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MEDIA RELEASE

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## FOUR CHRISTCHURCH DESIGNERS WIN AWARDS IN PRESTIGIOUS WORLD OF WEARABLEART (WOW®) COMPETITION

Four Christchurch designers have won awards at the prestigious World of WearableArt® (WOW®) Awards in Wellington, New Zealand. The 2018 show features 140 finalist garments by 147 designers from 17 countries and regions, vying for 39 awards.

This year's 2018 Supreme award winner was *WAR sTOry* by Christchurch sisters Natasha English and Tatyanna Meharry, also the winner of the Aotearoa Section. Tina Hutchison-Thomas of Mt Pleasant won the New Zealand Design Award for her garment *Eye See you Fluffy Kōwhai*; and Janice Elliott of Papanui was third in the Bizarre Bra Section for *Abreast of Time*.

WOW Founder and Head Judge Dame Suzie Moncrieff says *WAR sTOry* is "a garment that the judges described as an exceptional example of powerful storytelling realised through a work of art. An entry that the judges described as an exceptionally compelling realisation of a thought-provoking narrative that is flawless in its execution."

English and Meharry are the first ever two-time Supreme WOW Award Winners, having taken the top award in 2013 for *The Exchange*. This year's Supreme garment commemorates the more than 120,000 New Zealand men and women who served in World War I, of which more than 18,000 never returned home. It was created using recycled objects such as old army and household blankets, salvaged rimu from demolished houses, old collected plastic toy soldiers, broken crushed red bricks and traded pieces of pounamu to create the garment.

Dame Suzie says *Eye See you Fluffy Kōwhai* is "an entry that the judges described as surreal and sensuous; the different mediums used in the construction of the garment are balanced beautifully."

New Zealand's largest theatrical performance, WOW is celebrating its 30th anniversary season in 2018. WOW combines the world's leading wearable art design competition with a spectacular stage show that attracts an annual audience of around 60,000 people - over 40,000 of those travelling to the capital city from across New Zealand and around the globe.

Launched by Dame Suzie Moncrieff in 1987, WOW takes art off the wall and onto the human form. Over the past three decades, WOW has attracted some of the most cutting edge creative designers from across the globe. This year entries from 44 countries and regions vied for a coveted spot onstage. A record 17 countries and regions were represented in the show, showcasing finalist designs by professionals from the fashion, art, design, costume



and theatre industries, alongside students and first-time enthusiasts. WOW provides an opportunity for these creatives to experiment, push boundaries and explore design, materials and techniques.

This year's show is presented as a series of six worlds, each with its own design provocation that designers have responded to. Along with the recurring Avant-garde, Aotearoa and Open sections are Under the Microscope, Reflective Surfaces and the biennial Bizarre Bra.

WOW's 2018 judging panel consisted of WOW Founder Dame Suzie Moncrieff; Margarita Robertson, Creative Director of iconic fashion label NOM\*d; Sam Gao, Weta Workshop Art Director and Business Development Manager; Weta Workshop Co-founder and CEO Sir Richard Taylor; Cirque du Soleil's Nathalie Bouchard and International Guest judge Mary Wing To.

Garments go through a three-stage judging process to end up onstage, beginning in July. The garments are assessed for detail as well as their performance on stage.

World of WearableArt is on at TSB Arena, Wellington from September 27 until October 14. Tickets and more information at [worldofwearableart.com](http://worldofwearableart.com).

#### **Full list of winners**

##### ***WAR sTOry* by Natasha English and Tatyanna Meharry (CBD, Christchurch)**

Winner: Supreme WOW Award

Winner: Aotearoa Section

##### ***Ernst Haeckel's Bride* by Nika Danielska (Wroclaw, Poland)**

Runner Up: Supreme WOW Award

Winner: Under the Microscope Section

##### ***Mind the Synaptic Gap* by Grace DuVal (Chicago, United States)**

Winner: Dame Suzie Moncrieff Award

##### ***Feminine Hell* by Xia Tian, Yang Mengtong & He Fangyu (Shanghai, China)**

Runner Up: Dame Suzie Moncrieff Award

##### ***Ancient Dreamscape* by Kayla Christensen (Island Bay, Wellington)**

Second: Aotearoa Section

##### ***Tar'White* by Ali Middleton (Seatoun, Wellington)**

Third: Aotearoa Section

##### ***Foreign Bodies* by Dawn Mostow and Ben Gould (Seattle, United States)**

Winner: International Award: Americas Design Award



Winner: International Design Award  
Second: Under the Microscope Section

***Coccinelle* by Svenja (Brisbane, Australia)**

Third: Under the Microscope Section

***Underling* by Gillian Saunders (Richmond, Nelson)**

Winner: Open Section

***WOW Tools of the Trade* by Shelley Scott (Mount Eden, Auckland)**

Second: Open Section

***Ajaw Eamanom* by David Walker (Eugene, United States)**

Third: Open Section

***Uplifting* by David Kirkpatrick (Tuakau, Waikato)**

Winner: Bizarre Bra Section

***Le Spectacle!* by Erna Van Der Wat and Karl Van Der Wat (Karaka, Auckland)**

Second: Bizarre Bra Section

***Abreast of Time* by Janice Elliott (Papanui, Christchurch)**

Third: Bizarre Bra Section

***Echoplex - Goddess of Reverb* by Natalie Hutton (Melbourne, Australia)**

Winner: Avant-garde Section

***Axminstress* by Kate MacKenzie (Havelock North, Hawkes Bay)**

Second: Avant-garde Section

Runner Up: Sustainability Award

***Tangka* by Qiongwen Zhang (London, United Kingdom)**

Third: Avant-garde Section

***The Wise Athena* by Lau Siu San & Cathy, Sin Wei Chow (Hong Kong, China)**

Winner: Reflective Surfaces Section

Winner: International Award: Asia Design Award

***Hilandera* by Julio Manuel Campos Lopez (Madrid, Spain)**

Second: Reflective Surfaces Section

***Lady Ethereal* by Dawn Mostow (Seattle, United States) and Snow Winters (Tacoma, United States)**

Third: Reflective Surfaces Section



***Eye See you Fluffy Kōwhai* by Tina Hutchison-Thomas (Mt Pleasant, Christchurch)**

Winner: New Zealand Design Award

***Absinthium* by R.R. Pascoe (Blue Mountains, Australia)**

Winner: International Award: Australia and Pacific Design Award

***Blue Star* by Adam McAlavey (London, United Kingdom)**

Winner: International Award: United Kingdom and Europe Design Award

***Quantum* by Annabelle Widmann (Santa Eulalia, Spain)**

Winner: Cirque du Soleil Invited Artisan Award

***Hide and Seek* by Mingzhang Sun (London, United Kingdom)**

Winner: First-Time Entrant Award

***Baroness of Vortex 6* by Laura Thapthimkuna (Chicago, United States), Stephen Ions (Biddulph Moor, United Kingdom) & Patrick Delorey (New York City, United States)**

Runner Up: First-Time Entrant Award

***Shell* by Zhang Qiyao (Shanghai, China)**

Winner: Student Innovation Award

***Under the Skin* by Louise Byford (London, United Kingdom)**

Runner Up: Student Innovation Award

***Something Fishy: A Man-Eater Double Feature* by Wendy Moyer (San Miguel de Allende, Mexico)**

Winner: Sustainability Award

***236 Maiden Lane* by Lynn Christiansen (San Francisco, United States)**

Winner: Wearable Technology Award

***Tangible Duality* by Hanna Smith (Avoca Beach, Australia)**

Runner Up: Wearable Technology Award

***Spirit Bone* by Guo Xiao Tong (Beijing, China)**

Winner: Weta Workshop Emerging Designer Award

***Kākāpō Queen* by Stephanie Cossens (Johnsonville, Wellington)**

Runner Up: Weta Workshop Emerging Designer Award

**New Zealand winner stories:**



## More detail about the New Zealand designers:

### Auckland region

Nana's pin cushion was inspiration for **Shelley Scott's** (Mount Eden, Auckland) garment *WOW Tools of the Trade*. Scott, who had a total of four finalist garments in this year's WOW Awards Show (two that she created with her daughters Jaime and Ashley), says while creating her entry last year she wanted to showcase the unconventional tools often used to create WOW garments. "I noticed my old pin cushion that I had inherited from my Nana. I looked around my workroom at all the various things I use to create my entries - from pliers, blowtorches, heatguns, glue guns, sewing machine, hammers - the list goes on and on." Scott says the garment is a testament to the New Zealand No.8 Wire mentality that helps us be resourceful and creative. "Our ability - borne out of isolation - to improvise, create, invent, explore and adapt in order to solve problems is embodied in the WOW entries we submit," she says. Scott is a first-time WOW finalist.

*Le Spectacle!* is designed to be a "celebration of the most amazing, eye-popping extravaganza of a show - none other than WOW!" says **Erna Van Der Wat** who designed the winning garment with her husband **Karl Van Der Wat** (Karaka, Auckland). A play on the words 'spectacles' (eyeglasses); 'a spectacle' (sight to behold); and 'Le Spectacle' (a spectacular live show), Erna says the garment celebrates WOW's 30th anniversary show and the artistic journey designers have gone on. The designers were inspired by Erna's Grandmama's glamorous 1940s spectacles and were created using perspex, paper, vinyl film and LEDs bringing the garments' peeping eyes to life. The Van Der Wats have had eight previous finalist garments since 2006. Their 2011 garment, *Reflection* won the WOW Factor Award (now the Dame Suzie Moncrieff Award) and the People's Choice Award.

### Waikato

**David Kirkpatrick** (Tuakau, Waikato) put his mechanical engineering background to work in his first-ever WOW garment, *Uplifting*. The Bizarre Bra is inspired by the GE X jet engine and 787 wing designs. Kirkpatrick says creating the garment helped him during a low period. "The project 'uplifted' me from a depressive point in my life by giving me a focus outside of the pressures of work and family life. The opportunity has given me space to create outside of my usual work design pressures" He used a small home 3D printer and fibreglass to create the garment, transforming his garage into his workspace. "It was challenging creating a large garment using a small home 3D printer, and combining old and new technologies together by using computer design but then using hours of hand finishing," he says.

### Hawkes Bay

**Kate MacKenzie** (Havelock North, Hawkes Bay) is a practising artist and former WOW Supreme Award winner who took her inspiration from carpets and hall runners for her 2018 entry, *Axminstress*. MacKenzie lamented the replacing of "woollen works of art that graced our floors and warmed our hearts" with "beige colourless weavings" and upcycled childhood memories into this Avant-garde garment. MacKenzie sourced the Axminster carpets from Trade Me: "The floral carpet was the exact image in my head... I don't know why I had such



a connection to this carpet, but it may be that my Grandma had it in her house." The carpets required a lot of cleaning before they could be used to create her garment - "I hired a professional carpet cleaner and did a million rain dances on the upturned rugs to dislodge years of grit embedded in the wool." MacKenzie won the Supreme WOW Award in 2014 for *Poly Nation*. This is her sixth finalist garment.

### **Wellington region**

**Kayla Christensen** (Island Bay, Wellington) took inspiration from her ancestors for her garment *Ancient Dreamscape*. "As night dawns, the soul leaves the body and goes into a distinct dream realm. My ancestors live there, they are waiting to be remembered," she says. "The ancestors that communicate while I sleep tell a story of my whakapapa and where I have come from." She describes it as a "surreal feeling of waking up after being in another world and meeting my grandmothers with a sense of *deja vu*." A talented artist, Christensen has painted the stories of her dreams, each portrait representing a grandmother with a family heirloom or a story that connects to a part of her culture. She drew, painted and sewed each painting by hand. Christensen has previously had six finalist garments in WOW and this year, for a period, reduced her hours at work to dedicate more time to her WOW entry. "I have pushed myself to the limits to create something that I have pulled from my dreams and into reality, sharing a little piece of my imagination for all to see." Her 2017 entry, *Kuini* won her Third place in the Aotearoa Section and she's previously won one other award. She studied fashion design at Massey University.

Inspired by the story of an early European whaler who was saved by Te Rauparaha, **Ali Middleton's** (Seatoun, Wellington) garment *Tar'White* weaves together Māori and Pākehā cultures. Cloaks were born out of necessity for protection from the cold and many indigenous fibres were used to weave the cloaks, which were passed down through generations. The relationship between early Māori and Europeans, particularly during the rise of shore-based whaling, is explored through Middleton's garment. "While Māori were quick to recognise the economic benefits of developing positive working relationships with Europeans, trade and other Pākehā practices were accepted on Māori terms with concepts like *mana*, *tapu* and *utu* playing significant roles." The story of James (Worser) Heberley who narrowly missed death through the act of Te Rauparaha covering him with his cloak - symbolising protection - interested Middleton. "Te Rauparaha issued a warning "Hoki ki to kainga" (go home). Heberley took that advice and paddled back to Waikanae to pick up his wife Te Wai and their daughter, then paddled his canoe across the Cook Strait to their home in Te Awaiti (later known as Tar'White). This was New Zealand's first shore-based whaling station. The year, 1833." This is Middleton's ninth finalist garment, having started entering WOW in 2008.

