

For immediate release

# barbican

## Citra Sasmita: Into Eternal Land

The Curve

**30 January – 21 April 2025**

Press preview: Wednesday 29 January 2025, 10am – 1pm.

*This exhibition was made possible thanks to Lead Support from the Bagri Foundation, additional support from the MENAEA Collection, Kuala Lumpur, the Henry Moore Foundation, and Natasha Sidharta, as well as a residency in partnership with Delfina Foundation.*



Citra Sasmita, *Act One* (detail), 2024, from *Into Eternal Land*, The Curve, Barbican, 2025 © Citra Sasmita

In January 2025, Indonesian artist **Citra Sasmita** will transform The Curve for her first solo exhibition in the UK: a new commission titled ***Into Eternal Land***. Working fluidly across painting, sculptural installation, embroidery and scent, Sasmita will invite visitors on a symbolic, multi-sensory journey through the 90-metre-long gallery to explore ideas of ancestral memory, ritual and migration.

An interdisciplinary artist, Sasmita's practice challenges fixed ideas in relation to gender roles, hierarchies of power, systems of oppression, and more. Her work refuses categorisation both in terms of materials and iconographies, questioning reductive, colonial conceptions of traditional Indonesian art and the historic marginalisation of craft traditions. *Into Eternal Land* speaks to universal and urgent concerns: connecting with ancestral traditions, grappling with the power and precarity of the natural world, and proposing the possibility of feminist resistance.

Sasmita's practice often engages with the Indonesian Kamasan painting technique. Dating from the fifteenth century, and traditionally practiced exclusively by men, Kamasan was used to narrate Hindu epics. Reclaiming this masculine practice, Sasmita is interested in dismantling misconceptions of Balinese culture and confronting its violent colonial past. Underpinning her work is a dedication to alternative narratives, particularly the experiences of women who have been fetishised, suppressed or erased. Reinventing inherited mythologies – from indigenous Indonesian histories to Dutch colonial narratives, to

contemporary society – her protagonists are powerful women who populate a post-patriarchal world.

For her Barbican commission *Into Eternal Land*, the artist draws inspiration from a rich range of sources. These include centuries-long histories of displacement and migration across the Indonesian archipelago, as well as the symbolism of heaven, earth and hell across cultures – from the story of Bhima Swarga crossing hell to save his parents, as recounted in the Balinese epic Mahabharata, to Dante’s *Inferno* and beyond.

Panoramic scroll paintings – Sasmita’s reinterpretation of Kamasan paintings – unfurl along the curved walls of the gallery, depicting women undergoing transformation and reincarnation: becoming trees or bird spirits, emitting flaming auras, pouring forth water and blood. Shrine-like installations encircled by long braids of hair reference deep genealogies and memories held in the body, while paintings on python skin nod to rituals of sacrifice. Textiles hang from the ceiling like flags, conceived of as symbolic portals to another realm. They feature hybrid woman-plant beings, who hold powerful knowledge of herbal medicine. These works are made in collaboration with women artisans in west Bali, whose knowledge of this specific embroidery technique is in danger of disappearing. A mandala (circle) of ground turmeric serves as the focal point of the final chapter of the exhibition, offering a space for meditation. An ambient soundscape by Indonesian composer Agha Pradiya Yogaswara offers a sonic response to Sasmita’s cosmologies.

**Citra Sasmita said:** *“Facing the majestic space of The Curve makes my heart tremble, but at the same time it invites me to explore possibilities that I had never imagined before. As a Balinese person, I believe in the ability to be embodied in space and time. The Curve has allowed me to present a ritual for the space itself, along with the cosmology and cultural roots that I bring from Bali. I am very much looking forward to how visitors will feel when they experience this exhibition.”*

### **About Citra Sasmita**

Citra Sasmita (b. 1990, Bali, Indonesia) is a self-taught artist. She studied literature and physics, then worked as a short story illustrator for the Bali Post before she began developing her expanded artistic practice. Major group exhibitions include *to carry*, Sharjah Biennial (United Arab Emirates, forthcoming 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). Solo shows include *Atlas of Curiosity*, Yeo Workshop (Singapore, 2023); *Ode To The Sun*, Yeo Workshop (Singapore, 2020); and *Tales of Nowhere*, Museum MACAN, Jakarta (Indonesia, 2020).

