

PRESS RELEASE

“Dealing in Distance” Mini Festival Comes to Bali with More than 30 Artists: Exploring Diaspora, Migration, and Belonging



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The travelling mini festival “Dealing in Distance”, organised by Goethe-Institut, makes its way to Bali from 22-25 January 2026, taking place across three venues in Denpasar: CushCush Gallery, Masa Masa, and MASH Denpasar. Featuring more than 30 Southeast Asian diaspora artistic contributions—some are related to Germany—the festival presents over 20 public programmes, including exhibitions, performances, workshops, talks, and walking tours.

This edition in Bali follows the festival’s previous stops in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, in the first two weeks of January, continuing its exploration of various notions of diaspora, migration, and identity in distance. Conceived as a platform for research-based practice, “Dealing in Distance” understands knowledge as an ongoing process rather than a fixed conclusion, moving between local and global contexts.

Initiated by the Goethe-Instituts in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi), “Dealing in Distance” is conceptually framed by the regional curator, RED Nguyễn Hải Yến, who draws on the idea that identity does not grow from a single origin, but from multiple connections. The festival’s third iteration in Bali is realised in collaboration with two local curators, Wayan Sumahardika and Savitri Sastrawan.

“Aligned with Goethe-Institut’s commitment to dialogue and mobility, Dealing in Distance unfolds through a range of public programmes, presenting encounters—often uneven and unresolved—between contemporary Southeast Asian diasporic, Indonesian, and Balinese artists. By bringing these diverse perspectives together, we hope to spark reflection, exchange, and new ways of understanding cultural connections in an increasingly mobile world,” said Dr. Marguerite Rumpf, Regional Head of Cultural Programmes at Goethe-Institut Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

Bali provides a critical lens to reflect on belonging beyond fixed definitions, shaped by plural worldviews, histories of migration and tourism, and ongoing negotiations between tradition and contemporary experience. Within this context, Bali is an active site where historical layers and contemporary



negotiations intersect, and thus, this edition's concept "~~KAMU DARI MANA?~~ (WHERE ARE YOU FROM?)" finds clear resonance.

Dealing in Distance "~~KAMU DARI MANA? (WHERE ARE YOU FROM?)~~" will feature artistic contributions from:

Alvin Collantes | Amal Purnama | Bilawa Ade Respati | Bumi Bajra | [cap naga] | Don Rare Nadiana x Wulan Dewi Saraswati | Ferdiansyah Tajib | Gatari Surya Kusuma | Gede Yogi Sukawiadnyana x Ni Komang Ayu Anantha Putri x Manik Sukadana | Hà Thúy Hằng | Hiền Hoàng | Hoo Fan Chon | I Ngurah Suryawan | I Putu Oka Surya Pratama | Jules Leaño | Made Masak | Melati Suryodarmo | Nelden Djakababa Gericke x Putri Minangsari | Noutnapha Soydala | Nindya Nareswari | Nuturang | Phạm Minh Đức | Prinka Saraswati | Sarnt Utamachote, Plum, Gula Malacca | Vita Wulansari | Wayan Gde Yudane x Putu Septa | Woven Kolektif | Zelin Seah

Wayan Sumahardika, one of the local curators, stated, "Dealing in Distance invites artists and audiences to experience Bali not merely as a paradisiacal tourist destination, but as a social and artistic laboratory where diaspora, history, and mobility converge. Against the backdrop of rapid tourism development and Bali's global imagery, the programme raises a critical question: is there such a thing as an authentic Balinese identity?"

Foregrounding the emotion arising from encounters between migrant and local—amid cultural globalisation, mass tourism, and social vulnerability, a selection of Balinese artists enacting their aesthetic and political positions across generations and regions in Bali. *Before the Pulse Fails* by Wayan Gde Yudane and Putu Septa presents a sonic experience that captures between living tradition and the risk of rhythmic rupture—where patterns may break, shift, and be reconfigured.

The collaboration between Don Rare Nadiana and Wulan Dewi Saraswati in *Mengguh Les: Exploring the Diversity of Flavors in Bali* employs taste as a medium to convey Bali's long civilisational history—one that remains fluid, open, and continuously rearticulated through new civic imaginaries.

Woven Kolektif, an artist collective based in Australia and Germany who shared diasporic connections to Indonesia, engages with collective memory to shape broader dialogues around shared histories in their audio visual and tactile works.

Moving across Bali, to acknowledge the multiplicity of stories and perspectives that exist in the exiles, a range of performances echoed by the diaspora of South East Asian. A performative reading *Thelma and the Vixen* by Nelden Djakababa Gericke grappling with Filipino middle-aged woman's grief and the struggle of menopause, accompanied with a poet and dancer Putri Minangsari and a sound composition by Bilawa Ade Respati.

Reflecting on the island of Bali dubbed as paradise where global tourism, labor migration, and service economies intersect with the commodification of intimacy, Sarnt Utamachote, together with Plum and Gula Malacca, presents the long durational, five-hour performance *Girls gotta do what girls do?*, offering a critical reflection on these dynamics.

Access the full public programmes on "Dealing in Distance" by visiting goethe.de/indonesia/dealingindistance.

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About Goethe-Institut

The Goethe-Institut is the Federal Republic of Germany's cultural institute, active worldwide. We promote the study of German abroad and encourage international cultural exchange. We also provide a comprehensive image of Germany through information on German political, social, and cultural life. Our various cultural and educational programmes support intercultural dialogue and enable cultural participation. These various programmes strengthen the structures of civil society and support global mobility.

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