

1. ARTIST: (Biographical information, training, style/ period, where lived/ created art, influences)

XU BING (b.1955)

- Beijing Contemporary Artist
- trained in the Socialist Realism style, but shifted away from that
- president of his alma mater, the Central Academy of Fine Arts in China

2. STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS: (use of design elements/ principles: color, shape, value, texture, line, space; balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, etc.)

Printmaking & installation pieces; theme of words / text and their impact; utilizes space greatly and thought provokingly; Chinese characters used in abstract manner

3. MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES: (art making processes)

Mixed Media Installation

4. TITLE(S) OF MAJOR WORK(S):

Book from the Ground (graphic novel)

Monkeys Grasping for the Moon

Ghosts Pounding the Wall

The Living Word



5. TITLE/ FORM/ ORIGINAL CONTEXT/ SITE/ INTENDED FUNCTION OF FOCUS WORK (IMAGE IN CENTER): (Overlap to #6)

229. *A Book from the Sky* (1987-199)

4000 self invented characters that cannot be decoded, pages on ground as well as strung up overhead so it surrounds area

6. INTENDED PURPOSE & MOTIVATION (why was it made?); **PATRON/AUDIENCE** (who was it made for?); **ARTIST'S DECISION MAKING:**

Express that writing is the essence of Chinese culture and that it is tied with authority and morality, subversion shows importance of communication

7. INNOVATION/ CHANGE(S):

Reflection on the nature of writing, uses characters as art, uses characters that cannot be decoded

CONVENTION/ TRADITION(S):

Like many more abstract works, this piece is intended to provoke a question
As a installation piece, it uses space
Traditional Chinese writing style

8. THEME(S):

text/writing; society/commentary

COMPARE TO ANOTHER WORK:

Like Braque's *The Portuguese*, text has been utilized in a creative way. In the *Portuguese*, it was used to express how the surface could hold more than the artwork. Here, the characters have no meaning to convey the importance of the writing to Chinese culture and communication.