

OLGA CIRONIS

HANDLE ME GENTLY

&

DARREN SIWES

MUM, I WANT TO BE BROWN



11 April - 10 May 2008

both exhibitions will open 6 - 8pm Friday 11 April at Turner Galleries

Turner Galleries is very pleased to present solo exhibitions by two outstanding Australian contemporary artists. Whilst Olga work is sculptural and Darren's is photographic, both exhibitions are inspired by their children.

Olga Cironis is originally from Sydney, but has made Perth her home over the past 12 years. In this exhibition of new work she has created three dimensional animals based on drawings by her young daughter. Each quirky creature has a welded steel armature, covered with foam padding, then finally encased in old blankets. Olga will be encouraging the public to interact with her animals by picking them up, or moving them using their inbuilt handles.

Olga explained her work by saying she "used numerous collected woollen blankets, covering each foam covered object with one specially chosen blanket and loading it even further with the meaning of warmth, love, protection and hiding behind some cover. The toys/animals become laughable in their colourful attire, stupendous in shape and size... Each work is amorphous in terms of shape and ambiguous in their stance and positioning within the space. The sculptures are individual and separate works, yet together they create an installation and a performance when the public interact with the work."

Olga's artworks can be found in the collections of BankWest, Royal Perth Hospital, Bunbury Regional Art Gallery, WA School of Art & Design, Fremantle Hospital and numerous private collections.

This is **Darren Siwes'** second solo exhibition in Perth, the first was held in 2004 whilst he was artist in residence with us in Claremont, when we were The Church Gallery. This exhibition of new photographs is being held in conjunction with FotoFreo and was inspired by his young son asking his mum, "Mum, I want to be brown".

Darren stated that, "I am fascinated by children from indigenous backgrounds who are fair skinned, and desire to be brown. Noah my son discovered that there were a variety of skin colour variations between many of the people he had developed relationships with. Eventually he would ask us questions like "Why has Nanna got brown skin?" His realisation of the contrast between him and brown skinned people led to him to say to his mother "Mum I want to be Brown"... In creating this body of work I have tried looking through the mind of Children who view that being brown is far more preferable and desirable. I have looked to accentuate this difference by creating works set in a period when the Australian cultural milieu visioned and enforced a mono-cultural society different to that which is in the minds of these children. I think this work contrasts children's innocence with an adult baggage."

Utilising period furniture and clothing, Darren's photographic images simulate a nineteenth century aesthetic in which white middleclass families lives are being turned upside down. Their home interiors are set outdoors, which can be seen as an allegory regarding private thoughts and public revelations, and their white child longs to be Brown. Although quite serious in theme, these works are not without a sense of humour.

Darren's photographs can be found in the collections of Artbank, Art Gallery of SA, Adelaide Festival Centre, Art Gallery of WA, Australian National Gallery, Monash University, Queensland Art Gallery, Flinders University, Horsham Regional Art Gallery and Reine Sophia in Madrid. Darren is represented by Greenaway Gallery in Adelaide and will be in Perth for the opening of his exhibition.

Please do not hesitate to contact gallery staff on 08 9227 1077 or email info@turnergalleries.com.au should you require more information or images from the exhibitions. Exhibition works will be available to view on line: www.turnergalleries.com.au, and Olga and Darren are available for interviews.