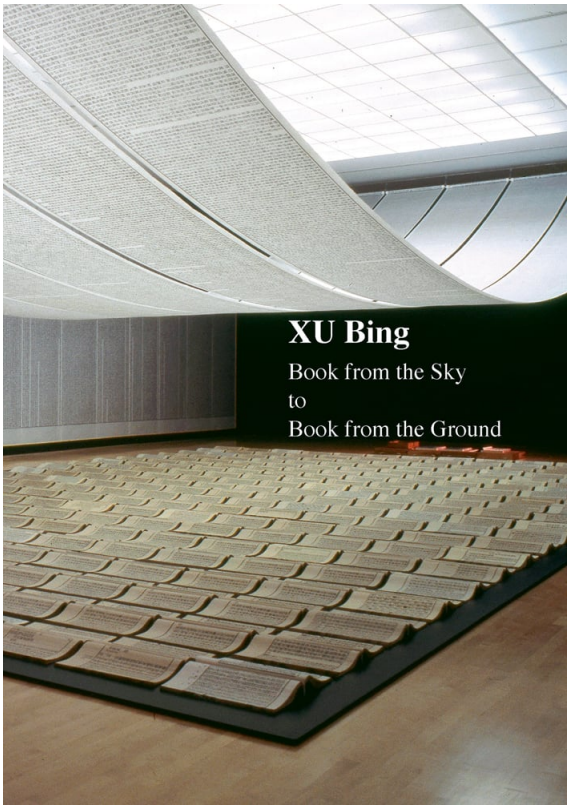
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Xu Bing

Book from the Sky to Book from the Ground

Xu Bing

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Territory	World
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Illustrations	171 color, 7 b&w
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Price	£30.00

- Monograph focusing on Xu Bing's most ambitious works of art: *Book from the Sky* and *Book from the Ground*
- Presents the artist's method and motivation in his own words
- An accessible yet academic insight into this innovative, internationally renowned Chinese artist
- Part of an ongoing series, *China Culture Perspectives*, of authoritative books by and about major figures in China's creative culture

"The written word is the most basic element of human culture. To touch the written word is to touch the essence of culture."– Xu Bing

Book from the Sky certainly seemed to have fallen from the heavens: the text of this installation piece was written in a new language that resembled traditional Chinese. No matter who scours Xu Bing's book for 'meaning', they will only discover a semblance of it: mutated characters that resist interpretation. Carving out approximately four thousand wood blocks by hand, Xu Bing spent four years, from 1987 to 1991, making (in his own words) "something that said nothing". After creating a book no one could read, it only made sense for Xu Bing to develop his next project: a book that transcended barriers of language: *Book from the Ground.* Composed entirely of pictographs, *Book from the Ground* is a groundbreaking study into the concept of universal communication. Whether his goal is total comprehension or confusion, Xu Bing's masterful exploration of language challenges the way we think about the written word.

Xu Bing has resided in the United States and China, giving him a unique insight into both Far Eastern and Western culture. His lifelong fascination with language began at primary school, when the Chinese language was simplified and complicated in quick succession. This theme of characters being abolished, modified and restored resonates in Xu Bing's artistry. Xu Bing has exhibited across the world, from Beijing to Wisconsin and beyond. He is an A.D. White Professor-at-Large with Cornell University, New York.

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