



INDONESIAN EYE

FX Harsono

Harsono's work is remarkable, and spanning four tumultuous decades in Indonesian art and history it has witnessed a multitude of changes and upheavals in Indonesian politics, society and culture. By the 1990s, he had established himself as a force in Indonesian contemporary art, creating powerful installations with strident social commentary. These compelling works, which critiqued the regime of power and oppression in Indonesia, gained critical attention and were widely exhibited abroad. The closing years of the 1990s were marked by a series of social shockwaves that reverberated throughout the nation; in particular, the economic meltdown of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis generated a groundswell of public anger. In 1998, this culminated in days of brutal street violence and the fall of Suharto's New Order. Indonesian-Chinese artists like Harsono experienced a profound sense of disillusionment, as the events of May 1998 revealed that the very "people" he had fought for through his art were just as capable of brutality as the political regime – and worse, these people would turn on each other. With the veneer of control under "strongman" Suharto removed, the fractures in Indonesian society revealed themselves more painfully than ever, particularly along ethnic lines. It was then that Harsono's art began to look inwards, as the artist intensely scrutinized his identity and place in society. To date, Harsono has continued to raise troubling questions about the position of minorities and the disenfranchised in Indonesia. His most recent body of work draws on his family history, in an investigative journey that reveals the intersection of the personal with the political. (*Tan Siu Li*, from the exhibition catalogue *FX Harsono: Testimonies*)

Rewriting the Erased Name, 2009

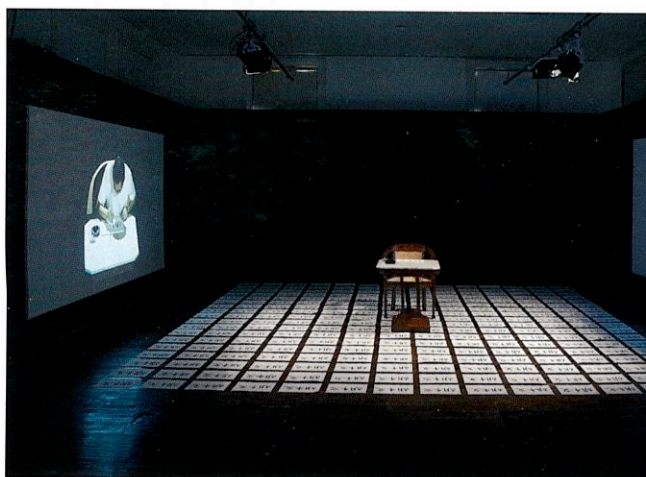
Wooden and rattan chair, wooden table with marble, Chinese ink on paper, performance video, variable dimensions, edition of 3
Installation view at Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney
Courtesy of Susannah Wimberley

