



Museum & Art Gallery
of the Northern Territory



MEDIA RELEASE

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WINNERS OF AUSTRALIA'S PREMIER INDIGENOUS ART AWARD ANNOUNCED IN DARWIN

Australia's richest Indigenous art prize, the ***Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award***, was presented in Darwin tonight to Ngoia Napaltjarri Pollard from Mt Liebig, 325km west of Alice Springs.

The coveted **\$40,000 TELSTRA AWARD** was announced by Mr Lawrie Mortimer, General Manager, National Indigenous Directorate, Telstra Country Wide, at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) in Darwin for the work *Swamps West of Nyirripi*.

The Award exhibition was officially opened by Northern Territory Arts and Museums Minister Ms Marion Scrymgour MLA.

In addition to the Telstra Award, prizes were awarded in four other categories:

The \$4,000 Telstra General Painting Award, was awarded to Alice Springs-based artist Linda Syddick Napaltjarri for her work *The Witch Doctor and the Windmill*.

The \$4,000 Telstra Bark Painting Award was awarded to Samuel Namunjaja from Mankorlod in west Arnhem Land for his work *Gungura (Wind Dreaming with Goanna Track)*.

The \$4,000 Telstra Works on Paper, was awarded to Brisbane-based artist Judy Watson for her work *a preponderance of aboriginal blood*.

The \$4,000 Wandjuk Marika Three-Dimensional Memorial Award, sponsored by Telstra was awarded to Baluka Maymuru from Yirrkala, east Arnhem Land for his work *Dhakandjali*

The Award judges were Mr Christopher Menz, Director, Art Gallery of South Australia and Ms Jody Broun from Western Australia who is the 1998 Telstra First Prize Winner. Both judges commented on the diversity and high quality of the works entered this year.

The *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* was founded in 1984 by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. The aim of the Award is to recognise and promote appreciation and understanding of the quality and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art from remote and urban based Indigenous artists throughout Australia, working in traditional and contemporary media. 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.

MAGNT Director Anna Malgorzewicz said the Telstra Award and all four category prizes were non-acquisitive this year, reflecting the significant increase in value placed upon Indigenous art during the past few years.

“The non-acquisitive nature of this year’s *Award* allows winning artists to sell their works and reap further rewards for their talent,” Ms Malgorzewicz said.

“I congratulate all 82 pre-selected finalists from the 297 entries received this year for featuring at this year’s *Award* and in particular the category winners and the winner of the Telstra Award.

“I thank Telstra for its continued support of the *Award* that increasingly builds the reputation and recognition of Australian Indigenous artists in what is Australia’s premier Indigenous art exhibition.

“The aim of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in 1984 was to establish an Award that recognised the important contribution made by Indigenous artists nationally, and to promote a better appreciation and understanding of contemporary Indigenous art. Together with Telstra, I believe this aim continues to be fulfilled.”

Mr Lawrie Mortimer, General Manager, National Indigenous Directorate, Telstra Country Wide said Telstra was proud of the part it played in supporting Australia’s rich cultural heritage and development through the Award.

“Since Telstra began its sponsorship of the Award in 1992, Indigenous artists have been awarded more than \$500,000 in prize money,” he said.

“The Award’s promotion of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art across the country has made a significant contribution to a wider appreciation and understanding of this art and its diversity.”

The **23rd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award** will be on display at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin from Saturday 12 August until Sunday 22 October 2006.

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The *23rd 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.