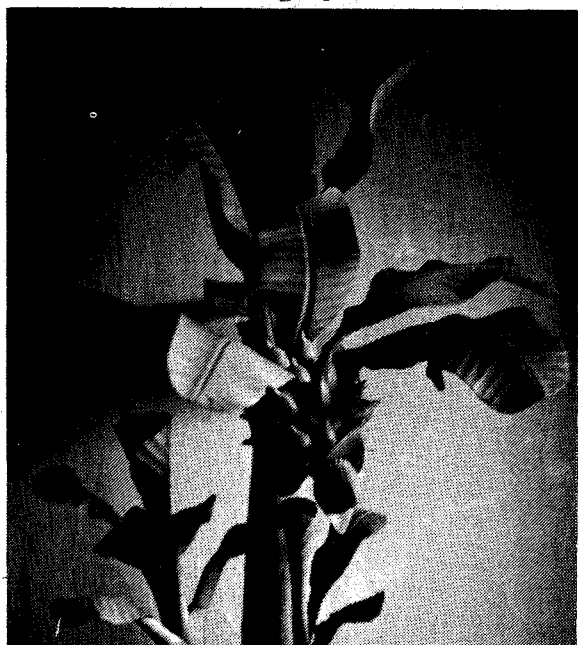




10. Female figure wood sculpture from Mas village on sale at the Sanggraha Kriya Asta handicraft center, Topati. In the background is a statue of Ganesha, the elephant god carved in stone using more traditional iconography.



11. "Leyak" wood carving. Walter Spies is said to have catalysed this now-common style of "free-form" wood carving, where the artist lets natural shape, line and grain determine final form. The Balinese say such carving gives freer rein to the "spirit" of the wood. Subjects range from emaciated females wrought from a single branch to the phantasmagorical melange pictured above, carved from a single tree trunk. Such work has become popular corporate art, gracing bank and hotel lobbies throughout Indonesia.



12. Realistic, representational wood-carving is now in vogue in Mas and Ubud. Both painted and natural examples of banana and palm trees are displayed in most art shops here. This example, from Padang Tegal, is over two meters high.



uninspired dances that followed in the wake of the best-received new tourist performances. Word travels fast on Bali; change is accelerated. By 1937, Miguel Covarrubias could write:

The Balinese still retain their traditions and hold their own manner of life, but are only too willing to adopt every new idea, good or bad, brought to the island by merchants, tourists, unsuitable education and missionaries... Bali is a living culture that is doomed to disappear under the merciless onslaught of commercialism and standardization.

Not quite fifty years later, this grim prophecy has found fulfillment in the words of Bill Dalton. In his 1982 edition of the Indonesia Handbook, he writes:

Bali has been degenerating into a tourist colony for well nigh fifty years now, an Isle of Capri in the Western Pacific...at last their unbelievably complex social and religious fabric is breaking down under the onslaught... recently the first boy OD'd on heroin...and for the first time in history you see rubbish piles...Its art is living on borrowed time.

Not all Bali fits Dalton's grim description. Since the tourist machine really began to hum in the late sixties, most foreign visitors have been funneled into a few villages near the international airport south of Denpasar. Indonesian leaders recognized early on both Bali's earning potential as a tourist destination and the deleterious effects of uncontrolled tourism. Anxious to preserve the island's culture and keep their golden goose laying (1984 Balinese tourist revenues were expected to top US\$24 million), the government encouraged easily-managed institutional tourism, large international-class resort hotels catering to package tour groups. With the resort providing for every need, sightseeing dependent on buses and taxis, souvenir shopping and performance viewing restricted to specially picked villages and "cultural centers," foreign pollution could be kept to a minimum, especially at the vulnerable village level.

Two hotel developments were planned, the first in Sanur village, the second on Nusa Dua, a barren, sparsely populated limestone peninsula 15 kilometers (9.3 miles) south of Denpasar. Both resorts were considered ideal for their isolation from the large Balinese village concentrations upslope to the north. Both were built, paid for and operated primarily by transnational hotel chains. Sanur boasted a number of international-class operations, while Nusa Dua, partially funded with a US\$16 million World Bank loan, was a monolithic resort. Both areas attracted middle and upper-class tourists. Neither provided local Balinese villagers with much income or training save as resident performers or menial labor. Middle-management positions were usually given to urbanized Balinese or Javanese. Top spots went to this same educated elite or foreigners. The arrangement provoked protest from both locals, who wanted a bigger share of the development pie, and foreign social scientists, who saw little benefit, cultural or economic, from this isolationist "Zoo Bali" approach to tourist control. Such methods might "protect" the culture; they would also prevent the Balinese from developing adaptive mechanisms to cope with modernity. The island could not be kept in the isolation ward forever.

