

# frieze

## REVIEWS

### Around Town: New York, USA

#### By Jason Farago - May 2015

Far better videos were just up the road from PS1 at **SculptureCenter** – recently renovated and doing better than ever under curator **Ruba Katrib**. She mounted the best show of the season: a retrospective of Thai artist **Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook**, whose mortality-obsessed but even-tempered work earns the overused compliment “haunting”.

Rasdjarmrearnsook transformed SculptureCenter into a thanatorium: she lectures corpses, records wailing mental patients, bottles her dogs’ hair. And, yet, death is not the end – her corpse students speak back to her – nor does its omnipresence preclude piercing, almost-indecent humour. In a video from her series *Village and Elsewhere* (2011), she sits with children in rural Thailand while a saffron-clad monk tries to explain two artistic reproductions: a photograph of Jeff Koons with two women in bikinis on the left, and, on the right, an image of Artemisia Gentileschi’s *Judith Slaying Holofernes* (c. 1612). If you were expecting Heinrich Wölfflin-style compare and contrast, that is not how art history is taught in rural Thailand: the monk links the images into a morality play, as his charges gleefully imagine an adulterous Koons having his head lopped off.