

MEDIA RELEASE

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**FIVE UK DESIGNERS WIN AWARDS AT WORLD'S ONLY
INTERNATIONAL WEARABLE ART COMPETITION - WOW®**

Four garments by five UK-based designers – from a first time WOW entrant to previous multi award winners - have won five design awards at the prestigious international **World of WearableArt™ (WOW®) Awards** in Wellington, New Zealand. **The 2017 show features 104 finalist garments by 122 designers from 13 countries, competing for 37 awards.**

WOW is the world's leading wearable art design competition. Now in its 29th year, WOW's combination of an international design competition inside a spectacular stage production is New Zealand's single largest annual theatrical show and a must-see event for close to 60,000 people every year.

The rules of competition mean that anything that is wearable can find a place on stage, as long as it is original, innovative and well-made. WOW attracts some of the most creative people from around the world, working at the cutting edge of fashion, art, design, costume and theatre, alongside students and first-time enthusiasts. WOW is a license to play, explore and experiment with resources and processes, with entrants using unexpected materials to create highly sophisticated garments incorporating everything from artisan craftsmanship to futuristic fabrication technologies. WOW's 2017 judges were WOW Founder **Dame Suzie Moncrieff**, fashion designer and artist **Kerrie Hughes**, artist **Michel Tuffery**, Weta Workshop's **Sir Richard Taylor**, Cirque du Soleil's **Valérie Desjardins** and David Jones' **Teneille Ferguson**. The judging process is in three stages, with garments being assessed in detail, as well as for their performance on stage.

Internationally renowned Indonesian accessories designer **Rinaldy Yunardi** took out top honours in the 2017 Awards. A first-time WOW entrant, Yunardi entered two garments *Encapsulate* and *Comos*, both of which won their respective sections, with *Encapsulate* also winning the Supreme WOW Award.

UK designers at-a-glance (descriptions of their work overleaf)

***Cube* by Adam McAlavey (London)**

First: Red Section

Winner of Cirque Du Soleil Invited Artisan Award

***The Spirit of Waitomo* by Maria Tsopanaki & Dimitri Mavinis (London)**

First: Illumination Illusion: Float, Fly, Flow Section

***Angel of a Different Kind* by Liam Brandon Murray (Derby)**

Winner of the International Award: United Kingdom & Europe Section

***Existence* by Alina Stanila (Reading)**

Runner Up: First Time Entrant



More detail about the English designers and their award-winning wearable art

Cube was awarded First in the Red Section and also won designer **Adam McAlavey** (London) the Cirque Du Soleil Invited Artisan Award. This is his second finalist entry – last year his design *Queen Angel* also won an award. McAlavey is a set builder and performance artist, who often works with bodies sheathed in latex. *Cube* is made of latex and plastic tube, and is inspired by an enslaved demon, who, even when his air is taken away, still can't be stopped. "I wanted to make a piece that represented what happens when you try and cage an unstoppable force. *Cube* is an agent of chaos. The only way to subdue it is to trap it in an airtight vacuum confinement unit. It nearly worked...but a different kind of chaos that was never imagined pops out!"

The Spirit of Waitomo by **Maria Tsopanaki & Dimitri Mavinis** (London) was awarded First in the Illumination Illusion: Float, Fly, Flow Section. This is the duo's sixth finalist entry since 2015, having now won seven awards in just two years. *The Spirit of Waitomo* is made of acrylic, neoprene, stardust and cord and is inspired by a mythical creature of New Zealand's Waitomo Caves. "This powerful creature exists underground, well connected with all natural processes of life and death, enlightening our journey in the universe, and reminding us of our direct tie with Mother Nature." The garment is constructed with rods, referencing the dried flax tubes of Māori piupiu (traditional skirt). The geometric patterns are inspired by *tāniko* weaving designs, and the colours used are a flaming red, representing the passion of the Māori people, and the bright green of nature. In 2011, London-based designers Tsopanaki and Mavinis established their fashion label, Erevos Aether, so they could make works of art. Internationally acclaimed, their bespoke creations adorn the likes of Lady Gaga, Daphne Guinness, The Black Eyed Peas, Jessie J, and Clean Bandit among others. When they saw WOW for the first time, they were able to appreciate not only the high level of creativity in the garments, but the sophistication of the event as a whole. "World of WearableArt is a one-of-a-kind platform for a designer to showcase their work, a fantasy world for someone to be part of, giving the ultimate creative freedom." Their design process is lengthy – beginning with researching an idea, creating the atmosphere around the garment, making mood-boards and sketches – all informing the intricacies of bringing a garment to life. "WOW is a platform to set our imaginations free, to release the 'explorer' side of us, and take us to the next level. It's an enjoyable process, almost like an initiation into a different world."

Angel of a Different Kind by **Liam Brandon Murray** (Derby) is Winner of the International Award: United Kingdom & Europe Section. This is Murray's second finalist entry since 2016, when he won two awards for the one design. Made of plastic, latex, material and electronics, *Angel of a Different Kind* is a morphed humanoid and hybrid bird. "All over the ancient world there are beings of a hybrid nature. Lots of people believe that these hybrids actually existed, and so I have created one, right here in reality."