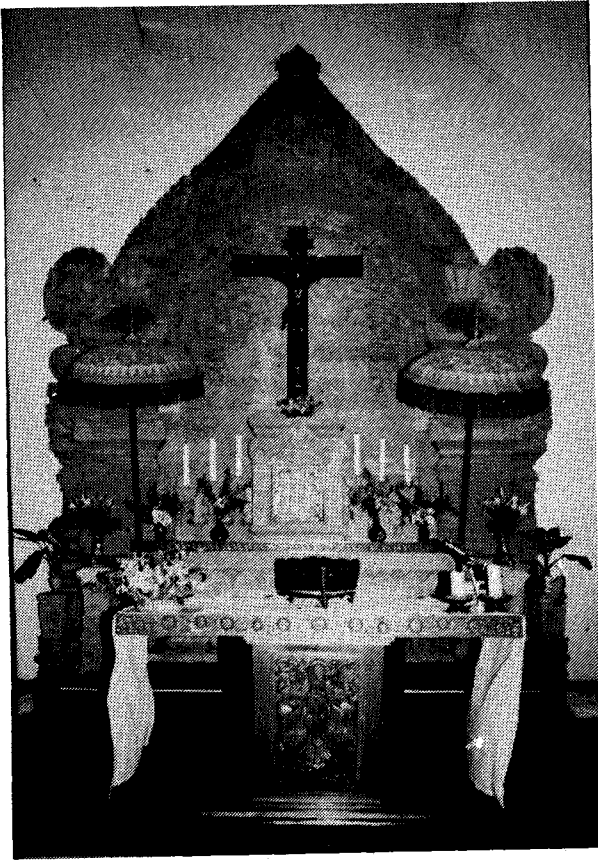
The laissez-faire alternative is not a pretty sight. Just a few kilometers

away from Sanur on Bali's south-west coast is Kuta, once a sleepy village best known for its gamelan, now the local answer to Mallorca: an indigenously-evolved resort catering to ultra low-budget travelers. Kuta's transformation began in the 1960's when young Australian surfers arrived in search of virgin waves. Americans and Europeans soon joined them. Local villagers provided inexpensive room and board in their own homes. Word of mouth provided advertising to the right audience. Traffic increased as did local income. Villagers began adapting their lives to foreign tastes, adding burritos, guacamole, fruit smoothies and steaks to their menus and dormitories or multi-room additions to their homes. Other services followed. Within a decade, Kuta had become a bustling crush of losmen (hostels), restaurants, bars, travel agents, money changers, cassette stores, souvenir stalls, and surf shops, the last servicing foreign customers and a fledgling local market.

Today, one can meet tourists sunning or partaking of the local masseuse on Kuta's diminishing sands (locals are using the reef coral for the foundations of their new buildings, increasing beach erosion) oblivious that Bali is known for anything but the sun, sand, surf, drugs, Western food and the "anything goes" tropical lifestyle. Such foreigners, if women, often wander the beaches topless, blissfully unaware of local mores ( Balinese women traded bare torsos for the Javanese-style kebaya blouse years ago) or under the mistaken assumption that this is "the Balinese way." Their male counterparts indulge in the machismo delights of en-masse bar-hopping, (or the Aussie variant, pub-crawling), motorcycle speed racing, or the hurling-our-women-into-the-waves syndrome characteristic of Western coastal resorts. Indeed, for most, Kuta is but an extension of the homeland, with a splash of exotic color. Now, as the word spreads up-market, attracting fancier hotels and middle-class tourists, Kuta is losing even its bohemian charm, little different from other resorts servicing the Western leisure trade.

Worse, uncontrolled development has brought more than just tourists. Kuta's narrow streets are now choked with smoke-belching bemos (three-wheeled mini-vans) and motorcycles. The lanes are filled with hustlers, muggers, thieves, prostitutes and pushers. The sleepy village now has all the problems of the big city, an urban blight far beyond the control of the local government. New losmen construction has been forbidden, a regulation that has done little but spread the building boom to nearby Legian village. Indonesian government police have been brought in to provide some measure of order. Still the tourists come. And not all stay on the beach.

