

MAGIC GWAND

ART AND COMMERCE COME TOGETHER BEAUTIFULLY AT SWITZERLAND'S GWAND AWARDS

Text by Hannah Bhuiya

GWAND might not be the sweetest of names, but the awards have plenty of other attractions. There's the beauty of its location on Lake Lucerne, for a start, idyllic even in November when GWAND is held, as well as the lavishness of its awards, such as the Ackermann Prize (a contract worth €50,000) or the Swiss Textiles Award (€100,000), which comes with the services of financial advisers for a year. With such prizes on offer, the selection process is rigorous. Nominees are selected by a panel that in 2004 included Carla Sozzani and Suzy Menkes, and they must be designers who have established themselves as conceptual, but with commercial prospects. This year nominees – London's Eley Kishimoto, Sophia Kokosalaki, Preen, Haider Ackermann, Laurent Mercier, Lutz of Paris and Cosmic Wonder from Japan – brought their collections to the lake, and put on presentations for judges, jury and guests. Freed from Fashion Week distractions, the clothes can speak better for themselves.

Judges this year included Raf Simons, a previous winner who has done GWAND proud by expanding his brand and improving distribution. This year the prize went to Haider Ackermann (featured in Tank volume 3 issue 9), whose intellectual but luscious leathers and silks persuaded the jury of his glittering future, despite or perhaps because of recent financial difficulties that stopped him showing in Paris last season. Previous nominees have included Bernard Wilhelm, Boudicca,



Haider Ackermann at GWAND 2004

Yvan Mispelaere, Benoit Missolin, and Tristan Webber, evidence of GWAND's international pull and influence. Even a nomination can change or save careers that are flourishing creatively, but faltering

financially. With plenty of those about, GWAND's place in the fashion awards pantheon is certainly secure.

FLASH FICTION 2

Island Of Doctor Moreau
by Stanley Donwood



I married during a sweaty fever of happiness and had been considering distaste for some years when it started. My face and chest began to feel too warm, as if I had run too far. On the morning following our third anniversary I awoke blearily, and padded to the bathroom where I found my mirrored self an impressionist caricature of what I had expected.

My skin had become my enemy; my self incarcerated within a prison that displayed my unhappiness publicly. I pulled at my features, pressed hard on my cheeks to bring a brief semblance of my previous normality to my face, but the details were all gone. I had to blur my eyes to see my past.

I left our house, and moved like a ghost through the streets, unhappily aware of the sharp three-dimensionality of my surroundings, the microscopic actuality of other people. I took short breaths, the air entering shallowly through my misty nostrils. It was like inhaling through cloth. I needed solitude, and walked quickly to the edge of the town. I passed along deserted roads, scuffing dust, keeping by the high walls in the shadows where I belonged.

It got late, and I worried that the dusk would assimilate me, that I would disperse like blood in the ocean. Reluctantly I returned home. My wife greeted me, and asked after my day. She talked for a while, but I didn't really hear what she said. I sat, morosely prodding at my face, unwilling to look at her eyes. I knew she would be squinting, making small head movements in an effort to force me into focus.

We divorced quite soon after. For a long time I thought that I understood why, but when I asked her one afternoon when we met in a cafe, she said I had got it wrong. It wasn't that, she said. It wasn't that at all.