



Fashionable fabric Heel (2008), an embroidery by Thai artist Jakkai Siributr

ON SHOW

Fresh Palette. A New York City gallery showcases art from Southeast Asia

ARTISTS IN UNSTABLE AND troubled countries always find a way to speak. In Thailand—currently in political turmoil—messages of protest and dissent have begun appearing in canvases, embroideries and sculptures. Tyler Rollins, an American enthusiast with a penchant for contemporary art from Southeast Asia, is betting that the trend will continue

as Thailand and neighboring countries known more for traditional styles that appeal to tourists pick up on the boom in Chinese political art.

In late October, Tyler Rollins Fine Art became the first gallery in New York City with a focus on contemporary Southeast Asian works. Located in Chelsea, the 3,000-sq.-ft. (280 sq m) space

will feature up-and-coming and established artists alike.

Rollins' timing is perfect: while prices for Chinese works dropped in the fall auctions, Southeast Asian art broke records. At Sotheby's in October, Indonesian artist I. Nyoman Masriadi's *Sorry Hero, Saya Lupa* (Sorry Hero, I Forgot), an image of Batman and Superman sitting on toilets, sold for \$622,000, eight times its presale estimate. And Filipino artist **Ronald Ventura, who is set to show at Tyler Rollins in 2009**, sold his *Nesting Ground* for \$280,000, more than 10 times the expected price.

Rollins opened his gallery

with an exhibition of works by Thai artist Jakkai Siributr, who stitches embroideries that explore his ancestral heritage, cultural suppression, censorship and dogs. Siributr is the great-great-grandson of King Mongkut (Rama IV), immortalized in *The King and I*. Many of his works reference the spiritual side of Thai culture by using saffron monks' robes as backdrops, and his intricate technique rivals that of 19th century American women embroiderers.

Tyler Rollins Fine Art is at 529 West 20th Street. Visit www.trfineart.com. —BY RACHEL AYDT