



Desert People's Choice Award announced as the 2026 Vincent Lingiari Art Award comes to close

Presented by [Desart](#) and the [Central Land Council](#), the fourth iteration of the Vincent Lingiari Art Award has concluded on a record-breaking note.

This year's award celebrated the 50th anniversary of the passing of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NT) 1976 through the exhibition theme *Our Country, Our Culture: 50 Years of Land Rights*. For the first time, the award coincided with the opening of one of the country's most significant Aboriginal art events, [Desert Mob](#), which saw thousands attend in an artist-led celebration of desert art and culture.

Featuring 56 artworks by 58 artists from across the CLC region and the Desart Art Centre membership, the award honoured the legacy of Vincent Lingiari, the Wave Hill Walk-Off and the struggle for land rights across the widest range of media submitted to date.

In 2026, the award offered a \$10,000 major prize to the most outstanding artwork in the exhibition, the CLC Delegates' Choice Award of \$2,000 and the Desert People's Choice Award of \$2,000.

Elizabeth Ngwarraye Bonney of [Artists of Ampilatwatja](#) won the major prize for her painting, [My grandmother's country](#) 2025, and Joseph Williams Jungarrayi of [Nyinkka Nyunyu Art & Culture Centre](#) won the CLC Delegates' Choice Award for his painting [Three Brothers](#) 2025, as announced on the opening night of Desert Mob on 10 September.

Across the exhibition period, thousands of people visited the Araluen Arts Centre to view the exhibition with hundreds casting their vote for the Desert People's Choice Award. Votes were also submitted online with all exhibitive works receiving a vote, reflecting the extraordinary calibre of works submitted.

Desart and CLC are proud to announce that **Margaret Kngwarray Long** of [Utopia Art Centre](#) has won the Desert People's Choice Award for her painting, [Arnkerrth](#) 2026 which depicts Arnkerrth, the Mountain Devil - her mother's Dreaming from her country, Atnangkerr. Stretching 211 x 151 cm, Margaret's extraordinary work has also been reserved by the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

Desart and CLC congratulate all finalists of the 2026 award.

Quote attributable to CLC Chair, Warren Williams:

"Never before have so many people visited a Vincent Lingiari Art Award exhibition, never before have so many artists entered such high quality works and never before have so many of their works sold. We are very grateful to everyone involved for this unique chance to raise awareness of what has been achieved in half a century of land rights."



Quote attributable to Philip Watkins, Chief Executive Officer, Desart:

“Desart is proud to have partnered with the Central Land Council to present the 2026 Vincent Lingiari Art Award. My congratulations go to all artists and their respective Art Centres whose work continues to share powerful stories of Country, culture and identity. The Award has provided an important opportunity to come together as a community and reflect on the 50th anniversary of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, recognising the enduring significance of land rights, connection to Country and the ongoing strength of Aboriginal culture and communities.”

Quote attributable to Kelli Cole, Curator, Vincent Lingiari Art Award:

“It has been a privilege to curate the 2026 Vincent Lingiari Art Award, which attracted record entries and presented its largest exhibition to date. The exceptional artworks reflect the strength and diversity of Central Australian artistic practice, with several acquired by national institutions. I am proud to have worked alongside Desart and the Central Land Council, presenting the award within Desert Mob. Congratulations to the participating art centres and, above all, the artists.”

Ends.

Images for media use available [HERE](#). Please refer to document for image crediting and captions.

Vincent Lingiari Art Award 2026 Winners:

\$10,000 Major Prize

My grandmother's country 2025

Elizabeth Ngwarraye Bonney

Artists of Ampilatwatja

\$2,000 CLC Delegates Choice Award

Three Brothers 2025

Joseph Williams Jungarrayi

Nyinkka Nyunyu Art & Culture Centre



\$2,000 Desart People's Choice Award

Arnkerrth 2026

Margaret Kngwarray Long

Utopia Art Centre

ABOUT DESART

Desart is the peak art body for Central Australian Aboriginal Art Centres. Established in 1992, incorporated in 1993, the association now counts over 30 independently governed Aboriginal Art Centres representing 8000 artists. Desart is governed by a 10-member Aboriginal Executive Committee elected from the membership regions and currently employs seven staff, servicing a membership area of 1.221 million square kilometres.

ABOUT THE CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

The CLC is a Commonwealth corporate entity established under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. It has statutory responsibilities for Aboriginal land acquisition and management in the southern half of the Northern Territory. Of the 780,000 square km of land covered by the CLC region, more than half is unalienable Aboriginal freehold land. Through its elected representative council of 90 community delegates, the CLC represents the interests and aspirations of approximately 24,000 traditional landowners and other Aboriginal residents.