



Memorandum of Inhumane Act No. 3 2017
pigment based digital print and charcoal on acid
free paper

137.5 x 355.5 cm overall (33 pieces)

Taking Nothing But Pictures 2018

video

duration 4:30



Memory of The Survivor 2016
wooden furniture, fused deposition models, standing
lamp, ceramics, sound recording, radio, video
projection, batik fabrics

dimensions variable

edition of 2 plus 1 artist's proof



The Survivor Story 2016

deboss, printing press on paper, digital print, pastel drawing and collage

46 x 61 cm each (5 panels)

edition of 5 plus 1 artist's proof



The Light of Spirit 2016

plastic electric candles, LED bulbs, sand, casted
cement, wood

220 x 210 x 300 cm

edition of 2 plus 1 artist's proof

This exhibition presents the artist's longstanding major project that investigates the genocide and mass graves of ethnic Chinese-Indonesians in Java, Indonesia from 1947 to 1949. Part documentary and part commemoration, the exhibition will see a new series of drawings alongside two major installations that confronts the truth of this history.

This project takes as its starting point, documentary photographs taken by the artist's father in the 1950s. Later, he met some of the survivors and also visited the mass graveyard, experiences which precipitated his research into this dark period of Indonesia's history. The victims and their families commemorate the event every year on the 5th of April, in a commemoration called *Ching Ming*. Since 2009, Harsono has been actively researching the little-known mass grave sites of ethnic Chinese-Indonesians; giving voice to those who cannot speak.

Episodes of violence and oppression against the country's ethnic Chinese minority can be traced to even before the birth of Indonesian nationalism in the early 20th Century. Racial violence marked Indonesia's transition from a Dutch colony to Japanese occupied territory and the subsequent Indonesian Revolution (1945-1949), considered to be one of the most violent eras in modern Indonesian history. To this day, this dark period of Indonesia's history has remained largely obscured with no official acknowledgement or efforts to initiate reconciliation.

"History also records the darker moments of loss and downfall. Oftentimes, the victims of persecution find it hard to share their pain with descendants or discuss their history at all. Revealing the truth feels like reopening old wounds," says the artist. "The perpetrators of historical violence have a tendency to edit history; their actions are erased like flaws to be covered over. A great nation learns from the past. Acknowledging history, even when it's painful, will help future generations to avoid making the same mistakes; whereas, denying the past will allow history to repeat itself."

The Light of Spirit, 2016, functions as a monument of remembrance and pays tribute to the individual tragedies and shared loss of the persecuted, shedding light on a past that had long been kept in the dark. Memorandum of Inhumane Act No. 3, 2017, incorporates images of mass graveyards as well as declarations and protests stated in the book, *MEMORANDUM, Outlining Acts of Violence and Humanity Perpetrated by Indonesia Bands on Innocent Chinese Before and After The Dutch Police Action Was Enforced on July 21, 1947*. Evidence of a history that cannot be refuted.

In Harsono's artist statement, he describes this exhibition in terms of a survivor: *I am not angry. It is true that I am not angry... but I want you to know what happened. Nobody should forget, so that these acts are never repeated again. "It has never been my intention to place blame with anyone, rather this is a call to everyone to accept the truth of history, however wretched it is, for a stronger nation."*

ABOUT THE ARTIST

FX Harsono is a seminal figure in the Indonesian contemporary art scene with a career spanning four decades. He co-founded Indonesia's Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru (New Art Movement) in 1975, with a group of young artists who believed in engaging with social and political issues, through an emphasis on experimental and conceptual approaches that incorporates everyday materials. Since his student days he has been an active critic of Indonesian politics, society and culture, consistently updating his artistic language to the contemporary social and cultural contexts. Harsono's own biography and family history are often the basis of his art, pointing at the disconcerting situation of minorities, the socially underprivileged against the backdrop of Indonesia's own history and political development. This intersection of the personal and the political is particularly evident in his most recent works.

In 2015, Harsono received the first Joseph Balestier Award for the Freedom of Art, awarded by the United States Embassy in Singapore and Art Stage Singapore, following his 2014 Prince Claus Fund Laureate Award. In recognition of his commitment to the freedom of art and expression, citing the artist's "critical installation and performance work that spanned pro-democracy dissent to explorations of the experiences of ethnic minorities." In addition to teaching, Harsono regularly writes about social questions and the development of contemporary art in Indonesia and Southeast Asia.

FX Harsono studied painting at STSRI "ASRI", Yogyakarta, Indonesia from 1969-74 and at IKJ (Jakarta Art Institute) from 1987-91. Since 2015, he lectures at the Faculty of Art and Design, Pelita Harapan University, Tangerang, West Java, Indonesia. Notable solo exhibitions include *Beyond Identity*, Nexus Arts, Adelaide, Australia (2015); *Testimonies*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore (2010); and *The Erased Time*, National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta (2009). Recent group exhibitions include *Sunshower: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2017); *After Darkness: Southeast Asian Art in the Wake of History*, Asia Society Museum, New York (2017); *Rosa's Wound*, Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, Taiwan (2017); and *Tell Me My Truth*, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney (2016).

Harsono has participated in key local and international biennales including the 20th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, Australia (2016); Jogja Biennale XII, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (2013); the 4th Moscow Biennale, Moscow, Russia (2011); 3rd Nanjing Triennial, Nanjing, China (2008); 3rd Kwangju Biennale, South Korea (2000); and the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Brisbane, Australia (1993). Harsono's works have been acquired in public collections including Singapore Art Museum; National Gallery of Singapore; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan; Gallery of Modern Art, Queensland, Australia; National Gallery of Adelaide, Canberra, Australia; and the Ullen Foundation Collection, Beijing, China.