



TONY ALBERT WINS \$100,000 BASIL SELLERS ART PRIZE

BY DAILY REVIEW 25 JULY 2014-07-31

Tony Albert has won the 2104 annual \$100,000 [Basil Sellers Art Prize](#) for his work *Once upon a time ...* (2013-14, pictured above).

The award was announced today at the host gallery, the Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne, where the work is on display with the other 15 prize finalists until October 26. Albert's work is a painted red target with 23 small framed works including watercolours, photographs, collage, and

small of found objects including toys, blocks and figurines. The work is introduced by a typed letter by Albert to fellow indigenous artist paying tribute to Bennett's work.

The prize was begun in 2008 by philanthropist Basil Sellars, a former basketball player and businessman who now lives in France, and who wanted to break down the barrier between art and sport.

Potter director Kelly Gellatly said in a statement: "The winning work, *Once upon a time* deals with the ongoing issue of racism in sport, and by implication, Australian society more broadly, and has at its heart the recent controversy surrounding the crowd abuse directed towards AFL player Adam Goodes (Goodes plays for the Sydney Swans, is a dual Brownlow medallist, and is the 2014 Australian of the Year). Within the suite of intimately scaled works comprising the overall installation is a delicate watercolour of the now iconic moment in 1993 when former Kilda footballer Nicky Winmar lifted his guernsey and pointed proudly at this black skin after enduring racial abuse during a match against Collingwood. The separation of these two incidents by over 20 years, along with the collective imagery of Albert's playful, yet deceptively powerful work, highlights the fact that as a society, we have a long way to go in both confronting and dealing with these issues.

"Judges commended *Once upon a time* for its bravery and poetry, and for the fact that it tackles such a difficult and emotive issue in sport and Australian culture without being didactic or heavy-handed. The work is neither a lesson nor a sermon, and provides no answers, but instead creates a contemplative space that encourages the audience to think about these issues in a way that engenders a sense of hope, and of the possibility of change. It also highlights the way in which sport can be a positive forum in which to both air and tackle difficult subjects. Issues such as racism will no doubt continue to arise and to confront, but the very public nature of sport ensures that it provides a platform on which to air, discuss and debate these issues rather than pretend that they don't exist."

The other 2014 finalists are: Narelle Autio, Zoe Croggon, Gabrielle de Vietri, Ivan Durrant, Shaun Gladwell, Richard Lewer, William Mackinnon, Rob McHaffie, Noel McKenna, Rob McLeish, Fiona McMonagle, Raquel Ormella, Khaled Sabsabi, Jenny Watson, and Gerry Wedd.

This year's judging panel included Elizabeth Ann Macgregor OBE, Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Kelly Gellatly, Director of the Ian Potter Museum of Art; Robert Cook, curator of modern and contemporary photography and design at the Art Gallery of Western Australia; Michael Hawker AM, distinguished businessman and a veteran of 25 Australian rugby test matches and now Chairman of Australian Rugby Union; and Dr Chris McAuliffe, consultant for the Basil Sellers.