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

**For further information, images or to arrange interviews please contact:**

**Visual Arts Press Team**

[visualartspress@barbican.org.uk](mailto:visualartspress@barbican.org.uk)

**Hannah Carr, Communications Manager**

e – [hannah.carr@barbican.org.uk](mailto:hannah.carr@barbican.org.uk)

t – +44 20 3834 1191

**Lily Booth, Communications Officer**

e – [lily.booth@barbican.org.uk](mailto:lily.booth@barbican.org.uk)

t – +44 20 3834 1184

**Press images available online**

Further information and images can be found [here](#). Please [contact the press team](#) for any requests.

**Barbican press room**

All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Communications team's contact details are listed on our [website](#).

**Public Information**

Barbican Art Gallery, Barbican Centre

Silk Street, London, EC2Y 8DS

[www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk)

**Opening Hours**

The Curve is open 11am - 7pm

Refer to the website for Bank Holiday hours.

**Please look out for latest information on tickets via our website. Entry to The Curve is free.**

**EVENTS**

**Into Eternal Land: Artist Talk with Citra Sasmita**

**Tuesday 4 Feb 2025, 7pm**

**The Curve**

Join artist Citra Sasmita and curator Lotte Johnson for a conversation delving into the thinking and inspiration behind Sasmita's new exhibition *Into Eternal Land*.

**Film Screening: Citra Sasmita Presents *Pather Panchali* (U)**

**Monday 10 Feb 2025, 6.15pm**

**Cinema 3**

We will be screening Satyajit Ray's celebrated debut film *Pather Panchali*. Selected by Sasmita, Ray is her favourite Indian director and the film reminds the artist of her own childhood in Bali, Indonesia. Set in rural Bengal, *Pather Panchali* is a deeply moving tale which follows the young Apu and his family as they navigate the trials of poverty and loss. Adapted from Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay's novel, Ray's film is a lyrical exploration of innocence, survival, and the beauty of everyday life. With stunning cinematography, a haunting score by Ravi Shankar, and an unforgettable portrayal of family bonds, *Pather Panchali* remains one of the most influential films in world cinema.

**Barbican Young Poets x Citra Sasmita**

**Wednesday 9 April 2025, 7pm**

### **The Curve**

The Barbican Young Poets will present a special evening of performances and readings in artist Citra Sasmita's installation, conceived in response to her Curve commission.

Barbican Young Poets is an artist development initiative and community for those who wish to explore what's possible for their poetry and creative expression, fostering a collective of poets to become the next generation of powerful creative voices.

### **Exhibition**

This exhibition was made possible thanks to Lead Support from the Bagri Foundation, additional support from the MENAEA Collection, Kuala Lumpur, the Henry Moore Foundation, and Natasha Sidharta, as well as a residency in partnership with Delfina Foundation.

**The Bagri Foundation**, established in 1990, is a family foundation driven by curiosity with a vision to cultivate a meaningful space for Asian culture to thrive, shift perspectives and deepen connections. Through grants and strategic partnerships, the Foundation champions unique ideas that weave the traditional and the contemporary of Asian culture. Recent projects include *Artes Mundi 10*, the UK's largest art award; *Asian Bronze: 4000 Years of Beauty* at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, an exhibition exploring bronze craftsmanship through the centuries; and *Acts of Resistance: Photography, feminisms and the art of protest* at South London Gallery, a project highlighting feminist waves globally in the contemporary era.

### **About the Barbican**

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have a large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We're proud to be the home of the [London Symphony Orchestra](#), and a London base of the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#). We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our other associates and partners including the [Academy of Ancient Music](#), [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#), [Boy Blue](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), [Darbar](#), [Doc'n Roll Film Festival](#), [Drum Works](#), [EFG London Jazz Festival](#), [London Palestine Film Festival](#), [Serious](#), and [Trafalgar Theatre Productions](#).

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### **Barbican Art Gallery and The Curve**

Our visual arts programme embraces art, architecture, design, fashion and film. Many of our exhibitions explore the interconnections between disciplines, periods and cultures, and aim to imagine the world in new ways. Designers, artists and architects are our collaborators in this process.

We invest in the artists of today and tomorrow; The Curve is one of the few galleries in London devoted to the commissioning of new work. Through our activities we aim to inspire more people to discover and love the arts. Entrance to The Curve is free. Through Young Barbican we offer £5 tickets to 14 – 25 year olds for our paid exhibitions, children under 14 attend for free.

Our exhibitions are complemented by comprehensively researched catalogues and a full range of public events. In partnership with renowned museums and art galleries, many of our exhibitions travel to reach both national and international audiences.

The Barbican believes in creating space for people and ideas to connect through its international arts programme, community events and learning activity. To keep its programme accessible to everyone, and to keep investing in the artists it works with, the Barbican needs to raise more than 60% of its income through ticket sales, commercial activities and fundraising every year. Donations can be made [here](#).