

ARAHIMAIANI

SHADOW OF THE PAST



Curated by

ISA Art
Advisory
A MEMBER OF [INDONESIANLUXURY.COM](https://www.indonesianluxury.com)

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SHADOW OF THE PAST

SOLO EXHIBITION
BY ARAHMAIANI

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**Indonesian Luxury's
Private Viewing Space**

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INTRODUCTION

Shadow of the Past exhibition will highlight Arahmaiani's recent works in adjacent to her solo exhibition *The Past has not Passed* (Masa Lalu Belumlah Berlalu) at Museum MACAN. The celebratory private viewing will be accompanied by an artist talk and a special performance by Arahmaiani in collaboration with Aaron Taylor Kuffner's Gamelatron project at Indonesian Luxury Viewing Space.

Recognized as one of Indonesia's most influential and respected artists, Arahmaiani has been included in over one hundred solo and group exhibitions around the world since 1980. *Shadow of the Past* is a follow-up to an important landmark for contemporary Indonesian art as Arahmaiani is the first Indonesian artist to have a solo show at Museum MACAN, the first institution of its kind in Indonesia. As part of Indonesian Luxury's mission, we want to present the best of contemporary Indonesian art while educating and promoting its values and impact on individuals and society. Thanks to Arahmaiani and Aaron Taylor Kuffner, this show will bring our vision to life.

Additionally, *Shadow of the Past* will feature some of Arahmaiani's photographs and videos from her experiences in Tibet in 2016, exploring the natural environment and spirituality. Some of the paintings on display were inspired by Jawi or Pegon, an Arabic alphabet used to write the Javanese and Sundanese languages, in particular for poetry and ancient religious writing.

Transformed for local languages, they symbolize the existence of creative, adaptive abilities and an appreciation for cultural diversity, characteristic of Javanese culture

and the archipelago in general.

Arahmaiani's work ties back to her original themes of spirituality, cultural syncretism and humanity's connection with nature as well as feminism in religious context and her fascination with the buried past of her native Java and its rich Hindu-Buddhist cultural heritage, still under-recognized.

“Saya tak butuh panduan ke depan, pada masa lalulah kutemui masa depan.”

Salah seorang pelawat kegelisahan, seorang seniman performans perempuan Indonesia yang paling dikenal dunia, Arahmaiani, kembali menawarkan perenungan-perenungannya di pameran solonya “Shadow of The Past”.

Satu saat, Arahmaiani dengan sikap artistiknnya sempat dialienasi dalam dua dunia, karena serangannya pada kapitalisme global hingga distigma “fundamentalist” di teritori Barat. Sementara di Timur, di tanah kelahirannya, Indonesia, ia kritis terhadap budaya patriarki bagi sebagian besar pemeluk Islam, yang beresiko dianggap “anti syariah”. Arahmaiani kemudian memutuskan menjadi pengelana abadi pada tetirah sesungguhnya: pencarian atas hakikat.

Seperti salah satu hikayat para bijak yang paling dikenang, mereka para leluhur mewejang, di dunia Timur kuno “saya tak butuh panduan kedepan, pada masa lalulah kutemui masa depan”. Arahmaiani menemui jejak-jejak Atisha Dipamkara Srijnana, seorang filsuf sekaligus pendeta Budha pada abad 10/11, yang paling dihormati diseantero Asia pada masanya.

Spiritualisme Islam dalam tataran “hakikat” ingin diraih Arahmaiani pada sosoknya, di sana, di puncak paling tinggi sejagat, di pegunungan Himalaya, India tempat Atisha menebarkan ajaran-ajarannya.

Arahmaiani tak hanya menemukan pencerahan-pencerahan spiritual, namun juga kesadaran dirinya sebagai bagian dari alam maha besar dari jagat ciliknya di Tibet, yang manifestasinya sebagai seniman bekerja dengan para pendeta Budha menumbuhkan kepedulian terhadap lingkungan sekitarnya.

Ia masygul, sangat tercekam menyadari bahwa dataran tinggi Tibet, selama 9 tahun terakhir pengelanaannya di antara Indonesia-Tibet adalah realitas Tower Air yang menjadi cadangan bagi 2 miliar lebih penduduk Asia.

Sementara dunia dalam ambang krisis air bersih, korporasi global terus saja mengeksploitasi sumber-sumber alam yang tersisa, menjadi ancaman serius bagi bumi. Sejak itu, pada 2010 ia memutuskan proyek-proyek seninya yang selalu terhubung pada isu-isu lingkungan hidup.

Kajian-kajian mutakhir tentang isu keperempuanan, memang tak lagi berkubang pada kesetaraan laki-laki dan perempuan; namun meluas merengkuh ketidakadilan mereka yang dimarginalkan, kediktatoran mayoritas terhadap minoritas, kemiskinan mereka yang ditindas dan peminggiran budaya aseli sebuah negeri. Bahkan, isu pemanasan global menjadi subyek utama kajian.

Seperti apa yang dikatakan Charlene Spretnak, dalam States of Grace (1993); seorang kritikus kajian perempuan dan seni yang menyebut bahwa kegagalan modernitas memang menyebabkan kematian ekologi, sebuah kondisi globalisasi yang tak berkualifikasi dengan target pertumbuhan ekonomi; yang akhirnya memamatkan budaya-budaya masyarakat dunia ke-3 dan krisis lingkungan hidup akut.

Dalam sajian performannya nanti di Isa Art Advisory, sebagai perluasan pameran semi retrospeksinya di Museum MACAN beberapa saat lalu, Arahmaiani akan menampilkan performans khusus sebagai kristalisasi pengalamannya selama bertahun-tahun di Tibet berkolaborasi dengan seniman AS, dengan gamelan kinetiknya (Gamelatron), Aaron Taylor Kuffner, tentang ungkapan-ungkapan pengembaraan spiritualnya.

