



Marion Scrymgour
MINISTER FOR ARTS AND MUSEUMS

28 May 2006

NEW INDIGENOUS CURATOR FOR MAJOR ART AWARD

A prominent Indigenous curator will oversee Australia's most distinguished Indigenous art competition, Arts Minister Marion Scrymgour announced today.

Franchesca Cubillo, the newly employed Indigenous Senior Curator of Aboriginal Art & Material Culture at the Museum and Art Gallery of the NT, recently chaired the Pre-Selection panel for the *23rd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*.

"The Telstra Award is not simply about competition but more so the celebration of Indigenous Australian art and culture," Ms Scrymgour said.

"I am proud to announce that this year 297 entries were received into the Art Award ... Franchesca with fellow panel members, has had the very difficult role of overseeing the shortlist of 82 finalists!"

"Franchesca has had a successful background over a decade in curatorial practice at the South Australian Museum, the National Museum of Australia and as Director at Tandanya, the National Aboriginal Cultural Institute.

"It's great to see Franchesca – a local Aboriginal woman – back home as the MAGNT's first Indigenous Senior Curator of Aboriginal Art & Material Culture."

Ms Scrymgour said she was sure the public would be impressed by the diversity and quality in this year's Award.

"The works came from across Australia and include art in many different forms, such as three-dimensional works and paintings on bark, canvas and paper," she said.

"There has been a very strong round of entries this year and, without revealing too much, I have been informed there will be some really nice surprises for people coming along to view the exhibition in August.

"The *Award* will showcase the very best of Australian Indigenous art, highlighting cutting edge and innovative works in both traditional and contemporary media."

Ms Scrymgour also announced that a need to further promote and market the *Award* to artists in metropolitan areas had been identified in this year's pre-selection process, so that, next year a *New Media* category will be created.

Ms Cubillo said finalists have been contacted this month so their entries will arrive in good time to facilitate an efficient installation and judging process.

“The arrival of artworks is when the excitement really begins to build,” Ms Cubillo said.

“The *Award* is an opportunity for emerging artists to have their works exposed on a national stage next to the works of artists who have built reputations for 10 years or more.

“I feel really privileged to be part of this *Award* that continues to build strong momentum and tradition, so I am really looking forward to the coming months.”

The two judges of this year’s *Award* are Christopher Menz, Director , Art Gallery of South Australia and Jodie Broun, previous Telstra 1st prize winner in 1998..

The 23rd *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* is non-acquisitive this year, meaning MAGNT will no longer automatically acquire the winning entry, leaving the artist free to benefit further by selling the work.

The *Award* is an important showcase for both established and emerging artists and has come to be regarded as the premier national event in the Australian Indigenous art calendar.

The *Award* exhibition open on August 11 and will be on display until 22 October.

Contact: Maria Billias 0401 119 746