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NORDIC HERITAGE MUSEUM ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THE NORTH BY NORTHWEST FASHION COMPETITION

Sarah Borruso wins Judge's Award, and Meg Lord wins the Volvo's People's Choice Award

SEATTLE – November 15, 2011 - The Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle, WA today announced the winners of the **North by Northwest (N x NW) fashion competition** held during the **2011 Nordic Fashion Biennale**. The winner of the juried competition is **Sarah Borruso** of San Francisco, California and the winner of the “People's Choice Award” sponsored by Volvo is **Meg Lord** of Portland, Oregon. The runner-ups in the juried competition are **Yeon Jang** of British Columbia and **Tanya Min Jee Ellis** of Seattle, WA, and the runner-up in the People's Choice category is **Natalya Robinson** of San Francisco, California. The panel of fashion experts who chose the judge's award winner included **Yvan Mispelaere**, Creative Director at Diane Von Furstenberg; Danish skin care guru **Ole Henriksen**; Icelandic designer **Steinunn Sigurðardóttir**; and New York-based Icelandic artist **Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir**, the guest curator for the Nordic Fashion Biennale.

The two first-place winners will each win a trip to Reykjavik, Iceland during **2012 Reykjavik Fashion Week**. The winners will receive round-trip airfare from Seattle to Reykjavik compliments of **Icelandair**, and 3 nights' accommodations at the hip, award-winning international hostel **Reykjavik Downtown**, located a block from the waterfront in the heart of downtown Reykjavik.

The winning entry in the juried competition is a silk chiffon and crepe de chine dress called **Play of Lines, II**, designed by **Sarah Borruso**. Yvan Mispelaere said of Borruso's design, “I think she shows here great skills of sensibility and “*maestria*” in managing efficiently a beautiful concept of construction starting from great references (Dora Jung's designs) and extracting cleverly inspiration in the most creative way. The result is delicate, simple, elegant and desirable for a very personal woman. Subtly classic and very contemporary at the same time, this is also a successful fashion item that you would wear right away!” He continued, “Beautiful sketch and layout of inspiration too, very arty and mature. I see here “Nordic influences” in the relationship with nature and movement (like water waves) specific light (“clair, obscure, shadowing”) and sense of space and freedom as well as the cultural references Sarah talked about—nothing too literal or “folky,” but a sharp way of “looking back to find her future.”

Sarah Borruso, a native of San Francisco, studied fashion at Parsons School of Design. Borruso currently lives and works in San Francisco, where she launched her own women's clothing line, Stars + Ravens. Each contestant was asked to describe how their entry was inspired by Nordic design. Borruso wrote, “This three-layered silk dress was inspired by a textile design called *Play of Lines* by the Finnish designer Dora Jung. Her textile—which won the Grand Prix at the 11th Triennale in Milan in 1957—literally inspired me to “play with lines.” While Jung's piece played with black and white lines on the warp and weft of her loom, my piece involved cutting lines

free from cloth. The ultimate effect is a bit of an optical illusion—razor-cut transparent black lines overlap and intersect to create various shades of grey, grey-green, black and turquoise on the surface of the dress.”

The winning entry in the Volvo’s “People’s Choice” category is a **Felt Jacket** of un-dyed merino wool, hand-felted, by **Meg Lord**. Lord, who is based in Portland, Oregon, is a senior studying Apparel Design at the Art Institute of Portland. Lord wrote, “This garment was inspired by the Oseberg and Gokstad Viking ships. The craftsmanship is inspiring not only for the wood carvings on the front keel but for the beautiful overlapping oak shell that curves around the frame and comes to a point at the stern and bow. I incorporated the strips of felt to curve around the body and arms in the same fashion. The use of wool and felting has a very strong history in Nordic culture and with wool being a renewable resource; it is immensely versatile and sustainable.”

Of the two runner-ups in the juried competition, designer Steinunn Sigurðardóttir commented that **Yeon Jang’s** canvas and leather **Backpack** was a “good concept, nice execution, the proportions on the back pack are also very nice.” Danish skin care specialist Ole Henriksen, commenting on **Tanya Min Jee Ellis’** blended wool **Asymmetrical Coat**, said “This piece is timeless. The silhouette defines the beautiful lines of a woman’s body and elongates the figure.”

The runner-up in the Volvo “People’s Choice” award, **Natalya Robinson**, created **Aleftina Convertible Vest**, a versatile garment of hand-made cotton and wool textiles that could be converted into nineteen different looks.

The purpose of the competition was to inspire creativity, encourage emerging designers to seek out new directions, and spark awareness of new trends in Nordic fashion. The competition was open to fashion students, recent fashion school graduates, and emerging fashion designers who reside on the West Coast of the US or Canada. Thousands of people voted, both online and in person, for the “People’s Choice Award”.

The generous sponsors of the North by Northwest Fashion Competition include Icelandair, Hostelling International’s Reykjavík Downtown hostel, and Volvo, sponsor of the “People’s Choice Award”. The 2011 Nordic Fashion Biennale was produced in part due to the generous support from numerous partners including Iceland Naturally, Icelandair Cargo, Icelandic USA, Inc., Volvo, Marel, Trilogy International Partners, Scan|Design Foundation by Inger & Jens Bruun, Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, Artsfund, 4Culture, and the Seattle Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs.

To view all the N x NW fashion competition finalists, visit <http://www.nordicfashionbiennale.com/nfb/competition/>

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About the Nordic Heritage Museum

With over 55,000 visitors annually, the Nordic Heritage Museum is a cultural treasure in the Pacific Northwest. It is the only museum in the United States that represents the cultural heritage of all five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The Museum’s mission is to share Nordic culture with people of all ages and backgrounds by exhibiting art and objects, preserving collections, providing educational and cultural experiences and serving as a community gathering place. The Nordic Heritage Museum presents a wide range of vibrant programs including contemporary art exhibitions, outstanding concerts, lectures and films and a variety of special events throughout the year.

For general information, visit www.nordicmuseum.org or phone (206) 789-5707.

*Museum hours: Tues-Sat 10 am to 4 pm; Sun 12 noon to 4 pm; Mon closed
The museum is located at 3014 NW 67th Street, Seattle, WA 98117*