Rewriting the Erased Name #1, 2011

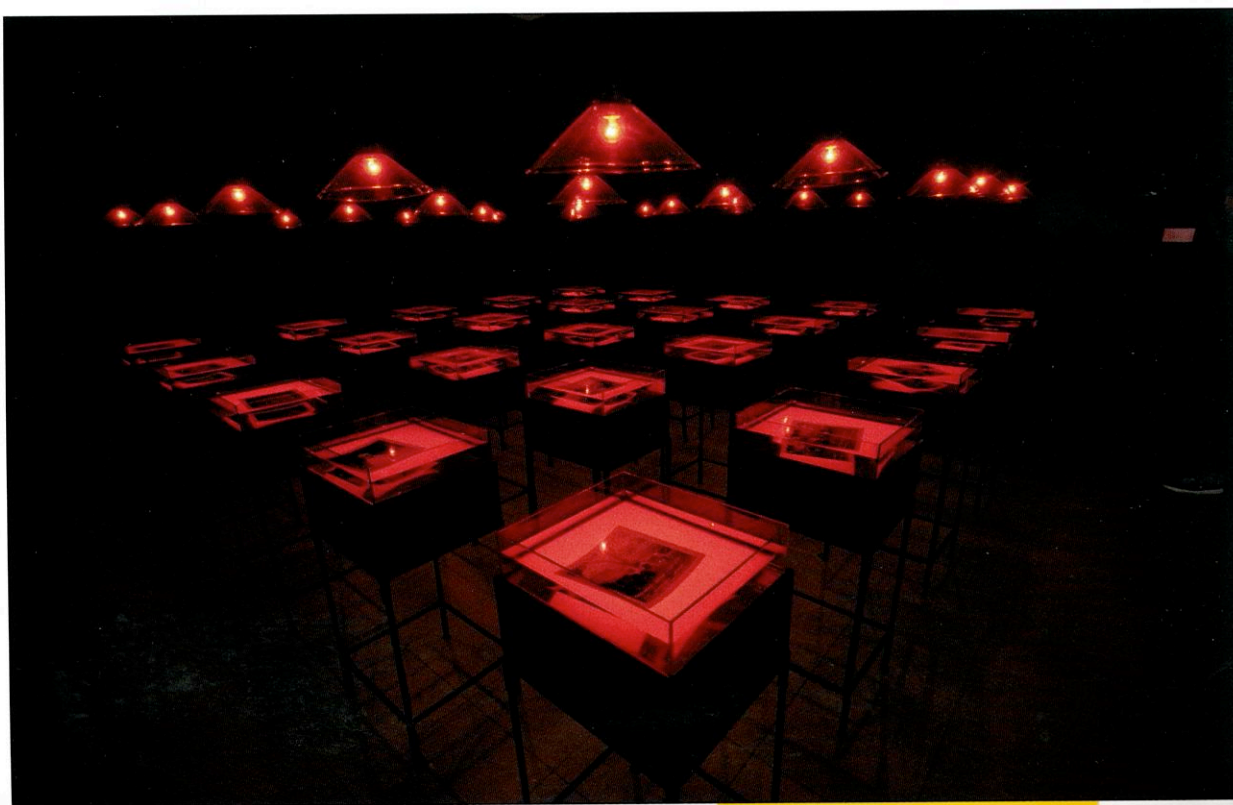
C-print on photo paper, 110 x 180 cm, edition of 5
Collection of the artist
Courtesy of the artist and Langgeng Gallery

Rewriting the Erased Name #2, 2011

C-print on photo paper, 110 x 180 cm, edition of 5
Collection of the artist
Courtesy of the artist and Langgeng Gallery



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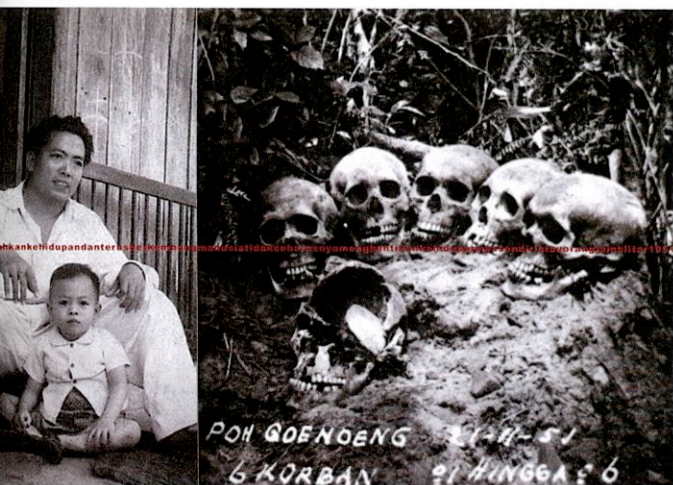




Bon Appetit, 2008
Table, cloth, chairs,
tableware, needles and
butterflies, variable
dimensions
Collection of the artist
Courtesy of the artist and
Langgeng Gallery

*Preserving Life, Terminating
Life #4*, 2011
Dptych, c-print on
Hahnemühle canvas,
100 x 175 cm
Collection of the artist
Courtesy of the artist and
Langgeng Gallery





Preserving Life, Terminating Life #5, 2011

Diptych, c-print on Hahnemühle canvas, 100 x 175 cm
Collection of the artist
Courtesy of the artist and Langgeng Gallery

Monument Bong Belung, 2009

Screen print on textile, needles, electric lamp and c-print on photo paper, variable dimensions
Collection of the artist
Courtesy of the artist and Langgeng Gallery