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MEDIA RELEASE

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

Four London, United Kingdom 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.

Mingzhang Sun won the First-Time Entrant Award for his garment *Hide and Seek*; Adam McAlavey won the International Award: United Kingdom and Europe Design Award for his garment *Blue Star*; Louise Byford was Runner Up for the Student Innovation Award for her garment *Under the Skin*; and Qiongwen Zhang came third in the Avant-garde Section for her garment *Tangka*.

Of *Hide and Seek*, WOW Founder and Head Judge Dame Suzie Moncrieff says it is “an entry that the judges commended for its beautiful colour palette and mosaic quality.”

Of *Blue Star* Dame Suzie says it is an entry that “the judges described as sculptural, graphic and futuristic.”

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 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.

This year's Supreme WOW Award winner was *WAR sTOry* by Natasha English and Tatyanna Meharry of Christchurch, New Zealand. The sisters 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 128,000 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.

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 (Christchurch, New Zealand)**

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 (Wellington, New Zealand)**

Second: Aotearoa Section

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

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 (Nelson, New Zealand)**

Winner: Open Section

***WOW Tools of the Trade* by Shelley Scott (Auckland, New Zealand)**

Second: Open Section

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

Third: Open Section

***Uplifting* by David Kirkpatrick (Waikato, New Zealand)**

Winner: Bizarre Bra Section

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

Second: Bizarre Bra Section

***Abreast of Time* by Janice Elliott (Christchurch, New Zealand)**

Third: Bizarre Bra Section

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

Winner: Avant-garde Section

***Axminstress* by Kate MacKenzie (Hawkes Bay, New Zealand)**

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 (Christchurch, New Zealand)**



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 (Wellington, New Zealand)**

Runner Up: Weta Workshop Emerging Designer Award

**United Kingdom winner stories**

The character of **Qiongwen Zhang's** (London, United Kingdom) garment *Tangka* is described as a "powerful heroine crossing time and space." PVC, beads, and padding were



used to create the triptych that makes up *Tangka*. She says the character “travels across space and time and mixes the elements of stained glass from Western culture and the traditional Tibetan art form *Tangka* together.” This is Zhang’s first time as a World of WearableArt designer.

About 50,000 buttons were used to create **Mingzhang Sun’s** (London, United Kingdom) garment *Hide and Seek*. Sun, a first-time designer, says it represents an HIV patient. He hand pressed each button to create the garment. “They are in the pattern of different animals and it represents the food chain. The food chain represents the patient eaten by the virus,” Sun says. Having finished the garment and been through long-term treatment himself, Sun says the garment brings back lots of memories “which relate to the reason that I made this artwork, and I am very happy that I made it to this stage.”

**Adam McAlavey** (London, United Kingdom) says his garment, *Blue Star*, represents the horror and wonder he feels looking at the stars. “The scale of time and space I can’t comprehend gives me endless nightmares and inspiration.” Each of the three latex sections are placed on the body and air is vacuumed out to create precise and elegant shapes, while constricting and controlling the model’s movement. McAlavey says he wanted to see how far he could push what’s possible making wearable latex vacuumed shapes. “The idea is to completely restrict many parts of the human body and only allow specific parts to move, creating a human puppet.” McAlavey, who’s had two previous World of WearableArt award-winning garments, says it’s taken more than a year to find a concept that allows the model to move and walk. McAlavey was the 2017 *Cirque du Soleil* Invited Artisan Award winner.

**Louise Byford’s** (London, United Kingdom) garment *Under the Skin* explores the ideas of costume as a second skin. Latex has been sculpted and distorted to represent muscular-like tissue and veinal structures, bringing our innards to the surface. “It aims to question ideas around beauty, the grotesque, and the way in which we judge humans based on appearance. It also explores the idea of ‘genetic manipulation’, re-shaping and distorting the silhouette through sculptural and architectural forms,” Byford says. She stretched latex sheets over giant frames and poured liquid latex coloured with paint over the top, blending and spreading it and leaving it to dry before releasing the sheets from their frames to create the distorted ridges and grotesque shapes.