

AUSTRALIAN WEARABLE ART FESTIVAL 2025

AWARDS, CATEGORIES AND JUDGING PROCESS

Welcome to the Australian Wearable Art Festival, where creativity knows no bounds and art transcends traditional boundaries. In this document, we present an overview of the diverse categories and awards that form the heart of our festival.

Awards

Each finalist must choose one of the following main categories to enter the event and there will be one winner and a runner-up awarded for each of these categories:

- Trashion
- Elements of Nature
- Abstract Form
- Avant-garde

From these categories the following additional awards will be celebrated.

- Innovation Award
- Sustainable Nature
- Textile and Fibre Award
- People's Choice
- Supreme Winner

Additionally, if the artist fits the criteria, the entry will also be eligible for:

- Emerging Wearable Artist (first time exhibitor at any wearable art show or exhibition)
- Youth Award (between 16 and 25 years on 9 August 2025).

Please note that an artist work will only be awarded one award ie a category winner and Supreme winner will not be given to the same work as in previous years.

Categories

1. Trashion

A combination of fashion and trash. This category repurposes discarded items or objects we may consider trash and brings them to life in a creation that is original, innovative and inspiring. This wearable art entry will ideally heighten awareness of the waste we generate in our everyday lives and will draw attention to the endless possibilities for reusing and up-cycling. This entry must be at least 80% legitimately upcycled trash.

Key words for this category are:

Disrupt – Deconstruct – Pull Apart – Connect – Build New – Repurpose – Intrigue – Delight
PRIZE: \$1500

2. Elements of Nature

Drawing inspiration from our natural surrounds and the forces that shape our world – earth, water, air and fire. This category invites the artist to celebrate the earth and its bountiful gifts, the water that nourishes all life, the oceans that ebb and flow with the tides, the air we breathe and the winds that fill our sails, and the fire that warms and transforms, embodying the spirit of renewal and resilience.

This category embodies the essence of these elements, creating wearable art that honours the cycles of nature and our connection to the environment in all its forms.

Whilst we encourage sustainability, any materials can be used.

Key words for this category are:

Cyclical – Environment – Explore – Movement – Connected

PRIZE: \$1500

3. Abstract Form

Whether fluid or structured, organic or geometric, this category explores the abstract shape not influenced by the human form. This is a call to explore the boundaries and experiment with how shapes can convey movement, stillness, strength, or grace.

Whether your creation embodies the flowing curves of water or the rigid angles of architecture, let your imagination sculpt the space around the body, crafting a wearable masterpiece that speaks through its silhouette.

No material restrictions.

Key words for this category are:

Innovative – Expressionism – Modern – Challenge – Unexpected

PRIZE: \$1500

4. Avant-garde

This is the 'New World'. Let's push the boundaries and step into what we do not know. Designs challenging the traditional aesthetic, unexpected materials and striking silhouettes. It's 'Style beyond Fashion', embracing experimentation but telling the world a story so important to hear.

This wearable art creation will take us into an infinite world of possibilities - a journey that challenges our perceptions of where fashion ends and art begins.

This category has no limits on new, reused or natural materials – the world is your oyster!

Key words for this category are:

Bold – Provoke – Surprise – Spectacular – Intrigue – Unconventional – Drama

PRIZE: \$1500

Additional Awards

Innovation Award \$1000

This award is for those who dare to venture beyond the conventional, experimenting with new techniques, materials, and concepts. Whether through cutting-edge technology, lighting or movement, unique construction methods, or unexpected applications, we seek works that redefine what wearable art can be. Show us your boldest ideas, your most daring innovations—this is where the future of fashion and art collide.

Sustainable Award \$500

This award is for the artist who displays a commitment to sustainability in their creative process, through the use of eco-friendly materials, and ethical practices, with at least 80% organic natural materials being used in the final piece.

Textile and Fibre \$500 plus article in Textile Fibre Forum magazine

This category honours the artistry and craftsmanship of textiles and fibres, celebrating their versatility and tactile beauty. Whether woven, knitted, felted, or stitched, this is a space for artists to explore the endless possibilities of fabric and fibre. We invite you to experiment with texture, pattern, and form, using traditional techniques or innovative.

Emerging Wearable Artist \$1000

Many of our artists are experimenting with wearable art for the first time and for this we applaud you. No matter what artistic background you have come from, if this is your first exhibited wearable art piece, you will be in with a chance for winning this award.

Youth Award \$500

Australian Wearable Art Festival has a commitment to nurturing young talent and this award is given to our standout artist who will be between 16-25 years on 8 August 2025.

People's Choice Award \$500

This hugely popular award is voted on by our audience members.

Supreme Award \$5000 + article in Textile Fibre Forum magazine

This is our main award – our 'Best in Show' and the winner could be from any category. Different from previous years, a category award-holder will not be automatically awarded the Supreme title.

Judging Process

The judging process at the Australian Wearable Art Festival is characterised by a personalised and insightful engagement with the artists. This year will see a designated judging area and the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations with the participating finalists, to gain a deeper understanding of the inspiration, technical skill and creative journey behind each unique wearable art piece. Artists' statements are reviewed to gain insights into the conceptual foundations and meaning behind the wearable art submissions and then the judging panel submit their final scores after seeing the pieces performed on the catwalk.

Judges allocate scores based on the following criteria:

1. Concept to creation

How successful has the artist been in bringing their concept into creation. Each artist will speak about their original vision and then how this might have developed over the making of the garment. Based on the artist's intent, does this piece resonate/deliver the artist's story clearly?

2. Meeting the category criteria

It is important that each piece is an accurate representation of its category. For example, a garment in Trashion must be made from 80% recycled materials. When looking at scoring, it may be that some artists have cleverly complimented their category more than others.

3. Skill/Execution

It is important to consider the level of skill drawn on for each piece - how the materials were manipulated and the form was constructed innovatively to build the final piece. Consideration will also be given to the level of traditional skills used such as patternmaking, sewing or floristry etc.

4. Silhouette/shape

Judges will look at the design basics of shape or form, structure, colour and texture and view the balance of the overall design. How does the garment fit together as a connected and coordinated look, taking the shape or silhouette, line, colour and texture into consideration? How do headpieces, accessories and shoes all add or detract to the piece?

5. Wearability

Once on the catwalk, how well does the piece 'dance' with the body. Are there movements within the piece that enhance the story, a flutter of feathers, something that catches the light or drags along the ground? Does the performer struggle with wearing the piece or is it effortless and seamless? Just keep in mind that marking is on the piece as opposed to the performance.

6. WOW/Impact

It is always difficult to measure something intangible but we are looking for a work that has that distinct point of difference. It may be in the form of an exaggerated feature, a striking colour, a piece of millinery so amazing it could enter on its own, a spectacular silhouette or a stunning fabric.