

World of Wearable Art® (WOW™) MEDIA KIT

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World of WearableArt

- an annual international design competition
- an annual awards show in Wellington
- the National WOW Museum in Nelson
- an international touring exhibition programme

1. World of WearableArt (WOW) Boilerplate

World of WearableArt (WOW) combines an international wearable art competition with a spectacular stage show. Celebrating its 30th year in 2018, New Zealand's single largest theatrical production attracts entries by designers from all around the world working at the cutting edge of fashion, art, design, costume and theatre, alongside students and first-time entrants. Entries to the 2019 World of WearableArt Awards Competition close on 29 March, with garments from pre-selected and returning New Zealand designers received by WOW HQ by 18 June. The National WOW Museum in Nelson houses a collection of the most extraordinary garments selected from WOW's past season and maintains an expanding international exhibition touring and presentation programme.

2. WOW Beginnings

WOW is one of New Zealand's creative success stories.

The original WOW concept was founded and created by Dame Suzie Moncrieff in 1987. The first WOW Awards Show was staged in rural Nelson as a promotion for a

rural art gallery for an audience of just 200 people. Dame Suzie, who was a sculptor at the time, had the vision to take art off the wall and exhibit it as a live theatrical production.

In its third year, the WOW Awards Show moved into Nelson's Trafalgar Centre, establishing itself as a must-see annual event, before moving to Wellington in 2005. At the end of the 2018 show season, almost 770,000 people saw a WOW Awards Show.

After 30 years, Dame Suzie continues to be a driving force behind WOW, acting as a guide and mentor to the wider creative team.

"To take art off the wall and out of static display. To adorn the body in wildly wonderful ways. To celebrate creativity in a lavish and unique on-stage spectacular that will inspire us all." Dame Suzie Moncrieff, WOW Founder

3. WOW Key Facts

- 2019 is the 31st WOW Awards Show
- The 2019 show season is from 26 September to 13 October
- An anticipated 60,000 national and international show-goers will attend the three-week show season
- Almost 770,000 people have seen a WOW Awards Show since 1987
- WOW has showcased more than 4,877 finalist garments on its stage
- The judging process is in three stages: the first in Nelson in July; and the second and third in Wellington in September
- Since 1987, a total number of 10,200 people have worked on a WOW Awards Show including cast and crew
- Almost \$2,430,000 in prizes (cash and in-kind) has been awarded to finalist designers since 1987
- In addition to the Show, WOW has a large-scale touring exhibition that has toured in Australia and in the United States including the Bishop Museum Hawaii, MoPoP in Seattle, and Peabody Essex Museum in Salem. In 2018 it travelled to the Erarta Museum of Contemporary Art Museum in St Petersburg, Russia, and in June 2019 the exhibition will open in Colorado Springs Fine Art Centre.
- The National WOW Museum in Nelson has an historical collection of 434 garments with an annual exhibition of the previous year's finalists. The Museum attracts more than 40,000 people each year.

"A fabulous event that is equal part couture, choreography and craziness."
Time Magazine

4. WOW Biographies

DAME SUZIE MONCRIEFF | Founder

Dame Suzie Moncrieff is the creator and founder of the original WOW concept. She was Artistic Director and Scriptwriter for the show for the first 25 years and continues to be a driving force behind the WOW phenomenon and an inspiration to the WOW team. Dame Suzie acts as a guide to the show's creative and production teams. Dame Suzie has received a number of awards for her achievements and contribution to the arts. She was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 1998, and made a Dame in 2011, when she was also awarded Wellingtonian of the Year for her contribution to the arts. In 2014 Dame Suzie was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Massey University for her contribution to the field of art and design. In 2015 Dame Suzie was named New Zealand's Deloitte Top 200 Visionary Leader for the Year.

"WOW celebrates a huge variety of designers and ideas. It creates a competition that rewards people for being brave with their creativity, while also giving something spellbinding and magical to audiences."

Dame Suzie Moncrieff

HEATHER PALMER | Competition Director

Heather Palmer has been WOW's Competition Director since its inception in 1987, playing an instrumental part in the success of the WOW Awards Show. She is a key point of contact for designers. Over the years, Heather has been integral in managing the awards process, looking after backstage show activities and managing WOW's extensive historic garment collection. Her role also sees her keenly involved as a guest lecturer at design schools, collaborating with training institutions both nationally and internationally, and promoting WOW offshore.

GISELLA CARR | Chief Executive

Gisella Carr has been the CE of WOW since 2016. Gisella's career has seen her leading organisations and major projects across the creative industries sector, most recently as Chief Executive of Film New Zealand and as Director of Funds Development at the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, as well as earlier senior roles at Creative New Zealand and The Royal New Zealand Ballet. Major projects include work for The Gibson Group on Vaeggen for the Museum of Copenhagen, as originating strategist and creator of the Arts Laureate Awards for

New Zealand's Arts Foundation, and as an advisor to New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, Auckland and Wellington City Councils. Carr has also taught management and cultural policy at both Auckland and Victoria Universities.

5. National WOW Museum, Nelson

The winning garments from each year's show are 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.

