



Yan Pei-Ming
INNOCENT
February 11th, 2014 – March 29th, 2014

Massimo De Carlo gallery is proud to present *Innocent*, a new exhibition by Chinese artist Yan Pei-Ming. Yan Pei-Ming's second solo show with the gallery in London introduces a new body of work inspired by one of the most important paintings of art history, *The Portrait of Pope Innocent X* by Diego Velázquez.

Yan Pei-Ming grew up during the Cultural Revolution in China and he left Shanghai for France in 1980, where he studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Dijon. During the last 30 years Yan Pei-Ming has established himself as one of the most prominent Chinese artists, depicting portraits all the emblems of power from East and West in epic size. These include Mao Zedong, the Last Emperor, Prince Charles of Wales, Vladimir Putin, Barack Obama, Pope John Paul II, among others, as well as other fundamental characters of our culture such as Bruce Lee, Alexander McQueen, Marilyn Monroe, Pablo Picasso, Michael Jackson, and many others.

Through this very large constellation of icons, most often represented in large oil on canvas paintings, Yan Pei-Ming's intention is to discuss power and history through human eyes and expressions, as he comments himself: "Art is about mankind. It speaks to people. Portrait is like a mirror, it reflects to us who we are, what we are. My work always orients towards human beings, it's the centre, the fundamental element of my work. If you ask me to do abstract painting, I can't handle it. I am interested in human beings."

The exhibition is centred around *The Portrait of Pope Innocent X* by Spanish artist Diego Velázquez painted in 1650, and currently exhibited at the Galleria Doria Pamphilj in Rome which also served as an inspiration for a seminal work by Francis Bacon. Innocent X was an extremely important Pope, and one of the most significant patrons of Baroque art and architecture in Rome. The image of Innocent X depicted by Velázquez transmits power and authority as much as it builds a direct relationship with the viewer: Innocent X shows his humanity through his real detailed face while the background is erased through a thick velvety fabric to maximise this revolutionary effect. For Yan Pei-Ming the image of *Innocent X* by Velázquez becomes a symbol for today's personalization of government and domination, a statement on the weakness of humanity, as well as a commentary on painting itself. Through a number of variations of dimensions, colour, surface, shape, and with a meticulous attention to a certain number of describing details such as the hands of the Pope, in fact, Yan Pei-Ming is able to construct a discourse that refers both to art history and our contemporary society at large.

This exhibition at Massimo De Carlo, London presents 15 brand new paintings; among them, *Innocent* introduces a spectacular series of unique works that progress in dimensions from very small to very large.



YAN PEI-MING

Yan Pei-Ming was born in Shanghai in 1960. He lives and works in Dijon (France). Yan Pei-Ming has had solo exhibitions at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing; the San Francisco Art Institute; and the Musée du Louvre - *The Funeral of Mona Lisa* by Ming was shown in the room next to the original Mona Lisa. Group exhibitions include the Venice Biennale in 1995 and 2003; the Sevilla Biennale in 2006; the Istanbul Biennial in 2007, among others.

Yan Pei Ming is collected by a number of prestigious institutions including the Centre Georges Pompidou; the Honolulu Museum of Art; the National Gallery of Australia; the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; the Museum Ludwig in Koln; and the Shanghai Art Museum in Shanghai.

HARD FACTS

Massimo De Carlo, London
55 South Audley Street
London W1K 2QH
From February 11th, 2014 until March 29th, 2014
Open Tuesday to Saturday, 10:00am – 6.00pm
Opening: Monday February 10th, 2014, from 6.00pm

For further information and materials:
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