

# JOHN FRIES AWARD 2016

## ::: MEDIA RELEASE :::

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### Indigenous artists encouraged to enter emerging art award

With the first-ever win by an Aboriginal artist – [65-year-old Ben Ward from WA](#) - of the \$10,000 John Fries Award last year, the organisers are keen to receive even more entries from Indigenous Australian and New Zealand artists for the 2016 award, which has just opened for entries.

Artists need to submit five images of recent work to enter the competition, which is run annually by artists' rights organisation, the Copyright Agency | Viscopy. Shortlisted artists can work with the award's curator and judge to create their final exhibition work.

Curator [Oliver Watts](#) wants to work closely with regional art centres and Indigenous curators to help find and uncover the next wave of talent.

"The John Fries Award is really about a providing platform of discovery. It gives emerging artists the chance to gain first-hand experience of working with a curator, become better networked with others in the industry and have their work seen by thousands of people through an exhibition and online gallery.

"This kind of exposure will help open doors to future opportunities," he says.

Indigenous finalists over the years have included [Jason Wing](#), [Serena Bonson](#), [Beryline Mung](#), [Alair Pambegan](#), [Pauletta Kerinauia](#) and [Kitty Malarvie](#), all of whom have used the opportunity to grow their careers through gallery sales and exhibitions.

"The John Fries Award team is proud to have such a strong history of Indigenous work in the exhibition and we have been happy to see these artists leverage the award to greater success," Watts says.

"Indigenous art has an incredibly important place in the contemporary art scene. In the global age, Indigenous art is an exciting and vital challenge to Western orthodoxies.

"Post-colonial art, of which Indigenous art played a major part, is often about displacement and migration, but I am also interested in the very nature of Indigeneity, and its particular relationship to place and time.

"We are interested in how Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Maori artists see the world, with issues and influences that are happening to them right now."

This year, the entry conditions call for five images that demonstrate the artist's developing practice in their chosen discipline over the past three years.

The John Fries Award is open for entry now and closes at **12 noon on Monday, 22 February**. All finalists' entries feature in an exhibition from 20 August to 1 October 2016 at [UNSW Galleries at UNSW Art & Design](#) – the award's presenting partner for the third year running.

This continued partnership outlines both Copyright Agency | Viscopy and UNSW Art & Design's desire to build a professional and resilient creative economy through recognising outstanding talent in the emerging arts sector.

The award's \$10,000 prize money has been donated by the Fries family in memory of former Viscopy director and honorary treasurer, John Fries, who made a remarkable contribution to the life and success of Viscopy.

### **About Copyright Agency | Viscopy**

Viscopy was set up by artists for artists in 1995. Today, Copyright Agency | Viscopy advocates for artists' copyright and provides services that ensure artists are fairly rewarded for the reproduction of their work by issuing licences and collecting fees on their behalf. In doing so, we aim to help build a more resilient creative economy where new artistic expression is valued and artists are acknowledged and financially rewarded for their work.

### **PHOTOS**

High resolution photos of previous winner Ben Ward and his 2015 winning entry, *Our Country* can be provided on request. Interviews with Curator Oliver Watts and Ben Ward can also be arranged on request.

### **CONTACTS**

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