

Thursday 14 April 2011

## Entries flood in for Indigenous Art Award

Renowned Indigenous artists Danie Mellor and Nici Cumpston and Indigenous arts curator Judith Ryan have been appointed judges of the 28<sup>th</sup> *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) and Principal Sponsor Telstra.

Entry to the prestigious awards have closed with an impressive 327 submissions received, vying for the total prize pool of \$60,000.

The three judges have the challenging task of selecting the winning works from representatives from every state and territory across the nation. Entrants are vying for the \$40,000 main prize and a chance to gain national acclaim for their art.

"Reflecting the importance of the Awards to this community, we have received strong entries featuring high calibre art works from all corners of the country, and we are thrilled to have such well-known and respected names in the Indigenous art world join us to select the finalists," MAGNT Senior Curator Dr Christiane Keller said.

Danie Mellor is an arts lecturer at the University of Sydney and holds a PhD from the Australia National University in Canberra. Mellor won the Telstra Art Award in 2009, after receiving two highly commended awards in 2003 and 2007.

Nici Cumpston is an assistant Curator of Indigenous Australian Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia where she recently curated and co-wrote the accompanying publication for the exhibition *Desert Country* which is touring nationally until 2013. Cumpston has been exhibiting her work since 1998 and has been a finalist in the *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* eight times.

Judith Ryan is the Senior Curator of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Victoria, where she commenced her art museum career in 1977. Ryan has curated more than 40 exhibitions of Indigenous art and is widely published in this field.

Joining the three judges and curator on the pre-selection panel are Bruce Tindale, Manager of the Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery and Cath Bowdler, artist, curator, writer, arts administrator and former lecturer at Charles Darwin University.

The pre-selection of finalists who will have their work showcased in the exhibition at the MAGNT in August is taking place in Darwin this week.

Entries received comprise the following state and territory representation; NT (101), QLD (39), NSW (14), ACT (2), VIC (5), TAS (3), SA (5), WA (46) and WA, SA and NT desert regions (112).

*The 28<sup>th</sup> National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award exhibition opens, and award presentations will be made, on Thursday 11 August 2011.*

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

**Image:** Pre-selection underway at MAGNT in Darwin with curator and judges

The 28<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.

