

Media Release:

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MAGNT Prepares for First International Timor-Leste Exhibition

The Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) staff are busy putting the finishing touches on the world first exhibition of Timor-Leste art and material culture.

The international exhibition, *Husi Bei Ala Timor Sira Nia Liman – From the Hands of our Ancestors*, presents the MAGNT's Timor-Leste holdings alongside the National Collection of Timor-Leste.

MAGNT Curator of Southeast Asian Art, Joanna Barrkman said it was wonderful to see the exhibition coming together.

"The exhibition will feature more than 130 works including textiles, ancestral figurines, ceramics, ceremonial house doors, body adornment, prints and paintings drawn from both the National Collection of Timor-Leste, MAGNT's collection as well as a number of additional loans from the Australian Museum and private collections from Timor-Leste and Australia," Ms Barrkman said.

"The works will range from rare traditional pieces including carved ancestral figurines and ceremonial silver jewellery to more recent cultural expressions, which feature contemporary paintings and prints produced by young energetic Timorese artists.

"This will be the first ever international display of these beautiful cultural objects since the nation gained independence in 2002 and MAGNT is very honoured to be the first museum in the world to host this collection in conjunction with the National Directorate of Culture, Timor-Leste."

MAGNT conducted a salvage operation in association with United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), saving 500 objects from the Dili museum collection following the 1999 riots when much of Timor-Leste's cultural heritage was destroyed.

"This exhibition is a testimony and celebration of the survival of Timor-Leste's cultural inheritance, and MAGNT is very pleased to welcome members of the Timorese community both locally and from overseas to the opening of the exhibition."

In addition to the exhibition the MAGNT Shop will stock *tais* (traditional Timorese textiles) and other crafts made by the Alola Foundation and Timor-Leste's craftspeople during the exhibition.

Husi Bei Ala Timor Sira Nia Liman – From the Hands of our Ancestors opens at the MAGNT Saturday, 22 November to Sunday, 12 July 2009.

Ends

Media Note – for more information contact Joanna Barrkman on 8999 8249

A media photo opportunity to capture the installation with MAGNT Curator Joanna Barrkman and Timor-Leste's Head of Museums and Heritage Mr Abilio Da Silva is available in the gallery tomorrow, Tuesday 18 November at 11am, meet in MAGNT foyer.

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