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Rulai, 2008-2009, ash, steel and wood, 18' 1/2" x 14' 10" x 10' 11-1/2". Private collection.

Neither Coming Nor Going,

**Zhang Huan's second solo show at PaceWildenstein,
features *Rulai*, a monumental Buddha and recent large-scale works on paper
based on the 7th-century Chinese prophecy book Tui Bei Tu**

**The exhibition follows the debut of his newly conceived Handel opera, now scheduled to
tour China in 2010, as well as the publication of a new Phaidon monograph**

**NEW YORK, November 24, 2009—Following the critically-acclaimed September premiere of *Semele*,
a new production of George Frideric Handel's opera directed and designed by Zhang Huan and
presented to audiences at The National Opera of Belgium in Brussels (scheduled to tour China in
2010), the artist will be the subject of his second solo exhibition at PaceWildenstein.**

***Neither Coming Nor Going* will be on view at 545 West 22nd Street, New York City, from December 11,
2009 through January 30, 2010. An opening reception will be held on Thursday, December 10th from
6-8 p.m. Representing the artist's continuing investigation of humanity through tradition, historical**

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associations, and personal experiences, *Neither Coming Nor Going* will feature a monumental ash Buddha, *Rulai* (2008-2009), measuring 18' 1/2" x 14' 10" x 10' 11-1/2", as well as a series of unique large-scale works on paper made in 2006-2008.

The compacted ash surface of *Rulai*, supported by an internal metal frame, is heavily embedded with miniature porcelain Buddha relics, copper offering dishes, miniature skulls and unburned joss sticks. The strikingly beautiful grisaille palette of the sculpture is sharply contrasted with blood red paper wrappers, clustered around the crown and face of the deity. Burning incense pours out from Buddha's head, activating a traditionally static art form with performative aspects, one of the artist's hallmarks.

Using ink, paper handmade from the bark of Mulberry trees, and in some works feathers to build up the surface, Zhang Huan depicts animals and landscapes in the series of unique works on paper included in this exhibition. He references the celebrated 17th-century Chinese painter and calligrapher Bada Shanren as well as Tui Bei Tu, a seventh-century Tang Dynasty prophecy book which reappeared in second-hand book stores in China in the 1990s after being banned by the Communist party. Tui Bei Tu offered an alternative to traditional Eastern and Western systems and presented insight into China's future, utilizing drawings and poems to prophesize a sequence of sixty events.

Zhang Huan is widely regarded as one of the most vital, influential and provocative contemporary artists working today. His early performances were conceived of as existential explorations and social commentary, and to some degree, the layers of ideas explored in these pieces have carried through to his more traditional studio practice, which he embraced upon moving to Shanghai in 2005, after living and working for eight years in New York City.

In addition to the debut this year of *Semele*, which will be the first full-length Baroque opera to be performed in China next year, Zhang Huan was the subject of a comprehensive monograph published in 2009 by Phaidon Press as part of their "Contemporary Artists" series. Yilmaz Dziewior, director of the Kunstverein in Hamburg, and Robert Storr, Dean of the Yale School of Art, contributed essays, and an in-depth interview with the artist, conducted by curator and critic RoseLee Goldberg is also included.

Zhang Huan was born in 1965 in a small town called Anyang in Henan Province just prior to the Cultural Revolution. At one year of age, Zhang Huan went to live with his grandparents in a tiny village in the

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countryside known as Tangyin County. At fourteen, he started his artistic training in the so-called Su-style or Soviet style and traveled by bus each day for his lessons. Zhang enrolled in undergraduate studies at the Art Department, Henan University, Kaifeng to concentrate on Chinese ink painting, drawing, oil painting and art history in 1984. Upon completion in 1988, Zhang was an instructor of art and Western art history at Zhengzhou College of Education for three years. He studied oil painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing from 1991 to 1993, and it was during this period that he first started experimenting with performance art.

At the same time, a group of young Chinese artists, including Zhang Huan, established the “Beijing East Village.” It was in this community that Zhang developed his early performance practices and many of the works that would soon bring him international attention, such as *12 Square Meters*, in which the artist sat for an hour, covered in honey and fish oil, in a fly infested public latrine and *To Add One Meter to an Anonymous Mountain*, where nine people lay on top of one another to raise the summit by a meter. These performances and many others came to be known by their photographic documentation, which are now considered the artist’s first iconic works.

In 1998, Zhang Huan was included in *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* organized by Asia Society and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center. It was during this exhibition that he relocated to New York City. Over the course of the next eight years, Zhang Huan created 13 performances and exhibited in five solo exhibitions and more than 60 group shows throughout the United States. The artist moved back to China in 2006, settling in the southern Min Hang district of Shanghai, where he opened the Zhang Huan Studio and established a Foundation.

Among his many notable exhibitions the Asia Society, New York, presented *Zhang Huan: Altered States* (2007-08), the largest museum exhibition of the artist’s work to date. Organized by Melissa Chiu, Director of the Asia Society Museum and Vice President of the Society’s Global Arts Programming, the exhibition featured 55 of Zhang Huan’s major works produced over the past 15 years in Beijing, New York, and Shanghai. *Zhang Huan: Altered States* later traveled to the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Zhang Huan’s work is part of nearly 40 public collections worldwide, including Bard College, Center for Curatorial Studies, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Center of Contemporary Art, Malaga, Spain; Centre national d’art et de culture Georges Pompidou, Paris; Centro Galego de Arte Contemporanea, Santiago de

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Compostela, Spain; Denver Art Museum; The Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana; Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Florida; Philadelphia Museum of Art; S.M.A.K., The Municipal Museum of Contemporary Art Gent, Belgium; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, among others.

For more information on *Zhang Huan: Neither Coming Nor Going* please contact Jennifer Benz Joy at jjoy@pacewildenstein.com or Lauren Staub at lstaub@pacewildenstein.com or call 212.421.3292.

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Tui Bei Tu No. 75, 2008, ink on handmade paper, 12' x 8' 2"



Tui Bei Tu No. 74, 2008, ink on handmade paper, 12' x 8' 2-1/4"

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