



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 27 September, 2019

## FIVE DESIGNERS FROM AUSTRALIA WIN AWARDS IN THE 2019 WORLD OF WEARABLEART™ (WOW™) AWARDS

Five Australian designers have won awards at the World of WearableArt (WOW) Awards in Wellington, New Zealand. The 2019 Awards Competition and Show features 108 finalist garments by 115 designers from 22 countries and regions all vying for the opportunity to win one of 34 awards and a share of more than NZ\$180,000 in prizes.

Kirsten Fletcher of Queensland won The Residency Experience Award with her garment *Woven In-tent*. The Residency Experience Award prize includes the opportunity for Kirsten to show up to five pieces of her work at the exclusive Residency Experience showroom in Los Angeles for a three-month period. Kirsten will also receive NZD \$5,000, a \$2,500 travel prize to allow her to visit The Residency showroom in L.A. and exposure on The Residency social channels.

B. Åkerlund, Los Angeles-based fashion activist, celebrity stylist and co-founder of The Residency Experience partnered with World of WearableArt to launch the Residency Experience Award. B. was looking for a designer whose WOW garment exemplified exceptional cutting-edge design. "*Woven In-tent* is pure couture with an incredible message around sustainability. It has been exquisitely finished and the pieces are strong together and individually," she said.

Kirsten's garment *Woven In-tent* also won the International Design Award: Australia & Pacific, was the runner up to the Supreme WOW Award and came second in the Avant-garde Section. The judging panel said, "We absolutely loved the story and thought behind this entry - the two pieces are complementary yet subtly different and Kirsten has demonstrated a precision that you wouldn't think could be achieved by hand. *Woven In-tent* uses clever composition and every element is perfect, we particularly loved the linear forms that wrap the body."

Tara Morelos, Ahmad Mollahassani & Nelia Justo of Sydney came third in the Transform Section with their garment *Infini-D*.

Michelle Wade of New South Wales came third in the White Section with *Enlightened*, the garment she worked on with her New Zealand-based brother Adam Wade.

For three weeks every year, the internationally renowned wearable art competition showcases the finalist entries in a spectacular theatrical show in New Zealand's vibrant capital city of



Wellington. An audience of around 60,000 people are expected to attend the 2019 World of WearableArt Awards Show season, with many travelling from around New Zealand and the world to attend this must-see annual event.

This year's Supreme WOW Award winner is *The Lady Warrior* by Rinaldy Yunardi of Jakarta, Indonesia. This is the second time Rinaldy has been crowned Supreme WOW Award winner - he first won in 2017 for his garment *Encapsulate*, which was also the Open Section Award winner.

Rinaldy created *The Lady Warrior* with the toughest warrior of all in mind - the woman. *The Lady Warrior* plays the role of daughter, wife and mother. She is about inner strength rather than brute physical strength. "I used various mediums of materials to represent different elements of *The Lady Warrior*. Recycled paper made into rope and woven tightly together represents humanity and inner strength built from her experiences - she was born vulnerable but with life experiences she has strengthened and become strong" he says.

World of WearableArt Founder and Resident Judge Dame Suzie Moncrieff says *The Lady Warrior* is "a garment that the judges described as an extraordinary metamorphosis of a fragile organic material into something so beautiful. Demonstrating perfect balance and form, as well as immaculate craftsmanship, *The Lady Warrior* conveys a stunning fragility which is perfectly balanced with a subtle strength. The judges particularly loved the use of traditional weaving to create a piece that is so contemporary."

Rinaldy also won the Avant-garde Section and the International Design Award: Asia with *The Lady Warrior*.

In 2019, designers from 43 countries and regions entered in the hope of their garment making it through the judging process and appearing on stage as a World of WearableArt Awards finalist. Finalists come from an incredibly diverse range of backgrounds, professional and non-professional, and working in the fields of fashion, art, costume and theatre, along with students and first-time entrants.

