

POWERLINE

the magazine of the powerhouse museum summer 10/11

lace design
competition





TOP: ANNIEBELL MARRNGAMARRNGA, YAWK YAWK SPIRITS, MADE FROM WOVEN BUSH GRASSES; ABOVE: PATRICIA PAYNE, DESIGN FOR HOLD 6; TOP RIGHT: JOEP VERHOEVEN, LACE FENCE; LOWER RIGHT: LAURAN SUNDIN, PENDANT. IMAGES COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS.

The finalists of the Powerhouse International Lace Award will go on exhibition from July 2011

positive spaces

STORY BY LINDIE WARD, CURATOR, POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

Finalists for the Powerhouse International Lace Award have now been chosen by five international and Australian judges. From an outstanding field of 700 entries, the chosen designs feature a broad scope of philosophies, techniques and materials from 22 countries around the globe.

The work of 140 finalists will go on display in a unique exhibition at the Powerhouse Museum in July 2011 as part of the Sydney Design festival. Prizes totalling \$40 000 AUD will be awarded. The overall winner will receive \$20 000 and \$4000 will be awarded in each category of traditional techniques, built environment, fashion and accessories, digital multi media and Australian and New Zealand student work.

The project defines lace as 'an openwork structure in which the pattern of spaces is as important as the solid areas'. This very broad definition can encompass a wide range of materials and techniques. The aim of the project is to encourage innovative design and to remind designers and lace makers that every lace design was, at some moment in time, innovative and contemporary. Creating new work in unorthodox combinations involves a continuous chain of problem solving. Each designer has embraced this exciting challenge.

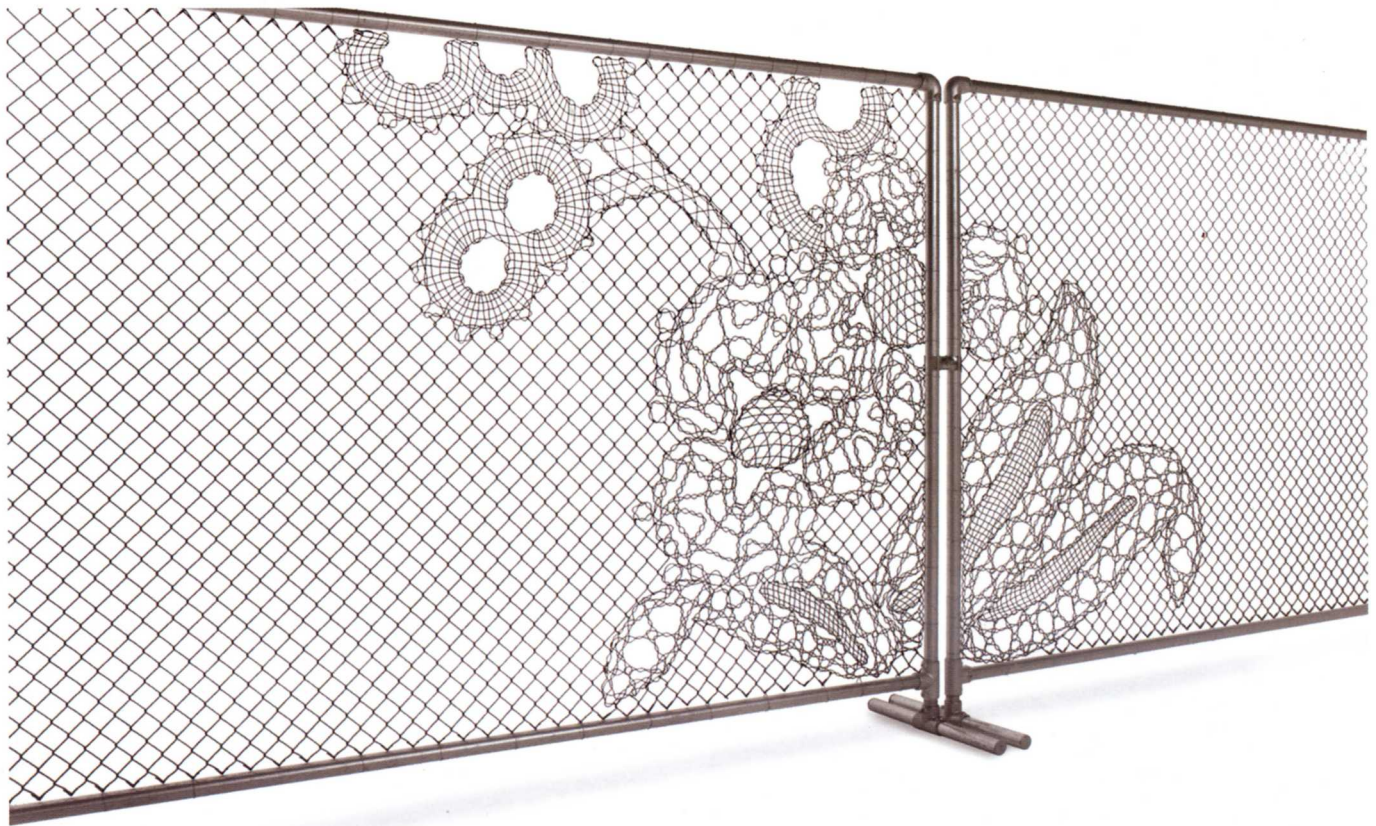
Finalists' work was chosen for its visual impact, originality and creativity, innovation in design, materials or techniques and skill in execution. Their work encompasses a fascinating range of conceptual interpretations of place or origin. Each artist has discussed their work and inspirations in their submissions – how their work has developed and what it represents for them personally. To date the works have been

