



Northern Territory Government

Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts



Traditional Owner Proud to be Telstra Art Award Finalist

Wardaman Traditional Owner Bill Harney is one of 104 finalists at this year's 24th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*, to be held at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) from 10 August 2007.

Mr Harney, 76, said he is as "fighting fit as a two-year-old" and proud to once again be a finalist.

"I grew up with art and it is something my mother, father, grandmothers and grandfathers passed down to me," Mr Harney said.

"Everything in our lives comes from our Dreaming stories that is captured in our artwork and which is being passed down to the younger generation."

Wardaman is used to describe the language, land and people traditionally associated with an area of land to the south west of what is now known as Katherine, about 330km south of Darwin.

Mr Harney's entry *This is the Lirringining Story* is a painting that uses a variety of bush ochres to tell the story about Grasshopper Dreaming.

His entry was installed at MAGNT today.

"The *Lirringining Story* is about the part of the Grasshopper Dreaming when the little crawling grasshoppers were travelling in a group," Mr Harney said.

"They were singing, dancing, naming country, plant and soil and all the different pigment – Barnjan (white), Liwin (red), Gilirringa (yellow) and Wumurrung (black).

"They were also naming the decorations and costumes of straw and grass for body painting in country.

"This story belongs to Wardaman Country, Wardaman people."

The Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) Director Anna Malgorzewicz said entries had been submitted by artists from across the country and the calibre of entries was extremely high.

"We have received entries from right across Australia, from Perth to Brisbane and Tasmania to the Torres Strait. The *Award* is identifying new Indigenous artists every year and this year's entries are outstanding," she said.

Artists have submitted a diverse range of artworks, from 2D works on paper, bark and canvas to works made from a variety of media including photography, linocut and mixed media.

The *Award* was founded by MAGNT in 1984, and remains the nation's longest-running *Award* dedicated to Indigenous artists. The *Telstra Award* attracts a \$40,000 prize and the four media category prizes attract an additional \$4,000 each.

The *Award* is non-acquisitive, meaning MAGNT will not automatically acquire winning entries. Last year, Ngoia Napaltjarri Pollard won the *Telstra Award* with her artwork *Swamps West of Nyirripi*. This piece later sold for \$21 960.

"We're expecting many of the works to be in great demand following the announcement of this year's winners," Ms Malgorzewicz said.

"Last year, 25 finalists sold their works for a combined total of more than \$250 000."

Lawrie Mortimer, General Manager of the Telstra National Indigenous Directorate, said the *Telstra Award* provides incredible exposure for Indigenous artists from across Australia who in many cases, come from remote and isolated communities.

"Telstra's support for this *Award* helps ensure the continued development of Indigenous art in Australia by identifying and recognising the country's most talented artists no matter where they live," he said.

The *Award* is open to all adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and aims to showcase the very best Australian Indigenous art from around the country.

The 24th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* exhibition opens and *Award* presentations will be made on Friday 10 August 2007. The exhibition will be on display until Sunday 18 November 2007.

For further information contact:

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