NT Indigenous visual artists open national art galleries

Eight internationally renowned Indigenous visual artists from across the Top End will this week attend the official opening of new gallery space at the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) in Canberra.

The Northern Territory Government has provided $10,000 to support the artists’ attendance and participation in the opening of 11 new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art galleries at the NGA.

Arts Minister Gerry McCarthy said that the NGA was one of the most significant investors in Northern Territory Indigenous visual art.

“This will be one of the most significant Indigenous visual arts showcasing events in Australia for 2010 and Territory artists are very well represented,” said Mr McCarthy.

“The NGA houses the largest permanent collection of Australian Indigenous art in the world with over 7000 works, of which 600 works will be on display in the new galleries.

“The opportunity to view artworks that are usually kept in storage will allow artists and audiences to reconnect with the arts and cultural practice of previous generations and to inform contemporary practice.

“The Territory Government is committed to supporting Indigenous artists and recognises the important role Indigenous art has in the Territory’s cultural identity.”

- Artists attending include: Richard Birrinbirrin and David Gaykamangu from Ramingining, John Mawurndjul and Owen Yalandja from Maningrida, Gali Yalkayirriwuy Gurruwirri and Jeremiah Bonson from Galiwin’ku, and Jean Baptiste Apuatimi and Maria Josette Orsto from Tiwi Islands.

- This week the artists will take part in a program of opening events including an Indigenous welcome, smoking ceremony, performances followed by a tour of the galleries and public artists’ talks to share stories about their art and their communities,

- Overseeing the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art galleries is NGA Senior Curator of Indigenous Arts, Franchesca Cubillo, former Senior Curator of Indigenous Art and Material Culture at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) and former curator of the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award (NATSIAA).

Official Opening: Thursday 30 September, 2010

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