



WOW **recognition** | angela crompton

again

A World of WearableArt garment by Picton designer Val Griffith-Jones will be one of the designs to WOW audience members at the 2012 Hong Kong Arts Festival.

The 40th annual event starts tomorrow and will draw 150,000 international performers and audience members to the Kowloonbay International Trade and Exhibition Centre for eight days. Seven 70-minute WOW presentations are included on the programme and are expected to attract about 16,000 people, WOW managing director Gabrielle Harvey says.

The presentation for Hong Kong was designed to showcase the best sections from past WOW award shows. One will be "Evolution Of The Apron" by Val Griffith-Jones. It was created for the 2006 Montana World of WearableArt Awards and will be one of the dance and character costumes displayed in Hong Kong

with visual props designed by WOW Ltd.

"We aim to show New Zealand to be a country of creativity and colour, presenting a different side of us from the way that perhaps the Hong Kong and Chinese market traditionally think of us," Gabrielle says. In the South Pacific Section, New Zealand's traditional culture will be depicted in a more contemporary way. Most audience members will have never seen a WOW show and won't know what has hit them, she adds.

The World of WearableArt was born in 1987 when Nelson sculptor Suzie Moncrieff created a new genre of performance to promote a rural art gallery. She took art off the wall and put it on a community hall stage. Two hundred people attended that first show but its success saw the concept develop and in 2005 the World of WearableArt Awards show moved to Wellington to

reach bigger audiences in larger venues. More than 300 designers from around New Zealand and many other countries enter each year's show and 170 finalists make it on to the stage.

Val says Evolution of the Apron was the third of four designs she has done for the WOW Awards and each one had made it into the finals.

"It's quite exciting to see [them] on the stage.

"It's a challenge, to make something structurally that lasts. You have to make things very strong and that can be taken on and off and worn easily"

Evolution of the Apron was a family story, inspired by how much her grandmother's life had differed from her mother's life, which in turn was quite unlike her own.

"I'm aware of the opportunities my generation has had compared to their grandmothers."



Illumination: Evolution of the Apron, created by Val Griffith Jones, of Picton, for the 2006 Montana World of WearableArt Awards and modelled here by Sam Wiffen, left, Arunee Wilson and Jordan James, has been selected as one of the best WOW designs to show at the 2012 Hong Kong Arts Festival. Photo: NELSON MAIL FAIRFAX NZ