



*Angel No.13*  
80x66.67cm, 2006

The Galerie Dix9 is pleased to introduce you

# CUI XIUWEN

**November 16th 2010 to January 15th 2011**

Opening November 16th at 6:00 pm

## GALERIE DIX9

19, rue des Filles du Calvaire 75003 Paris - M° Filles du Calvaire

Opening hours : tuesday to friday : 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm,  
saturday from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm and by appointment

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# CUI XIUWEN

Aware of the profound changes in post-Mao Chinese society, Cui Xiuwen is an emblematic figure of this young generation of women artists whose presence strongly asserted in the international art scene. Part of the growing audience of the artist, Galerie Dix9 presents her first solo exhibition in France.

Despite its apparent simplicity, Cui Xiuwen's work contains various meanings. Without claiming any feminist activism, the artist shared her experience to point out the status of women in China and question stereotypes on gender and identity.

Born in 1970 in a poor family in Northern China, Cui Xiuwen started painting. Member of the group called «Sirens,» she exhibits with three other female artists in her small apartment – as women were hardly welcome in public spaces in the 90s. First sign of asserting her identity as an emancipated woman, Cui Xiuwen painted naked men.

Coming to video a few years later, the artist addresses the issue of sexuality in contemporary China. *Lady's* (2000) is the result of a hidden camera in the «ladies room» of a Beijing nightclub where prostitutes are chattering as they prepare for their clients.

In *Toot* (2001), Cui Xiuwen goes on the stage and appears as a mummy, wrapped from head to toe in toilet paper. This is the image of women subjected to the gaze of men. Water drops slowly disintegrate the shell, leaving the woman naked and triumphant as *The Birth of Venus* by Botticelli.

The setting of *Public Space* (2000) is an outdoor movie theater as it was common in the 70's. It broadcasts a looped declaration of love from a film of that period and questions the reaction of today young people facing the same scene.

*Sanjie* (2003) is inspired by *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci. The unique figure of a young schoolgirl is playing all the characters of the painting, magnifying the same gestures. She wears a red scarf as did the Chinese Group of Young Pioneers. This scarf represents a part of the artist youth. The shirt has remained very white in her memory, although Cui Xiuwen knows that souvenirs fade reality. The "color of history" tries to erase horrors of the past. Judas may be any of us.

From that time, Cui Xiuwen will focus her works on youth innocence, using a figure which looks like her "alter ego", at least a kind of icon she places in different contexts.

In 2004, Cui Xiuwen turns to photography. She shoots and then works with digital tools. In the series *Angel* (2006 - 2008) the subject is again a young girl, a little bit older than before, pregnant, and wearing a virginal white dress. Alone, she does not seem as serene as one could presume in her situation. One may even see some tears (*Angel 13*). Other pictures contain multiple figures of the same character, set in traditional places of power. There the young girls seem prisoners, trying to escape from the Forbidden City (*Angel 6*).

With these figures, the artist evokes the plight of young women in China, constrained by social traditions or political primacy to the male child. Formerly sold as wives, servants or concubines they are today kidnapped, victims of incest or AIDS.

Here again are mixed multi-cultural references. A Chinese imperial architecture, a blue sky like in Western art, a very contemporary teenager. In an equal light and timeless atmosphere, the characters inserted into preexisting settings create some incongruity (what has to do a schoolgirl in the Imperial Palace?) or a kind of disharmony felt more than seen. It is like a new type of Chinese opera that transcends the particularities of time and place.

Returning from a trip to Japan, Cui Xiuwen analyses the various aspects of her ego in *Existential Emptiness* (2009). This latest series depicts a girl a little older than before, accompanied by a doll that resembles her. Mostly monochrome, these photographs are inspired by traditional Chinese painting. The puppet doll recalls the Japanese Bunraku theater.

Placed together or separated, the two figures are parts of a puzzle, evoking the duality body / soul, yin and yang, life and lifelessness. In *Existential Emptiness 1* both figures are elongated in the snow, their heads toward the center of the composition. While in the wooded landscape of *Existential Emptiness 5*, the doll rests on the back of the young girl. Somewhere else they are separated by a considerable distance, each placed at one end of the image. The exaggerated horizontal format magnifies the white river and is reminiscent of the meditative Sugimoto's photographs..

In these frozen landscapes of northern China, Cui Xiuwen operates in a new style where the doll reinforces the symbolic content of the work. A work always between modernity and tradition.

