



WOWing them in Hong Kong

By MARNIE HALLAHAN

New Zealand's World of Wearable Arts show has leaped on to the international stage and took some North Shore designers with it.

More than 100 of the most loved garments from the WOW archives featured in a spectacular show at the world renowned Hong Kong Arts Festival last weekend.

Erna and Karl Van Der Wat of Rothesay Bay are amazed their 2011 WOW Factor Award winning garment Reflection was chosen, considering the huge box it would need to make the trip, Mr Van Der Wat says.

Mrs Van Der Wat entered her first garment, In-Trigued, into the Illumination Illusion section in 2006 and was stunned when it was runner-up.

"Once you've experienced the thrill of seeing a creation of your own exhibited on stage alongside the world's best designers, you're hooked," she says. "After that thrill, well there was no turning back."

Mr Van Der Wat got on board in 2010 and as a team they began using their complementary abilities to create even more technical and elaborate entries.

That year they entered

two garments, Libra into the Bizarre Bra section and Unity into the Illumination Illusion.

Again their entry into Illumination Illusion section was named runner-up.

But it was their 2011 entry into the Avant Garde section that really stole the show.

The garment Reflections used 52 metres of aluminium tubing which took more than 72 grueling hours to polish.

Mrs Van Der Wat took inspiration from precious time spent with her elderly parents reflecting on their journeys in life.

And the Van Der Wats' journey with WOW is far from over.

"I am already playing with a few ideas for the 2012 show season and Karl – well Karl does not want to know anything about it yet – he's gone fishing," Mrs Van Der Wat says.

Other North Shore designers included in the Hong Kong show were Judith Keith from Campbells Bay with her entry

Tiki Touring and Susan Holmes, one of New Zealand's foremost fabric artists from Beach Haven. Five of Mrs Holmes' garments were chosen, Blue Lagoon, Fluorescence, Dragon Fish (replica 2), Figurehead and The Green Man.



Winning reflection: Erna and Karl Van Der Wat's entry won the WOW Factor Award last year and has been showcased in Hong Kong.