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Phung Huynh, "Sweet and Sour Pork", 2008, acrylic and oil on canvas, 24 x 72".

When The Year of the Golden Pig dawned in 2007, reportedly millions of Chinese women were enthusiastically working towards having the good fortune of giving birth to a golden piglet: a child who would be blessed with lifelong prosperity. Phung Huynh, a mother herself, must have certainly known this when she painted "Sweet and Sour Pork" last year. The life-size sow stretches across a six-foot long, brilliantly orange canvas with a Mona Lisa smile on her face and back hooves flexing in contentment. After all, she has a half dozen two-headed Chinaman babies alternately suckling her very pert teats and being naughty by pulling each other's pigtails. This is disorienting imagery indeed, but the vibrant palette, deft craftsmanship, and tongue-in-cheek humor keep this work from tumbling into being merely grotesque (Sam Lee Gallery, Chinatown).

--Jeannie Lee