



## CREATIVE SPIRIT ALIVE AND WELL AMONGST UK/EUROPEAN FINALISTS FOR MONTANA WORLD OF WEARABLE ART™ AWARDS SHOW

The cult image of the horse, moodiness, the fourth dimension, violent sea anemones and putting a bag of rubber rings to good use are some of the beguiling ideas behind the finalists selected for the 21<sup>st</sup> Montana\* World of WearableArt™ (WOW®) Awards Show in Wellington, New Zealand.

"It seems a global recession has set people's creative spirits alight with fresh ideas," says Suzie Moncrieff, WOW® Founder and Director. "Necessity is the mother of invention and it's rewarding to be inspired by people's innovative approaches."

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, and has a growing reputation for inspiring and encouraging recycling. 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 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 and October in Wellington, New Zealand.

A big bag of white rubber rings was the catalyst behind Maartja Dijkstra's surreal garment from The Netherlands, *Bulged Being*, also made with wires, refextionfabric and metal. The Rotterdam designer confesses, "Fashion is more than wearable things, it's all about making things you want to make. I will try to enter WOW® every year from now on!" (see attached image of Dijkstra's 2008 entry *Illustre Shoe-Machine*, runner up in the WOW® Wellington International Award.)

Mary Wing To from the United Kingdom has woven natural silk and human hair around her elegant leather garment *Saddle Up*. The saddler from Enfield is reviving her craftsmanship through design, "using the body as the canvas and leather as the art." She had to hand cut, stain, mould, lace and hand stitch each piece of leather to create something that exemplifies the wild and spirited horse. "The power and mystique of the horse inspires man like no other," says Wing To.

Entries flocked into the Montana WOW® Awards Show from the film, fashion,

photography, craft, design, textile, sculpting, drama and art worlds but it's not exclusive - entrants do not have to be professional designers or hold fine arts qualifications. This non-elitist approach ensures new artists participate every year, keeping WOW® progressive. 60% of the finalists from the UK/Europe are first time entrants this year.

Francesca Zagari from London used her talents as a window displayer to construct her entry *4<sup>th</sup> Dimension* made out of piano wire, elastic ribbon and steel boning. "Over very large distances, space appears to be folded, giving it an extra fourth dimension," explains the first time entrant, who managed to create a 3D diamond shape that curves in two directions and folds around the body as it moves.

A glowing deep sea anemone inspired Nicola Richardson to create her mesmerising garment, *Ultra Violent Beauty*, entered in the CentrePort Illumination Illusion® Section. "Despite being a predatory animal that lives in complete darkness, these animals glow spontaneously on their own and bring a magical beauty to the dark depths of the sea floor," explains Richardson. The first time entrant from Offchurch, UK, will delight the audience as her startling anemone comes to life in the dark.

Being able to change your outfit based on your mood is the concept behind Wilma Korenromp's versatile garment, *Flip-Over*, which enables the wearer to flip different pieces of fabric over their head. There are dark woven fabrics for subdued moods, fluorescent puff paste for extrovert moments, splashes of green and orange for humour, needle punch flowers for romance, and swarovski crystal stones for chique days. The textile designer from Tilburg, Netherlands, has been inspired by the concept of art that adorns the human form and changes as it moves, "giving the wearer the possibility to adapt or even to react against drab times."

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.

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 \*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](http://www.worldofwearableart.com) or e-mail [media@worldofwearableart.com](mailto:media@worldofwearableart.com)