Mereka berdua akan menemui bayang-bayang “Atisha”, yang terhubung dengan masa silam dan kearifan-kearifan tatkala beranjangsana ke Nusantara pada abad 10, bersama atribut bendera-bendera; dengan simbol-simbol huruf beragam teritori.

“My latest works in the form of paintings, videos, installations, and performance, are influenced by my research into the past cultures of Animism, Hinduism, and Buddhism in Indonesia, which left behind many temples – even the largest Buddhist temple in the world, Borobudur, which was buried for 800 years and was rediscovered around 200 years ago. Also there are very ancient books of Buddhist teaching, such as Sanghyang Kamahayanikan, which was discovered in the kingdom of Lombok when it was defeated by the Dutch military in the year 1900.

Furthermore, there is the relationship in ancient times between Tibetan Buddhism and local Buddhism in what is now Indonesia (which in the past was of the Mahayana/Tantrayana sect). A monk known by the name Lama Atisha, who became a reformer of the Buddhist religion in Tibet and who founded Kadampa school, once studied for twelve years in the Buddhist university in Sriwijaya (the ancient kingdom in Indonesia), where he received the guidance of a local master by the name of Dharmakirti, who in Tibet is known as Lama Serlingpa.”

Besides this, my activity with the monks and the laypeople in Lab village, in the Kham region of Tibet, over the past six years, with the goal of solving environmental problems, is also of course another source of fresh inspiration which has a relation to the past of Java, my place of birth. The Tibetan Plateau – which is also known as the Third Pole and Asia’s Water Tower because it is the source of seven large rivers on which the livelihood of more than two billion people depends – is under the threat of draught. Climate change, also known as global warming, has caused the glaciers and even the permafrost to melt. There have been many disasters at the upstream areas of the rivers, such as floods and mudslides. Efforts must be undertaken to prevent larger disasters, particularly to answer the issue of the drying up of all the springs there.

Thus my new works might be more of a contemplation on the present condition of life, which is full of issues and challenges. Which is under the threat of ecological destruction. Or which is awash with the suffering of those who are poor and marginalized in this less than just economic system that tends to be profit oriented. I try to imagine a brighter future for life and try to change the direction of thinking that causes destruction and inhuman conditions.

- Arahmaiani

About the Tibet Experience

ARTWORKS



Shadow of the Past: Sweden Version I
Series of 8 photographs

Print on paper
90 x 120 cm
2015



Shadow of the Past: Tibet Version I
Series of 8 photographs

Print on paper
80 x 120 cm
2018



Shadow of the Past: Tibet Version II
Series of 8 photographs

Print on paper
80 x 120 cm
2018



Shadow of the Past: Lasem Version I
Series of 8 photographs

Print on paper
80 x 120 cm
2018



Shadow of the Past: Tibet Version I
Series of 8 Videos

Video
2018



Shadow of the Past: Tibet Version II
Series of 8 Videos

Video
2018



Shadow of the Past: Lasem
Series of 8 Videos

Video
2018

“Pegon Arabic or sometimes called Jawi (in the Malay region) are letters derived from Arabic writing (which came together with Islamic beliefs) which were then transformed and used for local languages. This needs to be understood because it shows the existence of creative, adaptive abilities and appreciation for cultural diversity; which is basically a characteristic of culture in Java or the archipelago in general. This has inspired me to make works using Arab Pegon in visual works both in the form of paintings, installations and objects.”

*- Arahmaiani
About her paintings*

Meditative Jawi I
—
Acrylic on canvas
125 x 150 cm
2018



Meditative Jawi II
—
Acrylic on canvas
125 x 150 cm
2018



Silent Rainbow I

Acrylic on canvas
125 x 150 cm
2018



Silent Rainbow II

Acrylic on canvas
125 x 150 cm
2018



Silent Rainbow V
—
Acrylic on canvas
125 x 150 cm
2018



Silent Rainbow VI
—
Acrylic on canvas
120 x 140 cm
2018



Silent Rainbow VII

Acrylic on canvas
120 x 140 cm
2018



Silent Rainbow VIII

Acrylic on canvas
115 x 135 cm
2018

ARAHMAIANI

Recognized as one of Indonesia's most influential and respected contemporary artists, Arahmaiani is known internationally since the 80s for her powerful and provocative commentaries on social, political and cultural issues. Born in 1961 in Bandung, Indonesia, she has established herself as a pioneer in the field of performance art in Southeast Asia, although her practice incorporates a wide variety of media.

Always supported by a strong theoretical background and true to her combative spirit, her art has shifted from criticism to activism. Moving between Indonesia, Tibet, Germany and India, her most recent research explores the natural environment and spirituality. For the past eight years, she has in particular focused her work on the environmental issues in the Tibetan plateau region, where she has been collaborating with Buddhist monks and villagers to increase environmental consciousness through ongoing community projects.

Arahmaiani has held or participated in over one hundred solo and group exhibitions around the world. Her works have been performed and exhibited widely in museums and biennales, including: the Venice Biennale (2003); Biennale of the Moving Image, Geneva (2003); Gwangju Biennale in South Korea (2002); Bienal de São Paulo (2002); Performance Biennale, Israel (2001); Biennale de Lyon, France (2000); Werkleitz Biennale, Germany (2000); Bienal de la Habana, Cuba (1997); Asia-Pacific Triennial, Brisbane, Australia (1996) and the Yogya Biennale (1994).



In New York City, she was included in the landmark 1996 exhibition, *Traditions/Tensions* at the Asia Society, as well as in the *Global Feminisms* exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum in 2007. Her performances and other artworks have appeared in institutions in the United States, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan and Indonesia.

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