This year the 115 finalist designers were presented with six design provocations, which subsequently form the six worlds of the stage show. Three of these thematic worlds are recurring - Aotearoa, Avant-garde and Open, and three are new for 2019 - Mythology, Transform and White.

WOW's 2019 judging panel is comprised of WOW Founder and resident judge Dame Suzie Moncrieff, innovative Auckland-based designer James Dobson of fashion label Jimmy D and



acclaimed multimedia sculptor Gregor Kregar. In addition, a number of awards were judged by Sir Richard Taylor, CEO and Creative Director of Weta Workshop, B. Åkerlund, iconic fashion activist and co-founder of The Residency Experience in Los Angeles, and Melissa Thompson, Cirque du Soleil's Montreal-based Creative Intelligence Team Lead + Conceptrice.

Dame Suzie Moncrieff, WOW Founder and resident judge says: "Each year we are presented with the most extraordinary garments and each year it gets harder and harder to judge as there are so many outstanding works. This year has been no exception. I have been astounded by the wide range of materials used and the intricacy and originality of the designs. It is the highlight of my year and is an exhilarating and humbling experience to view this stage full of the world's best examples of wearable art and to appreciate the immense amount of work that goes into each one of them".

The World of WearableArt Awards Show is on at TSB Arena, Wellington from September 26 until October 13. Tickets and more information at [worldofwearableart.com](http://worldofwearableart.com)

