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RECESSION AN INSPIRATION FOR 2009 MONTANA WORLD OF WEARABLEART™ ENTRIES

Creative juices have been flowing around the country according to Suzie Moncrieff, WOW® founder, who is getting ready to judge the 21st Montana World of WearableArt™ Awards' entries this weekend. "History has proven that innovation always springs from tough times and that's come through with the calibre of entries this year," says Suzie.

Alongside Suzie, the line up of judges who will meet in Nelson tomorrow are: British born, sculptor Max Patte and fashion inspiration and businesswoman, Annah Stretton. Oscar winning film-maker, Richard Taylor joins the judges at second judging in September to decide the Weta Award. The judges will embark on the difficult task of deciding which garments, from a selection of almost 300, will make it to the catwalk in September.

"The first round of judging is going to be exciting as people have really embraced creatively recycling materials," says Heather Palmer, Competition Director. "We've received garments made from old cricket pads, wet suits, inner tubes, mussel shells, mattress springs and even used tea bags!"

Every year WOW® selects a judge from both the art and fashion worlds to ensure the winning garments are truly outstanding examples of WearableArt™.

Annah Stretton is one of New Zealand's well-loved fashion designers, producing evocative, feminine collections for the past sixteen years. Her unique flair is a staple at both New Zealand and Australian fashion week and she currently stocks throughout Australasia, the USA, the UK and parts of Europe. But that's not all. This inspirational businesswoman publishes the monthly magazine, *Her Business* - currently ranked in the top twelve in New Zealand. She has a number of philanthropic charities, has just opened Café Frock in Morrinsville and won the 2009 Veuve Clicquot Businesswoman's Award. Annah has also passionately supported and designed for WOW® for many years.

Joining Annah is Max Patte, who works as a senior sculptor for WETA Workshop and whose film credits include *Harry Potter*, *Prince Caspian*, *Batman Begins*, *Troy* and *The Last Samurai*. "He is a great fine arts sculptor," says Richard Taylor, currently working with Max on *The Hobbit*. "He is completely enthused by his own craft and the

art that's inside him." Max has embraced Wellington and sculptured a piece, *Solace in the Wind*, for the waterfront, which has won two public choice awards and become an iconic symbol of the breathtaking elements of the city. The British artist was elected as an Associate Royal British Sculptor last year.

The Montana WOW® Awards is a major, international arts event attracting entries from around the globe, infusing a wonderful assortment of multi-cultural dimensions into the show and turning many heads towards New Zealand. With more than \$100,000 in prize money, the innovation and inspiration behind the entries increases every year. With high overseas interest, there are particularly strong numbers of entries from India and the USA.

Simon Ungless, Director of Graduate Fashion from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, and close associate of Alexander McQueen, said of WOW® last year, "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®."

Tickets are still available for this year's show which is poised to be fantastic with special nightly performances from the mighty comedy duo, the Topp Twins, beginning Thursday September 24th at the TSB Bank Arena in Wellington.

*Montana Wines from New Zealand are devoted supporters of creativity, and are the naming partner of the Montana 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 of drama, music, lighting, construction, dance, theatre and comedy. Long running BBC correspondent Michael Peschardt was blown away after seeing the 2008 WOW® show, "I've seen major cultural and fashion shows around the world and this is unlike anything I've ever witnessed before."

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