

Press Release

# Han Bing

## *Atlas*

2 September—4 October 2025

Opening Tuesday 2 September 2025, 6—8pm

Thaddaeus Ropac London

Ely House, 37 Dover Street, London, W1S 4NJ



*microwave cowboy*, 2025. Oil paint, oil stick and spray paint on canvas. 172.7 x 203.2 cm (67.99 x 80 in).

*I take something that is meant to be ignored or quickly forgotten  
and turn it into something that makes me wonder and linger.*

— Han Bing

Thaddaeus Ropac London is pleased to present *Atlas*, the first-ever exhibition of Han Bing's work in the UK. Han Bing is recognised for her sensitive yet disruptive paintings that capture the fragmentary textures of her urban surroundings. Spanning the gallery's ground floor, the exhibition will include new paintings alongside a series of works on paper,

executed, as is signature for the artist, on found pages of newspaper. *Atlas* continues the artist's exploration of the city as a site of image-making – an ever-shifting topography where forms collide in vivid and unexpected ways. The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue featuring a text by the art historian Doris von Drathen.





*the good witch*, 2025. Oil paint, oil stick and spray paint on canvas.  
177.8 x 143 cm (70 x 56.3 in).

Based in Paris, Han Bing was born in China and has lived in New York, Los Angeles and Shanghai. Her paintings develop from the visual impressions that she gathers and unconsciously absorbs as she moves through cityscapes, rather than from direct representation. She is particularly drawn to the remnants of advertisements and posters she sees on the subway and the street; how these torn compositions, accumulated over time like strata, create a palimpsest that ‘infiltrates the texture of the city’. Imagery infiltrates her work in a similar way, caught beneath streaks of electric colour and jagged planes that are continually scraped back and reworked over several months. The artist works directly onto the canvas, sketching what she describes as the compositional ‘skeleton’ already loosely formed in her mind, before adding layers of colour: the ‘tissue’. She often stages disruptions to the painterly surface, combatting familiar or recognisable elements with distinctive marks that resemble rips or glitches. In *they told me it only gets better* (2025), a staged domestic table scene reminiscent of an interiors magazine spread is ruptured by a large, faceted form that the artist describes as a kind of ‘punch’.

*What interests her are the gaps between images. Her attention is captured not by the tearing down itself, nor by the image fragments; rather by the ebb and flow of emergence and disappearance.*

— Doris von Drathen

Similarly, the poetic and often playful titles Han Bing gives her works navigate an internal landscape, filtering passing thoughts and interests, fragments of overheard conversation, song lyrics and lines from films that resonate, without offering fixed meaning. *Atlas*, the title of the exhibition, refers not only to the Titan of ancient Greek mythology, condemned to bear the weight of the heavens for eternity, but also to the first vertebra of the human spine, which, located at the top of the neck, supports the head and carries nerve signals between the brain and the body. By layering its associations with additional references to the Wizard of Oz – *no place like home*, *the good witch* and *Kansas anymore* – and the music of the late American rapper Mac Miller, Han Bing assembles narratives of self-discovery, the quests that lead us afar then return us home again. As such, *Atlas* presents various approaches to mapping, as the artist charts the spaces we inhabit, whether anatomical, geographical or emotional.



*they told me it only gets better*, 2025. Oil paint, oil stick and spray paint on canvas. 143 x 177.8 cm (56.3 x 70 in).





*Vivor*, 2025. Acrylic and oil pastel on paper.  
24.5 x 18.6 cm (9.65 x 7.32 in).

Alongside Han Bing's large-scale paintings, the exhibition includes a series of small works created by transferring paint directly onto sheets of newspaper. 'It's a very delicate thing,' she explains, 'because it's like making a monoprint where you lay the paint down and you never know what's going to come out until you peel the paper off and it reveals itself to you.' Like the recursive, accidental mark-making that occurs between objects in urban environments, in these important works, the artist layers spontaneous painterly abstractions over daily news to generate chance meanings. Vibrantly coloured dapples of pigment graze and splatter the newsprint, obscuring photographs like light leaks. The effect is uncanny, as familiar, everyday ephemera become the site of visual disruption. Han Bing reminds us that in a city, images are never fixed – but are continually transforming, accumulating new meanings like patina.

### About the artist

Han Bing is recognised for her sensitive yet disruptive visual language in paintings that deconstruct pictorial reality and open up new dimensions. Having recently moved to Paris after living in New York, Los Angeles and Shanghai, her practice draws on urban elements, including street scenes and architectural facades. She takes inspiration from the textures and patterns that appear in cities – especially the 'errors' and 'glitches' generated by ripped posters. For the artist, 'painting is a way to resist all the information that is being forced on us', and her observations of city life serve as a starting point for the processing of emotional impressions.

Taking inspiration from various sources, including theatre, science and literature, Han allows the dynamics of the works to guide their compositions. She creates using oil sticks and spray paint, occasionally allowing surprises during the process to introduce an unexpected twist to the work. 'My paintings are representational at times, but it's more that there is a dynamic where a few patches have met unexpectedly and turned a bewildering situation into something that made sense to me at that particular moment,' says Han. Her works gradually move towards abstraction as figurative elements are filtered and deconstructed into fragments.

She holds an MFA from Parsons School of Design in New York and a BFA from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. Her first solo exhibition in a French institution took place at Passerelle Centre d'art contemporain, Brest, in 2024, and her work has also been shown in exhibitions at institutions including National Art Museum of China, Beijing (2024); Le Consortium, Dijon (2022 and 2024); and UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2020), among others. Her first solo exhibition at Thaddaeus Ropac, *Han Bing: got heart*, was presented in the Paris Marais gallery in 2023.



Portrait of Han Bing, 2025. Photo: Pierre Tanguy.

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