



RECORD NUMBER OF INDIAN FINALISTS SELECTED FOR MONTANA WORLD OF WEARABLEART™ AWARDS SHOW

Vampires, a near death experience, people's obsession with their mobile phones, and a fear of mathematics are just some of the intriguing ideas behind the Indian finalists selected for the 21st Montana* World of WearableArt™ (WOW®) Awards in Wellington, New Zealand.

"The stories of passion behind each entry are often just as inspiring as the garment itself," says Suzie Moncrieff, WOW® Founder and Director. "And we're delighted to see an incredible creative array of ideas from India this year, with a record number of entries making it through to the final selection." In addition we are honoured to again exhibit two garments from renowned Indian Fashion Designer, Manish Arora's collection".

"The number and calibre of Indian entries is the result of a collaborative partnership we have had with the Fashion Design Council of India, in conjunction with Tourism New Zealand, since 2005 to inspire young Indian fashion design students to enter the Montana WOW® Awards Show" explains Suzie Moncrieff.

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

Passion and dedication enabled Ankur Kaushik from Ghaziabad to finish his garment, *Madam Mathews As Marksheet Monster* - based on a childhood fear of seeing his mathematics' marksheet at school. "Finding the right material was tough," says Kaushik who folded polypropylene into hundreds and hundreds of triangles to get his desired look. "But the toughest thing was finding the funds for this piece. I skipped meals and used to walk for miles just to save a few bucks."

Vikram Singh from Ahmedabad has created a magnificent garment, *Joinery*, out of hand painted rubber sheets, which give the illusion that the sweeping dress is actually made from wood. The inspiration is from old antique doors found in India that "become more interesting as they age," says Singh. The fine arts student says, "The process required a lot of my time and patience - much more than I thought I had!"

"A labour of love," is how Pooja Kapoor describes her entry, *City Nymph*, made out of plastic straps from the foot-wear industry. The upcoming fashion designer from New Delhi sees urban life as fluid and has poured her impressions into her garment, which has a glossy, urban finish. "The movement in city life is slick, slippery, almost dangerous. It threatens the familiar world we have been used to," explains Kapoor.

Swati Gupta visited a lot of Indian palaces and forts while researching her garment, *I Feel Like A Princess Tonight*, entered into the Children's section. Inspired by fairytales, the Jaipur fashion student wanted to create a child's dream, "which has no boundaries of any nation, set in clouds, moonlight and a castle."

3000 charger pins were used in Ragini Ahuju and Rishabh Rhode's entry, *Multi-Plug* to demonstrate people's obsession with their mobile phones and the panic they feel when the battery runs out. Fortitude was needed for the New Delhi students to complete the garment, as each pin had to be attached through two eyelets - 6000 in total!

A near-death experience in a canoe was so significant for Tanmay Gupta from New Delhi, he fashioned a rowboat that floats in the dark for the CentrePort Illumination Illusion® section, called *My Lively Experience With Death*. The fashion student found the incident and subsequent hallucinations "blissful" and has tried to capture the colour and passion of the moment in his clever entry.

Vampires floating through mid air surrounded by their mischievous partners in crime - bats, is the theme of Anmol Sharma and Siddharth Aredath's entry, *The Bats And Their Mistress*, also entered in the CentrePort Illumination Illusion® section. Sharma surrounded his workshop with UV lights to be able to design the mesmerizing piece and cheekily suggests, "Vampires are make believe, yet we have managed to catch one for the audience."

The line up of high calibre judges for 2009 are: British Associate Royal Sculptor Max Patte, fashion designer and businesswoman from New Zealand, Annah Stretton, alongside 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