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***** press release – for immediate release *****

Woven tales of Ink, Silver and Silk

17th November, Thistle Hall

5.30pm, fashion show at 6pm

"Come,
Venture into a tale of fantasy;
Where mysteries unfold,
Illusions take hold,
Explore hidden meanings, trapped beauty,
In the depths of Escape..."

Otherworldly illustration, illusionary photography, fairytale fashion and whimsical jewellery meet in a dynamic exhibition. Escapism, fantasy and an inclination towards teleportation coexist in ***Woven tales of Ink, Silver and Silk*** - an exciting showcase of new work by four Wellington-based artists: **Minu, Mairi, Sarah Dalley, Sophie Lewis-Smith**.

Awoke is a story in the making. Minu's new series of ink/acrylic works tells a tale of two worlds. Seemingly in opposition to each other, the 'metal city' and the 'night forest' are interconnected and interdependent. Drifting apart, both worlds are under threat.

Originating in Germany, Minu arrived in Wellington three years ago and stayed. With a background in commercial design and architecture, she now works as an independent illustrator and artist. Her artwork ranges from traditional printmaking to mixed media and textile art.

Minu is passionate about the idea of open-ended storytelling. She does not focus on the narrative, she depicts non-textual matter to create archetypal characters and scenes. Her illustrations are snapshots of strange and magical stories - triggering shared memories, handing the story back to the viewer, for him or her to complete the tale. Even though her characters are naïve and somewhat melancholic, they emit something strangely positive and uplifting. Her compositions are based on simplicity, leaving wide open spaces.

Mairi's photographic series' ***Beyond***, and ***Beauty Deep*** depicts an illustrative story of changing realms and the displacement of identity - By taking a little of the real, a little drama and a little surreal - referencing characters from fairy tales - Mairi selects surreal colour and creates interesting juxtapositions to outline the bittersweet bite that comes with every want.

A graduate from Edinburgh College of Art in Scotland Mairi obtained an honours degree in Visual Communication specialising in Photography in 2006. She grew up in the UK before her parents emigrated to Coromandel in 1990 and has since lived between NZ, UK and Canada.

Mairi's work stems from a fascination with reflections and illusions that can captivate, tantalize and mysteriously dissolve. It is this transitional fluidity that so attracts her and pulls her in: the playful nature of water, the fragility of an image, and the undiluted depth of a surface deception. Mairi captures the dreamscapes of an imaginary world, tokens of differing perspectives that peek out and are not digitally recreated - but caught in an instant of carefully orchestrated control. Mairi is on a personal journey to find the right balance of control and creative spontaneity.

Sarah Dalley's six-piece autumn/winter 10' collection ***Empty Pocket***, draws upon the old fairy tale *The Little Matchstick Girl*, which was written by Hans Christian Anderson in the 1800's. Taking this sad story she has used colour and volume to portray the journey of the poor girls last night on earth and the death in which she escaped to. Starting with a very dark and dismal collection and taking it through to a carefree, light and playful air. Her present work is an innocent and girlie collection with many frills, dresses and bows.

After spending \$30 on a box of fabric from a retired dressmaker, Sarah soon realised her passion for vintage fabrics - taking the box of fabric and turning it into a 2 piece collection of woman and menswear. Sarah graduated with a Diploma in Fashion Design and Technology from Massey University in 2008. Together with Danni Ridley, she tested the market with handmade knickers, holding stalls throughout the summer at various carnivals, fairs and markets. She now has gone on to develop her own individual garments.

Sarah is inspired by many things; fantasy and escapism, nature and romance, fabrics and frills. These are found in many places, a friend's closet, photo albums, sitting on a hill looking out onto the city or rifling through an op shop's treasure. Using one of the found gems she then creates a story and world around this object bringing it to life through garments, colour and details. Sarah's work has a few stylistic signatures - nothing made with a zip, able to be worn in more ways than one and to look cute, chic, yet casual and comfortable.

Sophie Lewis-Smith's new series of jewellery, ***Precious Fragility***, is inspired by a recent trip to South East Asia where she witnessed both the kindest and nastiest sides of human beings - the heartfull and the heartless; adventurous life and tragic death. Drawing upon her experiences, her jewellery evokes metaphors of life, death and rebirth, using symbolism that she encountered in a Chinese temple. Her new series presents playful, interactive and otherworldly lockets,

bracelets and brooches.

Sophie began her official training in Jewellery and Silversmithing, later transferring to a major in sculpture. She graduated with a BA (HONS) in Sculpture from Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland, in 2005. Since graduating she has returned to smaller scale work and exhibited in jewellery showcases in Auckland and Wellington. Her work has sold in Canada, Scotland and New Zealand.

Sophie's work often reflects childhood imaginings and fantasy - creating escapist worlds and ideas that are sometimes much more comfortable and romantic than the real world. There is a comfort to be found in the metaphysical, but her work also encourages the wearer not to take life too seriously. Her jewellery is a means to give to the world tokens of gratitude and encouragement.

You are warmly invited to the exhibition opening on 17th November at Thistle Hall at 5.30pm, Sarah's six piece fashion show commences at 6pm.