



***Two paintings win 2023 Aboriginal art prize***

Two exquisite paintings have tied for first prize in the 2023 CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes Aboriginal Art Competition.

Artists Raymond Thorpe of Forbes and Pamela Bugmy of Dubbo have both been named winners and will each receive the \$2000 first prize.

Mr Thorpe's painting *Trackers* and Ms Bugmy's painting *God's Country* were two of 14 stunning entries this year.

The competition was judged by Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green, CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes chief executive officer Anne-Marie Mioche and Red Bend Catholic College visual arts teacher Tracie Axton.

In the intricate *God's Country*, Ms Bugmy depicted her hometown, Wilcannia.

Mr Thorpe's *Trackers* is an impressive artwork of more than one square metre in area.

"The winners bring you out to another level, a spiritual level, they draw the viewer into both of those paintings, and that's one of the things I think is really, really powerful that I'm not just an objective viewer, I get drawn into the actual artwork," Bishop Macbeth-Green said.

The judges were impressed by the depth of talent displayed in the competition.

"The entries were so strong that we had to have two first place winners this year, and I think apart from the beauty of the actual paintings, the symbolism in both of those was really powerful," Ms Mioche said.

"One is called *God's Country*, and the symbolism, particularly the link between Aboriginal spirituality and Christianity in that painting is just amazing.

"*Trackers* is the six seasons and a father and son tracking during those six seasons, so that's really beautiful as well, it teaches us something about Aboriginal culture."

Ms Axton remarked on the use of colour and said she enjoyed the symbolism of the artwork.

"I can understand it's trackers, because I can actually follow the journey that they've created in *Trackers*," she said.

Second prize of \$1500 was won by Carmen Hutchison of Cobar with *Swim (Bambinya)*.

Third prize of \$500 was won by Mark Curry of Wilcannia with *Old Man Roo*.

The judges awarded a special junior prize of \$250 to Hannah Thorpe of Forbes for her painting, *Seasons*.

The 14 entries came from a diverse range of locations across the Catholic Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes, which spans 52 per cent of NSW.

**Ends.....**

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