Significant numbers of the low-budget crowd venture forth from their Western oasis to find "the real Bali," just the area the Indonesian government would prefer foreigners see from behind glass. The adventurous have a number of options to get around the island, from bicycles to taxis. Most choose motorcycles, a conveyance that kills one Westerner per week on Bali. Fanning out from the southern peninsula, the travelers head to the destinations made famous in print and film: to Lake Batur, home of the "original Balinese," the xenophobic Bali Aga; to Besakih on the slopes of Mount Agung, "Mother Temple of Bali"; to Singaraja, the old Dutch capital; but most of all, to Ubud.

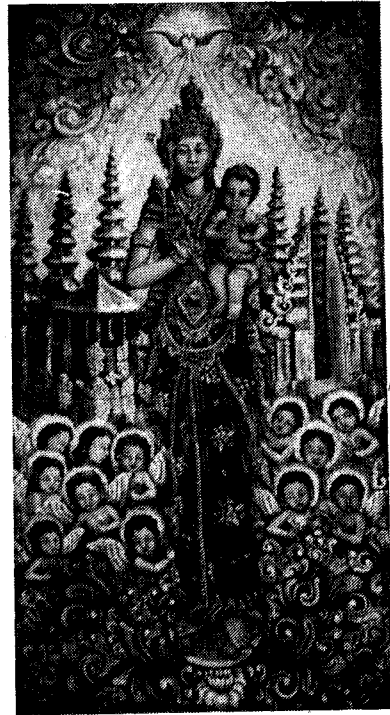


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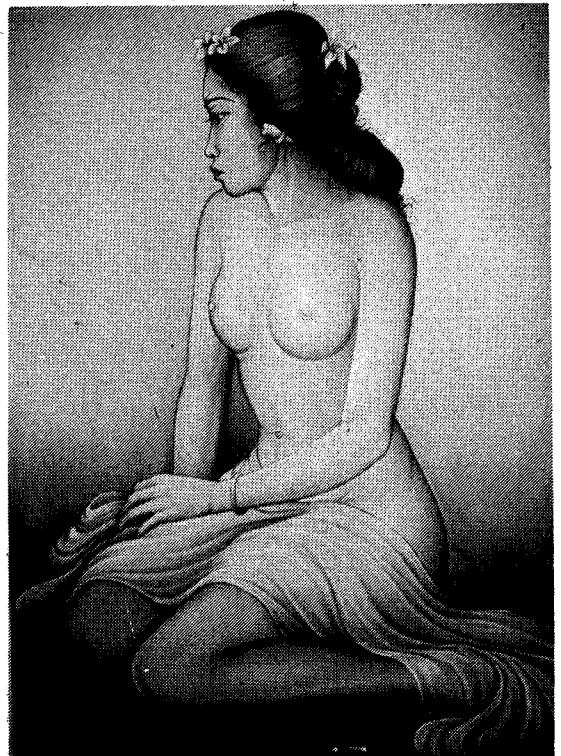
13. Saint Joseph's Church in Denpasar is a Catholic institution built in Balinese temple style, complete with multi-tiered roofs. Angels flanking the entrance and guarding the roof are carved in wood and stone in poses reminiscent of legong dancers. The sacristine lamp, baptismal and altar (pictured above) also incorporate traditional visual elements with Catholic orthodoxy.

14. Madonna and child, Saint Joseph's Church, Denpasar. Flanked by cherubs, standing on a lotus, backed by a Hindu temple, looking for the world like the Balinese goddess Saraswati, this mother Mary and baby Jesus painting stands near a side entrance of the church.

15. Balinese woman, Ubud style, Sanggraha Kriya Asta handicraft center, Topati.



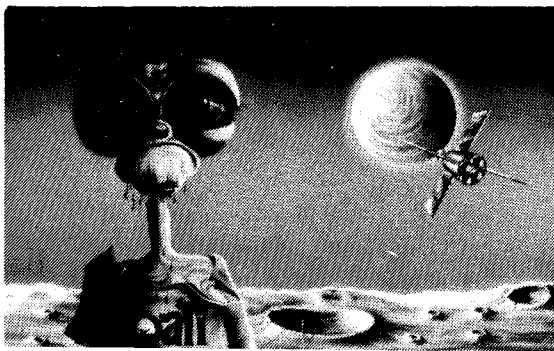
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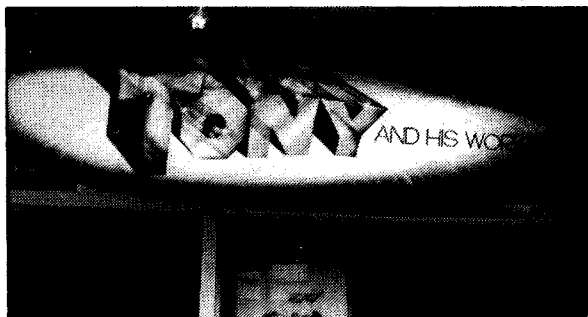
15.



