

# Wellington Style



MICHAEL BEEL  
THE EXHIBITIONS

TRELISE COOPER  
LAMBTON QUAY LOCATION

THE SILK PRINCESS  
SOPHIE VOON BRIDAL WEAR





## CONTENTS

**6** TRELISE COOPER  
THE WELLINGTON STORE

**10** FIONA QUINN  
OTHER-WORLDLY

**15** MICHAEL BEEL  
THE EXHIBITIONS

**18** SILK PRINCESS  
SOPHIE VOON BRIDAL

**20** WORLD OF WEARABLEART  
AN INTERNATIONAL BRAND

**22** BIRD IN A CAGE  
REBECCA FARGHER

**25** DECO  
BY PHOENIX

**26** GOOD AS GOLD  
TREE FORT STORE DESIGN

**28** CRANE BROTHERS  
MADE TO MEASURE

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## INTRODUCTION

Retail does not exist without the replenishment from the designers, and our cool little style capital is home to some exceptional designers. The range of output is stupendous. It covers all bases from the avant garde art-performance-garments of Hermione Flynn to the delightful inventions of Starfish and the fluid silhouettes from Philippa & Alice.

These designers export: both their garments and their design stories. Many Wellington designers feature in the established fashion shows of Dunedin, Auckland, Melbourne and New York. Wellington's being home to Massey University's fashion design school is simply treasure, and many well-known names have been through its courses. The school pinpoints Wellington as a destination where things are happening – a fact buttressed by the city being host to the World of WearableArt extravaganza. Such international applause is not given to the sleepy.





# TRELISE COOPER

*The Trelise Cooper shop for Wellington is in this building, and serenely complements the old architecture with its own fresh wonderland offerings of Baroque notes, surprises and feelings.*

Since it went up in 1906, the old Public Trust building on Lambton Quay has always fascinated with its Florentine-Edwardian architecture. Here is a full display of the polished granite, marble, limestone and red brick so beloved by the period's architects; the delightful Baroque notes, the decorative surprises, the feeling of something special.

The shop is like a long gallery. This is the architecture of fantastic first impression, followed by a voyage through it, pausing and noticing. Overhead, skylights and

wooden ceiling trusses add flavour, and escort us.

The design is the work of Penny Barnett whose association with Trelise Cooper meant there was a deep understanding of what the brand stood for; what its story was. A Baroque spirit presides.

This is no suddenly decided-upon notion, as the brand has had this spirit for many years. In this shop, the baroque appears in a wealth of bloom-and-tendril motifs. These appear in framed drops of







vintage wallpaper, the moulded ormolu on the furniture, the painted rondels on the floor and the copper and iron work dazzling along the way. Particularly stunning are the peony blooms fabricated from copper sheeting left behind by a previous tenant of the space.

Garments are displayed both on racks and as styled mannequins. This styling work is exceptional: the mannequins show the exuberance of single pieces, as well as combining the pieces so the visitor can absorb Cooper's love of layering and colouring.



Towards the back of the shop are the dressing rooms – big, glorious tents of bronze-flecked material jutting out to soften, and excite, the view. They hint at the lavish campaign tents that Napoleon used on his way to Russia. Such a military hint is also occasionally encountered in some of the garment designs where there is the use of braid, epaulettes, pipings and facings done in regimental gold and cord.

At the rear of the shop is a generous mirror, bordered by metal tendril work. On top of this mirror, like a coronet, stands the Cooper cipher; a lower-case 't' engulfed with vines. It is the same cipher used for the signboard on the building's exterior.



# FIONA QUINN

Fiona Quinn is an exquisite practitioner of skill and imagination. Her technical accomplishment as a photographer is certainly beyond doubt, and in her blog [blog.fionaquinn.co.nz](http://blog.fionaquinn.co.nz) she generously carries on a Q and A rapport with her followers who want to know details.

Quinn is also a masterful art director. Much of her work has an evocative feel which can take us into the imagined landscapes of Wuthering Heights or position us in the swamp-gothic feel of Tennessee Williams.

