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EXHIBITION: **Yan Pei-Ming**
You maintain a sense of balance in the midst of great success

DATES: **May 14 – June 16, 2007**

Opening Reception: **Monday, May 14, 2007, 6:00 - 8:00pm**

Opening on May 14, 2007, David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of new works by Chinese artist Yan Pei-Ming, who divides his time between Shanghai, China and Dijon, France. In 2006, Yan Pei-Ming was the subject of a one-person exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, Saint-Étienne, France. He had solo exhibitions at the Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China; Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (both 2005); Kunsthalle Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany (2004); *Fils du Dragon, Portraits chinois*, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon, France; *Portraits de Mao*, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, Besançon, France; and Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva, Switzerland (all 2003). The artist's many prestigious group exhibitions include *The Unhomely, Phantom Scenes in Global Society*, 2nd Biennale International of Contemporary Art, Seville, Spain (2006); *A propos du Lingchi (supplice des cents morceaux)*, with Huang Yong-Ping, Musée Denon, Chalon-sur-Saône, France; *Moi – Autoportraits du XXe siècle*, Musée du Luxembourg, Paris, France (both 2004); *New Zone – Chinese Art*, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland (2003); the Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2003 and 1995); and Lyon Biennial, Lyon France (2000 and 1997). This will be Yan Pei-Ming's first exhibition in New York.

Best known for his larger-than-life self portraits, as well as paintings of political and cultural icons such as Mao Tse-Tung and Bruce Lee, Yan Pei-Ming has emerged in recent years as one of the most dynamic and experimental Chinese painters. Before moving from his native Shanghai to France in 1980, Yan Pei-Ming painted landscapes and portraits of peasant workers. Since then, his subjects have included anonymous figures, his father, Buddha, and a series of prostitutes, all concurrent with an on-going body of self-portraits. Although the genre of portraiture is not commonly encountered in Chinese art, it manifests with both Eastern and Western sensibilities in Yan Pei-Ming's works. His expressive style and controlled palette reflect a connection to the aesthetic and cultural climate of China as well as the influence of 20th-century American conceptual art. His canvases are typically mono- or bi-chromatic and painted with large brushes (sometimes a broom), in either black and white or deep shades of red. With a mastered economy of marks, he delineates his compositions with broad, sweeping gestures and visible drips, resulting in images that dissolve into near-abstraction at close view.

For this exhibition, Yan Pei-Ming has created two new self portraits in oil – one red and one black, each 11 x 11 feet – and several large-scale watercolors; each approximately 5 by 9 feet. Yan Pei-Ming's works on paper show his mastery of light and shadow (he studied with a traditional Chinese calligraphist) and continue the conceptual investigations of his paintings: metaphysics, everyday life, and death. Much like his Mao Tse-Tung portraits, which recontextualized Mao's iconic stature as a bridge between Western and Chinese culture, the artist's newest subjects have cross-cultural relevance. Functioning as portraits within portraits, *American Dollars* (2007) comprises six watercolors of paper bills (each with its corresponding American President) in denominations of one to one hundred. Installed in a grid, they are imposing at nearly 15 feet high. In several of the works, the artist shows his subject repeated, side-by-side; among them is *Double (Hou Hanru)* (2007), two slightly different portraits of the renowned curator. In *Double (Americans)* (2007), two soldiers are in uniform against the American flag. *Double (Self-portrait at the Morgue)* (2006) depicts the artist dead, eyes closed, a subject he has returned to several times over the course of his career. In all of the works, Yan Pei-Ming's fluid yet precise technique, use of repetition, and shallow pictorial space infuse his images with an eerie morbidity, thus reinforcing their connection to real, indescribable, events.