16. One of many "party posters" papering the walls of Kuta.



17. E.T. comes to Bali (the film has yet to reach Indonesia). A shop mural, Kuta.



19. The shingle hung from this Kuta shop is a surfboard, similar to those rented inside. The airbrush lettering imitates surf wax.



18. A tour agent's advertising board, Kuta.

COME ONE, COME ALL. !!!  
TO THE SATURDAY NIGHT.

# PUB CRAWL



IT'S A GREAT NIGHT OUT SEEING SOME OF  
BALI'S BEST NIGHTSPOTS.

We'll bus you around all night, and drive you back home -  
for only Rp: 1500,- per head.

Starting off with a real aussie meal, served with a -  
PIZZA MARGHERITA, ROAST PORK, ROAST BEEF, ROAST CHICKEN,  
GARLIC BREAD AND MIX SALADS.  
**ALL FOR ONLY Rp: 4000,-**

Let you try Exotic tropical cocktails, icy Cold -  
draught beers, then finish off at the POOL PARTY AND -  
DISCO where you can dance till the wee hours, then we'll bus you  
back home again.

IT'S THE BALI RAGE YOU CAN'T MISS OUT ON -  
WE'LL PICK YOU UP OUTSIDE THE FOLLOWING PLACES  
SATURDAY NIGHT.



KARTIKA PLAZA	: 5.30.
YOGI II RESTAURANT	: 5.35.
KUTA BEACH CLUB	: 5.40.
CASABLANCA BAR	: 5.45.
KUTA SEAVIEW HOTEL	: 5.55.
PURI RAMA COTTAGES	: 5.30.
KAYU API RESTAURANT	: 5.35.
LEGIAN BEACH HOTEL	: 5.45.
BALI MANDIRA COTTAGES	: 5.50.
BALI WALTZING MATILDA	: 6.00.



**BOOK YOUR SEAT EARLY AT THE:** Casablanca bar,  
Bali Waltzing Matilda,  
YOGI II RESTAURANT,  
KAYU API RESTAURANT.

(WE'LL EVEN SELL YOU A "PUB BRAWL" T SHIRTS) DRESS AS YOU PLEASE.

**NUMBERS LIMITED TO 200 PERSONS. BOOK NOW. !!**

**BRING YOUR CAMERA & FLASH. !!**



21. Kuta party poster advertising a production said to be the successor to "The Bonfire Beach Party" (no. 16). All such gatherings are foreign-organized, foreign-advertised, foreign attended. The mere "five thou" (500C rupiah; about US\$5.00) is a hefty sum for most Balinese, save the more successful Kuta entrepreneurs.

Billed in the tourist brochures as "the cultural capital of Bali," Ubud has remained a focus for dance and painting since the upheaval of World War Two. It is now also the only village outside of the southern peninsula with any large concentration of tourists. Puri Lukisan is now but one of many galleries (though by far the best) that line the road from Denpasar, side-by-side with bargain-basement "homestays," a few up-market accommodations (some complete with fans and mosquito nets) and a host of restaurants offering everything from Balinese roast suckling pig to American chili con carne. A few of the better eateries, like Murni's in Campuan and Hans Snell's in the mid-town area, are run by Western-Balinese couples, a handy combination when the help is local and the guests are foreign. Murni's also combines food with souvenirs, selling cloth from Sumba, Sawu, Roti and other Indonesian islands, baskets from Lombok, and spiffed-up versions of traditional Balinese art-forms. These last are tailor-made for the Western market: temple offerings, household items and clothing are subtly reworked, replacing the sometimes gaudy materials (brightly colored synthetic yarn, glitter and gold-leaf) preferred by the Balinese with earthy substitutes more in keeping with the Western stereotype of "primitive" art. They sell like hot-cakes.

