

## Media Release No. 648

**Under embargo until 6pm Thursday 18 June**

### **2015 GAB TITUI INDIGENOUS ART AWARD WINNER ANNOUNCED**

Nancy Kiwat, represented by Erub Arts, has been named winner of the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award in opening night celebrations held at the Gab Titui Cultural Centre on 18 June.

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) Deputy Chairperson, Mr Aven Noah presented Ms Kiwat with the \$7,000 award for her ceramic work, *Ilan Pamle*, depicting her grandparents and cultural connections with Papua New Guinea.

Mr Noah congratulated Ms Kiwat, a first-time entrant in the Award, describing *Ilan Pamle* as an outstanding work and example of the high-quality being produced by emerging artists in the region.

“For nine years, the Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award has presented a grass-roots representation of works contributing to the national Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal arts industry,” Mr Noah said.

“Through Gab Titui, the TSRA is proud to continue to support artists in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area, at all stages of their practice, to develop and gain national recognition.”

*Ilan Pamle* was fired in Australia’s northern-most kiln at the Erub Art Centre on Erub in the eastern Torres Strait islands.

The piece has a strong connection to the island, using the medium of wood-fired ceramic to translate the significance of basalt rock and the volcanic nature of Erub.

The medium brings together elements of man, his land and sea together in an ancient craft, using deep-water seaweed to create individual markings during the twenty-one hour firing process.

Erub Arts Manager, Diann Lui, said Nancy is one of the art centre’s newest artists.

“Nancy is enjoying creating works across a range of new mediums,” Ms Lui said.

“Erub Arts give people who have always enjoyed making things a pathway to an artistic career.”

*Ilan Pamle* was selected from a field of 50 works submitted by artists throughout 14 remote communities in the Torres Strait by guest judge and celebrated artist, Destiny Deacon, and community cultural advisors Cygnet Repu and Lizzie Lui.

In addition to the Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award Winner, over \$11,000 in prizes was awarded in ten other categories:

**Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award Runner Up** was awarded to Bob Kaigey (Thursday Island) for his painting, *Apu Ra Ee*.

**Best Cultural Artefact** was awarded to the late John Dorante (KIRRIRI – Hammond Island) for his carving, *Warrior Dance*.

**Best Work on Paper** was awarded to Weldon Matasia of Badu Island Art (Badu Art Centre) for his lino print, *Seahorse*.

**Best Work on Canvas** was awarded to Tony Harry (Warraber Island) for his work, *Waru Paingerr Ya Alali* depicting the plight of marine life against stray fishing nets (ghost nets).

**Best 3D Work** was awarded to Jimmy K. Thaiday of Erub Arts (Erub Art Centre) for his wood-fired ceramic, *Gur Legiz*.

**Best Craft Work** was awarded to Lavinia Ketchell of Erub Arts (Erub Art Centre) for her handcrafted ghost net work, *GN Necklace*.

**Best Secondary Student Work** was awarded to Tanisha Seden (KIRRIRI – Hammond Island) for her painting, *Best Friends*.

**The National Museum of Australia (NMA) History Through Art Award** is a non-acquisitive prize sponsored by the National Museum of Australia that recognises artworks that best capture aspects of the histories of Torres Strait Islander lives and experiences. The 2015 Award is dedicated to the Late Ceferino Sabatino who is dual recipient of the NMA History Through Art Award and sadly passed away last year. The 2015 prize was awarded to Laurie Nona of Badu Island Art (Badu Art Centre) for his lino print, *Danalaigau Rangadhau Kab (Life's Journey Paddle)*, depicting a *Kab* (paddle) representing a vessel containing the traditional importance of cultural identity; the survival journey of an Islanders way of life.

**Highly Commended** awards were presented to Rosaline Tomsana (Kubin Community, Moa Island/Horn Island), Jimmy J. Thaiday (Erub Arts, Erub), Dennis Newie (St Paul's Community, Moa Island), Robert Meddy Kaigey (Mer Island), Taicee Pearson (Iama Island), and Abbie Pearson (Iama Island)

**Commended** awards were presented to Angela Torenbeek (St Paul's Community, Moa Island), Rion Savage (Masig Island), Kahtyjah Mola (Thursday Island), Maryann Bourne (Erub), Segar Passi (Mer Island), and Teleo Hope (Thursday Island)

Prizes were awarded in opening night celebrations that included performances by Badu Island's Aibai Sagulau Buai Dance Team and the opening of a new cultural maintenance exhibition, *Evolution: Torres Strait Masks*, co-curated by award-winning artist Alick Tipoti.

Mr Noah thanked Mr Tipoti and all Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award entrants for their support and participation in this year's exhibitions.

"We are privileged to have the support of artists like Mr Tipoti who, at the height of their practice, bring an unsurpassed level of cultural and artistic expertise to our exhibitions," Mr Noah said.

Community members can visit the 2015 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award exhibition until 21 August and *Evolution: Torres Strait Masks* for the remainder of the year.

Nominations are open for the Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award *People's Choice Award* until 10 July 2015 and can be made by visiting the Gab Titui Cultural Centre. The 2015 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award catalogue showcases the 50 works entered into the Award and is available to purchase from the Gab Titui Cultural Centre Gallery Shop for \$25.

**ENDS**

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**2015 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award Winner, Nancy Kiwat (Erub Arts), *Ilan Pamle*. Wood-fired ceramic 2015.**