

Melbourne local artist shortlisted in 2010 Telstra Art Award

21 July 2010 - Bindi Cole from Melbourne is one of only 96 artists announced as a finalist in this year's 27th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* for her new media work titled "Laura".

Bindi's new media work is part of a series of stylised photographic images depicting 'Sistagirls' – a term used to describe a transgender person in Tiwi Island culture.

"With a population of around 2500, there are approximately 50 'Sistagirls' living on the Tiwi Islands. This community contains a complex range of dynamics including a significant history of pride and shame – I hope that in some way I have captured the essence of who they are and the spirit of their community," said Cole.

A Melbourne based emerging artist and award winning photographer, Bindi's work exposes the unspoken power dynamics of Australian culture in the here and now.

In 2009 she won the Deadly Art Award as part of the Victorian Indigenous Art Awards, and was funded by Australia Council and Arts Victoria to create a series of portraits of the Tiwi Island transgender community.

This is her second selection as a Telstra Art Award finalist, having previously been selected in 2008.

Telstra Art Award Curator, Kate Podger said there had been a diverse range of artworks submitted, from traditional works on paper, paintings, barks and three dimensional artworks to, for the first time, entries in the Telstra New Media Award.

"I congratulate all of the artists from across Australia who entered this year - the Telstra Art Award continues to evolve and grow to offer new opportunities for Indigenous artists to showcase their extraordinary talents," Ms Podger said.

Telstra Chief Marketing Officer, Kate McKenzie, said the Telstra Art Award provides an important national showcase for the work of Indigenous artists from all around the country.

"We're proud that Telstra's support of the Telstra Art Award for the last 19 years has helped Indigenous artists like Bindi Cole gain recognition, and enabled more Australians to see their outstanding work," Ms McKenzie said.

Now in its 27th year, the Telstra Art Award is the first and longest running art award dedicated to the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, and is an opportunity for Indigenous Australians to express and celebrate their culture, beliefs and society.

The Telstra Art Award comprises the \$40,000 Telstra Award and \$4,000 to other categories including; the Telstra General Painting Award, the Telstra Bark Painting Award, the Telstra Work on Paper Award and the Wandjuk Marika Memorial 3D Award (also sponsored by Telstra) in addition to the Telstra New Media Award (\$3,000).

The 27th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* exhibition opens on Friday, 13 August 2010. For more information about the Telstra Art Award or to view the online gallery of works from previous Telstra Art Award exhibitions go to www.magnt.nt.gov.au/natsiaa. To follow the Telstra Art Award on Twitter go to www.twitter.com/natsiaa

Media note: To speak with Telstra Art Award finalists, please call Melanie Neilson on 0400 599 463

The 27th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* is supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments

