



ALASKAN CARPENTER TAKES OUT SUPREME AT MONTANA WORLD OF WEARABLEART™ AWARDS SHOW IN NEW ZEALAND

David Walker, a carpenter from Alaska won the Montana Supreme WOW® Award in Wellington, with awards also going to designers across New Zealand, India, the USA and the UK.

The 21st Montana World Of Wearableart™ (WOW®) Awards were announced last night after another spectacular show with an international designer winning, for the first time in WOW®'s history. 165 incredible garments graced the stage across seven unique sections in and around graffiti art, magic gardens, super heroes, dancing cowboys, charming creatures from the dark and a parallel universe. Award winning comedic maestros, The Topp Twins entertained the audience along with New Zealand's premiere percussion group, Strike and high-octane hip-hop dance troupe, Legacy.

"There was no sign of a recession for the Montana WOW® Awards Show, with designers from all over the planet ascending on New Zealand to see their garments come to life on the catwalk," said Suzie Moncrieff, WOW® Founder and Director. "It was very exciting for an international designer to win, reflecting how truly global the event has become."

The Supreme Montana WOW® Award went to David Walker from Alaska for his sensational, 17th Century ball gown *Lady Of The Wood*. The Alaskan artist created the piece entirely out of mahogany and lacewood with 52 strips of maple and cedar veneer for the hooped skirt, topped off with a glamorous wig made out of wood shavings. A carpenter by trade, Walker has been creating WearableArt™ for ten years and can't get enough of the Montana WOW® Awards Show, attending for the third year in a row and scooping the highly coveted WETA Award in 2007. *Lady Of The Wood* was also winner of the Tourism New Zealand Avant Garde Section.

Associate British Royal Sculptor and 2009 WOW® judge, Max Patte said of the Supreme Montana WOW® Award, "It works on every level - original design and beautifully executed and something that can be appreciated by everyone. Once again, it raises the game and expectations for next year's WOW®!"

First time Wellington entrants, Hayley May and Fiona Christie were runners up to the Montana Supreme WOW® Award and also scooped the Gen-I Creative Excellence

Section - Fold, with their intricate garment, *Second Skin*. The film-maker and architect wanted to create a piece that, "resembled a reptile as it sheds its skin" and embedded over 2000 pleats into the fabric of their garment, folded in three directions to form scaled plates of armour. The detail in the finished piece was absolutely breathtaking.

Winner of the prestigious 2008 WETA Award, Sarah Thomas, took out the 2009 WETA award too, as well as winning the American Express Open Section with her remarkable piece, *American Dream*, modelled on the 1950's car. The Timaru artist was inspired after visiting the World of WearableArt™ & Classic Cars Museum in Nelson and her entry celebrates the notion that cars are often regarded as female with perky tail fins, extravagant bumpers and mounds of well-placed chrome. Richard Taylor of WETA Workshop judged the award blind, so did not realize Thomas was the recipient again until he presented it to her on stage.

"Winning one of the most coveted awards on consecutive years was an incredible triumph," said Moncrieff.

Human hair and the mystique of the horse was the inspiration behind Mary Wing To's garment, *Saddle Up* - winner of the 2009 Wellington International Award and commended in the Tourism New Zealand Avant Garde Section. The saddler from Enfield, United Kingdom had to cut, stain, mould, lace and stitch each piece of leather by hand, then weave silk and human hair around them and says she has been reviving the craftsmanship of saddlery through design, "using the body as the canvas and leather as the art." WingTo traveled to Wellington for the second time to receive her esteemed award.

Long term WOW® award winning designer and 1996 Supreme winner, Susan Holmes from Auckland, took out the highly coveted Untouched World WOW® Award - chosen by Suzie Moncrieff for the most innovative garment with WOW® factor - for her creation, *Firebird*. The garment combined Stravinsky's music with the exotic displays of Birds Of Paradise, revealing an astonishing display of colour as it unfolded on stage. "I have entered every year since 1990 and it never gets any easier!" said Holmes.

Gina Digirolamo and Lindsey Eisentraut from San Francisco, USA were winners of the Shell Student Design Award. Their very compelling piece, *Bound*, had two models in austere garments eternally bound by the wrists. "This work represents our connection to the earth and each other - one human tribe plus our isolation and encapsulation as individuals," said Digirolamo.

A love of gardening inspired Catherine Anderton to create her daunting piece, *Lagarus Ovatus En Masse*, which took the Booker Spalding First-Time Entrant Award and was also runner up in the American Express Open Section. The garment is made from over 2000 cotton tails or bunnies (*Lagarus Ovatus*), which were hand glued into a dramatic cloak, fit for a sinister creature to adorn. The Wellington gardener grows Christmas Trees, "when I'm not murdering cotton tails."

