

**MEDIA RELEASE - LOTL**  
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## **ARTISTIC BENT IN THE MOUNTAINS**

The Blue Mountains to the west of Sydney has long been known as a refuge where artists of all persuasions escape the pressures of the city to enjoy the freedom to express their creativity. However, living away from the metropolis does have some drawbacks.

Just over 7 years ago, three lesbian artists living in the Blue Mountains were frustrated that in such a renowned creative community, the opportunities for exhibiting work were few and far between. In a stroke of inspiration, the women turned their frustration into action and the bentART annual exhibition was created.

“The formation of bentART was a wonderful example of women creating something positive and empowering and providing an opportunity for lesbian and gay artists to show their artwork” says Julie Martin, the current president of bentART. She notes that “At the same time as providing an outlet for artistic expression, bentART also increases the visibility of queer art in the wider community.”

Indeed bentART has been so successful in increasing awareness, the exhibition, now in its 7<sup>th</sup> year, is now open to GLBT artists all around Australia, with this year’s prize pool being a record \$5,900. BentART is able to offer this prize pool through the generosity of its local and regional sponsors. This year “we are honoured to have a wonderfully talented judging panel, composed of Dr Anthony Bond (Director of Curatorial Services at The Art Gallery of New South Wales), Robyn Nolan (artist and joint owner of the Nolan on Lovel Gallery in Katoomba) and Ingrid Haydon (academic & artist )” Julie commented.

Past bentART exhibitions have allowed emerging and established lesbian artists to exhibit their work in a welcoming and inviting forum. Emerging lesbian artist Valerie Ingham, for example, has won the Peoples’ Choice award for three years running. Ruth le Cheminant an established professional artist with a long history of solo and group exhibitions both in Australia and internationally is a regular contributor to bentART.

**When:** Opening, Friday June 10 at 6.30 pm-9pm, Sat & Sunday June 11 & 12 10-5pm, Monday June 13 10-4pm.

**Where:** Wentworth Falls School of Arts, GWH Wentworth Falls.

Also running on the long weekend is the LGBT 3 Sisters’ disco in Blackheath (Sat. Night) and the costume Ball on the Sunday night (see [www.pinkmountains.com.au](http://www.pinkmountains.com.au))

**FOR MORE bentART INFORMATION & ENTRY FORMS GO TO [www.bentart.com.au](http://www.bentart.com.au)** Please contact Julie Martin on 02 4757 2274 or 041 047 5744 or email [info@bentart.com.au](mailto:info@bentart.com.au) with any inquiries.