

MEDIA RELEASE

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China Under Construction: Contemporary Art from the People's Republic

Curated by Maya Kóvskaya

July 14th through August 31st, 2007

Opening Reception: Saturday, July 14th, 6:00 to 9:00 PM

CANG XIN CAO FEI CUI XIUWEN DAI GUANGYU GAO BROTHERS HAI BO HAN BING HE YUNGCHANG
HEI YUE-JI SHENGLI HONG LE HU YANG HUANG RUI HUANG YAN JIAO YINGQI MA YONGFENG
PENG KAILIN QINGQING QIU ZHIJIE RONGRONG & INRI SONG DONG TAO AIMIN WAN LI WENG FEN
WU GAOZHONG WU YUREN XU YONG ZHAN WANG

Deborah Cotton Gallery is pleased to present China Under Construction: Contemporary Art from the Peoples Republic, featuring China's most prominent contemporary artists curated by Beijing-based art critic Maya Kovskaya. The exhibition is an illuminating and provocative alternative to the clichéd, dated images of Chinese art that have over-saturated the international media of late. The internationally acclaimed artists include participants in the Venice Biennale and other prestigious international exhibitions. and whose work engages the transformations that are constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing the new China.

Chinese contemporary art has reached a turning point and the artists in China Under Construction are at the forefront of the new trajectory, in the early and mid-1990s, easily digestible, foreigner-pleasing formulas from mainland China, such as political pop and cynical realism, captured the international art community's imagination. This first generation of works played on well-known Cultural Revolution imagery, popular political symbols. and representations of social disaffection and alienation that led easily into Western narratives about a China in transition embraced by the mainstream foreign media. By the late 90s', however, growing numbers of Chinese artists, many born in the 70s, were unwilling to manipulate this new discourse of power in order to follow the first generation's path to easy success. Their formative experiences more on the new processes of social and economic transformation, unleashed by Reform and Opening (initialed in '78). Now, images of a country attempting to carry out unprecedented and rapid economic 'modernization' by political frat have overtaken the old creative canons, bringing a more diverse generation of new Chinese contemporary art to the international stage.

China Under Construction is spatially organized into three conceptual clusters that involve various sorts of major change in China illuminated by the art works in the show. Deconstructing Landscape explores change in the relationship between people and the natural environment, landscape and built environment, in particular the shifts in conceptions of 'the human being and nature' as people rethink tradition in the context of 'modernization.' This section features photography works by Wu Gaozhong, Zhan Wang, Hcng Lei, Dai Guangyu, Han Bing, Huang Yan, He Yunchang and video by Ma Yongfeng. Reconstructing Selves and Lives investigates change in the conditions of everyday life. change in social status, class and identity, and the tension between ordinary people's dreams of a new world and harsh realities of the present world, featuring Cao Fei & Ou Ning's acclaimed video 'San Yuan Li' (Venice Biennale). and photography by Weng Fen, Han Bing and Cang Xin, Contesting Power/Constituting Knowledge interrogates change in discourses of power and authority, discipline and punishment. And the ways in which gender, capital. discourse and power intersect. This change exists in the ever-expanding sex trade that has come to represent the seedy underbelly of China's transformation of lives and livelihoods at the nexus of public and private. This section features groundbreaking video by Cui Xiuwen. Dai Guangyu. and Ma Yongfeng. sculpture by the Gao Brothers. anthropological installation by Tao Aimin. and photography by Hei Yue Ji Shengli. Qingqing, and the team of photographers Xu Yong and former sex worker Yu Na. Constructing a Tenuous Modernity engages the human costs of China's juggernaut triad of 'industrialization. urbanization and modernization and its ubiquitous demolition, construction and arduous human labor, with an array of works; photography by the Gao Brothers. Rongrong & Inri. Cui Xiuwen. Cao Fei, Peng Kailin, sculpture by Wanli (Mari). video by Wu Yuren. and a live multimedia performance installation by Han Bing.

Through photography. video, sculpture. installation. and performance. China Under Construction examines the ways in which China is being constructed. deconstructed and reconstructed in this era of transnational flows of people, culture and capital, localized globalization, and so-called 'modernization.'

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 future media installations. The gallery aspires to provide a forum through connecting Texas. national and international artists to make positive change.