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EXHIBITION: DANIEL RICHTER – THE MORNING AFTER

DATES:

May 10 – June 19, 2004. Reception: Monday, May 10, 2004

Opening on May 10, the gallery will present new paintings by German artist Daniel Richter. This will be the artist's first solo exhibition in New York. A survey exhibition is currently on view at the Power Plant in Toronto, Canada (through May 23), traveling to the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, and then to the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. The Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, Germany, awarded Daniel Richter the *Preis der Nationalgalerie* in 2002, and in 1998 he was the recipient of the prestigious *Otto Dix* award.

In the 1990's, Daniel Richter became known for his colorful abstract paintings, gaining critical success in 1999 when he introduced large-scale figurative paintings. His work is based on images taken from magazines, newspapers and books, collaged by Richter into compositions rife with both latent and overt violence, political struggle, social transformation and public upheaval. Richter's work exists in a long tradition of painting, that references Goya, Gericault, Manet, Munch, Beckman, Ensor, Immendorf, Kippenberger among others. Not only is his work a testament to painting's vitality today, but it also reinforces the tradition of history painting.

The body of work made for this exhibition seems to investigate notions of theatre and performance, represented through circus motifs. The people and animals that populate these paintings are placed in both natural and urban settings, often in a strange hybrid of the two. In the title painting of the show, *The Morning After*, a giant gorilla is descending a cavernous stairway, cradling a fragile bird. The isolation of the animals in the bright green/blue colors of the stairway evoke a post-apocalyptic scene. The gorilla could be descending into the unknown, but the stairway/ cave also may represent a stage on which the gorilla is exposed to any kind of danger. Another painting, titled *Halli Galli Polly*, shows a frightened horse standing on its back legs attacked by an eclectic group of animals. The background of modernist architecture serves as an absurd theatrical backdrop and suggests the possibility of performance. In *Erben von Burden*, a woman in an acrobat outfit either installs or deinstalls trophies of different animals onto a wall. The animals in this body of work are actors, as well as aggressors and victims, in a fear-filled and conflict-riddled world.

Often painted with very bright, almost fluorescent colors, Richter's subjects are pulsing with nervous energy, and seem to have materialized from a chemical reaction taking place on the surface of the work. His canvases glow and glisten, engaging viewers in a push-and-pull process. Even in the more sparse compositions, there is always a sense of abundant activity. The more quiet spaces on his compositions reveal a co-existence of many different strokes, patches and spots, adding to the overall feeling of erupting energy.

Richter's work offers no clues or clear answers, and it doesn't make political statements. As specific as the sources of his images may be, his paintings transcend their original context. The artist often repeats his images, thereby revealing the interchangeability of images throughout history. His paintings draw parallels to our present and past, making us all part of the phenomena that Richter unravels in his work.

For more information, please contact David Zwirner at 212.272.2070, or visit us online at www.davidzwirner.com