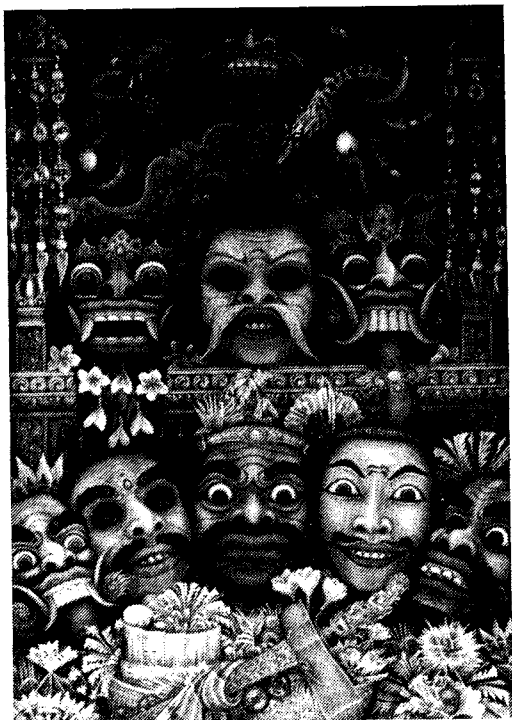
Resident tourists in Ubud are bale to benefit from night-time performances of wayang, legong, and other dances like baris and kebyar, staggered throughout the week by competing groups to allow everyone a share of the profits. Performance standards are relatively high and audiences small, a far cry from the thrice-weekly cattle-call at Bona village. There, in a performance area packed on three sides by row upon row of folding chairs, dancers perform the kecak, "virgin dance" (a bogus sang hyang dedari) and "fire dance" (a tourist rendition of the syang hyang jaran, a trance-dance involving horse-spirit possession and coal-walking), accompanied by an unrelenting tattoo of tourist flash-strobes. Little wonder that the pre-adolescent "trance" dancers in these performances are barely able to contain their not-so-entranced laughter, reason enough, perhaps, to discourage the performance of sang hyang and other sacred dance genres for commercial gain, as was recommended at a Balinese cultural conference in 1971.

Ubud is still the home of foreign painters: cubist (and restaurateur) Hans Snell and figure painter Antonio Blanco are the most famous of these. Successors to (though hardly replacements for) Spies and Bonnet, these Westerners are widely shown in galleries throughout Ubud.

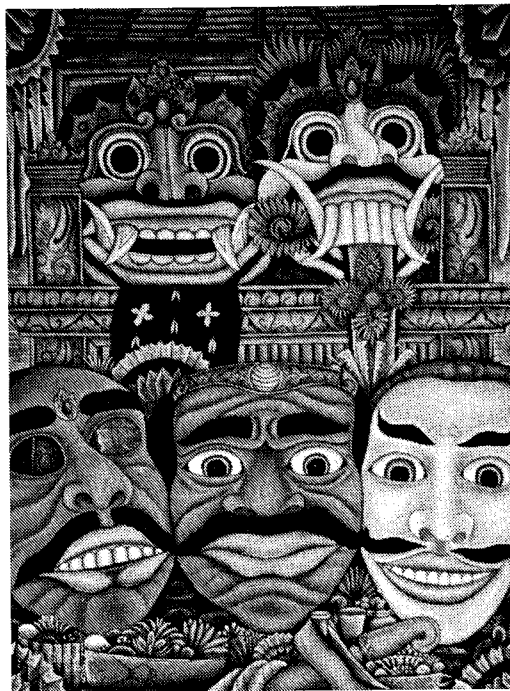
Most indigenous artists continue to paint in the styles of the 1930's, often rehashing old themes, occasionally copying Puri Lukisan originals stroke for stroke. The life depicted in this work is a pre-modern idyll populated with bare-breasted women, placid animals, serene stands of coconut palm. Time has stood still. New styles occasionally break these established rhythms. In 1960, Arie Smit, a Dutch artist who had come to Bali four years before, introduced canvas and acrylic paints to a group of adolescents in Penestanan village, near Ubud. Their naive, brightly-colored landscapes and genre scenes soon attracted wide attention; today the "Young Artists" style is an established, widely-imitated painting milieu, displayed alongside older work at Puri Lukisan.

More varied in style and concept is the work of Pengosekan, also near Ubud, a cooperative artist's community founded by two brothers, I Dewa Batuan and I Dewa

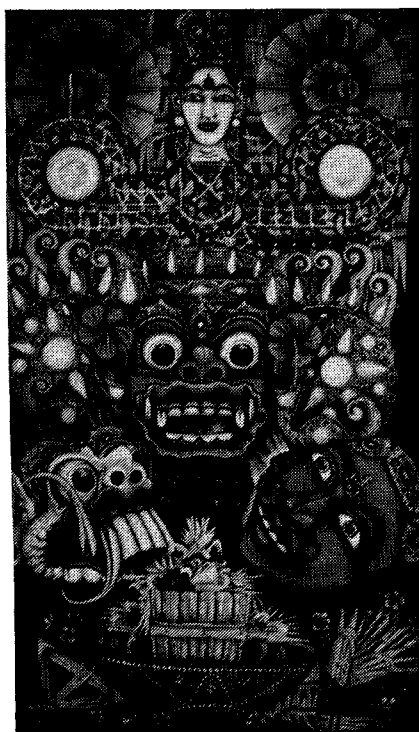




22a.



