



Green Wall-Military Uniform (2008), oil on canvas, 6' 6-3/4" x 9' 10-1/8" x 2"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New work by Zhang Xiaogang on view at PaceWildenstein

October 31 – November 29, 2008

NEW YORK, October 10, 2008—Zhang Xiaogang, who joined PaceWildenstein in 2007, will have his first solo exhibition from October 31 through November 29, 2008 at 534 West 25th Street, New York City. The artist will be present for an opening reception on Thursday, October 30th from 6-8 p.m. A catalogue with essays by Dr. Jonathan Fineberg, Professor of Art History at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign, and Leng Lin, author and President of Pace Beijing, accompanies the exhibition.

Zhang Xiaogang: Revision will feature works from 2008, including seven oil paintings of interior spaces and a large landscape measuring approximately 9' x 13' from the artist's new *Green Wall* series. Two large-scale photographs with overpainted images and calligraphy entitled *Description-Photography* (2008) will also be on view.

"Memory isn't a thing that can actually present the past," Zhang Xiaogang once explained; rather, memory undergoes "continuous revisions." The artist was eight years old when the Cultural Revolution began, and the tumultuous narrative of his nation's recent past remains an integral part of his life today not merely as "historical fact," but as a "psychological state." In Zhang Xiaogang's work, the past lives

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in the present as a memory re-imagined. As his complicated reveries unfold in his artwork, they re-conceive the past, exposing the emotions that history has concealed. The artist presents an eastern narrative in a western style, speaking not only to his own “raw lived experience” and Chinese society, but attaining a visual language that reaches across cultures.

The vestiges of history have appeared in Zhang Xiaogang’s work over the past decade or more in his series *Bloodline: Big Family, Amnesia and Memory*, and *Inside–Outside*. The new *Green Wall* series, on view in this exhibition, retain little of the artist’s familiar imagery, but continue to evoke hope and confidence, signifying that “the memories or past are still fresh somewhere.”

“It is the task of great artists to create the psychic spaces in which we can bring together our inner life with the inevitable facts of our existence,” Jonathan Fineberg writes in his catalogue essay. In the liminal spaces of Zhang’s *Green Wall* series, viewers pass seamlessly between the psychological and the physical. Like a faded photograph that resurrects a memory, distant reveries emerge in *Green Wall–Slumber 2* as Zhang prompts the viewer to create their own version of the narrative; is the woman’s gentle face that looms in the foreground drifting into sleep or awakening; has she been swallowed by death, or is she dreaming of tomorrow? “I subtracted from my past and concentrated on memories,” Zhang Xiaogang once explained; “After a while the past began to look like a dream, like a fantasy.”

The color that lends its name to the series signifies a revolutionary color associated with communist China. In his canvases, Zhang reflects the government’s common practice of painting green on the bottom portions of the wall in the 1960s and 1970s. The paint was applied without discrimination between private and public spaces in the spirit of collectivism. Similarly, the artist utilizes the green wall in his paintings to blur the boundary between physical and psychological.

The relationship of reception and perception also comes into play in a new series of large-scale photographs with ink and oil paint entitled *Description–Photography*. In *Description–2008-9-17* and *Description–2008-9-18*, Zhang layers his own thoughts and experiences in a journal-like manner on top of a painted snapshot procured from old Chinese films. The images and the text do not correspond with one another, suggesting the complex interactions between perception, memory, and history.

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Zhang Xiaogang was born in 1958 in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province in southern China. When the Cultural Revolution began in 1966, Zhang was eight years old. His parents were forced to give up their government posts, leave Zhang and his three brothers behind, and go to a “study camp” in the countryside. At the age of 18, Zhang was sent to “reeducation camp” to labor alongside peasants. Following the collapse of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, Zhang Xiaogang was accepted into the prestigious Sichuan Institute of Fine Arts in Chongqing in 1977. Through his studies he found inspiration in the works of Van Gogh and Millet.

In 1995 Zhang Xiaogang presented his ***Bloodline: Big Family*** series in an exhibition entitled *The Other Face: Three Chinese Artists* as part of the larger international exhibition *Identità e Alterità*, installed in the Italian Pavilion during the centenary 46th Venice Biennale. Drawn from formal family portraits, the paintings represent both the individual and the faceless masses of China at once. The figures, often dressed in identical Mao suits, have distinctive red blood lines which demonstrate the links between people.

Since 1989 Zhang Xiaogang has had fourteen solo exhibitions and has participated in nearly 150 group exhibitions. His work can be found in numerous public collections worldwide, including Dongyu Museum of Fine Arts, Shenyang, China; Fukuoka Museum of Art, Japan; National Gallery of Australia; Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, California; Musée de Picardie, Amiens, France; Queensland Art Gallery, Australia; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Shanghai Art Museum, China; and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

For more information on ***Zhang Xiaogang: Revision*** 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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ZHANG XIAOGANG: REVISION
ADDITIONAL WORKS ON VIEW



Green Wall-Slumber No. 2 (2008), oil on canvas
 63" x 78-3/4" x 1-7/8"



Green Wall-White Bed (2008), oil on canvas
 59" x 78-3/4" x 1-1/4"



Green Wall-Landscape and Television (2008), oil on canvas, 9' 10-1/8" x 13' 1-1/2" x 2"



Description-2008-9-17 (2008), ink and oil paint on chromogenic color print
 5' 10-5/8" x 11' 6"

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