

Tiwi artist shortlisted in 2010 Telstra Art Award

26 July 2010

Susan Wanji Wanji from Melville Island, located on the Tiwi Islands 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 painting, *Hunting for Bush Tucker*.

Born and raised in Maningrida, Arnhem Land in 1955, Susan learnt to make bark paintings and woven mats and baskets as a young girl. Her unique style has absorbed influences from both Tiwi and Arnhem Land cultures and her work has been displayed nationally and internationally since 1990.

Since 1990 Susan has been a finalist in five previous Telstra Art Awards. Her entry for 2010 is a painting using natural pigments on linen and features a traditional tunga basket used to carry bush tucker such as yams within a dense network of detailed patterns.

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 Susan Wanji Wanji 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: For media interviews call Karlie Weinert on 08 8999 4730 to arrange.

Image: Susan Wanji Wanji pictured at Munupi Arts and Crafts Association, Melville Island.

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