22b.



22c.

22. Three versions of I Nyoman Meja's 1975 masterpiece, Topeng Bali (Balinese masks). The first (a) is the original work, displayed in Puri Lukisan. The second (b) and third (c) are found just down the road in the galleries of other Ubud artists. Such imitation is common in Balinese art. One artist's success is often copied on an island-wide basis.

Putuh Mokoh. Output is prolific, ranging from the organic, surreal visions of Mokoh to the tight, finely detailed wayang renderings of I Gusti Made Baret and Made Gatro.

Probably the most original and perceptive artist now painting in Bali is I Wayan Bendi of Batuan, an outstanding proponent of that village's miniature style, subtly changed to express Bali's changing persona. Like his father, I Wayan Taweng, Bendi paints in finely-detailed washes, outlining every leaf, every wavelet, every fold of cloth or landscape in Chinese ink, filling in with transparent acrylic. Unlike the conventional serenity of the past, however, Baendi produces witty, occasionally nightmarish caricatures of modernity, a vision of Bali consumed by tourists. Long-nosed, with sunglasses and cameras, they cover these bird's eye renderings like locusts, photographing every conceivable facet of everyday life, riding the waves on wildly-decorated surfboards, touring the narrow roads on bizarrely-ornamented motorcycles, hiding from police surveillance, led astray by guides. Bendi's sons, still pre-teens, are beginning to produce similar work. All three generations, grandfather, father and children exhibit together in their Batuan gallery, a microcosmic sociology of the times.

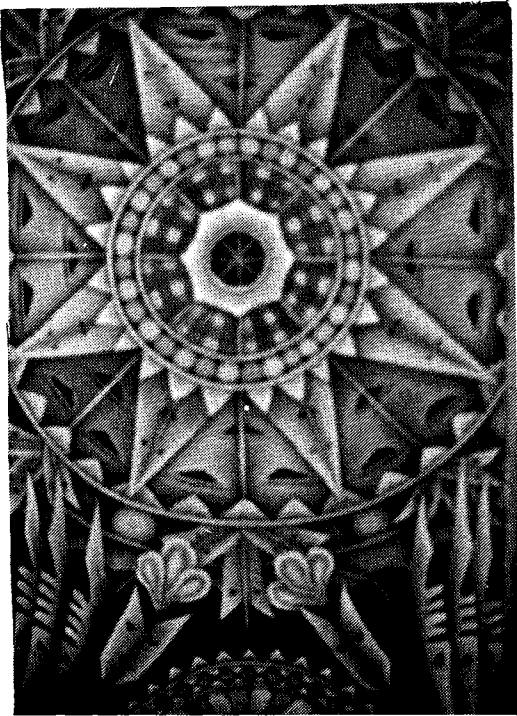
The work of I Wayan Bendi is an enlightening, instructive prism for the foreign viewer, one of the few thoughtful reactions to the changing Balinese world. Bendi's world-view, however, is passive, and can be ignored by tourists eager for fulfillment, not confrontation. More active is the work of Ubud's Bina Wisata foundation. Founded in mid-1982, housed in an unassuming building near the Puri Lukisan, Bina Wisata is dedicated to the preservation of Ubud's culture and environment. The foundation headed by Tjok Raka Kerthyasa and run primarily by Nyoman Surdana and Silvio Santosa. Besides a paid staff of five, the foundation makes use of numerous volunteers. Bina Wisata's main efforts are directed at tourists, seeking to heighten foreign awareness, empathy and perception of Ubud's culture through information. To this end, Bina Wisata produces maps (with tips on what to see and how to behave) a tee shirt (with the foundation motto: Ubud Indra Lestari, "Beautiful Ubud, Preserved Naturally") and a newspaper, Napi Orti ("How Are You") with articles, jokes, photographs and cartoons on Balinese culture and tourism. The foundation has received widespread support among the villagers of Ubud and plenty of attention from foreigners, including a recent article in the Far Eastern Economic Review, a regional weekly.

Bina Wisata is by no means a panacea for Bali's snowballing ills. Kuta, Sanur and Nusa Dua remain blighted and corrupt. Fast-buck tourism is still a growth industry. Mass-produced trinketism is rampant. Bina Wisata, however, is an indigenous, constructive reaction to tourism, more dynamic and potentially more effective than either the failed isolationism of the resorts or the free-market morass nearby. The members of Bina Wisata know these places well; one started Bali's first disco at Sanur in 1970; others have traveled abroad and seen Western culture at its source. They hope to save Ubud from ill-effects of a culture they have experienced first-hand.

In the past, faced with the beginnings of tourism, the Balinese proved themselves resilient and adaptable. Now, as their social fabric finally begins to unravel, they must be even more resilient, and resourceful as well. Bina Wisata is a badly needed first step. The Balinese need many more.

Sincerely,

  
Bryn Barnard



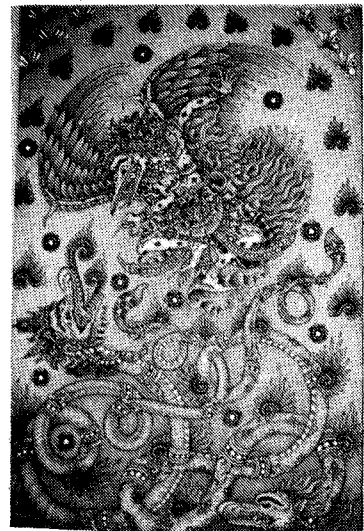
23. Cili, I Dewa Putuh Mokoh, Pengosekan. These female figures are integral parts of many Balinese festive decorations.



29. Barong, "Young Artists" style painting, Sanggraha Kriya Asta handicraft center, Topati.



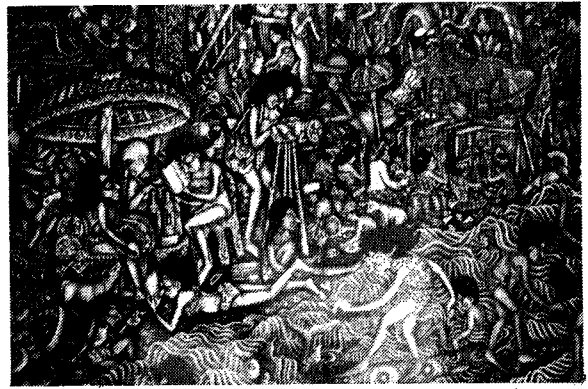
31. Arjuna Wiwaha, Made Gatro, Pengosekan. The same story as No. 6.



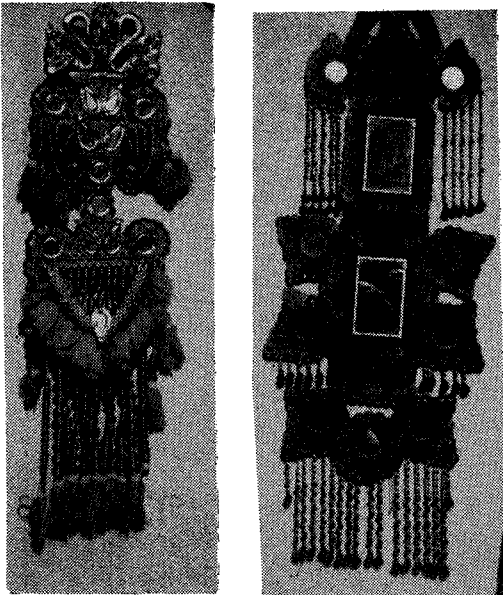
30. Garuda and Naga, I Gusti Made Baret, Pengosekan. Garuda is the mount of the deity Vishnu; the Naga is a mythical serpent.



31. Tourists in Batubulan.



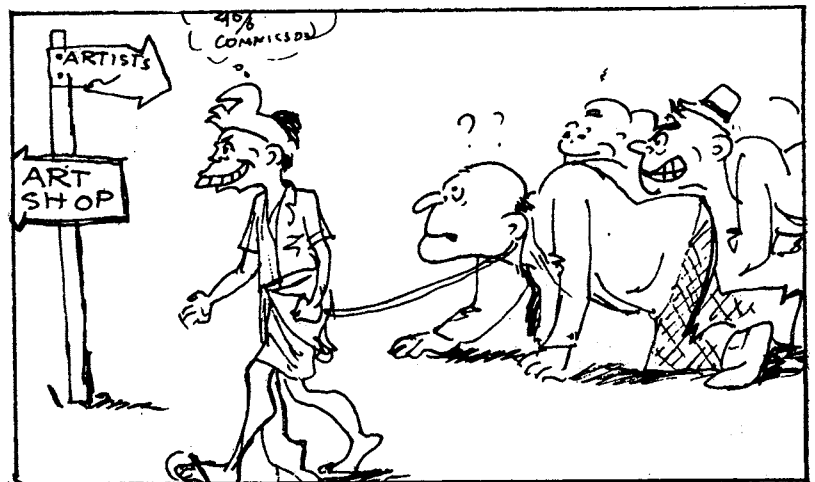
32. Tourists as depicted by I Wayan Bendi, Batuan.



