

## NT Arts Access Awards 2019

Good afternoon and welcome.

My name is Mary Jane Warfield, I am the Chairperson of Incite Arts.

I would like to acknowledge the Arrernte people on whose land we are holding this event and pay respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

I would like to thank Lord Mayor Ryan for agreeing to have the 2019 NT Arts Access Awards presented side by side with the Mayoral Awards. Thank you to the ASTC team and partners who have done such a fine job in organising today.

It is an honour to be here with you all and celebrate International Day of People with Disability.

(If it has not already been announced: Thank you to Anders Pfeiffer for audio describing this event today. We are proud to be able to provide this access for people with vision impairment)

I would like to present the NT Arts Access Awards with the help of Lord Mayor, Damian Ryan.

### ABOUT THE AWARDS:

The 2019 NT Arts Access Awards recognise the contributions of NT individuals, groups and organisations who have been working to improve accessibility in the creative arts for people with disability, across all genres of creative endeavor.

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The awards are a joint venture of Arts Access Darwin and Incite Arts and have been running since 2009. The awards celebrate NT based artists with disability, arts workers, support worker, community groups and organisations who have made an outstanding contribution through their creative practice.

I would like to make special note of the NT Arts Access Award for Outstanding Individual Artist: which in 2016 was named the ***Michele Castagna Award***. This award honours Michele's memory for now and the future and recognises Michele's outstanding contribution to Incite Arts in her role as Chairperson from 2007- 2014.

Along with her work with Incite Arts, including founding and leading Arts Access Central Australia 2004 – 2013. Michele received many awards and recognition Michele in her lifetime. Notably in 2016 she was awarded the NT Arts Access Award for Excellence in Inclusive Arts Practice. Michele has left an enormous and unique creative legacy for our NT arts and disability community and we thank you Michele.

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The NT Arts Access Award recipients are judged on the following criteria:

- Artistic merit and high-quality artistic outcomes;
- Community engagement, long service and ongoing contribution to accessibility in the NT.

This year's awards were judged by Meagan Shand the CEO of Arts Access Australia.

Arts Access Australia works to increase opportunities and access for people with disability as artists, arts-workers, participants and audiences. We would like to thank Meagan Shand for generously offering her time and expertise to judging this year's awards.

This year's awards are being held simultaneously in Darwin and Alice Springs. Award recipients from Darwin are receiving their awards as part of the Darwin City Council celebrations for International Day of People with Disability.

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## Now to this year's awards...

### THE MICHELE CASTAGNA INDIVIDUAL ARTIST AWARD

– Recognising an outstanding NT artist with disability.

**WINNER:** Patricia Higgins – **Darwin**

As part of Patricia's OT Therapy for her Parkinsons Disease she has taken up painting. This has helped her inspiration in creating various arts works. She has also produced a book about Cyclone Marcus which is aimed at kindergarten to year 2 level. Trish was diagnosed five years ago and still remains positive through her art.

## **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:** Abigail Maralngurra – Darwin

Abigail is a young indigenous visual artist. Abigail is an outstanding emerging artist, whose career has been taking great strides of late, earning her significant recognition in her field of practice.

As young artist just 2 years out of high school she has made significant developments, both in her skills as a painter and also of her conceptual development as a story teller.

Abi joined the Free Space Studio in Darwin in 2017, and has been working under the mentorship of artist and facilitator Dennis Bezzant.

Abi's next step is to apply to undertake VET subjects in Visual Arts at Charles Darwin University in 2020 alongside her studio practice at Free Space Studio.

Abi's work is largely biographical and depicts both herself and her family intertwined with her Beluen culture, dreamings and totems. Abigail's talent and hard work have led to her selection into several major exhibitions and projects between 2017 -19.

**ARTS WORKER CATEGORY** – recognizing individuals who have been instrumental in supporting the creative practices of artists with disability.

## **WINNER:** Tania Lieman - Darwin

Tania Leiman has worked as the creative producer of CemeNTworx Theatre at Darwin Community Arts since 2016.

Her theatre practice is dedicated to Community Arts and Cultural Development with a significant number of her projects focused on inclusion and access for theatre artists, spoken word artists and musicians with disability and lived experiences in mental health.

Her work spans skills development and professional development workshops, theatre productions as well supporting the solo practices of artists with disability.

The projects, productions and workshop programs which Tania has produced have contributed significantly to increased opportunities for NT artists with disability.

Significant Disability Arts Projects Include: CemeNTstars – Disability Theatre Program; CemeNTheads – A ten-month Mental Health drama classes and workshop series held annually to develop a theatre work to be performed in Mental Health Week; Disability Dance & Drama - Weekly drama, dance, movement and percussion workshops for people with disability with high support needs; and solo mentoring projects with John Scrutton, spoken word artist and Kyle Adams DJ, RAP and performing artist. John and Kyle both attended the 2018 Meeting Place in Alice Spring where they performed to a national audience.