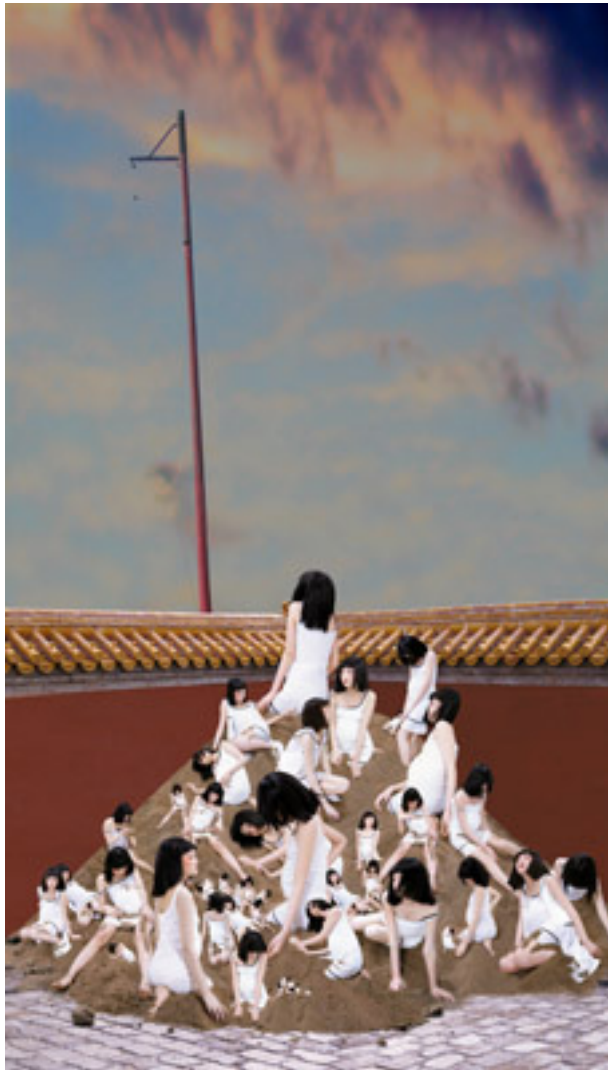


*Existential Emptiness 1*  
243 x 67,5 cm, 2009



*Existential Emptiness 5*  
130 x 57 cm, 2009





*Angel 6*  
170X90.92 cm, 2006



*Angel 4*  
170X90.92 cm, 2006



*Sanjie*  
installation vidéo, dimensions variables

# BIOGRAPHIE

**Born in Herbing, province of Heilongjiang in Northern China, in 1970.  
Lives and works in Beijing**

Graduate from the Fine Art department of the Northeast University (1990)  
Graduate from the department of painting of the Central Academy of Fine Art of Beijing (1996)

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

### 2010

Today Art Museum, Beijing (solo show)

### 2009

*Attitudes*, Female Art in China, La Centrale Electrique, Brussels, Belgium  
*China, the contemporary rebirth*, Palazzo Reale, Milan, Italy  
*Enantiomorphous* – Art of Female, White Box Museum, Beijing  
*The fourth Chengdu Biennale*, Contemporary Art Museum, Chengdu, China  
*Talk-Statement*, National Museum of China, Taiwan  
*I have a dream*, Carriage House Center for the Arts, New York

### 2008

*Ongoing women*, Mozen Art Museum, Beijing  
*Our Future* : Guy et Myriam Ullens Collection, UCCA, Beijing  
*China Gold Exhibit*, Musée Maillol, Paris  
*55 days in Valencia* Chinese Art Meeting, IVAM, Valence, Spain  
*Free zone*, BS1 Art Collection, Lugano  
*The Metamorphosing Female*, Osage, Shanghai

### 2007

*The Power of the Universe*, Asia Art Center, Beijing  
*China-Facing Realty*, MUMOK, Vienna, Austria  
*China New media Arts exhibition*, Bundeskanzleramt Kunst museum, Vienna, Austria  
*Today's documents*, Today Art Museum, Beijing  
*Floating – New Generation of Art in China*, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Séoul, Korea  
*Thermocline of Art*, KM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany  
*Artist in the Wonderland*, the Baltic Sea Cultural Centre, Gdansk, Poland  
*The screen-Eye or the new image*, Casino, Luxembourg

### 2006

*Between Past and Future*, New Photo and Video from China, Nasher Museum, Durham, USA  
*2006 International Digital Art Award*, Brisbane, Australia  
*The Thirteen : Chinese Video Now*, PS1, New York  
*Post Nora*, Today Art Museum, Beijing

### 2005

*Between Past and Future*, New Photo and Video from China, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK  
Zhengda Art Museum, Shanghai  
*Always to the Front*, Guandu Art Museum, Taipei, Taiwan

### 2004

*Untitled : Julia Loktev – Julika, Cui Xiuwen*, Tate Modern, London, UK  
*Cui Xiuwen-Kan Xuan, a dual video exhibition*, CAPC Bordeaux, France  
*Out of the Window - Spaces of Distraction*, The Japan Foundation forum, Tokyo  
*Spellbound Aura* – the new vision of Chinese photography, Taipei, Taiwan  
*China – the Body Everywhere ?*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Marseille, France

### 2003

*City net Asia 2003*, Seoul Museum, Korea  
*Alors la Chine ?*, Centre Pompidou, Paris

### 2002

*Under Construction*, the Japan Foundation Asia Centre, Tokyo  
*C'est pas du Cinéma*, Le Fresnoy, France

### 2001

*Dialogue-Others*, Bari City Museum, Italy  
*Beijing with Contradiction*, Finnish Museum of Photography, Finland