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Adelaide artist shortlisted in Silver Jubilee Telstra Art Award

Adelaide's Darren Siwes is one of over 100 entrants to be short listed in this year's prestigious 25th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*.

Darren's photograph *Gold, Silver, Bronze Woman* is part of a series which explores Plato's philosophy of class in social systems - and how society is still influenced by hierarchical order.

Darren's artwork, which depicts three figures standing in front of large representations of Australian coins, questions how society allocates people to perceived levels and why one person should be considered more worthy than another.

The 40 year old from Upper Sturt is a passionate painter, having completed a Bachelor's Degree in Visual Arts in Painting, Sculpture and Drawing with a Double Major in Photography.

Gold, Silver, Bronze Woman is Darren's fourth time entering the *Telstra Art Award* and he believes they are an important showcase for indigenous artists.

"The Award is highly respected and thrust the entrants directly in front of the eyes of the art world, raising artists' profiles in the art community to help launch careers," said Darren.

Museum and Art Gallery (MAGNT) Acting Director, Apolline Kohen said the great diversity of Indigenous expression is reflected in the artworks submitted this year which range from 2D works on paper, bark and canvas to 3D works made from fibre, ironwood and fibreglass.

"The quality of the art works we have received for this year's Silver Jubilee is outstanding, and there is no doubt the judges will have a difficult time selecting the winners," Ms Kohen said.

Lawrie Mortimer, General Manager of the Telstra's Indigenous Directorate, said the Telstra Art Award provides incredible exposure for Indigenous artists from all around Australia.

"Telstra's support of this Award helps ensure the continued development of Indigenous art in Australia by identifying and recognising the country's most talented artists, no matter where they live," Mr Mortimer said.

The overall \$40,000 Telstra Award and further four media categories will again be non-acquisitive in 2008, which means the winning artists can retain or sell their works.

"We're expecting many of the works to be in great demand following the announcement of this year's winners," Ms Kohen said.

"Last year, over two thirds of finalists sold their works for a combined total of more than \$850,000."

Winners in the Telstra Art Award will be announced on Friday 15 August at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, and works will be on display until Sunday 26 October 2008.

The Telstra Art Award is open to all adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and aims to showcase the very best Australian Indigenous art from around the country.

For further information contact:

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Media note: To speak to Telstra Art Award finalists call Melanie Neilson on 0400 599 463.

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