

Thursday, 11 August 2011

EMBARGOED UNTIL 6pm CST/6.30pm EST, THURSDAY 11 August 2011

South Australian Artist Dickie Minyintiri Wins National Telstra Art Award

South Australian artist Dickie Minyintiri has been awarded Australia's most prestigious Indigenous art prize for his insightful painting reflective of his rich personal history, at the **28th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award**.

Dickie Minyintiri has received the **\$40,000 Telstra Award** from Minister for Arts and Museums Gerry McCarthy and Telstra Chief Customer Officer Mr Gordon Ballantyne at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) for his work, *Kanyalakutjina (Euro tracks)*.

Selected from 60 other pre-selected works, *Kanyalakutjina (Euro tracks)* is synthetic polymer paint on canvas and uses Dickie's idiosyncratic expressive style.

Kanyalakutjina (Euro tracks) is a remarkable painting in which Dickie reflects on his more than 90 years of walking his country, tracing the tracks of animals to the central and important *kapi tjukula* (waterholes) to drink; and where *Wati* (men) also went for *inma* (ceremonies).

Born in Pilpirinyi in Western Australia, Dickie Minyintiri is one of the most senior Pitjantjatjara men alive today, endeared and revered by the whole community as one of the most significant and important artists from the region, a highly respected *Ngangkari* (traditional healer), and senior Law Man.

Dickie's family were the first people at Ernabella before the mission days, and his powerful recollections of his family's history are reflected through his work that tells the story of his life in pre-contact times, his position in ceremony, and how it is used to protect the ancestral beings of his country.

In addition to the Telstra Art Award, \$4,000 prizes were awarded in five other categories:

The Telstra General Painting Award was awarded to Bobby West Tjupurrula from Kiwirrkura in Western Australia for his untitled work that depicts designs associated with the significant rockhole site of Tarkul, north of Mt Webb in Western Australia. This is the site where large groups of *Tingari* men came in ancestral times to be burnt in a large fire.

The Telstra Bark Painting Award was awarded to Raelene Kerinauia from Melville Island in the Northern Territory for her work *Kayimwagakimi Jilamara*. Raelene's winning bark painting represents her Dreaming, *yirrikipayi* (crocodile) and was painted using a special technique with the *kayimwagakimi* (comb).

The Telstra Works on Paper was awarded to Dennis Nona from Torres Strait for his work *Zuga Zug*. Widely acknowledged as one of the most important Torres Strait Islander artists, Dennis has won the Telstra Works on Paper category for the second year running and was awarded the overall Telstra Art Award in 2007. His winning work on paper, *Zuga Zug* reflects an important story from Dennis' homeland, etched in his unique style.

The Wandjuk Marika Memorial Three-Dimensional Award, sponsored by Telstra, was awarded to 69-year-old Gali Yalkarriwuy Gurruwiwi from Elcho Island in Eastern Arnhem Land, for his work *Banumbirr (Morning Star poles)*. Gali has used different elements of natural pigments, feathers, wood and string to create the Morning Star poles, which is sacred to the Dhuwa clans of the *Yolngu* people.

The Telstra New Media Award which was introduced for the first time last year was awarded to 44-year-old and first-time Telstra Art Award finalist Ricardo Idagi from Murray Island in Queensland, for his work *Upi mop le – Tail end man*. Ricardo has used moving images inside a mask, to bring it to life and provide a glimpse into Ricardo's powerful personal experiences.

MAGNT Director Pierre Arpin congratulated all of the winning artists and the finalists in this year's Telstra Art Award for contributing outstanding pieces to this prestigious exhibition.

"I thank Telstra for its continued support of the Award, as well as the artists involved that increasingly build the reputation and recognition of Australian Indigenous artists in what is Australia's premier Indigenous art exhibition," Mr Arpin said.

"This has been a wonderful opportunity for me to be involved in the 28th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*, and I wish to thank everyone who has helped make this year's Telstra Art Award a fantastic exhibition."

Telstra Chief Customer Officer, Mr Gordon Ballantyne, echoed these sentiments congratulating artists for constantly pushing the boundaries and exploring new mediums to illustrate their culture and heritage.

"The works featured in this year's Award tell some wonderful stories and provide an opportunity for audiences to view the world from various artists' perspectives around Australia," Mr Ballantyne said.

"This year Telstra celebrates 20 years of supporting Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander artists through sponsorship of the Telstra Art Award – a milestone we're incredibly proud of."

Now in its 28th year, the Telstra Art Award is the longest-running art award dedicated to the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, and has come to be regarded as one of the premier national events in the Australian Indigenous art community.

The 28th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* judges were Dr Danie Mellor, Nici Cumpston and Judith Ryan.

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 6pm Thursday, 11 August 2011.

The 28th *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, 30 October 2011.

Ends

For media inquiries or to arrange interviews/photographs please contact:

Aimee Cadan
Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport
0437 915 366

Melanie Neilson
Javelin for Telstra
0400 599 463

Reminder: The announcement of the overall Telstra Award Winner and category winners is under strict embargo until 6pm CST/6.30pm EST, Thursday 11 August 2011.

Images from the media preview featuring winning artists with their works is available online by COB Thursday, 11 August 2011. Go to www.nt.gov.au/nreta/museums/mediaimages/, user ID: nretamag, password: tough1

Image: Dickie Minyintiri, *Kanyalakutjina (Euro tracks)*, synthetic polymer paint on canvas
Attachment: Judges' comments on the winning works of the 28th *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*.

The 28th *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.



Australian Government
Visual Arts and Craft Strategy
Northern Territory

