

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## HAN BING

### *On the Stage of Modernization*

January 20, 2007 through March 3, 2007

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 20. 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Deborah Cotton Gallery is pleased to present *On the Stage of Modernization*, a selection of videos and photographs by venerated Chinese multi-media artist Han Bing. The exhibition opens Saturday, January 20, 2007 with a reception with the artist from 6:00 to 9:00 PM, and continues through March 3, 2007.

China's Opening and Reform began in 1978, opening a Pandora's Box of transformations nationwide that were mirrored in the art world. In 1989, Chinese contemporary art suffered setbacks along with the crackdown on the student movement in Tiananmen Square. Since Hong Kong was returned from British sovereignty to the Mainland in 1997, the Peoples Republic of China has been engaged in a massive campaign of urbanized 'modernization.' The flourishing of contemporary Chinese art since then reflects a more tolerant attitude towards public culture, and the rise of an art that engages the everyday vicissitudes of China's transformation.

Han Bing's videos and photographs reflect this change in their saturation of symbolic imagery. Drawing on a symbolic and conceptual language that allows him to explore relationships between the living and the constructed, Han Bing explores the human costs of 'modernization.' and the brutal labor undertaken in its service, in his performance video of *Love in the Age of Big Construction* (2006) and photography such as *Everyday Precious*. While bearing witness to the sacrifice of traditional culture on the altar of the creation of a new, more 'modern' society, he explores in his video art, photography, and performance how this age of deconstruction is intimately tied to the age of big construction - how construction entails destruction. This era of de-construction involves the taming of the rural into the urban, but rarely addresses those left behind in the name of progress.

Han Bing may be best known for his *Walking the Cabbage* social intervention performances begun in 2000. He uses a quintessentially Chinese symbol of home, sustenance and comfort for poor Chinese - a bok choy cabbage - to provoke questions about contemporary social values and to comment on the ways in which our treatment and use of the objects in our world invests them with their particular, historically situated, socially constructed meanings.

Han Bing has conducted his 'cabbage walks' all over the world including Tiananmen Square in Beijing, Shanghai, The Great Wall, Tokyo, Miami, New York, Los Angeles and, this spring, across Europe (Brussels, Paris, and Barcelona). This ongoing international event will be performed in not only Houston, but Texas, for the very first time this weekend. During the reception, the artist will lead a cabbage on a short journey through Deborah Cotton Gallery. Cabbages and leashes will be available for those wishing to join in the ritual.

Han Bing (1974 - ) grew up in an impoverished village in rural China. After studying oil painting in college, he began Advanced Studies at the Chinese Central Academy of Art. Moving to Beijing, he witnessed the stark contrast between the urbanized 'Chinese Dream' propelling the nation's struggle to become modern and the harsh realities of those left behind, or trodden underfoot in the rush. As a clarion voice from the 'new contemporary art of the everyday' in a globalized, postcolonial context, Han Bing expresses the struggles and desires of ordinary people in 'the theater of Chinese modernization.' His work uses photography, video and multimedia performance installation to invert ordinary practices, asking us to rethink the order of things and contemplate the human condition.

Also on view until March 3 is the U.S. debut solo exhibition *Pure Space* by Yang Jin Long.

Deborah Cotton Gallery is founded on being an innovative showcase for ongoing presentation and promotion of strong historical and visionary contemporary artists world-wide, whose diverse practices include painting, works on paper, sculpture, video, photography, and conceptual and future media installations. The gallery aspires to provide a forum through connecting Texas, national and international artists to make positive change.