### **Full list of winners**

#### ***The Lady Warrior* by Rinaldy Yunardi (Jakarta, Indonesia)**

Winner: Supreme WOW Award

Winner: Avant-garde Section

Winner: International Design Award: Asia

#### ***Woven In-tent* by Kirsten Fletcher (Queensland, Australia)**

Winner: The Residency Experience Award

Winner: International Design Award: Australia & Pacific

Runner Up: Supreme WOW Award

Second: Avant-garde Section

#### ***Waka Huia* by Kayla Christensen (Island Bay, Wellington)**

Winner: Dame Suzie Moncrieff Award

Third: Aotearoa Section

#### ***Natural Progression* by Dylan Mulder (Wellington)**

Winner: Aotearoa Section

Winner: Wearable Technology Award

#### ***Kaitiaki* by Lisa Vanin (Cambridge, Hamilton)**

Winner: New Zealand Design Award



Second: Aotearoa Section

***Chrysanthemum & Amphitrite* by Jack Irving (London, United Kingdom)**

Winner: Open Section

Winner: International Design Award: United Kingdom & Europe

***Regnum Dei* by Daniella Sasvári & Aaron La Roche (Upper Hutt, Wellington)**

Second: Open Section

***Collide-o-Scope* by Vicky Robertson (Newtown, Wellington)**

Third: Open Section

***Gemini: the Twins* by Dawn Mostow & Ben Gould (Atlanta, United States)**

Winner: International Design Award: Overall

Winner: International Design Award: Americas

Third: Avant-garde Section

***Huaxia Totem* by Sun Ye, Miao Yuxin & Yuan Jue (Shanghai, China)**

Winner: White Section

Winner: Weta Workshop Emerging Designer Award

***The Blomar* by Akhilesh Gupta (Bangalore, India)**

Second: White Section

***Enlightened* by Michelle Wade (New South Wales, Australia) & Adam Wade (Hawke's Bay, New Zealand)**

Third: White Section

***Infini-D* by Tara Morelos, Ahmad Mollahassani & Nelia Justo (Sydney, Australia)**

Third: Transform Section

***Sea Urchin Explosion* by Jack Irving (London, United Kingdom)**

Winner: Cirque du Soleil Invited Artisan Award

Winner: Transform Section

***Dress Up Dolls* by Meg Latham (Motueka, Nelson)**

Second: Transform Section

***Banshee of the Bike Lane* by Grace DuVal (Chicago, United States)**



Winner: Mythology Section

***Soul Guardian* by Chang Yi-Wei (New Taipei City, Taiwan)**

Second: Mythology Section

***The Moirai - the Shape of Us* by Tina Hutchison-Thomas (St Albans, Christchurch)**

Third: Mythology Section

***Wrath of Medusa* by Edyta Jermacz (Suchy Las, Poland)**

Winner: First-time Entrant Award

***Walk All Over Me* by Louise Dyhrfort (London, United Kingdom)**

Winner: Student Innovation Award

***Engolfed* by Leanne Day (Papakura, Auckland)**

Winner: Sustainability Award

## **Winner stories**

### **Australia**

Choosing to live in light and self expansion inspired **Michelle Wade** (New South Wales, Australia) & **Adam Wade's** (Hawkes Bay, New Zealand) garment *Enlightened*. Over 18 months and five trips between New Zealand and Australia, the siblings took their garment from concept to design to construction. Although Michelle is a first-time international designer, she is originally from New Zealand and wanted to create the garment on New Zealand soil. She chose Edlin Martine Ltd, the closest boat builder to the town where she and Adam grew up. "We set out to create a bold, unique, sculpturally symmetrical piece: a garment to be enjoyed and appreciated from any angle, anywhere in the audience. We wanted both males and females to recognise our chosen material of fibreglass and connect with it."

**Tara Morelos, Ahmad Mollahassani & Nelia Justo's** (Sydney, Australia) garment, *Infini-D*, is a homage to Yayoi Kusama's immersive art experiences - her iconic infinity rooms and nets. An infinite geometric grid of shifting colours creates the illusion of 3D depth penetrating a 2D surface bringing unexpected dimension to the garment where the model's body disappears within the illusory space. "The stylistic mash-up of futurist aesthetic and historical fashion recalls 'the uncanny' as experienced in post-modern gothic cinema; simultaneously unsettling and yet also strangely familiar. Stitching together industrially sourced materials and electronic components, the garment's construction has been approached from an architectural perspective." This is their first time entering World of WearableArt.



Made using over 500 abandoned tents, **Kirsten Fletcher's** (Queensland, Australia) garment *Woven In-tent* highlights the disturbing practice of people abandoning tents after music festivals. Kirsten first came across this issue eight years ago when she was leaving the famous Glastonbury festival. She began a journey to collect abandoned tents from various festivals and when she had collected 500, she started experimenting with the fabric for her garment. "I finally had my 'aha' moment after attending a basket weaving course. This was the key! I had been using the tent fabric the wrong way and not utilising its strengths. Its ability to crease meant I could cut the tent fabric into strips and create pleated strands to re-weave the fabric into something with new depth and texture. This once abandoned and discarded material suddenly became something with a beautiful lustre and a new life. Our fast fashion culture is setting a dangerous precedent to disregard and undervalue materials and resources. Sadly, this story isn't new, but it needs to be retold over and over again before we realise the implications of our decisions." Kirsten has been entering World of WearableArt since 2013 and came third in the Open Section in 2015 with her garment *Flow of Creation*.

### **China**

**Sun Ye, Miao Yuxin & Yuan Jue** (Shanghai, China) from Donghua University took inspiration from the Chinese totem - dragon, for their garment *Huaxia Totem*. The dragon totem symbolises power, strength and good luck in China and is a wonderful legend. Chinese are often called the descendants of the dragon. "In *Huaxia Totem* we expressed our impression of HuaXia dragon through 3D-printing. Our belief in dragons is displayed through the pure, noble and ethereal colour, white. Through this white totem, we call for peace and harmony in the world."

### **India**

**Akhilesh Gupta** (Bangalore, India) was inspired by the balanced form of the lotus for his garment *The Blomar*. "The lotus has been inspirational for creative masterpieces all around the world, be it art or architecture. Because of its balanced form, no visual components overshadow the rest. *The Blomar* opens up like a blooming flower." Akhilesh was first a finalist in 2017 with his garment *Hedwigg*.

