

Media Release **No. 581**

For release 26 August 2014

CALL FOR ENTRIES IN 2015 GAB TITUI INDIGENOUS ART AWARD

Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal artists living locally are invited to enter the 2015 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award, the eighth showcase of works produced throughout the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area (NPA).

The Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award is an initiative of the Torres Strait Regional Authority's (TSRA) Culture, Art and Heritage Program.

TSRA Chairperson, Joseph Elu said the Award was established in 2008 and continues to present the only annual collection of contemporary artwork produced by artists in some of our nation's most remote communities, in the Torres Strait and NPA.

"The Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award presents a great opportunity to local artists wishing to increase their exhibition experience and exposure nationally," Mr Elu said.

"Through this process we aim to emulate the experience that artists would have if entering any professional Award or exhibition around the nation."

The Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award is judged by some of the nation's leading Indigenous curators, in consultation with local cultural advisors, and has launched many local emerging artists into the spotlight.

2014 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award winner, Vincent Babia, said entering the Award helped him prepare for the next stage of his career.

"Telstra (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award) next year I think!" said Mr Babia when asked whether he planned on entering any other awards in the future.

"It's helped me prepare for the next level."

Mr Babia, who took out first prize for his lino print, *Adhe Buiya*, works out of New Mapoon Art Centre in the NPA telling the stories of his ancestors through art and traditional dance.

"Our culture is passed down verbally through each generation, from our grandfathers and uncles in song, dance and through artwork," Mr Babia said.

"When I was small, I would sit with my grandfather and uncles and watch them carving and making apparatuses.

“My art tells the stories from the seven clans of Saibai Island, though I mainly focus on my clan, the crocodile clan, Ait Koedal.

“Most of the people from Saibai are traditionally head hunters; we are a warrior culture, strong and proud. Our dances and our art reflect this culture and I use our people’s totems when telling our stories, whether in painting, carvings or in dance.”

Mr Babia is currently working on pieces for the inaugural NPA Cultural Festival and the Cairns Regional Gallery. The National Museum of Australia also recently acquired his 2011 Award winning work (Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award, Best Cultural Artefact), *Sageraw Mawa*.

The winner of the 2015 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award will receive \$7,000 in prize money as well as the opportunity to have their work featured on the cover of the exhibition catalogue.

For more information or an entry form, contact the Gab Titui Cultural Centre on 07 4069 0888 or visit www.gabtitui.com.au. Visit the website to view a full interview with Vincent Babia.



2014 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award judges Franchesca Cubillo, Senior Advisor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, National Gallery of Australia/Chair, Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair Foundation; Alo Tapim and Vic McGrath



2014 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award Winner, Vincent Babia, with his work *Adhe Buiya*



Valda Sabatino (R) with Best Secondary School Entrant, Michealine Faud and her work *Sagerwazer*



Visitors to the 2014 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award opening night

Images: George Serras, National Museum of Australia

ENDS

TSRA Media Contact – Bruce Nelson 0423 403 449