

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Emily K. Grandstaff
434.982.2932 / egrandstaff@virginia.edu

“Xu Bing’s *Tobacco Project* extends [our] reach as far as China and as close as Virginia, allowing us to explore their shared history and address Virginia’s place in the world in a wholly unexpected way. . . . Xu Bing’s inspired layering of the history, culture, and materials of tobacco widens our perspective on a topic that has become mundane yet highly politicized”

—from the foreword by Alex Nyerges, Director, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

XU BING: Tobacco Project Duke, Shanghai, Virginia, 1999-2011

Born in Chongqing, China, in 1955, Xu Bing is considered one of the most important artists of his generation. Between 1977 and 1987, he studied and taught at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing. He moved to the United States in 1990 and in 1999 received a MacArthur Fellowship, the celebrated “genius grant,” in recognition of his “capacity to contribute importantly to society, particularly in printmaking and calligraphy.” In 2008 Xu Bing was appointed vice president of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, and he now lives mostly in Beijing.

Timed to coincide with an exhibition of the same name at the VMFA, and a forthcoming exhibition at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, **XU BING: Tobacco Project (October 2011; distributed for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts)** offers a comprehensive overview of the artist’s print and calligraphic works that have appeared on an unlikely but surprisingly receptive medium—the tobacco leaf. Curator John Ravenal discusses the new Virginia work, its relation to the other tobacco pieces, and its place in the context of global contemporary art. Guest authors Wu Hung, Lydia Liu, and Edward Melillo address Xu Bing’s work in the context of contemporary Chinese art and the history and culture of tobacco in Virginia.

Including photographs of the forty-foot-long cigarette Xu Bing created for the installation *Traveling Down the River*, as well as *First Class*—a tiger-skin rug made from 500,000 “1st Class” cigarettes—XU BING: Tobacco Project offers an informative look into the artist’s creative process as well as a stunning catalog of his recent work.

October 2011 / 116 Pages / 6 x 9 1/4 / 80 color illustrations
\$35.00 S Paperback / ISBN 978-0-917046-96-4