

Illusions, Allegories, and Artwork: *Monkeys Grasp for the Moon*

An illusion is: _____

Where in the story "The Monkeys and the Moon" did you see an example of an illusion?

How did the artist Xu Bing use the idea of illusion to create his piece *Monkeys Grasp for the Moon*?

What other examples of illusion can you think of?

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An allegory is: _____

In what way is the story "The Monkeys and the Moon" an allegory? What do the various symbols represent?

Symbol	What it represents	Why I think that
The Monkeys		
The moon in water		
The monkeys make a chain, but are unable to grasp the moon in the water.		

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In what way is the artwork *Monkeys Grasp for the Moon* an allegory? What do the various symbols represent?

Symbol	What it represents	Why I think that
<p>A chain of monkeys hangs from the ceiling to the floor.</p>		
<p>The word “monkey” is written in different languages.</p>		
<p>The chain of monkeys reaches toward a pool of water.</p>		

Comparing Xu Bing's Artwork

Xu Bing has **many works of art** that are inspired by the relationship between meaning and words. *Monkeys Grasp for the Moon*, *The Living Word*, and *Book from the Sky* are some examples. He often manipulates language to distort meaning, to turn expectations on their head, and to change human perception.

Here are some quotes from Xu Bing about his other work:

About *The Living Word*:

"[the words are] escaping the confines of human written definition . . . the birds soar, careless of the words with which humans seek to define them."

About *Book from the Sky*:

"To manipulate the written word is to transform the very essence of culture . . . Any doctoring of the written word results in transformation at the core of a person's thinking . . . My approach is filled with reverence, yet mixed with mockery; as I tease [the written word], I also hold it above the altar."

Choose one of Xu Bing's other works and compare it to *Monkeys Grasp for the Moon*.

- How are they similar?
- How are they different?
- What effect do these works have on you?
- Do they have similar or different themes or ideas?
- Do they use the same media (materials) and techniques?
- Do they use or omit the same colors?
- Are there details or devices in common?
- Do they seem to express or evoke similar or different thoughts or feelings?



Indonesian



Russian



Braille



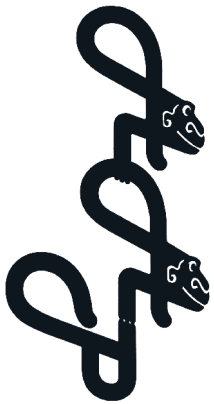
Italian



Hindi



Afrikaans



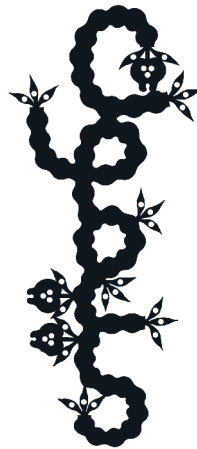
Chinese



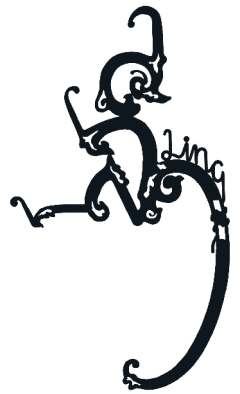
Korean



Persian



Lao



Urdu



Thai



Turkish



Japanese



German



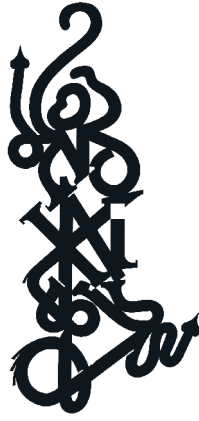
Spanish



French



English



Swahili



Hebrew



Arabic

