



Suspending the (un)conventional for fashion exhibit

As *Origins* goes to print, students from the Certificate IV in Fashion Design and Wearable Art are crafting “kooky” creations for their exhibition at the Darwin Festival 2009.

Inspired by the work of renowned British photographer Tim Walker, the *Moda Polymorphica* (fashion, multi-faceted) exhibit at this year's Darwin Festival was designed to challenge both designers and viewers to think “outside the box” and to showcase the imagination and creative skills of CDU's fashion students.

The project brief asked the students to create an “out there” piece of wearable art that included a sleeve or strap, a cane hoop in the skirt and would work visually from all angles, but particularly from below, as the creations were to be suspended from a tree and illuminated.

The creative pulse that gave life to the designs and exhibit began with the work of eminent fashion and portrait photographer Tim Walker. The rich photography of this award-winning British artist features regularly in the world's most exclusive fashion magazines.

Student Marie McGreggor said that despite the initial surprise of the Darwin Festival brief, she and her fellow students were soon enveloped by excitement.

“I must confess, I was a little overwhelmed at first by the enormity of the project. I only learnt to machine sew back in February (this year). But after many late nights designing and creating my dress, it's now finally complete. And although I'm a perfectionist, so am ever critical of my work, I am quite proud of the finished result.”

And proud she should be.

The 23-year-old's work, which she described as “Cinderella after midnight”, is spectacular: a deep purple fitted ball

gown from the front and a dishevelled, deconstructed labyrinth of fabric at the back.

“I used sandpaper to break down the cloth's texture, then bleached, knotted and shredded the fabric to create the train, which is detachable. I also screen-printed intricate motifs on to scraps of fabric which were then sewn on to add to the visual impact of the gown, particularly when it's lit up,” Marie said.

All the hard work and long hours have clearly paid off. Marie and her fellow students' creations are quite simply works of art and will no doubt create a visually stunning exhibit at this year's festival.

And while this project may have been daunting at first, it's spurred on Marie's passion for fashion.

“I've been told I have a unique style. I'm not sure how I could define it because I draw inspiration from everywhere. It's a mixture of many styles, meshing together hard and soft lines and using natural and manmade colours and materials.

“I want to work on my dressmaking techniques, while I study at CDU, so I can finely hone my style and some day get it out there on the catwalks,” she said. And having created couture just four months after learning to machine sew, Marie is sure to claim a space on the fashion stage.

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TEXT

Row Booker

IMAGE

Julianne Osborne

WEB BYTE

To view Tim Walker's fashion photography, visit the Design Museum W: www.designmuseum.org/exhibitions/2008/timwalker.

LEFT

Some of the creations ready for the Darwin Festival exhibit.

Anatomy of couture

To create “Cinderella after midnight”, Marie used:

- > 8m of cotton fabric
- > 8m of lining
- > 100m of thread
- > 1m cane hoop
- > 1lt of bleach
- > .5m of sandpaper
- > 500ml fabric paint
- > 290 hours on construction
- > unlimited imagination