

The creative team for WOW 2019 Awards Show revealed

Some of the best and brightest creative minds from both sides of the Tasman have been brought together to create this year's World of WearableArt (WOW) Awards Show.

The 2019 creative team, announced this month, includes talent new to the world of WOW as well as returning WOW alumni. The team has been hard at work creating this year's show since June 2018. The 31st season of WOW is on in Wellington from 26 September to 13 October.

WOW Chief Executive Gisella Carr, in announcing those who are involved this year, says the exciting challenge for any WOW show team is to create amazing theatrical worlds which will showcase both the overall 2019 competition themes and the entries of the individual designers.

"Every year we bring together artists from multiple art and design fields to achieve the explosive experience which is WOW. WOW loves it that such significant artists are attracted to working with us and with each other. And of course, every year's team wants to make the most compelling WOW show ever. We are loving what this team is cooking up for 2019."

Heading the 2019 show is **Show Director Andy Packer**, an Adelaide-based director of theatre, music theatre and opera who has also worked as a creative producer on multidisciplinary arts programs, large-scale outdoor events and festivals around the world.

Andy's theatre productions have toured to 12 countries including USA, Canada, Spain, Norway, China and India, including two seasons on 42nd Street, New York, two seasons in the Dublin Theatre Festival and five seasons at the Sydney Opera House. He has worked with screen icons including Barry Humphries, Kristen Chenoweth and Molly Ringwald. As Show Director, Andy is creating the show's overarching story.

Andy says: "I'm thrilled to be collaborating with this team of exceptional artists as we construct surprising and delightful worlds to invite our audience into. Expect visions of ancient monuments, ice-caves and a visit to the furnace of creativity.

"WOW is unique in the world; a true celebration of creative potential and the revelatory role art, theatre and performance can play in our lives."

Acclaimed choreographer **Sarah Foster-Sproull** is this year's **Director of Choreography**. The Auckland-based creative has worked with the Royal New Zealand Ballet and Footnote New Zealand Dance in New Zealand as well as companies in Edinburgh, China, Singapore and Fiji. She's currently Creative New Zealand's Choreographic Fellow for 2017-2019. Sarah's role is to set the dance and movement for each world, working closely with the Show Director and specialist choreographers.

Kiwi music legend **Paul McLaney** returns for a second year as **Music Director** for WOW. McLaney's career has spanned acoustic music as a solo artist, rock and pop with Gramsci and ambient electronica The Impending Adorations. He is the Director of Music

for the Pop-up Globe. McLaney first worked with WOW in 2018 and will bring together a medley of talented Kiwi musicians spanning genres from drum and bass and electronica to symphony, jazz and blues to create music for each section of the show.

Lighting Designer Chris Petridis hails from Adelaide and has worked on dozens of stage performances developing his experience across theatre, dance, and other live events in Australia and internationally. This is Petridis' second year working with WOW, having worked as a lighting programmer last year.

Sophie Ham returns as the **Head and Co-Designer of Costume**. Sophie has been working on WOW Awards Shows since 2011 and is tasked with creating all the costumes that adorn the dancers and special performers onstage. Sophie has worked with top theatre and dance companies including New Zealand Opera, Auckland Theatre Company, Indian Ink Theatre Company and the Touch Compass Dance Company.

AV Designer John Strang has developed a wide range of visual storytelling skills in his more than 15 years in the industry working on large scale projects across multiple platforms and countries. The Wellingtonian also VFX supervised film and television projects and was the creative director for many motion graphics projects. John previously worked on WOW from 2012-14.

Joining Andy from Australia is **Show Concept Designer Dan Potra** who has been working with Andy on the show's overall design concept. Dan is an award-winning designer for his work in opera and theatre who has designed many large scale sporting and cultural events including the Olympic and Commonwealth Games, and a stage adaptation of *How to Train Your Dragon*.

This year's show features three recurring sections - Aotearoa, Avant-garde and Open - as well as three new sections - Mythology, Transform and White.

While the creative team has been working on the theatrical show, designers from around the world have been pouring hours, weeks, months and sometimes years into creating the most stunning wearable art imaginable ready for the first round of the judging process in July in Nelson.

This year's judges include WOW Founder and resident judge, Dame Suzie Moncrieff, designer James Dobson of Jimmy D, and artist Gregor Kregar.

Along with vying for a coveted place in the 2019 World of WearableArt Competition and Awards Show, finalist designers will be considered for a range of prizes including prestigious industry awards such as the highly sought after Weta Workshop Emerging Designer Award chosen by Sir Richard Taylor, and the Cirque du Soleil Invited Artisan Award, where the winner receives a four-week residency at Cirque du Soleil in Montreal.

This year also sees the announcement of a new award, The Residency Experience Award which is judged by revolutionary fashion activist, stylist and costume designer, B. Akerlund. This award is presented to a designer whose entry exemplifies exceptional cutting-edge

design with part of the prize package including the opportunity to show pieces of their work at the exclusive Residency Experience showroom in Los Angeles for a three-month period.

The 2019 World of WearableArt Awards Show season will be on at the TSB Arena in Wellington from 26 September to 13 October. Tickets on sale now at worldofwearableart.com.

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Images of WOW and the creative team, as well as video, are available in [this folder](#).

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