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:** Sandra Brown - Alice Springs

Sandra Brown has been the Bindi Artists Art Coordinator for over 7 years, and provided unwavering support and commitment to the betterment of the artists service and supported employment for the Bindi Mwerre Mwerre Anthurre Artists.

Sandra has contributed significantly in the development between artists and key stakeholders of the art world, such as aligning artists with commercial galleries, art collectors, and taking artists and their work to the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, promoting their work through the successful annual Bindi Magic exhibition, and participating in one of Australia's most significant art events Desert Mob.

Sandra has provided guidance and been a constant for the nurturing and mentoring of artists in their personal and professional endeavours. She is a believer of equal rights and is a rock when it comes to providing what the people she supports need first. She works the hard yards in promotion and ethical arrangements and has endured trying times, yet remains committed to increasing opportunities for the artists.

**To accept the award – Sandra Brown**

## **LOCAL ARTS OR COMMUNITY ORGANISATION CATEGORY –**

recognising local Community Groups and Organisations for their contributions to increasing accessibility in the arts.

### **WINNER:** Incite Arts - Alice Springs

Incite Arts has been working in arts and disability in Alice Springs since 2004. In 2018, Incite partnered with Arts Access Australia, the peak national body for arts and disability, to deliver Meeting Place in Alice Springs. This was the fifth Meeting Place held in Australia, the first time it was held regionally and the first time in the NT.

This signature national event, brought together artists, artswriters and leaders from the arts and disability sector from across Australia, to build capacity and develop inclusive and accessible arts engagement in the NT.

The project raised participation rates and opportunities for people with disability to engage in the arts. This initiative reached into the NT to advance equality for Australians with disability as artists, arts workers, participants and audiences, through information, resources, research and advocacy.

Meeting Place 2018 provided a platform for NT artists with disability creative expression and allowed us to showcase the unique NT cultural voice in the arts and disability landscape to fellow Australians.

More than 70% of the speakers and artists involved in Meeting Place 2018 came from the Northern Territory.

Meeting Place 2018 was held at Araluen Arts Centre. It was audio described, Auslan interpreted, captioned and for those who could not attend in person, it was live streamed.

**To accept the award on behalf of Incite Arts – Virginia Heydon**

**PROJECTS** – for projects which have demonstrated outstanding leadership in accessible and inclusive arts practice

**WINNER:** Conway Ginger and the Fly, Bindi Mwerre Anthurre Artists - **Alice Springs**

In 2019 Bindi Mwerre Anthurre Artists produced a video project comprising an animation and a short "making of" documentary. *The Fly*, an animation based on the artworks of Conway Ginger, follows the day in the life of Central Australia's most ubiquitous outcast.

The animator, high school student Rory Rockchild was able to capture the whimsical nature of Conway's work while the absurd narrative mirrors his humour.

The animation *The Fly* premiered at 2019 Desert Mob Symposium alongside *Conway Ginger and the Fly*, a short documentary by David Nixon which captured the process and Conway's connection with the Bindi Mwerre Anthurre Art Studio. The project was a wonderful way to project Conway's kooky charm, which one glimpses through his work.

**To accept the award – Conway Ginger, Rory Rockchild and Bindi staff (and Dave Nixon?)**

**Projects HIGHLY COMMENDED:** Sounds Good to Me - **Alice Springs**

Incite Arts delivered of a pilot music program engaging local musician/mentors to collaborate with people with disability and people with mental health concerns living in Alice Springs in a regular, weekly workshop program.

This initiative offered new broad based participation and new opportunities for skills development and creative expression. The project ran over 2018 – 2019 with 40 participants in 2018 and 39 in 2019 with a total of 396 attendances.

Mentoring Artists were: Lucia Swift, Kristy Schubert and Xavia Nou.

Project Officers were: Philomena Hali and Emmeline Millward (2018) and Lauren Jones (2019).

Participant Groups were: Acacia Hill School; casa Incorporated Central Australia and Mental Health Association of Central Australia.

This pilot program successfully laid foundations for future art programs, including a program with students attending Acacia Hill School for Term 3 & 4 this year.

**To accept the award on behalf of Incite Arts – Lauren Jones**

**Projects HIGHLY COMMENDED** Who We Are - **Darwin**

Who We Are is a major group exhibition featuring artworks by 18 artists from the from the Free Space Studio

The exhibition haD wide reaching impact in generating exposure and professional outcomes for Darwin based visual artists with disability and for artistic excellence; which has been achieved through 3 iterations of the exhibition in 2018/19.

Who We Are was first exhibited as part of the 2018 Live Darwin Program, through support from Arts NT, where the exhibition was held at the Live Darwin Hub in Darwin City. The exhibition then traveled to Alice Springs where it was exhibited as part of the 2018 Meeting Place, bringing the exhibition to a national audience. In 2019 a condensed version of Who We Are has been curated into the City of Darwin's Citylife Platform, Lightbox Exhibition Series located at 4 locations around Darwin.

Thank you everyone.