

Press Contacts

Patrick Milliman

212.590.0310, pmilliman@themorgan.org

**XU BING'S SPECTACULAR *THE LIVING WORD 3*
TO GO ON VIEW JULY 15 AT THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM**

*WORK WAS CREATED SPECIFICALLY FOR THE MORGAN'S RENZO PIANO-
DESIGNED GILBERT COURT AND IS THE LARGEST VERSION OF THE LIVING
WORD THE ARTIST HAS PRODUCED*

New York, NY, May 20, 2011—The Morgan Library & Museum announced today that Chinese artist Xu Bing will create a new, larger version of his celebrated work *The Living Word* specifically for the Morgan's soaring glass-enclosed Gilbert Court. *The Living Word 3* will be on view from July 15. The project is the second in a series of annual summer installations of works by contemporary artists in the Renzo Piano-designed space.

Xu Bing has described *The Living Word* as a “floating, iridescent cloud of calligraphy” that traces the Chinese character *niao*, meaning “bird,” from its present-day usage in simplified Chinese to its ancient pictographic expression. The Morgan installation will comprise approximately 400 carved and painted acrylic characters, rising from the Gilbert Court's floor to its fifty-foot ceiling. It will be the largest of *The Living Word* series to date. A selection of the artist's original sketches for the project will also be on view.

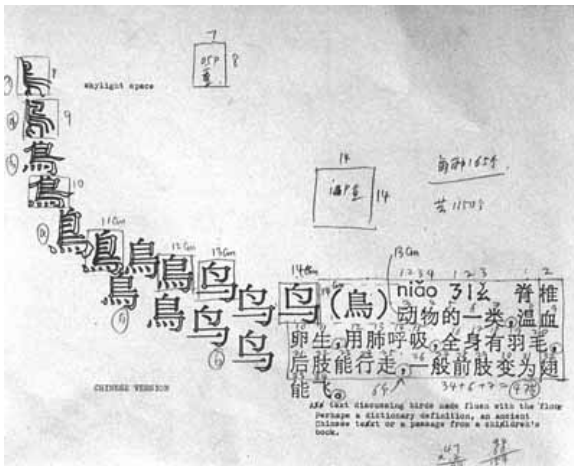


An earlier version of *The Living Word* by Xu Bing, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 2001. Courtesy Xu Bing Studio.

“Xu Bing has long been attracted to the intersection of word and image,” said William M. Griswold, director of The Morgan Library & Museum, “and *The Living Word* is an extraordinary example of this. Moreover, it is particularly appropriate for the Morgan as it speaks to the focus of our collections on both text and fine art. We are delighted that Xu Bing has specifically designed this work to take full advantage of the beauty of Renzo Piano's architecture.”

Though the Morgan is noted for its holdings of American and European art and literature, its founder, Pierpont Morgan, was also interested in Chinese art. He collected art and artifacts from the Middle East as well as Asia, and the Morgan will hold an exhibition this fall of some its greatest Islamic manuscripts.

During installation of *The Living Word 3*, scheduled to begin on July 5, visitors to the Morgan will be able to watch the work take form. Most of the 400 individual characters will be suspended from the Gilbert Court ceiling. This will be the first time a work from *The Living Word* series has been publicly displayed in a New York City museum.



The Living Word sketch

Xu Bing received a MacArthur Fellowship in 1999. In 2002 he was awarded the Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize and in 2004 received the first Wales International Visual Art Prize, Artes Mundi. Columbia University presented him with a Doctor of Humane Letters in 2010.

The artist grew up in Beijing but during the final years of the Cultural Revolution he was sent to the countryside to perform farm labor. He entered China's Central Academy of Fine Arts in 1977 to study printmaking, receiving both his bachelor's and master's degrees there.

Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at numerous museums, including the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington, DC, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, the Joan Miró Foundation, Barcelona, and the National Gallery of Prague. His work has also been featured in the 45th and 51st Venice Biennales as well as in the Sydney and Johannesburg biennales.

Since reopening in 2006, The Morgan Library & Museum has mounted a series of critically acclaimed exhibitions devoted to modern and contemporary art, including solo shows of work by Philip Guston, Roy Lichtenstein, and Jim Dine. In the summer of 2010 it held its first exhibition in Gilbert Court with three sculptures by Mark di Suvero.

The installation of *The Living Word 3* is supported by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Livio Borghese in honor of S. Parker Gilbert, with additional assistance from the American Friends of the Shanghai Museum.

The Morgan Library & Museum

The Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today, more than a century after its founding in 1906, the Morgan serves as a museum, independent research library, musical venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. In October 2010, the Morgan completed the first-ever restoration of its original McKim building, Pierpont Morgan's private library, and the core of the institution. In tandem with the 2006 expansion project by architect Renzo Piano, the Morgan now provides visitors unprecedented access to its world-renowned collections of drawings, literary and historical manuscripts, musical scores, medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, printed books, and ancient Near Eastern seals and tablets.

General Information

The Morgan Library & Museum
225 Madison Avenue, at 36th Street, New York, NY 10016-3405
212.685.0008
www.themorgan.org

Hours

Tuesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; extended Friday hours, 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Mondays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. The Morgan closes at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Admission

\$15 for adults; \$10 for students, seniors (65 and over), and children (under 16); free to Members and children, 12 and under accompanied by an adult. Admission is free on Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. Admission is not required to visit the Morgan Shop.