34. Temple offerings. The left-hand version is authentic, made with keping (Chinese lead coins once legal tender on Bali), leather, small mirrors, gold leaf on wood and synthetic yarn in purple and orange. The right-hand version is from Murni's Restaurant and has been modified to include larger (useful?) mirrors, sombre glass beads and naturally dyed yarn. The keping and small mirrors are retained.



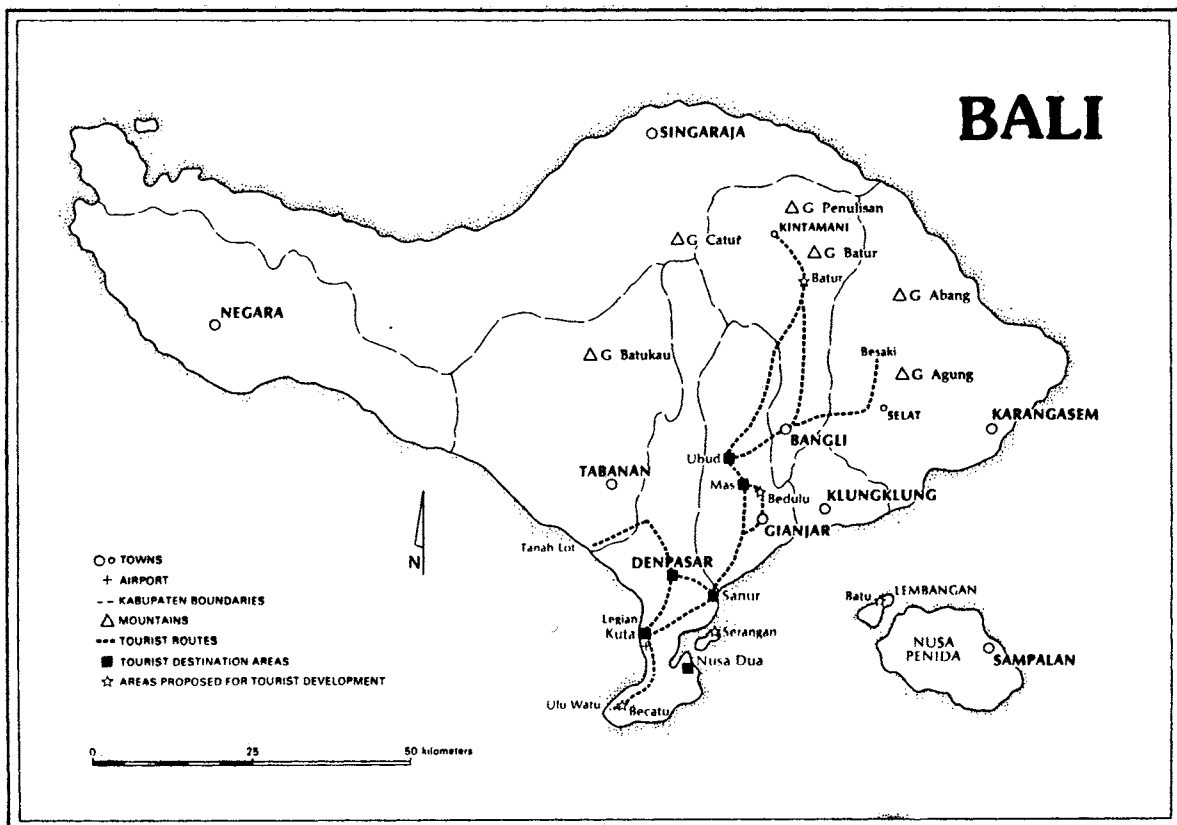
33. Surfer, as depicted by Mangku Made Gina, Pengosekan.



35. Tourists, as depicted in Napi Orti, Ubud.

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Map from "Tourist Destination Areas in Bali" by Antonia Hussey.

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