### **Indonesia**

Fashion accessories designer **Rinaldy Yunardi** (Jakarta, Indonesia) created his garment *The Lady Warrior* with the toughest warrior of all in mind - the woman. *The Lady Warrior* plays the role of daughter, wife and mother - she isn't about brute physical strength but inner strength. "I used various mediums of materials to represent different elements of *The Lady Warrior*. Recycled paper made into rope and woven tightly together represents humanity and inner strength built from her experiences - she was born vulnerable but with life experiences she has strengthened and become strong." Rinaldy first entered World of WearableArt in 2017 winning



the Avant-garde Section with his garment *Cosmos*, Open Section Award and Supreme WOW Award with garment *Encapsulate*. He has two entries in this year's Show.

## **New Zealand**

### **Auckland**

**Leanne Day** (Papakura, Auckland) was inspired by the wondrous overwhelming feeling of having more ideas than time to create *Engolfed*, a garment made from old golf bags and clubs. Leanne describes herself as a creative with a million thoughts running through her head at one time, where she often feels engulfed in a creative bubble that takes her focus away from daily life. "I bought a few different old golf bags and clubs on Trade Me and started cutting them up not knowing what my garment would look like. I wanted the materials to take on their own form, repurposing the great lines of the pockets and hardware used on the golf bags. I wanted the golf bags to represent the ideas swirling around in my head constantly and their weight symbolises the engulfing feeling I get that takes over my life."

### **Christchurch**

**Tina Hutchison-Thomas's** (St Albans, Christchurch) three piece entry *The Moirai - the Shape of Us* is based on exploring shape and colours to tell the story of the thread of life - the beginning, middle and end. *The Moirai - the Shape of Us* was inspired by fate, shape and life, merging Greek mythology with 15th Century fashions on today's stage to show that despite our differences, we are all the same. In Greek mythology, the Moirai are the goddesses of fate. Clotho spins the thread of life, Lachesis measures the length of life, and Atropos (representing inevitability) cuts the thread of life. "Spinning, measuring and cutting reflect not only all life, but my own personal creative journey. I love the idea of using different shapes - the rectangle, triangle and circle to represent the story of the thread of life," she said. Tina won the New Zealand Design Award in 2018 with garment *Eye See You Fluffy Kōwhai*.

### **Hawke's Bay**

Choosing to live in light and self expansion inspired **Michelle Wade** (New South Wales, Australia) & **Adam Wade's** (Hawke's Bay, New Zealand) garment *Enlightened*. Over 18 months and five trips between New Zealand and Australia, the siblings took their garment from concept to design to construction. Although Michelle is a first-time international designer, she is originally from New Zealand and wanted to create the garment on New Zealand soil. She chose Edlin Martine Ltd, the closest boat builder to the town where she and Adam grew up. "We set out to create a bold, unique, sculpturally symmetrical piece: a garment to be enjoyed and appreciated from any angle, anywhere in the audience. We wanted both males and females to recognise our chosen material of fibreglass and connect with it."



### **Nelson**

As a child growing up in the 1950s **Meg Latham** (Nelson) had a fascination with paper dolls and that interest was the inspiration for her garment *Dress Up Dolls*. “Never satisfied with the clothes supplied, I cut out and decorated my own fashion range. I’ve never really moved on from this - the paper dolls have just become people.” Meg is a long-time entrant of World of WearableArt, with her first foray into the competition being back in 1994.

### **Waikato**

Native tūī gave **Lisa Vanin** (Cambridge) the idea for her garment *Kaitiaki*. The tūī is unique in looks and sound and represents us as guardians of Aotearoa. Kaitiaki means guardian, tiaki is to look after and kai is used for a person who does the looking after. “We have one chance to look after our precious environment and natural resources to pass on to our future generations as their inheritance.” The wingspan in the design is indicative of the tūī and a guardian angel to look over our land. *Kaitiaki* is made from bamboo and copper materials and more than 700 handmade feathers have been crafted from those materials. “The layers of feathers and garments represent the different cultures, beliefs and diversity that makes us uniquely New Zealand. The ‘river’ of copper feathers cascading down the front also represents the water that surrounds us and is an essential part of our existence and ecosystem. The copper crosses represents our communities being pulled together and the patience and understanding required when such diversity is present. The Māori cloak is a solid and sturdy form, representing the warmth of our people and the community coming together as a united force to work as one.” Lisa first entered World of WearableArt in 2014, and in 2017 she was awarded Second in the Aotearoa Section for her garment *The Cloak of Pīwakawaka*.

