



WOW! We're on show in Hong Kong

By LEE-ANNE EDWARDS

Amongst the outfits onstage at Sunday's first international World of WearableArts in Hong Kong were two created in the Hutt.

Allison McKay and Florence McFarlane were part of a 12 strong group of designers from the Wellington region whose work joined those from fellow New Zealanders and international entrants at the WOW show, part of the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

The festival, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, is the region's premier cultural event, presenting over 200 performances of music, theatre and dance to an audience of 150,000.

For Florence McFarlane of Eastbourne, having her work, *Oh Lay, Oh Lei, Au Lait*, selected for the show was a big thrill.

"It was also part of the Montana tour that went round the country, so I guess they must like it," she said.

Made up of 4500 plastic rings, fishing line, plastic coated copper wire and plastic shopping bags, the Pacific-themed piece took a year to create, including collecting the pieces for it.

"I had people from all over the place helping me out once word got round about it. I had bits sent to me from the police college in Porirua and even old folk's homes up the Kapiti Coast.

"The daily trip to walk the kids to school involved going through the recycling, retrieving

the rings off milk containers. Initially the kids thought it was a naff thing to do, but I quickly reassured them that it was perfectly normal."

She still has 5000 rings stored away, in case she makes something for WOW again in the future.

"I'd like to enter again but I have a shoulder injury – my imagination is alive and kicking but I'm not really up to the physical bit of making a piece until I can settle this down."

Fellow designer and Sacred Heart College science teacher Allison McKay said her entry, *Cosy Tea* was a testament to persistence.

"My WOW history is attempting to get something into the contest three times.

"I did not succeed until my third attempt with *Cosy Tea*, which was entered in the children's section."

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Tiered delight: Lower Hutt teacher Alison McKay's *Cosy Tea*, a high tea concoction of cosy-covered teapots and cakes, was a finalist in the 2011 World of WearableArts children's section.



100-plus items in Hong Kong show

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Selected for the 2011 event, her entry was a play on high teas featuring a dress stacked with teapots and cakes.

Mrs McKay got to see the show a number of times, as she worked as an usher.

"I tell people not to give up as not only did my third try get in but it is being purchased for the historic collection and now it is off to Hong Kong."

Anchoring the show is Petone resident and WOW artistic direc-

tor Malia Johnston who is part of a team of 50 including choreographers, dancers, models, lighting, sound, riggers, wardrobe and stage management.

The World of WearableArt managing director Gabrielle Harvey says the 70-minute show has been specially created to showcase the best of the best sections from past award shows.

It will present more than 100 garments, including 16 from 12 Wellington designers.

There will also be dozens of dance and character costumes,

and some extraordinary props designed for Hong Kong by WOW Ltd. An audience of at least 16,000 is expected.

"We aim to show New Zealand to be a country of creativity and colour [and] through our South Pacific Section we can show an element of New Zealand's traditional culture in a more contemporary way.

"Much of the audience is unlikely to have ever seen WOW before, so they won't know what has hit them."

In the loop:
 Florence McFarlane from Eastbourne created her Pacific-themed piece, *Oh Lay, Oh Lei, Au Lait* from thousands of plastic rings and other recycled items. Modelling the outfit is Elizabeth Antoun from Wainuiomata.

