



# Kartika

## 9 Ways of Seeing

A visionary Indonesian artist and her view of the world

A film by Christopher Basile



## **Kartika: 9 Ways of Seeing (2018; 62 mins)**

A documentary film by Christopher Basile

A portrait of charismatic and outspoken Indonesian modern artist Kartika Affandi, her remarkable life, and her powerful and controversial paintings and sculpture. The story of Kartika is the story of a woman determined to express herself on her own terms, and to make a career as a modern artist, although she was born into a society and a time in which this was considered an impossible goal for a female.

Kartika was taught to paint by her father, the legendary Affandi, the nation's most celebrated and renowned artist. But she was warned that despite her prodigious talent and determination she would be fated to live in his artistic shadow.

Still actively painting, sculpting and exhibiting at the age of 83, the story of Kartika Affandi is a story of triumph. It is the story of how one woman succeeded in bringing her uniquely beautiful, complex, deeply personal, and sometimes shocking artistic vision to life.

"Kartika Affandi is the leading radical figure of the first generation of modern women artists in Indonesia. Kartika experienced the social cost exacted of women who chose to challenge the normative roles of wife and mother. She paid, with social ostracization and sexist reviews, for presuming to become a modern artist. Kartika provides the world with her own, particularized artistic challenge to the notion of what women are and what women artists should create. She shows us how one woman in Java claimed her freedom to define for herself a place, a style, and a voice of her own.

Kartika is the first female artist in Indonesia who has dared to openly express the pain and struggle of a woman in search of her true identity no matter how this might clash with culturally imposed roles of womanhood. Kartika is a vocal champion for the right of women everywhere to pursue independence and careers in the areas of their choice. While she has paid a heavy psychological and social cost for her determination to become an artist and express her particular genius, Kartika's struggle and triumph, like her art, is inspiring, beautiful and unique. "

– Dr. Astri Wright, Professor of South & Southeast Asian Art, University of Victoria, Canada







## **Kartika: 9 Ways of Seeing**

### **Scene Synopsis**

00:00 Opening Interview with Kartika

01:22 Opening Credits with details of various Kartika paintings, and abstracted images of Kartika painting the title "Kartika: 9 Ways of Seeing" on a semi-transparent screen.

Music by Sanggar Seni Kuda Lumping Pancer Manunggal

01:55 Scenes of Yogyakarta City, Java, Indonesia

Music by Sanggar Seni Kuda Lumping Pancer Manunggal (continued) with music by local Street Performers

03:35 Scenes of the countryside outside Yogyakarta where Kartika's home and gallery are located, and scenes of daily life at Kartika's home and gallery.

Music by Cepi Irawan and Grup Degung ISI Yogyakarta

06:22 Images of Kartika from 1930s to the present with voice-over Introduction by the Director and Kartika

Music by Cepi Irawan and Grup Degung ISI Yogyakarta (continued)

07:48 "**Part 1: Seeing the Invisible**" Interview with Kartika in which she discusses the influence of religion and spirituality on her work and life, and her painting of a Thai Buddhist temple.

10:10 Scenes of Candi Borobudur 9th century Buddhist monument in Java near Kartika's home and gallery, with Kartika creating a painting of Borobudur on-site

Music by Sanggar Seni Kuda Lumping Pancer Manunggal

13:47 "**Part 2: Seeing the Play of Shadows and Masks**" Interview with Kartika discussing her painting depicting her father Affandi with Javanese shadow-puppet characters on the occasion of his posthumous 100th birthday celebration, and her painting of a masked dancer trampling on her real face.

15:49 Scenes of the landscape-setting near Kartika's home in central Java, and of Kartika painting in a roadside field of flowers.

Music by Cepi Irawan and Grup Degung ISI Yogyakarta featuring Ela Yulaeliah

19:09 "**Part 3: Seeing the Perfection in the Imperfect**" Interview with Kartika discussing her painting depicting her aged father Affandi with two of his favourite models who were blind and paralyzed.

20:30 Kartika teaching children drawing at the Karna Manohara School for the Deaf which she helped found and continues to support.

24:05 "**Part 4: Seeing Black and White in Colour**" Interview with Kartika in which she discusses her paintings in which she depicts the world of colours using only black paint on white canvas.