### **Wellington**

**Dylan Mulder** is a Wellington-based industrial designer and 3D modeller who used artificial intelligence to create his garment *Natural Progression*. The inspiration behind *Natural Progression* is very much focussed on unlocking new thinking around Māori design using AI. “Much like a Māori carver or ta moko artist, AI intuitively reads the organic canvas, takes influence from spiritual concepts and grows itself in response to its form. From flint to steel tools to dremels - AI is just another tool in the shed. As a half Dutch, half Māori New Zealander, I am exposed to two distinctly different cultures. Having lived predominantly in European environments around the world, I find I wish to reconnect with my Māori side more to complete the picture.” Dylan has entered World of WearableArt a number of times since 2012 and in 2016 he won the Cirque du Soleil Award with his garment *Digital Stealth Gods* and was flown to Montréal, Canada to complete a four-week internship at Cirque du Soleil HQ.

**Kayla Christensen** (Island Bay, Wellington) looked to her genealogy, culture and heritage to find inspiration for her garment *Waka Huia*. Kayla describes *Waka Huia* as a goddess who





walks our sacred land, “Protecting our most prized taonga in her waka huia treasure box, taking it with her everywhere she goes.” Kayla was given a waka huia box of her own, along with a greenstone and three feathers from her partner and his family, and it’s one of her most prized possessions. This inspired her to create *Waka Huia* as a vessel that contains all our sacred, native taonga here in Aotearoa. “She holds eternal value to our native flora and fauna here in Aotearoa, a connection which runs deep through her veins and is passed down from her ancestors.” Kayla has been a World of WearableArt finalist every year since 2009 with her 2017 (*Kuini*) and 2018 (*Ancient Dreamscape*) garments both receiving awards in the Aotearoa Section.

**Vicky Robertson** (Newtown, Wellington) took inspiration from the kaleidoscope that transfixed the public in the 1800s for her garment *Collide-o-Scope*. “A person couldn’t walk down the street in London without seeing people being so immersed in the new invention.” Her garment draws on the wonder of the kaleidoscope with its colliding and overlapping colours. The idea was first sparked when she saw an image of a model walking directly in front of a projection of Notre-Dame’s rose window. “I wondered if I could recreate the effect of the window framing her.” The garment took 10 months to construct and most of her time was spent on computer drawing and perfecting the design of the harness the model would wear to carry the wheel. Vicky has been entering the competition since 2012 and won the Sustainability Award for her garment *Queen Qwerty* in 2013.

**Daniella Sasvári & Aaron La Roche** (Upper Hutt, Wellington region) based their garment *Regnum Dei* around telling this story and the statement ‘the Land of God welcomes everybody with love and respect’. “I am very sad that the political climate in Hungary is still filled with hate against Jews and Gypsies. Especially because St. Stephen 1000 years ago wrote in his advice that we must treat everybody with Christian love and compassion. He said that the nation will become rich, wise and knowledgeable if we become a multicultural society. I painted my version of St. Stephen’s offering with the minorities too - there is a Jewish money exchanger, Szeklers and Gypsies.” Daniella has been entering World of WearableArt since 2010.

### **Poland**

**Edyta Jermacz** (Suchy Las, Poland) drew on the mythological Medusa for inspiration with her garment *Wrath of Medusa*. Made from vinyl latex and neoprene, the garment features a picture of Bernini’s Medusa sculpture and a modern streetwear vibe. This is Edyta’s first time entering World of WearableArt and she has two entries in this year’s Show.

### **Taiwan**

**Chang Yi-Wei** (New Taipei City, Taiwan) likes to create works of art that represent the soul and don’t look human-like - that’s what her garment *Soul Guardian* is all about. “In a world full of



dark forces, inner demons make us fall and keep biting our hearts. We all need a god to purify our hearts. To preserve the integrity and purity of our souls.” This is Yi-Wei’s first year entering World of WearableArt.

