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For Immediate Release

Release Date:
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Exhibition:
Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook

Dates:
January 25 – March 30, 2015

Opening Event:
Saturday, January 24, 2015
5–7pm

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ARAYA RASDJARMREARNSOOK

FIRST US RETROSPECTIVE OF INFLUENTIAL THAI ARTIST

Long Island City, NY – SculptureCenter is pleased to present *Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook*, the Thai artist's first retrospective in the United States.

Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook (born 1957 in Trat, Thailand) is one of the most prominent artists working in Southeast Asia. The exhibition will showcase over 20 artworks spanning two decades of the artist's career, and will include video, sculpture, photography, and some of her better-known works, as well as those that have rarely been viewed, especially in the United States. Rasdjarmrearnsook is also producing new sculptures for the exhibition.

Working with psychologically rich materials, Rasdjarmrearnsook considers a wide range of subjects that have existed in marginal spaces, including women, the deceased, the insane, and animals. She creates complex narratives that confront societal structures of power and pedagogy. Concerned with systems of language and communication, Rasdjarmrearnsook makes earnest attempts to converse with subjects who don't speak in languages that are comprehended or even acknowledged by mainstream society.

The exhibition will present video works, including both *The Class* and *Conversation* series, where Rasdjarmrearnsook conducts discussions with corpses. Also included is *Village and Elsewhere: Artemisia Gentileschi's Judith Beheading Holofernes, Jeff Koons' Untitled, and Thai Villagers* (2011), a video in which a Buddhist monk leads a comical conversation about these two Western paintings in a temple. A more recent group of works featured focuses on the status of dogs in Thai culture and beyond. The exhibition will premiere a new series of sculptures, each a portrait of the stray dogs that Rasdjarmrearnsook cares for in her home and at Chiang Mai University, where she teaches.

For the past 25 years, Rasdjarmrearnsook's videos and installations have been regularly shown throughout the world. Rasdjarmrearnsook represented Thailand at the Venice Biennale (2005) and has been featured in many international exhibitions including dOCUMENTA (13) (2013), the Sydney Biennale (2010), the Gwangju Biennale (2006), the Istanbul Biennial (2003), the Johannesburg Biennial (1995), and the Carnegie International (2004). Rasdjarmrearnsook is also a respected professor in Thailand's leading art program at Chiang Mai University, where she has recently spearheaded one of the first media and theory departments in the country.

The exhibition is curated by **Ruba Katrib**, SculptureCenter Curator.

This presentation has been supported in part by funds raised through a successful Kickstarter campaign, part of the Art Basel Crowdfunding Initiative.

Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook is presented with the generous support of the Asian Cultural Council and many individual contributions. SculptureCenter's 2014/15 exhibition program is underwritten by UOVO Fine Art Storage.

PUBLIC PROGRAM

SC Conversations: Ecofeminism and the work of Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook

March 17, 2015

7pm

Attending to the perspectives of animals, women, the mentally ill, villagers, and even the dead, Rasdjarmrearnsook allows a range of subjects—those that are often muted in “othered” social positions—to be heard in her video works. Rasdjarmrearnsook uses pedagogy and poetry to engage in an ecofeminist critique that reorders culturally delineated states of being, ignoring established hierarchies between animals, women, the poor, the sick, and the dead. This conversation brings together feminist philosopher **Lori Gruen** and **Arnika Fuhrman**, a scholar focused on the aesthetic and political modernities of Southeast Asia, to discuss the complex issues of gender, animal rights, the politics of death, and the context of Thai culture. The discussion is moderated by **Ruba Katrib**, SculptureCenter Curator.

Lori Gruen is currently Professor of Philosophy, Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and Environmental Studies at Wesleyan University where she also coordinates Wesleyan Animal Studies. She has recently been elected as a Fellow of the prestigious Hastings Center for Bioethics. Professor Gruen has published extensively on topics in animal ethics, ecofeminism, empathy, and death. She is the author of three books on animal ethics, including *Entangled Empathy* (Lantern, 2015) and *Ethics and Animals: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2011); the editor of five books including *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth* with Carol J. Adams (Bloomsbury, July 2014) and the *Ethics of Captivity* (Oxford, May 2014); and the author of dozens of articles and book chapters. She has created a memorial website documenting the history of The First 100 chimpanzees in research in the US (first100chimps.wesleyan.edu) and has an evolving website that documents the journey to sanctuary of the remaining chimpanzees in research labs, *The Last 1000* (last1000chimps.com). For more info go to lorigruen.com.

Arnika Fuhrmann is Assistant Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at Cornell University and an interdisciplinary scholar of Southeast Asia, working at the intersections of the region's aesthetic and political modernities. Her book manuscript *Ghostly Desires* (forthcoming with Duke UP) examines how Buddhist-coded anachronisms of haunting figure struggles over sexuality, personhood, and notions of collectivity in contemporary Thai cinema. In a new research project, Fuhrmann focuses on new media and how the study of the digital allows for a perspective on the political public sphere that transcends commonplace distinctions of liberalism and illiberalism. This project intersects with her interests in the transformation of cities in contemporary South/east Asia. Fuhrmann's recent writing has appeared in *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture*, *Oriens Extremus*, and *positions: asia critique*. Complementing her academic work, she also engages in cultural programming and works in the curatorial team of the Asian Film Festival Berlin.

ALSO ON VIEW

In Practice: Under Foundations, an annual open-call exhibition for emerging artists with a focus on the production of new work.

January 25 – April 13, 2015

Now Showing: *Belleza y Felicidad*, a mini-retrospective of poetry booklets by the Buenos Aires-based literature and art collective.

January 25 – March 30, 2015

About SculptureCenter

Founded by artists in 1928, SculptureCenter is a not-for-profit arts institution in Long Island City, NY dedicated to experimental and innovative developments in contemporary sculpture. SculptureCenter commissions new works and presents exhibitions by emerging and established, national and international artists. Our programs identify new talent, explore the conceptual, aesthetic and material concerns of contemporary sculpture, and encourage independent vision.

SculptureCenter's major exhibition and operating support is generously provided by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts; the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council; the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; Jeanne Donovan Fisher; the Kraus Family Foundation; the Lambent Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation; the A. Woodner Fund; and contributions from our Board of Trustees. Additional funding is provided by the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation and contributions from many generous individuals.

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