27:20 Kartika at home and in her gallery discussing the range of her sculptural works, particularly her depiction of male and female archetypal forms

Music by Kake Kholis Sumardi Rosonggin and Firman Ariyadi

32:00 "**Part 5: Seeing the Deeper Meaning**" Interview with Kartika discussing the meaning of her painting depicting her father Affandi riding a becak (pedicab) to go to the home of his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife, and her parents' unusual marriage arrangement.

35:53 Scenes showing Kartika painting goats in-situ, in which she explains that as a painter the world is her studio.

37:50 "**Part 6: Seeing the Inner Beauty**" Interview with Kartika discussing her painting of her dying father Affandi without clothing, and the artistic beauty inherent in nude portraiture, along with a series of historical photos of Affandi.

40:08 Kartika tells the story of how an artist friend came to depict an elderly Kartika in two nude portraits.

Music by Cepi Irawan and Grup Degung ISI Yogyakarta

42:11 "**Part 7: Seeing the Mother**" Interview with Kartika discussing her portrait of her mother Maryati, and their relationship. Includes a series of historical photos of Maryati and her own needlepoint artwork and paintings.

47:25 Kartika with her paintings of Gunung Merapi, the active volcano near her home and gallery and which plays an important role in her life.

Music by Sanggar Seni Kuda Lumping Pancer Manunggal

49:15 "**Part 8: Seeing the Hidden Fault Lines**" Interview with Kartika discussing her self-portrait in which she depicts her head being torn apart. Featuring images of the Affandi Museum and her father's paintings.

51:38 Affandi footage from a 1980 documentary in which he discusses his relationship with Kartika and her future as an artist and as guardian of his work.

52:58 "**Part 9: Seeing Rebirth**" Interview with Kartika discussing her self-portrait in which she is depicted as a wizened newborn emerging from her own womb. She explains that her rebirth as an artist came with the realization that what differentiated her work from that of her more famous father Affandi's is that as a woman she brings a distinctively feminine perspective to her art.

56:25 Sequence of Kartika painting the film title "Kartika: 9 Ways of Seeing" on an illuminated, semi-transparent screen.

57:00 End Credits, interpolating images of 60 more of Kartika's paintings

Music by Julija Novosel and Christopher Basile

61:50 End





### **About Kartika Affandi**

The only-child of the world-renowned, expressionist master Affandi (1907 - 1990) and his first wife Maryati, Kartika's artistic talent was evident at an early age. But her father told her "It is a shame you were born a female and my daughter, because as a woman you will never be able to be accepted as an artist in this country. And if somehow you are, then you will always be cursed as my offspring to live in my shadow."

She grew up in extreme poverty, as the dying days of the colonial Dutch East Indies gave way to the brutal Japanese occupation during WWII. After the war when the Dutch returned to Java to try to reclaim their empire, her father Affandi supported the struggle for Indonesian independence by painting posters and graffiti rallying the population to revolution. For this her family was interned in a Dutch prison camp.

When the Indonesian revolution succeeded, the visionary leader Soekarno became the Republic of Indonesia's first President, and he supported Kartika's father Affandi. But Kartika's own determination to make a career as an artist was not taken seriously by her family, and at age 17 she was married off to a painter friend of her father's to become an 'artist's wife' instead. She bore him eight children in ten years but still continued painting, giving her first exhibition at age 23. When her husband finally abandoned her to live with two younger lovers, she became the first woman in the then 30-year history of the Republic of Indonesia to file for divorce.

Over the coming years she raised her children, and despite severe social criticism and financial struggle she continued to paint, and began a lifetime of artistic travel and study. Her struggle as an Indonesian woman artist gave her a natural empathy with the down-trodden everywhere, whether they were beggars or handicapped persons in Java, fishermen in China, peasant farmers in the low countries of Europe, Australian Aboriginals, or even long-suffering, farm animals. She liked to work out in the open, in close contact with the subjects and settings she painted, and she abandoned the paintbrush to directly apply paint to canvas with her bare hands

Eventually she remarried, this time to an Austrian she met while studying art restoration in Vienna. He returned with her to Java, but after a few years left her to move in with their housekeeper in the house next door to hers. Kartika's self-portraits during this period depict her bound with barb wire, psychologically tortured, and giving birth to a new, yet wizened and haggard version of her former self. Although she was



later to form a deep and long lasting relationship with a dashing Australian architect which continues to the present, she has never remarried.