### **United Kingdom**

Costume Designer **Jack Irving** (London, United Kingdom) has entered World of WearableArt for the first time this year and has an impressive four entries in this year’s Show; two of which have won awards. *Chrysanthemum & Amphitrite* demonstrate design inspiration that is two-fold. One piece is an iridescent inflatable wearable sculpture inspired by the chrysanthemum flower. “An exotic flower from a cosmic galaxy, which encapsulates its goddess within. She lures the viewer in from far away with her iridescent reflective petals. Her power and beauty prevail.” The second piece relates to the deep sea worm family Sabellidae commonly known as the ‘feather duster worm’ found on the sea bed. “This strong yet delicate piece represents Amphitrite’s regalia as she’s ruling the world of the deep, and captivates the viewer as the colours of the piece change as she moves in the light.” Jack’s other award-winning entry is *Sea Urchin Explosion* - an inflatable sea urchin showgirl dress. The garment starts like a dormant squid and transforms by inflating into an impressive sea urchin sculpture on stage. “The piece inflates to fend off the enemy if they get too close. A warning to any predator that wants to get a closer look!”

**Louise Dyhrfort** (London, United Kingdom) looked to the stiletto heel for inspiration when designing her garment *Walk All Over Me*. Louise reflected on her personal experiences of being a teenager out clubbing and not having enough money to get a taxi home. Instead, she and her friends would take off their heels and walk home holding them in their hands like a weapon. “*Walk All Over Me* is an installation that actively questions the use of something vulnerable in creating something aggressive. I want to force the viewer to see what they think suppresses the wearer can instead be used to defend oneself.”

### **United States**

**Grace DuVal** (Chicago, United States) pays tribute to the hundreds of needless cyclist deaths that happen every year around the world with her garment *Banshee of the Bike Lane*. This is Grace’s third year using recycled bicycle parts to create WOW garments. Having had a close-call as a cyclist herself and watching her friends mourn the loss of a fellow cyclist who was killed by a double-decker bus, Grace wanted to create a figure that honours those that have lost their lives. “*Banshee of the Bike Lane* heralds the death of cyclists senselessly killed by motor vehicles. Her wails echo through the city streets as she mourns those who have fallen. She is dressed all in black, her garb a shroud made from recycled bicycle inner tubes, chains and cogs; the cycling materials embracing her and honouring those whom she mourns.” The garment takes inspiration from the banshees of Irish mythology, wailing female spirits who



heralded the death of loved ones through their screams and shrieks. Grace has been entering World of WearableArt since 2009 and in 2017 she was the runner-up to the Supreme WOW Award and winner of the Sustainability Award with her garment *Refuse Refuge*. In 2018 she won the Dame Suzie Moncrieff Award with her garment *Mind the Synaptic Gap*.

Like a herd of sprinting zebras or a striped cobra ready to strike, **Dawn Mostow & Ben Gould's** (Atlanta, United States) garment *Gemini: the Twins* hypnotises the audience with its spiralling patterns. The husband and wife team discovered latex in 2009 and together formed Dawnmatrix, a latex fashion company that went on to dress pop stars like Katy Perry and Beyonce. Using their signature material - latex - they have created *Gemini: the Twins* with the intention of forcing the audience to do a double-take. "They will first see the beautiful silhouette, and negative space between the mirrored figures. Then they will realise that the two figures are wearing identically opposing patterns and their eyes will dart back and forth to confirm each motif." Dawn and Ben have been entering World of WearableArt since 2017 and have won a number of awards. In 2017 they won the Wearable Technology Award with their garment *Labyrinth Gown* and came Third in the Red Section with *The Messenger*. In 2018 they were overall winners of the International Design Award, as well as winning the International Design Award: Americas, and Second in the Under the Microscope Section with their garment *Foreign Bodies*.