She has an astute eye for location, whether it be something broad like an unsettling forest or something close up like the texture of industrial wreckage from the days of gold mining and monumental abattoirs. She possesses the genius of set-dressing, and also the intuition of knowing just when to capture the model so we believe there is a great story going on here.

In this image, reminiscent of a 1970s freshness and eagerness – perhaps a brief visit to the days of Mary Quant – is Quinn's shoot called *Chameleon*. The hair and make-up have perfect tonal modulations so the model gives us a sense of pure sincerity. And the garment, with its landscape of teased wisps and gnarly staples of wool, draws us in to a quiet appreciation of pure texture.

On the following page, the horse is called Othello, and the setting is his farm. The photo is part of an editorial shoot done for M2 magazine and titled *The Magician's Daughter*.

There was an emphasis on capturing an early-morning, misty, other-worldly feeling with not only the use of a smoke-machine, but also with serene pastel colourings. The quilt – so folk-art, so front verandah – was bought specially by Quinn for the assignment.



*Styling* Kiri Donaldson, *Hair* Shontal Healey,  
*Makeup* Amber Carroll, *Model* Shanna @ Red11.



# OTHELLO

*Styling* Courtney Sanders, *Makeup* Amber Carroll,  
*Hair* Miguel Lledo, *Model* Anmari @ Red11.







# MICHAEL BEEL

Some of the most exciting hairstyling is performance art. An opportunity to excel comes along in the form of a competition call and ideas begin to jostle for attention. Work begins: the stylist drawing on all the techniques gathered through a career.

The results are presented to an audience, might collect prizes along the way, then are photographed. The model walks away and that is often the project's full-stop. But, we have the photos to publish, and recall the verve of being in competition.

Wellington's Buoy salon has a long history of successful showings at expos, and this is much to do with having accomplished stylists working for the salon. Here we look at three expo works from the hands of Buoy's Michael Beel, Hair Director at Wellington Fashion Week.

We encounter fiery upcombing, the use of hidden frameworks, gorgeous colouring and the massing of loops and ringlets with extravagance. These are the works produced for major styling events for brands like Wella, ghd and Schwarzkopf.







# SILK PRINCESS

The gown is called 'Imperial Princess' and it is from Sophie Voon's bridal collection. The use of the word Imperial easily evokes a world of Chinese silk merchants trading with a Czarist-Hapsburg nobility of Middle Europe. It is quite different to the more Western white of gauze, lace, trains and veils.

The material is dupion silk – the weaving of silk from multiple cocoons. This lends a textured feel to the fabric where the manufacturing doesn't try to smooth out the small knots and tangles as the thread is extracted.

The embroidery is done with fine threads allowing subtle graduations of colour. The thread's slenderness also allows for a calligraphic presentation of tendrils and stalks from which burst the flower heads.

With such features, the material excludes anything other than a styling done along clean lines. Voon works the material with great poise and a satisfying lack of clamour. The only imposed piece of shaping are the stays giving volume to the bodice – a glance backwards at the centuries of suffocating, complicated bone corsetry.

The belt is also dupion silk; bamboo green, ruched for texture, and fastened at the back with giant pearlescent spheres.

'Imperial Princess' is just one of the items in the collection. Browsing through the look book is like opening doors along a corridor of pretty, made so much more delicious by having the garments modelled and photographed in imaginative settings.





# THE WORLD OF WEARABLEART

The World of WearableArt as an event began as a fascinating idea in the mind of Nelson artist Suzie Moncrieff. It was an idea which took art from the walls and wrapped it around models. It was in 1987 that the original show was presented in a community hall with prize money donated by a local cafe owner.

It soon became a fixture on the local calendar, then shifted to Wellington where it has become its own fabulous machine. The show is now a brand, and an international event. It is a two-hour performance full of dreams, surrealism, humour, the macabre and the fantastic.

Upwards of 170 creations are shown and a crew of 400 attends to all the details of lighting, sound, choreography and stage management. It is seen live by 50,000

people, and a press contingent ensures the world partakes as entrants come from over twenty countries.

