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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 6, 2008

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EXCEPTIONAL ARTIST BINH DANH VISITS COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY PRESENTING EXHIBITION AND LECTURE

Fort Collins, CO – The Department of Art in the School of the Arts at Colorado State University is pleased to announce the opening of a new exhibition in the Hatton Gallery in the Visual Arts Building by acclaimed visiting artist Binh Danh. “Life, times, and matter of the swamp” opens with a public reception on Mar. 31 from noon to 1:00 p.m. and will be on display through May 2. A public lecture by the artist entitled “Elemental Transmigration” will be offered at 5:00 p.m. in Griffin Concert Hall of the University Center for the Arts at 1400 Remington St. These events are part of the Department of Arts ongoing Critic and Artist Residency Series made possible by the FUNd at CSU. The series brings nationally and internationally prominent artists, critics and curators to the Colorado State University campus for public lectures, class room visits, critiques and gallery talks.

Binh Danh was born in Vietnam shortly after the end of the war and came to the United States as part of the exodus of “boat people.” Danh’s work, described by the San Jose Mercury News as “beautiful, haunting,” is included in the permanent collections of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the M.H. de Young Museum and the Oakland Museum. Using a unique process of his own invention, Danh prints found photographs onto the surface of leaves, using the natural process of photosynthesis. The leaves, bearing images of his native Vietnam, are then encased in resin, to preserve them and to reference the language of the scientific specimen. Danh calls these chlorophyll prints.

On September 15, 2006, as part of a series of issues marking the fifth anniversary of September 11, the *New York Times* used Binh Danh’s image “One Week’s Dead #2” on their cover. This chlorophyll print was inspired by a 1969 *Life* Magazine article and cover story that commemorated the deaths of 242 American soldiers who had perished in a one week period during the height of the Vietnam War.

With the use of this image the *New York Times* suggested a complicated matrix of relationships linking the memories of pain and loss in Vietnam, now four decades past, with the loss of human life in New York on September 11, and by implication in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“This is a unique opportunity to hear a compelling voice in the current art world and to see the extraordinarily beautiful and innovative works of one of today’s most talented artists. Binh

Danh's potent and timely message is that war, past wars and the war we are presently engaged in, profoundly touches our lives, our landscapes, and our memories," said Linny Frickman, Director of the Hatton Gallery.

Danh's new body of work, "Life, Times and Matter of the Swamp," brings together his chlorophyll prints, artifacts from the popular press that both reference the war in Vietnam and the current conflict, letters, photographs, death announcements, and references to the comic book character "Swamp Thing" to weave a story that indelibly ties these times together. At the core of the installation are Danh's chlorophyll prints of the faces of the Vietnam dead, drawn from the pages of the 1969 *Life Magazine*.

In a 2004 interview with Boreth Ly, a writer, and an Assistant Professor of Asian Art and Visual Culture in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Utah, Danh said, "There isn't one particular story that I am trying to tell but many stories, peoples' stories, family histories, stories that my mother told me about her experience of the war, painful stories that my father would never tell."

In an essay written for the exhibition catalog, Ly characterizes Danh's work as addressing "the overarching issues of life and death, as well as the more specific concerns of displacement and racial identity, as they relate to Vietnamese-Americans and their experiences as immigrants and refugees." He describes the power of Danh's work as "its aesthetic, scientific, and philosophical ability to provide one with (at least for a brief moment) a poetic closure to the reoccurring emotional pain that one might experience in any post-traumatic period."

The exhibition and visit by Binh Danh is made possible by the FUNd at CSU with additional support from the Fort Collins Shambhala Meditation Center as part of their series of events titled Inviting Wisdom: A Community Collaborative, funded by the Bohemian Foundation. The Center will hold a reception for Danh at the Hatton Gallery, Tuesday, Apr. 1 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. where the public is invited to meet the artist, view his work and hear his "Address to Local Artists."

The Mar. 31 opening reception and lecture and the exhibition are free and open to the public. The Hatton Gallery is located in the Visual Arts Building on Pitkin Street on the Colorado State University campus in Fort Collins. It is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays and from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays. For more information, please call 970-491-1989 or visit www.csuschoolofthearts.com.

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