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Marrickville local artist shortlisted in Silver Jubilee Telstra Art Award

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

Suzy's entry *Bengerang* is a three dimensional piece made up of 58 'totem poles'. The poles are made of plywood which she collected from Marrickville's Reverse garbage recycled materials outlet and painted in bright, acrylic colours with shapes and lines representative of people and communities.

The work, named after the area outside Moree where her family originates from, was inspired by the recent National Apology Day. Having been involved on the day, Suzy started thinking about the arrival of Captain Cook and the First Fleet.

"The poles are representative of all the Aboriginal people and my thoughts behind it were to wonder how did 'they' take over?" said Suzy.

The 44 year old has only recently explored her creative talents, having begun an Arts and Cultural Practices Certificate in Moree four years ago but leaving before finishing the course. She paints, produces lino cuts and uses whatever is at her disposal as an artistic outlet.

"I'm a bit overwhelmed that my entry has been selected in the finals," said Suzy.

"To win would be fantastic recognition and of course the prize money would be great funding to help further my work," she continued.

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.

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

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