

Limkokwing lecturer wins BTC competition

By Leungo Rakgati

GABORONE - The pieces were all neatly done and about 59 local artists submitted their artworks, but in the final analysis, Nyalalani Smarts was adjudged the best 2010 Botswana Telecommunications Corporation (BTC) telephone book designer.

Smarts, a lecturer at Limkokwing University, walked away with the P20 000 cash prize. Smarts told BOPA that this was the second time he had entered the competition and was happy that this time around he emerged the winner.

He said since the theme of the competition was to come up with something to do with communication that is culturally related, he decided to draw a sketch of the traditional game, morabaraba with its pieces icons of communication showing the web on top. Smarts explained that through the initiatives like this the arts in Botswana are developing and they can also pride themselves that they can now compete against those emanating from the artists from other countries.

He applauded the BTC and the Thapong Visual Arts for affording them this opportunity. BTC, in conjunction with Thapong Visual Arts Centre organised the competition in July and artists were invited to submit their entries for the design of the 2010 phone book cover.

The competition was only open to citizen artists who are also members of the Thapong Visual Art Centre. The objective of the competition was to address the challenge of working to see art attracting the recognition it deserves and being promoted locally and also to give the local artists the opportunity to express their creative ability by coming up with a design cover page for 2010.

Entrants were called upon to submit artistic pieces entailing media, graphic design, photography, painting, print or drawing and the phonebook cover was to reflect on the BTC group such as be Mobile and Botsnet.

According to the BTC Group General Manager-Commercial, Mr Loic Descamps, this is the second time the competition was run through Thapong Visual Arts Centre and there has been a significant increase in the submissions reflecting the quality of work. Mr Descamps said BTC is honoured that through the support of its clients it is able to run such a competition and be an active partner in the development of art in Botswana.

He noted that the artists and their works are often viewed with skepticism and not seen as professional and contributing to the economy, but with this gesture, BTC wants to change that perception and show that the art industry is indeed growing and needs continued support in order for it to further develop.

He said besides contributing to the economy, visual arts not only brings out people's cultural identity, they bring joy as art speaks to people in different ways and adds to their lives.

BTC also donated P20 000 to Thapong Visual Arts Centre for their contribution. When receiving the cheque, the Coordinator of the Centre, Mr Reginald Bakwena thanked the BTC for helping to develop contemporary art in Botswana. He said through initiatives such as this, art is promoted and thus making it get the recognition it deserves. BOPA

DAILY NEWS (23 November 2009)