

Lucid Epiphany

SEAN PURUCKER, UNITED STATES

This living, breathing 'dream catcher' is made using wire, rope, beads, plastic, glass and Spandex. Purucker, a costume maker from California, says: "WOW is an escape from the busy, stressful, overwhelming lives we all lead."



THE ART OF FASHION

The World of WearableArt show has been a fixture on the New Zealand arts calendar for 25 years. Now its unique hybrid celebration of fashion and art is going global

Words: Robert Tighe Photography: The Brancott Estate World of WearableArt



Suzie Moncrieff was a struggling sculptor when she organised the first World of WearableArt (WOW) show. It was 1987 and a couple of hundred people turned up to support what was intended to be a one-off fundraiser for a rural art gallery in Nelson.

Moncrieff however, was quick to spot the potential.

"I knew I had something very special," she says. "There was, and still is, nothing like it anywhere else in the world. There have been copycat events that accept any old fancy-dress costume, but we've always set high standards."

In the early days "colourful knitted cardigans and tie-dye dresses" were considered wearable art, says Moncrieff, but it didn't take long for designers to embrace the concept and start creating "art for the body rather than pretty dresses".

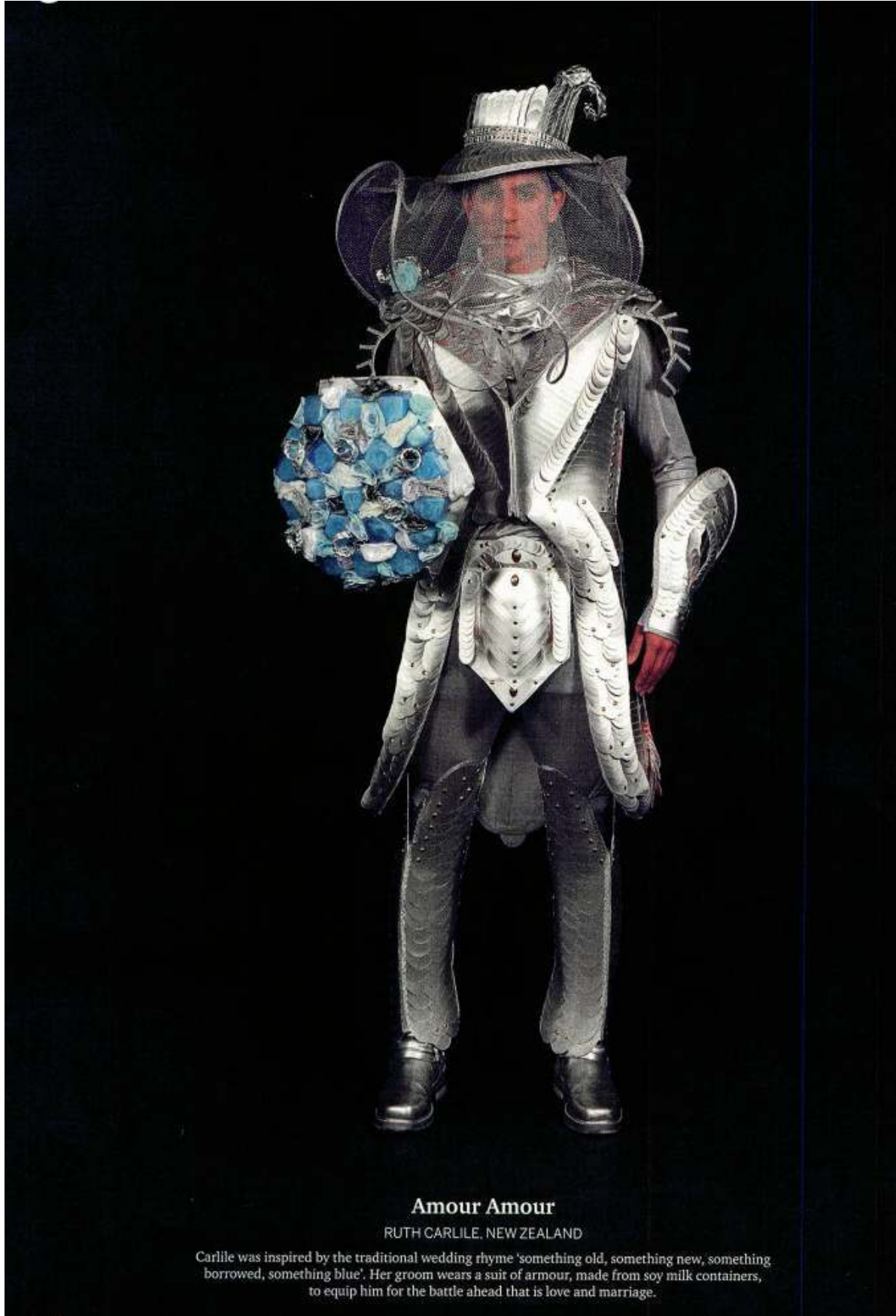
Almost 50,000 people attended the 2011 Brancott Estate World of WearableArt awards show in Wellington, a two-hour theatrical spectacular. A third of the 300-plus entries came from overseas designers and in January the WOW experience will be showcased to an international audience for the first time at the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