presented as proposals so many are still to be created and have freedom to evolve before they are submitted to the Museum in January 2011*. Their statements tell of the 'beauty of the world of mathematics' (Dr Lasse Remppe), of 'beauty created by the intimate touch of human hands.' (Lauran Sundin), and combining 'the sensitive and the small with the powerful, large and industrial.' (Joep Verhoeven). Lenka Suchanek comments 'When I make lace, I am totally at peace and in sync with the inner rhythm'.

Textile and metal works, some large and bold, some tiny and delicate, feature prominently in the submissions. Bethany Linton follows a family tradition of four generations of silversmiths in Western Australia. Her hand cut titanium jewellery, featuring designs of local endangered and extinct wild flowers, presents a powerful sense of place.

Other designers have also looked to their past and taken inspiration from family traditions. Vishna Collins is influenced by her Croatian origins where 'village people wore exquisitely hand crafted, richly embellished clothes whilst engaged in toiling soil, ploughing the fields...' Using needlelace techniques she illustrates how a beautiful garment can be created from simple raffia fibres. Mavis Ganambarr describes the making process of a group of women in Maningrida in the Northern Territory. 'Stories are told, laughter is shared as the women weave and in this way the pieces embody these things. In essence rather than interpreting origin, they embody it.

The final works will include large scale screens, garments of linked silver, and a bracelet, laser cut from a scribble, and



materials such as mulberry paper painted with persimmon juice, echidna spines and fine threads of glass. Karen Richards will produce a stop motion animation exploring her 3D textile sculpture 'Forest'. Though lace has been traditionally a decorative, two dimensional medium, Karen interprets lace 'in a random or more organic form as perfect for expressing a delicate or even brittle world. Its see-through qualities suggest skeletal forms, calcification, the organic and worn away.' Douglas McManus is another artist who creates textile prints from unusual sources, using his pelvic CT scan to create a quirky printed lace textile.

For Nava Lubelski the concept of destruction and repair is explored. She comments 'My work uses the creative power of destruction, as well as the constructive tools of repair and restoration. I celebrate accident, error and imperfection, developing narrative from chance and impulse. Rather than clean or discard, I embroider and decorate spills and stains on linens or canvas, turning the mess into a jumping off point for lyricism and improvisation.' Kate Campbell-Pope takes her inspiration from nature and the environment; she says 'The precariousness of human existence, and our tenuous relationship with our natural environment, are issues which are at the heart of my practice.'

The International Lace Award project presents an opportunity for the Museum to encourage and support the work of creative artists, bringing together a diverse range of skills in textile, wood, paper, glass, plastics, metal and multi media.

***Images in this article may be of artists' previous work.**

'THE PROJECT DEFINES LACE AS AN 'OPENWORK STRUCTURE' IN WHICH THE PATTERN OF SPACES IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE SOLID AREAS'

