



AUCKLAND FINALISTS TWIST ART AND FASHION FOR THE MONTANA WORLD OF WEARABLE ART™ AWARDS SHOW

Shoulder pads, Cliff Whiting, feathers, Colin McCahon, big hair, Bill Culbert and light changing suits are some of the ideas behind the Auckland finalists selected for the 21st Montana* World of WearableArt™ (WOW®) Awards Show.

"The Montana WOW® Awards Show blurs the lines between art and fashion - we always have a judge from both fields, and it seems a global recession has set many people's creative spirits alight with fresh ideas," according to WOW® Founder Suzie Moncrieff. The judges were highly impressed with the array of innovative entries this year, she said.

Designers are challenged to create something original, which has impact on a 40-metre arena stage and can withstand detailed inspection. The 2009 panel of judges have selected 165 garments from the UK, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, India, the Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, the USA, Canada and New Zealand. Out of these, 14 entries are from Auckland.

Winner of the 2006 Montana WOW® Supreme Award and 2008 CentrePort 'Inspired By Architecture' Section, Rodney Leong, has created a three piece ensemble, *AM I I AM* based on one of Colin McCahon's famous paintings *Victory Over Death 2*, which questions faith and strength. The Trelise Cooper pattern maker has transformed acrylic sheeting into an illusion of flicking through books on svelte black dresses and says, "it's a statement about one's self - living with the fear of doubt." (see attached image of Leong's 2008 winning entry *Conversations With Guggenheim*.)

Memories of her great grandmother's call to the Kotuku is what inspired Ponsonby artist, Hannah Jensen to create her garment, *Te Kotuku Rerenga Tahī*, along with her neighbour Terri Patrickson. The contemporary feathery creation took eight months to piece together and symbolises the sacredness of the creature. "I often use birds in my art and wanted to celebrate the Kotuku's rarity and elegance, creating awareness of it through a different medium," says Jensen.

Big hair, shoulder pads and the power suit are back in fashion, and Frances Valintine has produced a big shouldered suit out of discarded upholstery fabric, a shower curtain, leather and felt. The Manurewa consultant believes the survivors of the current recession will be "the ones who can pull off a convincing act," and the suit comes complete with stomping boots and a hefty hat.

Emma Jane Highfield collaborated with her husband, Steven Shalfoon for the first time to create *Betty And The Misbehaving Bees*, where Betty's fabulously high hair-do is mistaken for a hive by a swarm of bees. The colourful, humorous entry will come alive on stage in the CentrePort Illumination Illusion® Section.

Marilyn Manson's lyrics, "She is ... a doll, a prize, re-wired to be controlled, evidence that even sweet innocence can be mechanised," inspired Auckland student, Ellie James, to create *Mechanical Bride*, a little dress made from circuit boards which will swivel heads at any urbane cocktail party.

A local retirement village in Howick contributed most of the materials for Melody Brook's creation, *The Valkyrie War Maiden*, as it's made out of used tea bags! The Auckland housewife confesses her Bernina suffered from TDS (Tea Dust Syndrome) in the construction of the garment, where hundreds of bags were dried then stitched together to make an ethereal garment, inspired by the fountain statue of Valkyrie in the Auckland War Memorial grounds.

Another husband and wife team, Dinah and Mark Walker, have created a captivating male suit out of venetian blinds, inspired by the 1970's artist Bill Culbert and his stunning use of light. The piece is designed to "bring the full spectrum of colour to the dull and boring suit." The Walkers were commended in the 2007 Shell Man Unleashed® Section.

Cliff Whiting's amazing talent to produce traditional designs using modern materials inspired Judith Keith to fashion a garment into a giant tiki using glass beads which will take to the stage in the Air New Zealand South Pacific Section. The Auckland housewife had to hand sew and knot together approximately 60,000 beads to make *Tiki Touring*, - a glamorous cross country outfit, and a terrific juxtaposition of traditional and bling!

Amy Craven, winner of the 2007 Shell Tertiary Student Design Award, has created a poignant garment with her mother Maureen Craven, *Merchant Men*, in memory of her grandfather and great grandfather - who both became seamen, risking life and limb to provide for their families. "As mother and daughter we worked together to tell the story of two men, respective grandfathers we never knew but now know and respect through the family links that bind us," explains the Auckland film and television costumer maker (see attached image of Amy's winning 2007 entry, *Genetically Modified, Bio Mechanical*).

Every designer lovingly hands over their garment when entering the Montana WOW® Awards Show and how that piece is interpreted and brought to life in the two hour spectacular interwoven with every facet of performance, from music, dance, lighting, theatre and comedy, is what makes the show so unique every year.

The line up of high calibre judges for 2009 are British born, Associate Royal Sculptor Max Patte, fashion designer and businesswoman, Annah Stretton, and Suzie Moncrieff. Oscar winning film-maker, Richard Taylor of WETA Workshop will judge the WETA Award for the garment that best crosses the boundaries of film and WearableArt™.

"My expectations were blown out of the water," says Max Patte, who is currently working at WETA Workshop in Wellington. "I was amazed - really, really impressed. The diversity and standard of entries should ensure a knockout show."

Limited tickets are available for this year's show on-line at www.worldofwearableart.com. The show is poised to be another extravaganza with special nightly performances from the comedy duo, the Topp Twins, from 24th September to 4th of October at the TSB Bank Arena.

*Montana Wines from New Zealand are avid supporters of creativity, and are the naming partner of the WOW® Awards Show.

Described as, "a rebellion against the mundane", the Montana World of WearableArt™ Awards Show bends traditional perceptions of both art and fashion by choreographing garments into an extravaganza that blasts all the senses and uplifts the spirit. Esteemed BBC correspondent Michael Peschardt said, after seeing the 2008 show, "I've seen major cultural and fashion shows around the world and this is unlike anything I've ever witnessed before."

For further information, including imagery from previous shows, please refer to the on-line media room at www.worldofwearableart.com or e-mail media@worldofwearableart.com

** Footer:*

When publishing content please ensure you refer to the show as the Montana World of WearableArt™ Awards Show which can then be truncated to the Montana WOW® Awards Show. Please also ensure you publish the correct names for sections and awards ie: the Air New Zealand South Pacific Section.