

**FOR  
IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE**



PH (212) 343 7300 FAX (212) 343 2954

# **Y. Z. KAMI**

**FEBRUARY 11 - MARCH 14, 1998**

Y.Z. Kami's installation of sixteen portrait paintings will transform the gallery, creating the feeling of a memorial hall from the ancient world. His mysterious portraits seem to embody 2,000 years of history, evoking both Alexandrian Egypt and contemporary New York. Kami's solemn portraits of men and women of various ages will be installed around the perimeter of the exhibition space. The visitor will be struck by the intensity of the sixteen pairs of eyes staring at them from every angle.

Kami's work references the earliest existing painted portraits, from Fayyum in the Second Century B.C. Egypt to contemporary portrait photography. The faces of his subjects seem to belong to people from the ancient Near East even though they might actually represent people the artist found on a New York street. The portraits also have a disconcerting mediated quality that reflects their being painted from photograph rather than from life. The suspects hover in a timeless, disembodied state, neither ancient nor modern, neither dead nor alive.

"Who are these people?" viewers of Kami's work often ask. With their ambiguous portrayal, they could be criminals or saints, repressors or revolutionaries. One is drawn into their characters but mystified by their identities. They are intensely present but their gazes are timeless. They are not immediate portraits but portraits of memories. Their subject is both death and the persistence of life.

Y.Z. Kami was born in Teheran in 1956. He left Iran at the age of 17 and studied in the United States and in France. He holds a Masters degree in philosophy from the Sorbonne. He studied film at the Conservatoire Libre du Cinema in Paris. Last spring Kami's work was included in the exhibition *Architecture as Metaphor* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. This is Kami's fifth solo exhibition in New York where he lives and works.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT ELIZABETH IARRAPINO AT DEITCH PROJECTS**

**PH (212) 343 7300**

**FAX (212) 343 2954**

**Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 12-6**