Existence by **Alina Stanila** (Reading) is Runner Up of the First Time Entrant Award. *Existence* is a trio of garments in black and white, made of monofilament and yarn. The inspiration was *La Jetée*, a much-loved short science fiction film made by Chris Marker in 1962. The premise is summoning both the past and future, to assist with the present. *Existence* uses multiple knitwear techniques, combining high-tech monofilament with traditional yarns, and taking more than 700 hours to make. The patterns within the garments reflect different approaches to knitwear, to create a story of the past, present and future. Romanian-born Stanila is a renowned luxury fashion designer and artist, her signature designs push the boundaries of modern textiles and knitwear technologies with an aim to create modern couture. Stanila's unmistakable aesthetics have enchanted viewers at the likes of the House of Parliament Catwalk Show, London Fashion Week Catwalk Edit, and UK Fashion Week.

Full list of 2017 WOW Award Winners

There are 37 awards, received by 36 designers from 9 countries.

SUPREME WOW AWARD

Awarded to the designer with the garment considered by the judges to be the most exceptional overall.

- **Winner: Encapsulate by Rinaldy Yunardi (Jakarta, Indonesia)**
- Runner Up: Refuse Refuge by Grace DuVal (Chicago, United States)

DAME SUZIE MONCRIEFF AWARD

Chosen by WOW Founder Dame Suzie Moncrieff as the garment that epitomises the WOW spirit.

- **Winner: 222 Buckle Belts by Annina Gull (Zürich, Switzerland)**
- Runner Up: I Want More & More by Yi-Ting Hsieh, Yi-Ting Lai & Pei-Chen Liao (Kaohsiung, Taiwan)

SECTION AWARDS

Aotearoa Section

Designs inspired by New Zealand's rich cultures and celebrates this extraordinary part of the world.

- **First: Human Nature by Saar Snoek (Selling, Netherlands)**
- Second: The Cloak of Piwakawaka by Lisa Vanin (Cambridge, New Zealand)
- Third: Kuini by Kayla Christensen (Wellington, New Zealand)

Avant-garde Section

Wearable work of arts that are revolutionary, extravagant and extroverted, but still stylish and made with skill.

- **First: Cosmos by Rinaldy Yunardi (Jakarta, Indonesia)**
- Second: Forte by Chun Yee Chu (Hong Kong, China)
- Third: Reincarnated Goddess by Hei Man Sham (Hong Kong, China)

Weta Workshop: Science Fiction

An opportunity to imagine the thousands of other worlds that could reside in the universe and the entities who dwell there. This is the space for extraterrestrials and futuristic beings.

The winner of this section receives a four-week internship at Academy Award-winning Weta Workshop.

The prize includes accommodation and airfares to Wellington, New Zealand.

- **First: The Organ Farmer by Fifi Colston (Wellington, New Zealand)**
- Second: Cordycephila by Svenja (Brisbane, Australia)
- Third: Watcher in the Water by Craig McMillan (Greymouth, New Zealand)

Illumination Illusion: Float, Fly, Flow Section

Using the magic and illusion of UV lighting, the garments need to appear to float, fly, and flow through the space above the stage.

- **First: The Spirit of Waitomo by Maria Tsopanaki & Dimitri Mavinis (London, United Kingdom)**
- Second: Morpho in Bloom by Michelle Yeager & Tim Merz (Wyncote, Philadelphia, United States)
- Third: Tears of the Nudibranch by Sarah Seahorse & Luna Aquatica (Melbourne, Australia)

Red Section

Celebrating the colour of extremes - intense, packed with emotion ranging from passionate love to violence and warfare. All visible surface materials of the garment must be the colour red.

- **First: Cube by Adam McAlavey (London, United Kingdom)**
- Second: Does This Suit Me? by Kate Fisher (Wellington, New Zealand)
- Third: The Messenger by Dawn Mostow & Lana Crooks (Orting, Washington / Chicago, United States)

Open Section

A section with no thematic boundaries, giving designers complete freedom in concept, construction and materials. This section encourages a high degree of originality and innovation.

- **First: Encapsulate by Rinaldy Yunardi (Jakarta, Indonesia)**
- Second: The Maw by Baroness Varcra III (New York, United States)
- Third: LunaRorschach by Natasha English & Tatyanna Meharry (Christchurch, New Zealand)

FIRST TIME ENTRANT AWARD

Recognising creativity and innovation in an entry submitted by a first-time entrant.

- **Winner: Daisy by Annie Temmink (Charlottesville, Virginia, United States)**
- Runner Up: Existence by Alina Stanila (Reading, United Kingdom)

STUDENT INNOVATION AWARD

Open to all national and international tertiary students.

