



Aly de Groot, Lucky - The Patron Saint for All Things Protected (detail), fishing line, crocodile skull, wire and fishhook, 22 x 175 x 18cm. Courtesy: the artist and Togart Contemporary Art Award, Darwin

25 September 2013 | Noted fibre artist Aly de Groot is the winner of the Togart Contemporary Art Award for 2013. She was awarded the \$15,000 non acquisitive prize for her intricate ghostnet weaving piece *Lucky - The Patron Saint for All Things Protected*.

The winning work was inspired by de Groot's post as artist in residence at the Territory Wildlife Park (just south of Darwin) during 2012. She stated she "was fortunate enough to have an unlikely love affair with their ridiculously handsome resident four metre long crocodile, known affectionately as Graham." Also motivating this piece was the fact that crocodiles are one of the few water-dwelling creatures in the Northern Territory that are a protected species.

The judging panel comprised Fiona Salmon, director of both Flinders University of Art Museum and the city gallery, and Lisa Slade, project curator at the Art Gallery of South Australia. They stated, "the combination of whimsy, potency and material resolution" drove their decision in awarding de Groot's work the prize.

The Togart Contemporary Art Award is now in its eighth year. It is open to all artists who base their practice in the northern regions of Australia or whose work demonstrate a strong connection to the region.

This year, a record 46 artists were shortlisted for the award (25 Indigenous and 21 non-indigenous artists). The exhibition of finalists is on display at Chan Contemporary Artspace in Darwin until 18 October 2013.