

WEARABLE ART WHISPERS 2017

INTRODUCTION

Wearable Art Whispers is a new project by the City of Mandurah as part of its annual Common Threads Wearable Art competition and showcase. The Whispers project offers six wearable artists the opportunity to collaborate on the unique creation of a wearable art garment. The finished product will be an acclaimed exhibition piece for the Wearable Art Showcase, held in June 2017 in Mandurah, Western Australia.

Applications are open to experienced wearable artists living in Australia, able to connect and collaborate with other wearable art artists from around the country, grow the wearable arts community and enhance the artistic reputation of wearable art.

The project is similar to a progressive dinner or game of 'Whispers'. Six selected artists will each create a section of a garment, through interpretation of the theme 'La Mariposa' (Butterfly Woman) and in response to the work of the other artists in the project. Each artist will have four weeks to design and construct a section of the garment, before sending it to the next artist.

There is no fee to be involved and artists are required to supply their own materials. The City of Mandurah will pay all freight costs.

Applicants may be individual artists or partnership or collaboration. If a partnership or collaboration applies, information must include all contributors.

Applications close at 4pm (WST), 12 August 2016.

The project will be conducted from 26 August 2016 to 14 April 2017.

The garment section you construct must meet the following criteria.

1. Be a creative response to the theme 'La Mariposa'.
2. Be wearable; be able to be worn by a live model for photographs and in a choreographed show. Be durable and able to be worn up to 15 times. Headwear should be well fitted and balanced, and remain in place with movement. Be safe to wear, with no sharp edges and have an even weight distribution. Footwear should not restrict the ability of the model to walk and move safely.
3. Be size 10 (Bust 84cm, waist 68cm, Hips 92cm))
4. Be able to be freighted in a maximum size of 0.5 cubic metre.
5. Do not repeat or extinguish what has been created by another artist. Your contribution must build on what has already been done and be distinct yet connected. Consider layers, structures, extensions, textures and story aspects rather than specific body parts or garment segments.
6. Use care in handling, storing and packing the garment.

THEME

La Mariposa, Butterfly Woman By Clarissa Pinkola Estes

The project theme is La Mariposa (Butterfly Woman), based on the story in 'Women Who Run With The Wolves' by Clarissa Pinkola Estés. It's a mythological story that has layers of meaning and many options for creating a wearable art garment.

"...To the visitors, a butterfly is a delicate thing. "O fragile beauty," they dream. So they are necessarily shaken when out hops Maria Lujan. And she is big, really big, like the Venus of Willendorf, like the Mother of Days, like Diego Rivera's heroic-size woman who built Mexico City with a single curl of her wrist.

And Maria Lujan, oh, she is old, very, very old, like a woman come back from dust, old like old river, old like old pines at timberline. One of her shoulders is bare. Her red-and-black manta, blanket dress, hops up and down with her inside it. Her heavy body and her very skinny legs made her look like a hopping spider wrapped in a tamale. She hops on one foot and then on the other. She waves her feather fan to and fro. She is The Butterfly arrived to strengthen the weak. She is that which most think of as not strong: age, the butterfly, the feminine.

Butterfly Maiden's hair reaches to the ground. It is thick as ten maize sheaves and it is stone gray. And she wears butterfly wings-the kind you see on little children who are being angels in school plays. Her hips are like two bouncing bushel baskets and the fleshy shelf at the top of her buttocks is wide enough to ride two children. She hops, hops, hops, not like a rabbit, but in footsteps that leave echoes.

"I am here, here, here... "I am here, here, here... "Awaken you, you, you!"

She sways her feather fan up and down, spreading the earth and the people of the earth with the pollinating spirit of the butterfly. Her shell bracelets rattle like snakes, her bell garters tinkle like rain. Her shadow with its big belly and little legs dances from one side of the dance circle to the other. Her feet leave little puffs of dust behind. The tribes are reverent, involved. But some visitors look at each other and murmur "This is it? This is the Butterfly Maiden?" They are puzzled, some even disillusioned. They no longer seem to remember that the spirit world is a place where wolves are women, bears are husbands, and old women of lavish dimensions are butterflies.

Yes, it is fitting that Wild Woman/Butterfly Woman is old and substantial, for she carries the thunder world in one breast, the underworld in the other. Her back is the curve of the planet Earth with all its crops and foods and animals. The back of her neck carries the sunrise and the sunset. Her left thigh holds all the lodge poles, her right thigh all the she-wolves of the world. Her belly holds all the babies that will ever be born.

Butterfly Maiden is the female fertilizing force. Carrying the pollen from one place to another, she cross-fertilizes, just as the soul fertilizes mind with night dreams, just as archetypes fertilize the mundane world. She is the centre. She brings the opposites together by taking a little from here and putting it there. Transformation

is no more complicated that. This is what she teaches. This is how the butterfly does it. This is how the soul does it.

Butterfly Woman mends the erroneous idea that transformation is only for the tortured, the saintly, or only for the fabulously strong. The Self need not carry mountains to transform. A little is enough. A little goes a long way. A little changes much. The fertilizing force replaces the moving of mountains.

Butterfly Maiden pollinates the souls of the earth: It is easier that you think, she says. She is shaking her feather fan, and she's hopping, for she is spilling spiritual pollen all over the people who are there, Native Americans, little children, visitors, everyone. She is using her entire body as a blessing, her old, frail, big, short-legged, short-necked, spotted body. This is woman connected to her wild nature, the translator of the instinctual, the fertilizing force, the mender, the rememberer of old ideas. She is La voz mitológica. She is wild woman personified.

The butterfly dancer must be old because she represents the soul that is old. She is wide of thigh and broad of rump because she carries much. Her grey hair certifies that she need no longer observe taboos about touching others. She is allowed to touch everyone: boys, babies, men, women, girl children, the old, the ill, and the dead. The Butterfly Woman can touch everyone. It is her privilege to touch all, at last. This is her power. Hers is the body of La Mariposa, the butterfly."

The excerpt can also be accessed at

<http://www.beliefnet.com/columnists/thequeenofmyself/2010/11/this-weeks-theme-is-dancing.html>

The link below is to the entire book. Chapter Seven contains the story and discussion of 'La Mariposa.'

<https://788be3696c7c7f4e8e320c10ccacccc4aea08c4c.googledrive.com/host/0B6CJm8vUSj0Rm9KOEZvTXNhanc/Women%20Who%20Run%20With%20The%20Wolves%20-%20Clarissa%20Pinkola%20Estes%20-%20EN/Women%20Who%20Run%20With%20The%20Wolves%20-%20Clarisa%20Pinkola%20Estes.pdf>

