

## ARAHMAIANI: NEW YORK EXHIBITION



Exhibition view Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York, January - February, 2014.

### INTRODUCTION:

An exhibition of the work of **Arahmaiani** titled *Fertility of the Mind* at Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York, has just closed. The exhibition, from January 9 to February 22, was a comprehensive, well mounted exhibition as can be seen on the website of: [Tyler Rollins Fine Art](http://www.tylerrollinsfineart.com)

The exhibition was reviewed in the March edition of **ARTnews**. It was a brief review that was descriptive without analysis, but it is significant that an Indonesian artist, whose performance and installation works are not an easily marketable art, has gained this attention in New York.

### ARTnews Reviews: ARAHMAIANI

Tyler Rollins Fine Art

Powerful and challenging, this show introduced us to the work of the Indonesian Feminist artist Arahmaiani, with an excellent presentation of photographic and written documentation of her performance and other work. The artist's mission is to represent minorities and the marginalized throughout much of South Asia and beyond.



**Arahmaiani**, *Do Not Prevent the Fertility of the Mind*, 1997-2014, feminine napkins, fluorescent lights, wooden stool, glass vial, blood and photograph 108" x 144". Tyler Rollins Fine Art.

Greeting viewers to the show was *Do Not Prevent the Fertility of the Mind* (1997-2014), a “padded cell” wall covered in white sanitary pads. In the centre is a photo of the artist bearing a red-cross-embazoned pad on her head and holding an enlarged IUD and forceps in arms raised at her sides like a deity. On a stool in front of the wall was a vial of blood.

There were also photographs and captions outlining 30 years of the artist’s performances and installations. Arahmaiani has taken Joseph Beuys’s “social sculpture” as an inspiration for works that engage local and global issues. Her 2004 performance *Wedding Party (LAPEN Wedding)* presents a groom and a bride dressed in the flags of some 26 political parties in Indonesia. Lapen is a popular alcoholic drink, and the party as documented has devolved into chaos and parody.

The most recent work represented was Arahmaiani’s contribution to the 2013-14 exhibition “Suspended Histories” at the Museum Van Loon in Amsterdam. The museum commissioned artists to make works related to the role of the Van Loon family in the Dutch East India Company, chartered in the early 17th century to colonize Asia. Arahmaiani’s installation consisted of self-portrait photographs hung next to official portraits of the members of the Van Loon family. The artist dressed in simple Javanese attire, striking a pose.

At Tyler Rollins, the artist’s work *Sacred Coke* (1993-2014) centered on a round table covered with rice and soil and an upright Coca Cola bottle topped by a condom. Arahmaiani makes us aware of the historical repercussions of those early explorations and exploitations. This show was a welcome introduction to her work.

Cynthia Nadelman