Kartika is a thoroughly independent Javanese artist and visionary. In a culture where the individual self has traditionally only rarely been put to the fore, Kartika has made the self-portrait one of her main themes. In a society where emotion is suppressed, both publicly and privately, Kartika fills her canvases with intense feeling. In a culture where genitals are considered taboo in representation, Kartika has painted her own and others' nudity graphically and without any distancing sweetness, never depicting her body merely as an object of pleasure, whether that of others or her own, always including the whole spectrum of life experience in her work. Going against the old Javanese convention that placidity, harmony and beauty of both physical and spiritual kinds be normative for all forms of creative expression, Kartika creates real-life, turbulent and disturbing images.

Kartika's lack of reticence is unusual for a Javanese woman, particularly of her generation, but even compared to younger women. She has chosen to be at odds with a patriarchal culture in which the body, sexuality, nakedness, and even left-handedness, must be suppressed. Kartika's work emanates a motherly sensuality, unconstrained by narrow, moral precepts, the fear of how people will interpret or judge her, or any embarrassment about the body's natural functions. Kartika creates a link in her art and life to a mythology of strong, ancient Javanese female characters like Srikandi which had all but disappeared in the process of colonization and modernization in contemporary Indonesia.

Kartika is the first female artist in Indonesia who has dared to openly express the pain and struggle of a woman in search of her true identity no matter how this might clash with culturally imposed roles of womanhood. Kartika is a vocal champion for the right of women everywhere to pursue independence and careers in the areas of their choice. While she has paid a heavy psychological and social cost for her determination to become an artist and express her particular genius, Kartika's struggle and triumph, like her art, is inspiring, beautiful and unique.

– Extrapolated from writings by Astri Wright, Professor of Southeast Asian Art at University of Victoria, Canada, with the author's permission.







## About the filmmaker

Dr. Christopher Basile PhD is a filmmaker, ethnomusicologist, musician, composer, teacher, writer, photographer and painter based in Melbourne, Australia.

"How does one come to making documentary films in Indonesia? In my case, I loved drawing and books from the beginning and I soon developed a childhood obsession with shooting and editing 8mm film. Music took over with playing and singing solo and in bands, leading to electronic music and studio engineering - from the days of analog synthesis and tape to midi and digital. Love of drawing and electronic media led to becoming an artist-in-residence in a computer lab (University of Maryland in USA) and computer graphics work. As an undergraduate in university I fell in love with Indonesian art and culture, and played gamelan which led to study in Bali. Further academic study led to an MA and then a PhD for research in Ethnomusicology (ie 'anthropology of music' or 'musicological anthropology' depending on your perspective) for field-research on sasandu and sasandu-accompanied song on Roti Island near Timor in Eastern Indonesia. This field research included translation, field-recording, photography and videography which led to working in documentary filmmaking. Before *Kartika: 9 Ways of Seeing I* directed *An Introduction to a Javanese Way of Life, Death and Perfection* (2016) and worked as a cameraman, editor and composer on *The Java Spirit* (2014). I have also produced a series for Australian national radio on *The Music of Outer Island Indonesia* and published two CDs of my field recordings from Eastern Indonesia."

Contact Christopher via <http://havrillay.com/kartika/contact>







## **Kartika: 9 Ways of Seeing (2018; 62 mins)**

Director – Christopher Basile

Editor & Sound Designer – Garry Havrillay

Camera and Sound – Christopher Basile

Executive Producers – Michael J. Connor, Garry Havrillay, Kelli Berezin & Jan Grønbech

Associate Producers – Heather Curnow, Garrett & Bronwen Solyom

### Music

Sanggar Seni Kuda Lumping Pancar Manunggal featuring Slamet Budi Susilo

Grup Degung ISI Yogyakarta featuring Cepi Irawan & Ela Yulaeliah

Kecapi Suling Duo – Kake Kholis Sumardi Rosonggin & Firman Ariyadi

Oboe & Guitar Duo – Julija Novosel & Christopher Basile

All music recorded in Java, Indonesia by Christopher Basile

Thanks to Teuku Dalin, Riverside Music & Rehearsal Space

Kartika Theme composed by Julija Novosel & Christopher Basile

Excerpts from "Hungry to Paint: Profile of the Indonesian Painter Affandi"

Directed by Yazir Marzuki – Courtesy of The Affandi Museum, Yogyakarta

Thanks to The Affandi Museum Yogyakarta for permission to photograph and reproduce the artworks of Bpk. Affandi

Thanks to Ibu Kartika Affandi & Omahe Kartika for permission to photograph and reproduce her artworks and family photos

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Nude portraits of Kartika painted by Dyan Anggraini

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### SPECIAL THANKS TO

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