Each year, there is a Supreme Winner, a beacon garment which is published all over the world. In 2007, this award went to Rattle Your Dags, a work of designers Ursula Dixon and Paula Coulthard.

Rattle Your Dags made reference to wool as a New Zealand product, but with great fun. A cycle helmet formed the structure for the alarming merino horns, crystals were scattered through hemp ropes to give it sparkle, and huge packets of wool – called fadges – produced a silhouette of something taking time out from the Eighteenth Century. Photo courtesy of World of WearableArt, and the model is Halina Wolyncewicz-Russ.





# BIRD IN A CAGE

The sheer amount of invention shown by a new wave of New Zealand jewellery designers is stunning. Here is the work of dedicated individuals following their own paths of imagination, themes and choices of materials. One of the many trends to captivate designers is the enjoyment of working on a small, almost microscopic scale. These are the pieces of jewellery you get close to. These are objects which carry a patina of heirloom about them.

This delicious work, titled the Bird in Cage locket, is by Rebecca Fargher and revels in minute execution. It is modelled in sterling silver which has been oxidised, then the surface highlights have been polished back to the gleam of silver.

As a locket, it is a charming sphere which opens to reveal a bird swinging from a collar, set against finely-etched trees. Fargher is represented by Quoil gallery in Wellington.







# DECO

Phoenix Renata, founder of Phoenix Cosmetics, has produced a brilliantly-crafted collection of makeup under the name Dollface Baby. Greatly evident is a cinematic spirit of Art Deco – encounters with movie star posters, the first use of neon lighting, and porcelain figures on heavy alabaster bases.

In this photo, Renata's notions of the 'face-as-canvas' and 'makeup is fun' are carried through with a verve any Deco practitioner would have appreciated. Colour grading is magical. The eye work

is crisp and balanced – the butterflies which have alighted are cut paper. The lipstick, called Berry, is a long-finish, substantial work of architectural colour.

The Deco era has always fascinated Renata. Covering the entire mood scale from delicious fun through to black and white movies, Deco relies on exacting lines and precision to produce masterful works. This range from Phoenix has all the material for such mastery.

Photograph by Fiona Quinn.



# GOOD AS GOLD

Wellington's *Good as Gold* is more than mere retail, it is a work of story-telling done with great amounts of wood. It has all the hallmarks of being styled like a tree fort. It is a reminiscence of vigorous childhood which purrs away throughout the place.

The shop has three levels. Not precise stories, but stages joined by sets of steps as if made to fit around tree trunks too large to remove. The top level, like that of a fort, feels siege-like with hinged windows you push open to check on who is approaching.

The wood is macrocarpa, sourced from a specialist sawmill in the Wairarapa. It is the wood of farm construction – sheds, fences, storage bins – and carries the honest smell of resin and circular saws. In places the wood is kept rough-sawn, but where used for display shelves it is polished smooth.

And, like whimsy, the dressing rooms for the ground floor stand in a row showing off their architectural heritage of part boatshed, part outhouse. Good as Gold is an astute marketing envelope. It is so appropriate for showcasing designers whose work is often edgy.





# CRANE BROTHERS

An exhaustive knowledge of fabrics like the Escorial wool, cottons and merino weaves is part of a Crane production. As is the construction of each garment: to see the hundreds of individual pieces which will soon become a three-piece suit is to look at engineering precision.

And Crane Brothers styling is anything but static and dusty. Crane can just as easily introduce us to superb, custom fits as it can show us fantastic layering where one might only glimpse beautiful details like shirt stripes, tie-bars and

subtle stitching patterns around pockets and down lapels. Crane can also clothe in big volume coats with striking silhouettes and luxurious materials.

On his website, Murray Crane says it has been his goal to sell tailored garments and accessories to men. Rewardingly, this is very evident in the Auckland and Wellington shops where ready-to-wear clothes are on display, as well as big books of fabric samples which tell us this brand is also strongly associated with made to measure.







## FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS WITH FIONA QUINN



Learn the components needed to **shoot fashion**.

The shoot process – developing an idea from start to finish and creating a magazine-worthy series of images.

How to approach agencies to gain access to models,

The importance of fashion history and trends.

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