

## Larrakia artist Gary Lee shortlisted in 2010 Telstra Art Award

15 July 2010

Larrakia artist, writer, anthropologist and curator, Gary Lee is one of only 96 artists announced as a finalist in this year's 27<sup>th</sup> *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* for his new media work, *Robert, 20*.

Gary is currently a PhD Indigenous Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra but originally hails from Darwin, Northern Territory where the Lee family are a well-known local Darwin family.

The artwork, *Robert, 20*, is a digital colour print that was taken of one of Gary's colleagues, who he describes as a local (Canberra) boy.

"He's an 'urban' Koori... to me Robert encapsulates the modern Aborigine, one who is both smart and going places – and who knows what he wants to be and do... he is proud of his black father and white mother – his parents have instilled in him the importance of being a good human being above all else," said Gary.

Telstra Art Award Curator, Kate Podger said there had been a diverse range of artworks submitted, from traditional works on paper, paintings, barks and three dimensional artworks to, for the first time, entries in the Telstra New Media Award.

"I congratulate all of the artists from across Australia who entered this year - the Telstra Art Award continues to evolve and grow to offer new opportunities for Indigenous artists to showcase their extraordinary talents," Ms Podger said.

Telstra Chief Marketing Officer, Kate McKenzie, said the Telstra Art Award provides an important national showcase for the work of Indigenous artists from all around the country.

"We're proud that Telstra's support of the Art Award for the last 19 years has helped Indigenous artists like Gary Lee gain recognition, and enabled more Australians to see their outstanding work," Ms McKenzie said.

Now in its 27th year, the Telstra Art Award is the first and longest running art award dedicated to the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, and is an opportunity for Indigenous Australians to express and celebrate their culture, beliefs and society.

The Telstra Art Award comprises the \$40,000 Telstra Award and \$4,000 to other categories including; the Telstra General Painting Award, the Telstra Bark Painting Award, the Telstra Work on Paper Award and the Wandjuk Marika Memorial 3D Award (also sponsored by Telstra) in addition to the Telstra New Media Award (\$3,000).

The 27<sup>th</sup> *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* exhibition opens on Friday, 13 August 2010. For more information about the Telstra Art Award or to view the online gallery of works from previous Telstra Art Award exhibitions go to [www.magnt.nt.gov.au/natsiaa](http://www.magnt.nt.gov.au/natsiaa). To follow the Telstra Art Award on Twitter go to [www.twitter.com/natsiaa](http://www.twitter.com/natsiaa)

**Media note:** For interviews please phone Anne Marshall on 08 8999 4730 to arrange.

**Image:** Artist Gary Lee pictured at a recent exhibition opening in Brisbane.

The 27<sup>th</sup> *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

