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Gallery Installation Underway for 2010 Telstra Art Award

The Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) in Darwin is a hive of activity as installation of the 96 works pre-selected for this year's 27th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* is well underway.

Telstra Art Award curator Kate Podger said the countdown to opening night is only seven days away and MAGNT conservators, workshop crew, collection management and public programs staff are busily preparing the two galleries that will house the Telstra Art Award exhibition.

"For the first time since 2007, artists from all states and territories across the nation are amongst the finalists and there are so many wonderful pieces that make up this year's exhibition including works on paper, paintings, barks, three dimensional artworks and for the first time new media works," Ms Podger said.

"With the introduction of the inaugural Telstra New Media Award it presents a new challenge in installing the seven pre-selected works in the new media category.

"Artists working in new media use new and emerging technologies to create works that explore new modes of artistic expression; this may include using virtual and immersive environments, audio technology and interactive technologies.

"Since the 96 pre-selected works started arriving two months ago, MAGNT staff have been busy preparing the artworks – stretching paintings on canvas, framing works on paper, preparing supports for the three-dimensional work and setting up the new media works.

"Special rooms have been built to install an online virtual world for one work from NSW, and there's also a complex sculptural installation washed with archival footage of Aboriginal dancers.

"The Telstra Art Award is the premier national event in the Indigenous art community; it not only provides the opportunity for Indigenous artists to receive recognition for their work but also provides the general public access to an amazing exhibition of contemporary Indigenous art."

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 27th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* exhibition opens, and award presentations will be made, on Friday, 13 August 2010.

Artworks in this year's exhibition will be featured on an interactive website www.nt.gov.au/natsiaa, which offers users from around the world the opportunity to view moving images of this year's artworks and listen to recordings of the story behind the works through a virtual online gallery from 4pm Friday, 13 August 2010.

To follow the Telstra Art Award on Twitter go to www.twitter.com/natsiaa.

Media note: For interviews please contact Karlie Weinert on 08 8999 4730.

Image: MAGNT staff installing works for the 2010 Telstra Art Award.

The 27th *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.

