

Darren Siwes: *Oz Omnium Rex Et Regina*

PRESS RELEASE

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Opening Saturday 4 July 3 – 5 pm

Darren Siwes latest photographs could be seen as a departure from the complex imagery of his past work. Perhaps this is a shift to simpler iconography but it is quickly apparent that **Siwes** latest body of work is a loaded, multi layered and vital addition to his practice.

This body of work focuses on the imagery of coins, in doing so, **Siwes** is able to subversively explore issues of race relations to great effect. One cannot ignore the significance of commerce in society and more poignantly the effects on indigenous society. Of course class divides are a complex phenomenon, which involve learnt prejudices which are often there to secure a social hierarchy and inturn financial leverage.

What is a fictitious play with the history of our coinage takes on certain potency in today's climate, with the recent implementation of 'sorry day' as well as the addition of President Obama in the White house. However, for all the advances made recently **Siwes** work makes it resoundingly clear how far there is to go, by communicating just how ground breaking it would be for an indigenous head of state to be elected in today's Australia.

Siwes was awarded a *Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship* in 2002 and has held solo exhibitions in Australia, New York and Spain, as well as participating in group exhibitions in Prague, Belfast, Japan, Jakarta and the Netherlands. This year his work was curated into the Havana Biennale. His photographs have been acquired by: the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of Queensland, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the Art Gallery of South Australia, Artbank, Flinders University, Adelaide Festival Centre, Monash Gallery of Art and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid.

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