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2016 GAB TITUI INDIGENOUS ART AWARD WINNER ANNOUNCED

Nancy Kiwat, represented by Erub Arts, has been named winner of the 9th annual Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award in opening night celebrations held at the Gab Titui Cultural Centre on 16 June.

Ms Kiwat took out the major prize with her large-scale ghost net sculpture, *Popa Dabad* depicting her ancestor, a tribal chief elder of the Meuram tribe.

This is the second consecutive win for Ms Kiwat, who also took out the major prize in the 2015 Award as the first female Indigenous Art Award winner.

2016 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award judge, Mr Bruce McLean, Curator of Indigenous Australian Art at the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art, described Ms Kiwat's work as one of the best human-form ghost net sculptures he had seen produced.

"In Nancy's work, the personally and nationally significant subject is imagined in a playful, yet poignant manner, allowing a wide range of viewers to engage with the important stories of the contact period in the Torres Strait," Mr McLean said.

Mr McLean praised all artists who entered the Award, which he described as totally unique in the current field of national art prizes.

"Apart from its focus on the distinctive cultures and visual traditions of the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area, the Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award's attention to cultural authenticity as well as any final aesthetic judgement makes it very much unlike any other award or prize that exists today," Mr McLean said.

"In this respect, I would like to convey my deepest gratitude to cultural advisors Aunty Elsa Day and Uncle Gabriel Bani. Their generous insights into the cultural, social and political stories and histories underpinning many of the artworks were absolutely invaluable."

Runner-Up in the 2016 Award went to Laurie Nona of Badu Art Centre whose lino-print on paper, *Aykuyk*, was described as significant of a strong singular icon, encoding an important cultural message within its body.

"In this work, the clarity of the artist's designs and understated simplicity help to clearly relay the cultural message," Mr McLean said.

Category winners were announced as:

Vincent Babia (Seisia/Saibai), Best Cultural Artefact for his warup (drum), *The Drum of Wakemab*;

Andrew Passi Senior (Mer), Best Two-Dimensional Work for his painting, *Tag Mauki-Mauki Teter Mauki-Mauki*;

Racy Oui Pitt (Erub Arts), Best Three-Dimensional Work for her ceramic sculpture, *Pellet*;

Wasie Tardent (Thursday Island), Best Craft Work for her coconut weaving, *Turtle and Rice*;

Teleo Hope (Thursday Island), Best Secondary Student Work for her etching, *Humans Collide with Nature to Create Culture*; and

The History Through Art Award, sponsored by the National Museum of Australia since 2011, was awarded to Maryann Bourne (Erub) for her ghost net weaving, *Au Gem Wali*. The Award recognises works that best capture aspects of the histories of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal lives and experiences and was awarded to Ms Bourne for her work that invites audiences to imagine the history of Torres Strait Islander women through the symbol of the island dress.

Visitors to the opening night were the first to see the new works and also enjoyed performances by Naygayiw Gigi Bamaga and Seisia Saibailgal Dance Team, who recently returned from the Festival of Pacific Arts in Guam.

The 2016 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award is on display in the Gab Titui Cultural Centre Wabunaw Geth Gallery until 28 July 2016.

For more information on the opening night and Award recipients visit www.gabtitui.com.au.

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TSRA Media Contact – Bruce Nelson telephone (07) 4069 0700



Nancy Kiwat, *Popa Dabad* 2016. Ghost net and twine. Winner 2016 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award.



Laurie Nona, *Aykuyk (Food Plant)* 2016. Lino print on paper. Runner-Up 2016 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award.