- **Winner: Does This Suit Me? by Kate Fisher (Wellington, New Zealand)**
- Runner Up: Jellyfish in the Sky by Ka Lam Tam (Hong Kong, China)

SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

Recognising a designer who demonstrates inventive use of recycled materials in their garment.

- **Winner: Refuse Refuge by Grace DuVal (Chicago, United States)**
- Runner Up: Lady Luck by Marjorie Taylor (Eugene, Oregon, United States)

WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY AWARD

Recognising the application of the most original and innovative technology to the construction and/or function of the garment.

- **Winner: Labyrinth Gown by Ben Gould & Dawn Mostow (Orting, Washington, United States)**
- Runner Up: Lux Operon 1.3 by Erica Gray (Gold Coast, Australia)

INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

Acknowledging the creativity and excellence of international designers. The overall winning designer also receives a prize to travel to New Zealand when their next entry is selected for the awards.

- **Overall Winner: Cambrian Regeneration by Ran Xu (Shanghai, China)**
- **Americas: Like Nothing I Had Ever Seen Before by Julian Hartzog (Tarpon Springs, Florida, United States)**
- **Asia: Cambrian Regeneration by Ran Xu (Shanghai, China)**
- **Australia & Pacific: Mollusca by R.R. Pascoe (Blue Mountains, Australia)**
- **United Kingdom & Europe: Angel of a Different Kind by Liam Brandon Murray (Derby, United Kingdom)**

NEW ZEALAND DESIGN AWARD

Open to all New Zealand entrants.

- **The Seeker by Carolyn Gibson (Auckland, New Zealand)**

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL INVITED ARTISAN AWARD

Presented to a designer whose entry demonstrates outstanding use of new techniques or technologies, the winner receives NZD5,000 and a four-week residency at Cirque du Soleil in Montreal, Canada. Flights and accommodation are included.

- **Cube by Adam McAlavey (London, United Kingdom)**

2017 Finalists: 104 garments by 122 designers from 13 countries.

United Kingdom (6 finalist garments)

Gayane Arzumanova & Yui Jiang

Adam McAlavey

Liam Brandon Murray

Alina Stanila

Maria Tsopanaki & Dimitri Mavinis

Sara Whetherly

United States (10 finalist garments)

Australia (7 finalist garments)

China (12 finalist garments)

India (5 finalist garments)

Indonesia (2 finalist garments)

Malaysia (1 finalist garment)

Netherlands (4 finalist garments)

New Zealand (48 finalist garments)

Singapore (3 finalist garments)

Spain (1 finalist garment)

Switzerland (1 finalist garment)

Taiwan (4 finalist garments)

MEDIA BACKGROUND: About the World of WearableArt (WOW)

World of WearableArt (WOW) is the world's leading wearable art design competition. Now in its 29th year, WOW's combination of an international design competition inside a spectacular stage production is New Zealand's single largest annual theatrical production and a must-see event for close to 60,000 people every year. WOW also incorporates the National WOW Museum in Nelson, an expanding international touring exhibition and presentation programme, and an enterprise that operates across three New Zealand cities.

At the core of WOW is the annual international design competition that each year attracts entries from more than 40 countries. The rules of competition mean that anything that is wearable can find a place on stage, as long as it is original, innovative and well-made. WOW attracts some of the most creative people from around the world, working at the cutting edge of fashion, art, design, costume and theatre, alongside students and first-time enthusiasts. WOW is a license to play, explore and experiment with resources and processes, with entrants using unexpected materials to create highly sophisticated garments incorporating everything from artisan craftsmanship to futuristic fabrication technologies.

As New Zealand's single largest annual theatrical production, WOW draws on the best of New Zealand's creative industries across theatre, dance, music and production, building to a team of more than 300 people for the show's season, presenting what is truly a national event. With more than 70% of the audience travelling from outside of Wellington, WOW has a positive effect on the city, with high visibility, and the incoming visitors enlivening Wellington's restaurants, hotels and retail sectors.

The finalist garments compete for awards across six sections: three recurrent sections – Aotearoa, Open and Avant-garde; and three sections with design briefs specific to 2017 – Red, Illumination Illusion: Float, Fly, Flow, and Weta Workshop: Science Fiction. Prizes include the Supreme Award (NZD30,000), an artist residency at Cirque du Soleil (Montreal) and an internship with Weta Workshop (Wellington). The 2017 show season runs until October 8. Tickets are on sale now at www.worldofwearableart.com

The winning garments from each year's show are then exhibited at the iconic National WOW Museum in Nelson, which attracts more than 40,000 visitors each year. The exhibition allows people to see the garments up close, and truly appreciate the level of detailing and expertise needed to create an award-winning work of wearable art. The exhibition of 2017 WOW garments will open in early December 2017.

WOW's international programme includes **WOW's International Travelling Exhibition** which showcases 32 award-winning garments curated to present the best of WOW's creativity to the world. With support from the New Zealand Government, the exhibition has impressed more than 600,000 visitors in Australia and three museums in the US – Bishop Museum Hawaii, MoPOP in Seattle and Peabody Essex Museum in Salem.

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