Emma Whiteside won the Shell Sustainability Award for the best garment to use recycled materials, with *Queen Adelaide*. The Wellington industrial design student was smitten with the English Queen Adelaide (1830 - 1849, who, surprisingly for royalty, hated unnecessary expenditure) and fashioned an amazing, regal 18th Century gown out of discarded automotive radiator copper. "My parents used to operate a

radiator manufacturing plant and I used to polish up the best pieces with nail polish. The men in the factory thought I was crazy," confessed Whiteside.

The humble dandelion was the impetus behind Tracy Koole's entry, *The Dandelion Clock*, winner of the WOW® Children's Section. The elaborate garment honours the lovely childhood practice of making a wish then blowing the seeds into the universe, and was worn by three children. The Auckland costume maker has been entering WOW® for seven years.

Long standing WOW® designer, Cassandra Bowe fashioned a majestic, walking armchair, *Sir Lazyboy*, inspired by "Man's love of his favourite chair", which won the World of WearableArt & Classic Cars Museum Man Unleashed® Section. The chair had a 17th Century Court flavour and entertained the audience as it strutted, perched and reclined around the stage.

The face of Christ on a piece of toast being sold on Trademe, gave Marie Gant Roxburgh the idea for her striking piece, *Into Thin Air*, winner of the CentrePort Illumination Illusion® Section. The Christchurch student was inspired by "the way we present faces to the world" and used photos of her late mother-in-law and grandfather in the eyes of her dramatic face that appeared to pop out from the shadows. "I wanted to create something that represented our memories over time which fade into thin air," said Grant Roxburgh.

Janet Bathgate's three piece entry, *Rock On In The Shadowlands*, won the Air New Zealand South Pacific Section, and was inspired by Maori rock art navigators. The Nelson designer, who has been entering WOW® for a decade, studied the rock art of Te Wahipounamu before she took to her fabric layers with scissors to get her desired look. There were no familiar Maori motifs such as the koru, kotututuku or taniko in the garment and the result was wonderfully fresh.

The construction site next to Amy Jean Boebel provided the material - discarded aluminum screens - for her three-garment entry, *Screen Play*, runner up in the Wellington International Award and commended in the Gen-i Creative Excellence Section - Fold. The Telluride sculptural artist co-designed the garment with Sue Hobby, also from the USA, and they found the biggest challenge when manipulating the brittle screen was having enough band-aids on hand!

3000 charger pins were used in Ragini Ahuju and Rishabh Rhode's entry, *Multi-Plug*, runner up in the Shell Student Design Award. The New Dehli students wanted to demonstrate, "people's obsession with their mobile phones and their urgency when the battery runs out!" The pair, who traveled from India to receive their award, said they needed patience to complete the garment, as each pin had to be attached through two eyelets - 6000 in total.

Frank Strunk III from the USA drew inspiration from the strength and femininity of the ballerina and fashioned his delicate entry, *DaVina* out of aluminum and stainless steel - commended in the American Express Open Section. The St Petersburg artist and carpenter was a first time Montana WOW® Awards Show entrant and admits, "the energy required reminds me that there are no boundaries to my craft."

The line up of high calibre judges for 2009 were British born, Associate Royal Sculptor

Max Patte, fashion designer and savvy businesswoman, Annah Stretton, Suzie Moncrieff and Mr. Tsai Kang Yung, who judged the Wellington International Award. Oscar winning film-maker, Richard Taylor of WETA Workshop judged the Special WETA Award for the garment that best crossed the boundaries of film and WearableArt™.

Mr. Tsai Kang Yung, one of Asia's top television personalities and international WOW® guest judge said, "I wish every design student from around the world could have a chance to see this show, to see how powerful the creative mind can be."

37 International designers and over 100 global media were visiting Wellington to attend the Montana WOW® Awards Show, alongside many New Zealand designers. The show season runs until Sunday October 4th with a total audience of nearly 40,000 people.

*Montana Wines from New Zealand are avid supporters of creativity, and are the naming partner of the WOW® Awards Show. Founder of World of WearableArt™ Ltd, Suzie Moncrieff, and Montana's managing director, Fabian Partigliani, announced that their 12 year partnership will continue for a further three years until 2012 on stage at the 2009 Montana World of WearableArt™ Awards show on Friday 25th September.

Described as, "a rebellion against the mundane", the Montana World of WearableArt™ Awards Show bends traditional perceptions of both art and fashion by choreographing garments into an extravaganza that blasts all the senses and uplifts the spirit. Esteemed BBC correspondent Michael Peschardt said, after seeing the show, "I've seen major cultural and fashion shows around the world and this is unlike anything I've ever witnessed before."

For further information, including imagery please refer to the on-line media room at www.worldofwearableart.com or e-mail Loren Aberhart, Media Liaison media@worldofwearableart.com or phone: 021 2753 853

** Footer:*

When publishing content please ensure you refer to the show as the Montana World of WearableArt™ Awards Show which can then be truncated to the Montana WOW® Awards Show. Please also ensure you publish the correct names for sections and awards ie: the Air New Zealand South Pacific Section.