6. WOW International Travelling Exhibition

WOW's international programme includes its **International Travelling Exhibition**, showcasing 32 award-winning garments curated to present the best of WOW's creativity to the world. With support from the New Zealand Government, the current travelling exhibition has attracted more than 670,000 visitors in Australia, Russia and the US, including Bishop Museum Hawaii, MoPOP in Seattle and Peabody Essex Museum in Salem. It's due to open at Fine Arts Centre in Colorado Springs in June 2019.

7. WOW Judges

Each year the finalist garments and award winners are selected through three rounds of closed judging. The judging panel comprises of WOW Founder and Resident Judge, Dame Suzie Moncrieff, and two guest judges, from the worlds of art and fashion, who are invited to be part of the panel.

In 2019 the first round of judging will take place in early July in Nelson where Dame Suzie Moncrieff will be joined by two guest judges, yet to be announced.

In the second and final judging stages, the panel will be joined by Sir Richard Taylor CEO and co-founder of Weta Workshop, a guest judge from Cirque du Soleil and an international guest judge, to be announced.

8. WOW 2019 Competition Sections

The Awards are divided into six sections: three recurrent sections, and three specific to 2019.

Recurrent sections

- **Aotearoa** is inspired by New Zealand's own deep sense of place. From our rich cultures to our landscapes, our independence to our inventions, this is a

callout to show us New Zealand and New Zealanders as you see us.

[View the inspiration video here.](#)

- **Open** is a world where there are no boundaries, themes or rules, giving designers complete creative freedom to explore. Concept, construction, materials – the only limit is the imagination.
- **Avant-garde** is for wearable works of art that are experimental, radical and unorthodox. The challenge is to dare to defy the boundaries of fashion and create a work that is cutting-edge, rejects the ordinary and is unique and innovative.

[View the inspiration video here.](#)

Sections specific to 2019

Mythology challenges designers to be inspired by other worlds and dimensions; to explore fantastical stories of fearsome monsters and creatures, gods and goddesses, demigods and supernatural humans.

[View the inspiration video here.](#)

- **Transform** asks designers to create a work that changes in form, nature and appearance. The designers will play and innovate with different mechanisms for revealing unexpected aspects of their garment. The transformation might be playful and humorous, or it may be striking and startling.
- **White** represents a spectrum of emotions, white is associated with peace, light, love, perfection, purity and spirituality. In some parts of the world, white represents death and mourning; in others it is associated with angels, good health and time. Inspiration may be found in sheer simplicity, sculptural boldness, intricate detail or experimenting with layers, light and shadow, proportion or scale. There are no shades of pure white because the colour is the combination of all colours.

[View the inspiration video here.](#)

9. WOW 2019 Prizes

The World of WearableArt Awards Show brings artists and designers together to compete for a prize pool totaling more than NZD 187,500. An example of the coveted prizes available are listed below.

Supreme WOW Award

The most prestigious award of all; given to the entry that the judges consider to be the most exceptional overall.

- Winner receives NZD 30,000
- Runner-up receives NZD 15,000

Dame Suzie Moncrieff Award

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

- Winner receives NZD 6,000
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Weta Workshop Emerging Designer Award

Weta Workshop is a five-time Academy Award®-winning conceptual design and physical effects manufacturing facility that services the world's creative industries. The winner is chosen by Sir Richard Taylor, CEO and co-founder of Weta Workshop.

- Winner receives NZD 6,000 + four-week internship at Weta Workshop, including flights from anywhere in the world to and from New Zealand plus accommodation in Wellington for up to four weeks.

Cirque du Soleil Invited Artisan Award

Chosen by a judge from Cirque du Soleil, this award is presented to an established designer whose entry demonstrates outstanding use of new techniques or technologies.

- The winner receives NZD 5,000 and will undertake a four-week residency at Cirque du Soleil in Montreal, Canada. Flights from anywhere in the world and accommodation are included.

The Residency Experience Award

The winner of this Award is chosen by revolutionary fashion activist, stylist and costume designer, B. Akerlund. This award is presented to a designer whose entry exemplifies exceptional cutting-edge design.

- The winner receives NZD 5,000 and the opportunity to show up to five pieces of their work at the exclusive Residency Experience showroom in Los Angeles for a three-month period, during which time their work will be given exposure through the Residency social channels.
- The winner will also receive a travel prize of NZD 2,500 to enable them to visit the Residency showroom in LA.

“Athletes have the Olympics, actors have the Oscars, musicians have the Grammys, designers and costume creators have WOW!” - Bob Haven, Professor in Costume Technology, Kentucky University, 2007 WOW Designer

10. WOW Image, Video & Brand Guidelines

Image and Video guidelines:

- Images and Video must only be used for the stated purpose
- Images must be credited in print and online in the following way:

The Isobra, Janice Elliott, New Zealand

Photo: World of WearableArt Ltd

This credits the garment name, designer name and country of origin.

For more details, please email charlotte@worldofwearableart.com

Brand guidelines:

- WOW – abbreviation for World of WearableArt
- ‘Garment’ – a wearable art piece designed by a WOW Finalist Designer
- ‘Costume’ – performance wear for characters, actors and dancers within the WOW Awards Show
- WearableArt is **one** word – no ‘s’
- The ® symbol follows WearableArt®
- The ® symbol follows WOW®

11. WOW Social Media

www.worldofwearableart.com

<https://www.facebook.com/WorldofWearableArt>

<https://www.instagram.com/WorldofWearableArt>

12. Media contact

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