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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### NINE UNITED STATES DESIGNERS WIN AWARDS IN PRESTIGIOUS WORLD OF WEARABLEART (WOW®) COMPETITION

Nine United States 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.

Dawn Mostow and Ben Gould of Seattle's garment *Foreign Bodies* won the International Award: Americas Design Award, the International Design Award and was Second in the Under the Microscope Section.

WOW Founder and Head Judge Dame Suzie Moncrieff says *Foreign Bodies* is "an entry that the judges thought was a humourous, striking performance piece with each of the three "cells" being complementary but subtly different."

Lynn Christiansen of San Francisco won the Wearable Technology Award for her garment *236 Maiden Lane*.

Dame Suzie says *236 Maiden Lane* is "an entry that the judges thought demonstrated wonderful use of soft material to achieve a structured finish and was particularly impressive in terms of the intricate detail of the garment which can be seen from every angle."

Grace DuVal of Chicago was Winner of the Dame Suzie Moncrieff Award for her garment *Mind the Synaptic Gap*.

Laura Thapthimkuna (Chicago, United States), Stephen Ions (Biddulph Moor, United Kingdom) and Patrick Delorey (New York City, United States) were Runners Up for the First-Time Entrant Award for their garment *Baroness of Vortex 6*.

David Walker of Eugene was Third in the Open Section for *Ajaw Eamanom*.

Dawn Mostow of Seattle and Snow Winters of Tacoma were Third in the Reflective Surfaces Section for *Lady Ethereal*.



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 States winner stories**

**Lynn Christiansen** (San Francisco, United States) has created a garment satisfying her childhood fascination for where princesses from fairy tales live. *236 Maiden Lane* is created using wood, metal, thousands of individual pieces of felt, as well as more than seven litres of fabric glue. "Little did I know I would have to use so much math in its construction as I had to deal with differing circumferences and geometries to get it to work," she says. The asymmetrical fantasy castle is described as a "delightful property with old-world charm and breathtaking views fit for a queen". Christiansen says as a child she was always more interested in palaces and castles than gowns and dresses. "If only I could explore all the fascinating rooms, towers and hallways of a castle. What magic it would be to live in a castle," she says. Christiansen has had 13 previous World of WearableArt garments, winning the Open award for *Gothic Habit* in 2014, which was also runner up to the Supreme WOW Award.

Ancient civilisations mixed with the modern punk movement proved inspiration for **David Walker** (Eugene, United States). His garment, *Ajaw Eamanom* depicts "someone of importance with a little bit of attitude," he says. The name comes from the Mayan word for 'ruler' and his mother's name - Mona Mae - spelled backwards. Walker says "at 93 [she] is still the boss of the seven of us." He began with simple sketches but it took on a life of its own, with changes and additions as he constructed, which he says was a "rewarding way to design", although many extra hours were spent perfecting. Walker is a previous Supreme World of WearableArt Award winner, having taken the top honour for his 2009 garment *Lady Of The Wood*. *Ajaw Eamanom* is his eighth World of WearableArt garment.

Wife and husband team **Dawn Mostow** (Seattle, United States) and **Ben Gould's** triptych garment *Foreign Bodies* showcases a love of science fiction, an appreciation for



technological frontiers and a dash of humour. The inflatable bodysuits resemble a red blood cell, a white blood cell and the third a “world beyond this microcosm”, a group of “foreign bodies” clinging to an outer casing. “Each of these ‘nanites’ represents the newly pioneered nanotechnology frequently featured in the news today,” Mostow explains. The garment leaves open the questions of whether the third cell was sick to begin with, or whether the nanites infected the cell with something malevolent. Mostow has another award-winning garment in this year’s show, *Lady Ethereal*, which she created with Snow Winters.

**Dawn Mostow** (Seattle, United States) and **Snow Winters’** (Tacoma, United States) garment *Lady Ethereal* offers a Victorian silhouette reimagined for the space age. The cyberpunk garment is a celebration of feminine form and celestial possibilities. The pair met at their local maker space last year and became fast friends, bonding over laser cutting and wearable technology. Mostow looked at Victorian silhouettes to achieve a curvaceous, flowing and powerful form in galaxy-patterned latex, while Winters explored the challenge of transforming acrylic into a material that pushed it past its rigid nature, creating a shape that echoed the gown’s voluptuous shape. Mostow, a fashion designer, has created latex garments for films including *Total Recall* and *Guardians of the Galaxy 2* as well as on pop stars including Katy Perry and Beyonce. Mostow first learned of World of WearableArt after visiting the international exhibition at Seattle’s EMP Museum. Mostow has another award-winning garment in this year’s show, *Foreign Bodies*, which she created with her husband Ben Gould.

**Grace DuVal** (Chicago, United States) was inspired by her struggles with depression in creating *Mind the Synaptic Gap*. She describes the garment as a “joy monster, a personification of depression.” The unpredictable creature can go from silly and hyper one minute to lackadaisical and aloof the next, she says. The body was created using 350 recycled bicycle inner tubes while the head is iridescent vinyl covering carved, sharp facets. “For the past decade I have dealt with anxiety and depression, and have often marvelled at how deeply altered my moods can become simply because of one tiny compound that circulates through my body and brain,” DuVal says. In 2017 she created an award-winning piece which was runner up to the WOW Supreme Award, *Refuse Refuge* where she discovered the process of bike tube fringing and she began working on this year’s garment the day she got back from last year’s show.

**Laura Thapthimkuna** (Chicago, United States), **Stephen Ions** (Biddulph Moor, United Kingdom) and **Patrick Delorey’s** (New York City, United States) garment *Baroness of Vortex 6* is described as an “ancient being awoken from a rip in the space time continuum”. This will open a portal to another dimension where the Baroness will emerge from. Made using plastic, silk, steel and vinyl, this garment from first-time WOW entrants is entered in the Avant-garde Section. Her head and torso are ornate with a complex black exoskeleton that “has the power to swallow entire galaxies,” explains Thapthimkuna. “The lower torso of her body encompasses a slightly spherical landscape of dark matter with a curtain of silver folds beneath it that contain the actual folds of space time.” She says with the Baroness’ arrival, a “new cosmic age will be upon us all.”