

Aboriginal Art Awards and Exhibition

The School of Arts Hall came alive uncharacteristically early on Saturday, 25th June, for the opening ceremony of the Aboriginal Art Awards at 10.30am.

Bundjalung elder Aunty Agnes gave a Welcome, and Lismore mayor Merv King made an opening address. An evocative dance performance with didgeridoo followed the awards ceremony.

There were 120 entries on show, double the entries of last year, in this fourth year of the Awards, which travels around the region, offering cash prizes sponsored by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Entries came from all over the region, as well as from over the border, yet Nimbin artists won three of the six award categories.

The exhibition is being co-ordinated by Liz Johnson and Luke Close, whose work also included talks and presentations for school groups, funded by a grant from the ATSIA Board of the Australia Council, which was organised by the Nimbin School of Arts committee.

Committee chair David Hallett said, "This is a landmark event for the School of Arts, with over

200 people attending the opening, and many works sold."

MC for the Opening, Ashley Moran said, "It was great to see so many people at the opening, and it's been great to collaborate with the Nimbin School of Arts on this."

Judges for the Awards were Professor Judy Atkinson, Chair of Indigenous Australian Peoples at Southern Cross University, and Cath Fogarty of Northern Rivers Arts.

The quality of the painting entries was so high that the judges decided to introduce a new award within the Open category, the Gnibi Bundjalung Award, sponsored by SCU.

Awards were given in five categories:

- Open category (\$1,000), won by Burri Jerome, "Morning moon, Nimbin Rocks," oil on canvas.
- The inaugural Gnibi Bundjalung Award (\$500), won by Robert King, "Goanna Dreaming," acrylic on canvas.
- Sculpture (\$500), won by Garth Lena, "Man Goes," wood and ceramic.
- Collaborative Work (\$500), won by Paris Naday and Luke Close,



Seen at the Opening: Burri Jerome with Aunty Agnes (right), Professor Judy Atkinson (below left), "Scattered pipis," linocuts by Jackie Williams (below right). Pictures: Sue Stock



"Heart Evolution," digitally enhanced photographs of Luke's recovery from a heart attack.

- Youth (\$250), shared by Burri's two kids, Jali Rodriguez-Jerome "Rainbow Platypus," and Leilah Jerome, "Nimbin

Rocks," whose paintings quickly sold.

- People's Choice Award (\$250), decided by people attending the opening, won by Gilbert Laurie, "The Protector," acrylic on canvas.



this explanation, "Living culture to me is living landscape. The protection of sacred sites is the protection of humanity, the land and tradition. By the painting of sacred sites, I hope these elements are self-evident."

Congratulating all the

winners, David Hallett said what a good lead up to NAIDOC week the exhibition is. He added, "The committee is very keen to make this an annual event."

The exhibition is open daily until Sunday 17th July.

People of the Reeds

Blue Knob Hall Gallery
Exhibition News
from Aine



Seventy people gathered to hear a 'Welcome to Country' given by Bundjalung Elder Auntie Agnes at the Opening of "People of the Reeds" exhibition at Blue Knob Gallery on 22nd June.

Aunty Ag welcomed the twenty exhibitors from the Cabbage Tree Island Bunjum Arts & Crafts group, whose paintings and fabric art are on show until 31st July. In her talk Auntie Agnes mentioned her strong connections to Nimbin and her growing connection to the Blue Knob Gallery where she had an official role in the Gallery's Grand Opening last September. The program also included a Dance and Smoking Ceremony by Bundjalung Dancers and a talk by Digby Moran.

Cultural Ties

The Cabbage Tree Islanders' work gives insight into their lives on the gum-leaf-shaped island in the middle of the Richmond River, where a

community was founded more than a hundred years ago, and into the strength of their cultural ties. They pay particular tribute to the creatures of their land and water environments, and also bring many of their ancestral stories alive through imagery of cultural practices.

The textiles incorporate batik, silk-screen and dyeing processes in various combinations, resulting in unique pieces of art. The beautiful range of home-wares in one section of the installation includes tablecloths, curtains, blinds and lamps, some of them being collaborative works. Colour is used expertly and seductively to reflect the artists' natural and cultivated environment.

The paintings in the exhibition tell stories told to the artists by their elders and recall the memories they have of growing up on the island. Each of the artists has devel-

oped a unique style and colour sense through many years of exploration, dedication and commitment.

A strong connection to mother earth and to family is conveyed in the work, weaving connective threads through all the pieces.

Community Gallery

Blue Knob Gallery is happy to have this work included in their 2005 Exhibition Schedule and is interested in holding another exhibition of indigenous artists' work in the future. This is a community gallery run by volunteer artists who are dedicated to increasing the awareness and appreciation of art in the area. Artists' Talks are held at regular intervals at the gallery and all are welcome to attend.

The Blue Knob Hall Gallery is situated at 719 Blue Knob Road near the corner of Lillian Rock Road and is open Wed - Sun, 10am to 4pm. The Café, now under Gudren's management, is open till 6pm and has a delicious eat-in or take-away vegetarian lunch and dinner menu, coffee and cakes.

For more information please phone the Gallery on 6689-



Art on show: Part of the large crowd for the opening (above) and Aunty Agnes with Blue Knob Gallery director, Robyn Moore (below).

Inset: The colours of Mother Earth, by Stephen Sutor. Pictures: Sue Stock

