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**For Immediate Release**

### **Darwin artist awarded the Wenten Rubuntja Indigenous Artist Fellowship**

Advance – Global Australian Professionals together with Woodside and Arts NT are delighted to announce the Inaugural recipient of the Wenten Rubuntja Indigenous Artist Fellowship, Karen Mills.

The fellowship will bring Karen, a leading emerging Australian indigenous artist, to New York for an eight week program introducing her to the world's biggest art market, here in New York City.

Advance CEO Elena Douglas said “we are delighted to be able to introduce an artist of Karen’s caliber to New York. This will be a wonderful experience for her and we hope to introduce Karen to important mentors and galleries to forward her international career.”

“Karen is an emerging artist of great interest who has exhibited locally, nationally and internationally and will serve as another talented Australian ambassador when in New York,” she said.

Cynthia Coyne, Project Officer, Indigenous Arts Development Unit Darwin, said the selection panel considered a number of very strong contenders for the prestigious award.

“The selection panel was particularly impressed with the quality of Karen’s work and the way in which she has sought out professional development opportunities, reflecting her seriousness and dedication as a visual arts practitioner in Australia,” she said.

Karen began her career in 1996 when she completed an Associate Diploma of Fine Art at the Northern Territory University and later studied a Bachelor of Visual Art. In 1998 a painting by Karen was exhibited as part of the 15th Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award and in 2002 Mills was included in the significant Five Darwin Painters exhibition at 24 HR Art, Northern Territory Centre for Contemporary Art.

Alongside her own personal artistic career Karen has also engaged in community development and arts administration through membership of the Association of the Northern Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA) and her current role as a member of the Australia Council for the Arts, Visual Arts Board.

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Advance Global Australian Professionals is Australia’s leading network of Australian professionals and entrepreneurs overseas. Our purpose is to galvanise the global community of Australians for the economic, cultural and social advancement of Australia. Advance is an independent, not-for-profit organization registered in the United States.

The fellowship is named in honour of Aboriginal painter and campaigner, Wenten Rubuntja. Mr Rubuntja was born in Burt Creek, Northern Territory c 1923 and died in Alice Springs, Northern Territory 3 July 2005. He was one of the leading figures of the Aboriginal cultural and political world during the last 30 years and achieved an international reputation as a painter. Throughout his life he worked with great energy, humour and imagination to effect reconciliation between Australia's Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal communities. Albert Namatjira, was the greatest influence on his work as a artist. Mr Rubuntja alternated between painting in acrylics and watercolours always depicting themes of his dreamings .

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