THE PIG AND THE PANDA
ARTIST UNMASKS THE DIFFERENCES IN AMERICAN, CHINESE CULTURES
The three little pigs

borrows from the farm to make a statement

Artist

Xu Bing

Chinese-American differences

By Donald Miller

Post-Gazette Art Critic

Xu Bing—"Cultural Animal," opening at the Wood Street Galleries tonight, is the strongest art installation here since 1990. That was when Ann Hamilton showed her "offerings," free-flying canaries and rolling wood beads in a burned North Side house, for a single International.

This time, Chinese artist Xu Bing (pronounced Shu Bing), a key figure in the Chinese "New Wave" movement of contemporary art, offers "Phanta Zoo," three live Hampshire pigs, one male and two females, wearing fake panda masks; "A Book from the Sky," inked pages of Chinese calligraphy that are illegible but unreadable; and "Square Words: A New English Calligraphy," in which seemingly Chinese characters form readable English words. The gallery will also offer free calligraphy classes in conjunction with "Square Words."

This bizarre presentation is designed to make viewers more aware of cultural differences between Chinese and Westerners—and to spread the impact of Chinese "New Wave" art, which Xu Bing dislikes, is an example. This art is in the spirit of Xu Bing, the artist said, but without the maximum deconstruction.

Xu Bing's new pieces are immediately striking. A large ink painting of a toad sitting on a fence is gaudy and gross, with a two-color design of a rattlesnake and a green frog. Glazed ceramic gargoyles that resemble figures from Beijing's Temple of Heaven are also put on display.

"Phanta Zoo" and the presenters of the story behind them are based on facts: the artist had a chance to see these pigs while living in Beijing, and the story of the pigs嫉妒 is told in the middle of the gallery, in a large, white box. The pigs are dressed in fake panda masks and are surrounded by a black-and-white photo of the artist with the pigs.

"Panda Zoo" solving the story of the three pigs' adventures in China. The animals are depicted as being very sad and are surrounded by a black-and-white photo of the artist with the pigs. The pigs are dressed in fake panda masks and are surrounded by a black-and-white photo of the artist with the pigs.

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She invites me, 'I only need new ideas,' he says.

For installation art is tired and even deadly some artists think. 'Sculpture is dead,' he said. 'Painting is dead.'

But then, he adds, 'I think in performance art terms people are beginning to understand that the more we are uncomfortable, the more they will learn. I think my work is easy to understand and nothing.'

But just one word 'inaccurate' ... And my name has brought some joy.

**REVIEW**

**KU BING**

**CULTURAL ANIMAL**

WHERE: Howard Street Co-Op, 2nd floor Howard Street, Downtown.

WHEN: Exhibition runs through Oct. 13. Opening reception Sat., 6-9 p.m. Fri., 6-9 p.m. Tues.-Sat., 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Artist's reception, Sun., 1-3 p.m.

**ABOVE:** Ju Bing creates calligraphy for his exhibit at Wood River Gallery, "Panels.""Zoe.

LEFT: Hampshire poet writes a poem to mask a part of his name. A somber tone in cultural differences between the Chinese and Americans.