



ICONIC AUSTRALIAN LANDMARKS AND EVENTS USED IN MONTANA WORLD OF WEARABLEART™ AWARDS SHOW ENTRIES THIS YEAR

Dreamtime at Ayers Rock, the Sydney Opera House and Melbourne bushfires are just some of the ideas behind the Australian finalists selected for the 21st Montana* World of WearableArt™ (WOW®) Awards in Wellington, New Zealand.

Co-winner of the 2007 Wellington International Award, Felicity Hardy created her 2009 garment, *Nature's Fury* after the tragedy of the Melbourne bushfires. The costume designer explains, "Our land and animals were devastated by bushfires. Our trees: ancient myrtle beech and giant mountain ash, the providers of shelter and oxygen were also consumed, plus people burnt in their homes. So much perished in the path of the inferno." The garment has hand painted imagery from newspaper clippings around the base with a blazing staff to demonstrate the ferocity of the fire and sun. (see attached image of Hardy's 2007 winning entry *The Countess and Her Cousin: A Self Portrait*, made with Lynn Johnston.)

"The stories behind each entry are often just as inspiring as the garment itself," says Suzie Moncrieff, WOW® Founder and Director. "And sometimes calamities/tragedies - which resonate with so many people - help inject powerful emotion into a piece of art."

Described as, "a rebellion against the mundane", the Montana WOW® Awards Show is a prestigious arts event on the international design, fashion and costume calendars. Long running BBC correspondent Michael Peschardt was blown away 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."

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 Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, India, the Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, the USA, the UK, Canada and New Zealand, which will all grace the stage in September and October in Wellington, New Zealand. A quarter of the international finalists are from Australia.

Sadhana Peterson from the Blue Mountains has created a dancing personification of the Sydney Opera House in her garment, *Opera Diva*. Entered into the Gen-i Creative Excellence Section with the theme 'Fold', the artist experimented with three different materials before settling on violin strings and handmade paper to create her graceful piece. "It views the body as a landscape and the building as a costume," says Peterson, "and refers to white architecture on indigenous land."

Arachnophobia was the surprising catalyst behind Kelly Kuipers elegant garment, *Fear Of A Thousand Eyes*. The Melbourne dressmaker set herself the challenge to hand craft 125 spiders - each with eight eyes and eight legs - in the hope of mastering her phobia. The costume took over 120 hours and is also a representation of the fear of being judged, "As a designer it can be intimidating to launch new designs and ideas," says Kuipers. (see attached image of *Paint By Numbers* made by Kelly Kuipers in 2008.

The versatility of the little cable tie, which has saved many a back-stage moment of despair, is what set Catriona Mole on her journey to make *Pretty Fly For A Cable Tie* out of hundreds of them. Whilst researching her piece, the Victoria designer was amazed to find a cable tie club website, exciting a profusion of fans with her entry.

Black cockerel and golden pheasant feathers from Tamworth helped Glenys Mann "take her dream and turn it into a reality" in her sophisticated tribal garment *Raitzeilea*, where the head of a cockerel swings decadently as a necklace. (see attached image of *Shania* Mann made with David Scanlon in 2008.

Dreamtime and the myths around Ayers Rock (Uluru) inspired Colleen Weste from Mt Macedon to create her garment *The Rock-Heart of The Dreaming*. The silk/shibori artist and costume tutor fashioned her piece during an artist's residency at Uluru, where the azure sky and red earth weaved its way into her dreamy creation made out of silk, velvet and beads.

Sootie Barczak, a costumer designer from Victoria, was fascinated with pirate ships in Australian waters during the 18th century. Her entry *The Ghost Ship* was created out of calico and canvas and features an intricate hand made pirate ship nestled in a wig.

The line up of high calibre judges for 2009 are British Associate Royal Sculptor Max Patte, New Zealand fashion designer and businesswoman, Annah Stretton, and Suzie Moncrieff. Oscar winning film-maker Richard Taylor of WETA Workshop will judge the Special 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 New Zealand. "I was amazed - really, really impressed. The diversity and standard of entries should ensure a knockout show."

There is nothing quite like the Montana WOW® Awards Show for designers and artists to showcase their creativity, where their selected garments are brought to life in a theatrical extravaganza entwined with every facet of performance: music, dance, lighting, drama and comedy. The Montana WOW® Awards Show is set to thrill again with an incredible array of garments made from a plethora of weird and wonderful things, beginning Thursday September 24 at the TSB Bank Arena in Wellington - New Zealand's creative capital.

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

New Zealand's Montana World of WearableArt™ Awards Show bends traditional perceptions of both art and fashion by cleverly choreographing garments into an extravaganza that blasts all the senses and uplifts the spirit. Simon Ungless,

Director of Graduate Fashion from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco said, "It's the most important event I have seen in years. I am always looking for something new, and felt I was witnessing the phoenix rise from the flames of fashion, in the creativity and energy that is WOW®."

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