



“Fierce Tiger Descending the Mountain II” and “Fierce Tiger Ascending the Mountain II” by Bu2ma



Cartoonist Bu2ma

# Ferocious? Hardly. The tubby tigers we want to cuddle

Lu Feiran

In Chinese culture, the tiger is associated with strength, power and vitality. Not so the big cats created by a cartoonist who goes by the pen name Bu2ma. His depictions are fat and lazy, often with goofy expressions.

The departure from the traditional Chinese stereotype has made Bu2ma's endearing Panghu tiger a hit on the Internet, especially in this Year of the Tiger.

The Beijing-based cartoonist first sketched Panghu, or Fat Tiger, when he was trying out a new brush in painting software several years ago.

“I saw pictures of tigers in a zoo, and they were really, really fat,” he recalled. “I sketched them as I saw them with the new brush and posted them online. I didn't expect them to become so popular.”

Since then, Bu2ma has painted Panghu in an array of settings. Climbing up or crawling down mountains. Resting

in dens. All have comical expressions on their faces.

The tigers are drawn in traditional Chinese ink-wash style, with modern artistic twists.

One of Bu2ma's most popular works is entitled “Cub Calling for Its Mother.” It shows a tiger cub with flat, little ears and closed eyes shouting out “Mom!”

Another drawing called “Fierce Tiger Descending the Mountain” parodies traditional Chinese painting. Instead of the traditional majestic tiger, Bu2ma's cat is fat with a grumpy sort of grimace.

“Those works were created soon after the COVID-19 epidemic broke out in China, when people were in lockdown and in need of some cuteness for mental comfort,” he said. “I think that's why Panghu went viral.”

The beloved tiger is now moving offline, with figurines for sale.

“I tried to draw other things after Panghu gained fame, but none of them gained such



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“Cub Calling for Its Mother” is one of Bu2ma's most popular works.

popularity,” Bu2ma admitted. “Sometimes I feel that I have been typecast.”

Before becoming a cartoonist, Bu2ma was a manga artist and then toy developer. About a decade ago, he serialized comics for magazines. Some of his works were later published in individual volumes.