

10 August 2010

Telstra Art Award Exhibition Opens this Friday

The highlight of the national Indigenous art calendar is almost upon us with the 27th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* opening celebration set to take place at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) in Darwin this Friday, 13 August 2010.

The opening celebration not only announces the much anticipated winner of the \$40,000 Telstra Art Award and five category winners, it also offers the public the first opportunity to view this year's final selection of 96 Indigenous art works and features a great line up of entertainment.

Telstra Art Award Curator Kate Podger said this year is particularly exciting with the addition of another prize category, the inaugural Telstra New Media Award, aimed at the recognition and celebration of the increasing number of Indigenous artists using new media as part of their art practice.

"Also for the first time, this year the overall \$40,000 Telstra Art Award winner will be selected from the five category winners, the Telstra General Painting Award, the Telstra Bark Painting Award, the Telstra Work on Paper Award, the Wandjuk Marika Memorial 3D Award (also sponsored by Telstra) and the Telstra New Media Award," Ms Podger said.

"The opening night of the *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* is always a highlight of Australia's art events calendar and attracts visitors and artists from all over the country.

"Entertainment highlights of the evening include Lou Bennett, a multi-talented Yorta Yorta woman and co-founder of the internationally successful folk group Tiddas; Duganda Street Sounds, a group from Ramingining whose performances feature a combination of traditional and contemporary dance and music; and Wildflower, a young band fronted by five women from the remote Arnhem Land station of Mamadawerre.

"This year the galleries will be open from 4pm where visitors are invited to view the exhibition which includes paintings, three-dimensional works, barks, works on paper and new media works.

"The entertainment and announcement of the winners will then take place from 5.30pm on the lawns outside the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

"The Telstra Art Award has come to be regarded as 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.

"For the first time since 2007, artists from all states and territories across the nation are amongst the finalists."

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.

The 27th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* exhibition will be on display at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory until Sunday, 7 November 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.

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