**Stephanie Cossens** (Johnsonville, Wellington) is a sculptor with an interest in soft sculpture and ceramics. A first time entrant of WOW, her garment *Kākāpō Queen* is created to raise awareness for the critically endangered birds with fewer than 160 left. "I wanted to create a garment that highlights the distinctive plump softness of the bird while also representing its strength, endurance, curiosity and confidence," Cossens says. She created the headpiece entirely by hand, bending and riveting aluminium and sculpting each individual clay feather.



“Using my hands I become close to the animal that emerges, taking time to be gentle and nurturing as the creature unfolds. Cossens studied visual arts at Otago Polytechnic and works as a freelance artist out of Honey Badger Creative Studio.

### **Nelson**

**Gillian Saunders'** (Richmond, Nelson) garment, *Underling*, is the second in an intended set of three garments celebrating WOW anniversaries. Gillian's 2013 entry *Inkling* was tattoo and body art themed and was created for WOW's 25th anniversary. Now she brings the second installment with *Underling*, a street art and graffiti-themed garment. The garment's character is an “urban art warrior”, Saunders says, “committing art crimes to bring joy to inner city dwellers. But after a sudden and unexpected turn of events, she was forced to take her art off the walls, bridges and underpasses to adorn her body in the underworld.” Saunders took home the Supreme WOW Award in 2016 for her garment *Supernova* and has had 16 previous garments in the WOW Awards since 2000.

### **Christchurch**

Previous Supreme WOW Award Winners, **Natasha English** and **Tatyanna Meharry** (CBD, Christchurch) have had six finalist garments on the WOW stage since they began entering in 2012. The sisters created their 2018 entry, *WAR sTORy* as a representation of the more than 120,000 New Zealand men and women who served in World War I, of which more than 18,000 never returned home. The pair began planning for this garment in 2014, refining their ideas with the goal of getting it onstage in 2018, the centenary of the end of the Great War. They used recycled objects including old army and household blankets, salvaged rimu from demolished houses, old collected plastic toy soldiers, broken crushed red bricks and traded pieces of pounamu to create the garment. “We wanted to include as many tangible memories as well, using recycled materials that have been either collected over the years, traded or salvaged to help imbue this art piece with memories for past, current and future generations,” English says. The heavy weight of the memories and stories of the past pave the way for future generations of mokopuna to carry, she says. “The badges and symbols of honour are now worn by our generation, a deserving remembrance in this centenary year.” In 2013, their garment, *The Exchange* won the Supreme WOW Award, and they've picked up four other awards including runner up to Supreme award in 2016 for *Baroque Star*.

With 16 WOW finalist garments since 2006 and five finalist awards, **Janice Elliott** (Papanui, Christchurch) has spent a lot of time living and breathing WOW. One of two garments in this year's show, *Abreast of Time* is a literal rumination on the concept of the ticking of the clock. Elliott says “Here is an old mantle clock illuminating the history of time. It comes from way back in time, some other time, when you could take your time. No one would ask ‘what's the time?’ we didn't run behind time and life was timeless.” Elliott says it's a reminder to “take your time and keep ‘abreast of time’.”

Seeking inspiration from insects for this design, **Tina Hutchison-Thomas** (Mt Pleasant, Christchurch) settled on the poodle moth. The result is *Eye See You Fluffy Kōwhai*, which has been created with faux fur and crystals. Hutchison-Thomas explains: “I was drawn to the



poodle moth with its beautiful fluffy body, which reminds me of luxurious opera cloaks from the 1920s.” Hutchison-Thomas set herself the task of dyeing non-traditional fabric like faux fur to create the garment, sewing about 3,500 crystals on the wings representing the eye you see on many butterflies and moths. This is Hutchison-Thomas’s second garment in WOW, having first entered in 2017.