

14 August 2009

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 7pm CST/7.30pm EST, FRIDAY 14 August 2009**

## **ACT Artist Danie Mellor Wins National Telstra Art Award**

Canberra based artist Danie Mellor has been awarded Australia's prestigious Indigenous art prize – the national Telstra Art Award, at the **26<sup>th</sup> Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award** for his work titled *From Rite to Ritual*.

He was presented with the **\$40,000 Telstra Award** tonight by Professor Marcia Langton, Chair, Museums and Art Galleries Board of the Northern Territory, and Telstra Country Wide Group Managing Director, Brett Riley at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) in Darwin.

Measuring 2.07m x 1.54m the mixed media on paper artwork features intricate layers of imagery with Aboriginal people and Indigenous animals placed against a setting that is littered with elements of European culture.

*From Rite to Ritual* explores the encounter and fragile co-existence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous, or settler cultures. In this case the meeting place is the interior of a Freemason's lodge and the work highlights the importance of secret and public ceremony and initiation in both cultures; it speaks of the challenges of settlement, and the differences in spiritual enactment and belief.

Danie was born in Mackay, Queensland in 1971 and was educated in South Australia, South Africa, Canberra and England before completing his PhD at the School of Art, National Institute of the Arts, Australia National University.

Currently working as Lecturer of Theories of Art Practice at the University of Sydney, Danie's work had previously been highly commended in the *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* in 2003 and 2007.

In addition to the Telstra Award, prizes were awarded in four other categories:

**The \$4,000 Telstra General Painting Award** was awarded to Yinarupa Nangala from Kiwirrkurra in Western Australia for her untitled work. Yinarupa's painting depicts designs associated with the rockhole site of Mukula, east of Jupiter Well in Western Australia.

**The \$4,000 Telstra Bark Painting Award** was awarded to Rerrkirwanga Mununggurr from Wandawuy (East Arnhem Land) Northern Territory for her work *Gumatj Gurtha*. Rerrkirwanga's painting depicts her husband's Gumatj clan designs of sacred fire. Rerrkirwanga is the daughter of late Djapu clan elder Djutjadjuta Mununggurr, winner of the Telstra Bark Painting Award in the 14<sup>th</sup> *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*, 1997.

**The \$4,000 Telstra Works on Paper** was awarded to Glen Namundja from Gubalanya (Western Arnhem Land) Northern Territory for his work *Likkanaya and Marrayka*. The artwork is a representation of the *Yawkyawk* Dreamtime story about two sisters travelling through the country where *Ngalyod*, the Rainbow Serpent swallowed them whole.

**The \$4,000 Wandjuk Marika Three-Dimensional Memorial Award**, sponsored by Telstra, was awarded to Janine McAullay Bott from Perth for her work *Dhalkatj – Bilby*. Janine is a self-taught weaver whose work reflects her Noongar heritage as well as the animals and country of her ancestors.

MAGNT Director Anna Malgorzewicz congratulated all the winning Indigenous artists and entrants in this year's Telstra Art Award for their outstanding pieces.

"The Telstra Art Award is about the wonderfully talented Indigenous artists from around Australia, so congratulations to all of the 93 pre-selected artists for contributing to this prestigious exhibition and I wish them every success in their artistic careers," Ms Malgorzewicz said.

"I'd also like to thank everyone who has helped make this year's Telstra Art Award a fantastic opening event and exhibition, and Telstra for 18 years of continued sponsorship of this prestigious Award."

Telstra Country Wide Group Managing Director Brett Riley said the works from the 93 shortlisted Award entrants reflected the high quality Indigenous art being created across the country every year.

"I have been overwhelmed by the quality and artistic passion in these works. I would like to congratulate all the winners as well as every artist whose work is part of this outstanding collection. Telstra is proud to be supporting their artistic endeavours and helping them share their talent with the wider public.

"Telstra has been the major sponsor of the Telstra Art Award for the last 18 years. This support has recognised hundreds of Indigenous artists from across Australia and in addition to our sponsorship of the Award, Telstra has given \$500,000 directly in prize money to artists.

"Together with the \$2 million Telstra has invested over the past 12 months into a range of sporting, educational, artistic, philanthropic and business activities across the Territory, we remain committed to the future development of local communities," Mr Riley said.

Now in its 26<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup> *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* judges were Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Elizabeth Ann Macgregor and Curator of Indigenous Art at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Carly Lane.

Artworks in this year's exhibition will be featured on an interactive website [www.nt.gov.au/natsiaa](http://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 7pm CST Friday, 14 August 2009.

The 26<sup>th</sup> *Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award* will be on display at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory until Sunday, 25 October 2009.

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

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**Images from the media preview featuring winning artists with their works is available online from Friday, 14 August 2009. Go to [www.nt.gov.au/magnt/mediaimages](http://www.nt.gov.au/magnt/mediaimages), user ID: nretamag, password: tough1**

The 26<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



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Visual Arts and Craft Strategy  
Northern Territory