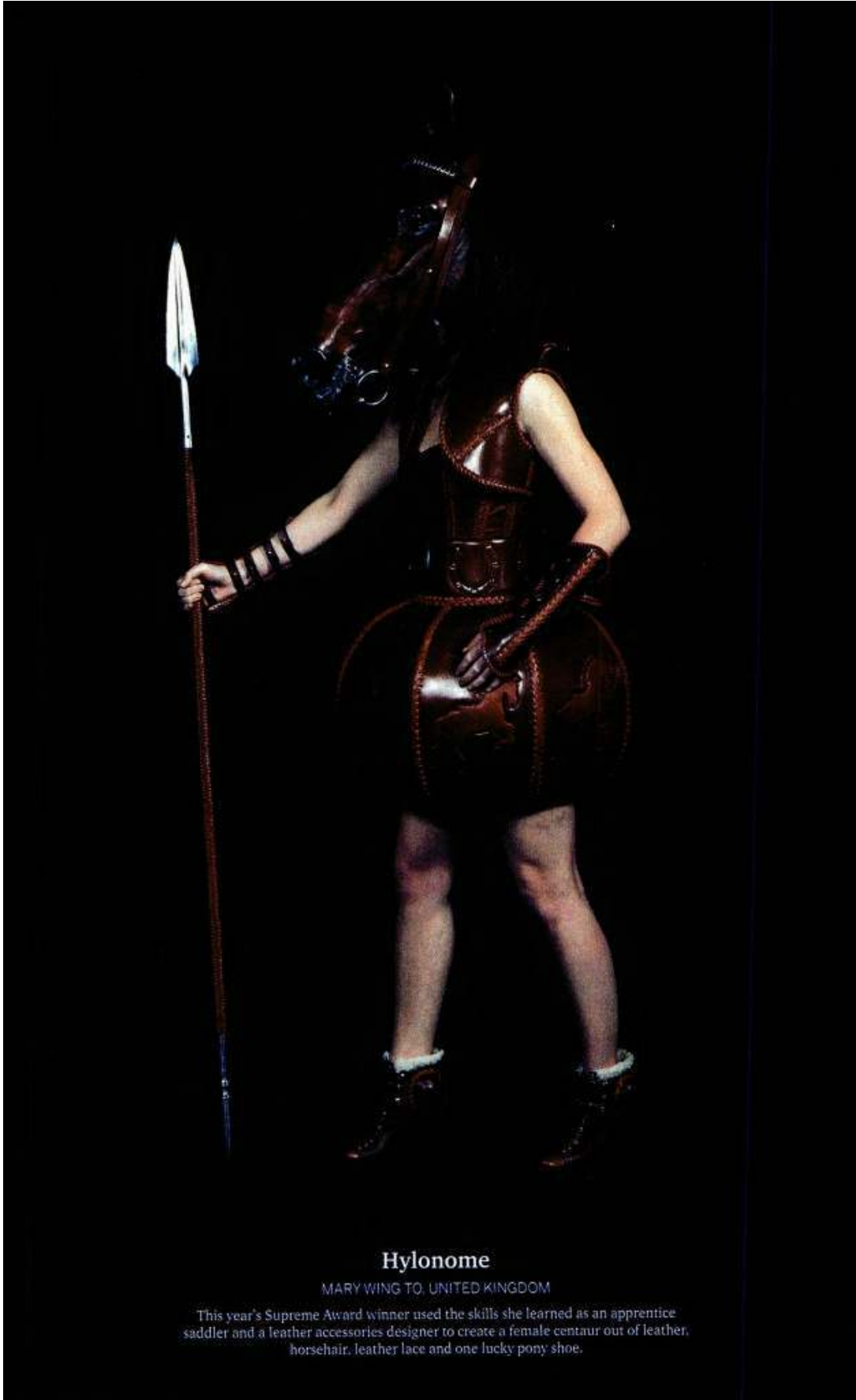
"This is the start of the next journey," says Moncrieff.

"We've become an iconic event in New Zealand. Now it's time to see what we can do internationally."

Moncrieff has a five-year plan: regional events around the world, culminating in a grand final.

"I'm hoping it will take off overseas," she says. "It's not an elitist show. You don't need a degree in design or fashion to enter: it's open to everybody. That's what makes it work, that's the magic of it. It's a great showcase for the designers, but it also makes art accessible and enjoyable. You don't have to be an intellectual to enjoy it."

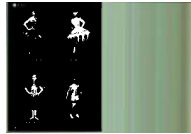




Hylonome

MARY WING TO, UNITED KINGDOM

This year's Supreme Award winner used the skills she learned as an apprentice saddler and a leather accessories designer to create a female centaur out of leather, horsehair, leather lace and one lucky pony shoe.



Feminine Mettle

FRANK STRUNK III, UNITED STATES



Girl In Red Shoes

SARAH HOPKINS, UNITED KINGDOM



Chrysolophus Pictus

NICOLE FITCHERS, UNITED KINGDOM



Sir Lace Alot

JULIE BRAWLEY, NEW ZEALAND



Hide In My Bone Shadow

MARJOLEIN VAN DER WAL, NETHERLANDS

The Supreme Award runner-up says her inspiration came from "the exoskeleton structure of insects. It was created from the desire for protection and I liked the idea of creating an armoured structure out of soft materials."

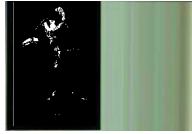


Skin
MARJOLEIN DALLINGA, CANADA

Itchy-Stitch
CHRISTOPHER DAVIS, NEW ZEALAND

Lady Bacilli Cocci
ANN SKELLY, NEW ZEALAND

Storyboards
ALI MIDDLETON, NEW ZEALAND



Hermecea

JAN KERR, NEW ZEALAND

Combining 'hermit' and 'crustacea' inspired a creature that could have been the love interest in the sci-fi movie *District 9*. Not surprisingly, Weta Workshop, the Wellington special-effects company that provided the spectacle for *District 9* and *The Lord of the Rings* films, offered Kerr a job.

