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Childhood Memories Continue to Inspire Artist

Acclaimed Yolgnu artist Gulumbu Yunupingu's entry in this year's 25th Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, *Garak the Universe*, continues on with her universal theme, which is inspired by childhood memories of her father's night time stories at the family camp of the seven sisters and other ancient mythologies.

In 2004 Gulumbu, the eldest sister of Galarrwuy and Mandawuy Yunupingu, won the \$40,000 Telstra Award for her installation of three memorial poles titled *Garak, The Universe*, which featured natural pigments on wood that appeared as glistening stars.

Will Stubbs, Coordinator of the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre says Gulumbu's work is very popular.

"Gulumbu's message is literally 'universal', the tones of her work are all the colours of the world's people; black, red, yellow, white and brown, and we all look upwards and aspire to the same stars," Mr Stubbs said.

"Gulumbu is a talented artist who works with many different mediums, including weaving, painting on barks, making shell jewellery, and strings for armbands and headbands.

"Her works have been shown worldwide, including appearing at Germany's 2000 World Expo to being one of eight Indigenous artists featured in the permanent collection at the Quai Branly Museum, Paris."

After winning the 21st Telstra Award in 2004, Gulumbu went on to do her first solo show at the Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne which was a sell-out, and her works appear in many collections including the Kerry Stokes Collection, National Gallery of Australia as well as state galleries around the country.

Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) Acting Director, Apolline Kohen said the great diversity of Indigenous expression is reflected in the artworks submitted this year which range from 2D works on paper, bark and canvas to 3D works made from fibre, ironwood and fibreglass.

"The quality of the art works we have received for this year's Silver Jubilee is outstanding, and there is no doubt the judges will have a difficult time selecting the winners," Ms Kohen said.

Lawrie Mortimer, General Manager of the Telstra's Indigenous Directorate, said the Telstra Art Award provides incredible exposure for Indigenous artists from all around Australia.

"Telstra's support of 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," Mr Mortimer said.

The overall \$40,000 Telstra Award and further four media categories will again be non-acquisitive in 2008, which means the winning artists can retain or sell their works.

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

"Last year, over two thirds of finalists sold their works for a combined total of more than \$850,000."

Winners in the Telstra Art Award will be announced on Friday 15 August at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, and works will be on display until Sunday 26 October 2008.

The Telstra Art 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.

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Image Credit:

Gulumbu Yunupingu with her 2004 winning entry *Garak, The Universe, 2004*, Natural pigments on wood.

The 25th 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.



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