

Ewe beauty: Dutch designer makes three-metre-tall lamb sculpture out of hundreds of kilograms of discarded European wool

NGV International | 3 October 2024 – February 2025 | Free entry



2 October 2024: A giant lamb by Netherlands-based designer and innovator **Christien Meindertsma**, made using a pioneering new fabrication technology, is the focus of this year's **MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission** opening on 3 October at NGV International.

Meindertsma's work ***First there was a mountain*** 2024 repurposes hundreds of kilograms of wool, from a flock of more than two thousand sheep based in Rotterdam, that would have otherwise been discarded as waste. Meindertsma has worked with Netherlands-based machine developer Tools for Technology to pioneer a groundbreaking robotic tool known as the 'Wobot' to produce the Commission.

Bringing attention to the growing issue of waste in the global wool market, Meindertsma proposes a potential solution for utilising this often-overlooked resource using innovative tools and technology.

First there was a mountain takes the form of a newborn lamb, captured standing for the very first time, accompanied by Meindertsma's new ***Wobot chair*** both revealing the versatility of wool, and how the technology behind the Commission could potentially pave the way for sustainable, circular design in furniture and beyond.

The felted wool produced by Meindertsma's Wobot is an environmentally sustainable alternative to petroleum-based materials such as foam, rubber, plastic, polyester and polystyrene. Unlike traditional industrial felting processes, Meindertsma's robotic needle-felting technique requires no water and can be combed out, enabling a completely circular material life cycle.

Meindertsma is internationally recognised for using design to conduct in-depth research into materials, uncovering their properties and the stories and industrial systems behind them. Focused on sustainability and the life cycle of products, Meindertsma's work challenges us to rethink our consumption of materials, encouraging a deeper understanding of the connections between the objects we use and their impact on the world.

Over the past two decades, the visionary designer has produced textiles, and furniture works exploring wide-ranging subjects such as animal by-products, household and textile waste, and forestry.

Previous works includes *One sheep sweater* where Meindertsma produced twenty sweaters from the coats of individual merino sheep, the multi award-winning *Flax Chair* which is an innovative, sustainable and biodegradable piece of furniture, and *PIG 05049* a publication documenting all of the products made from a single pig. Meindertsma has won three Dutch Design Awards; and has work held in the collections of MoMA (New York), The Victoria and Albert Museum (London) and the Vitra Design Museum (Weil am Rein).

The MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission is a major series inviting globally renowned female designers to create groundbreaking new work for the NGV Collection. Meindertsma is the third recipient of the annual, five-year commission series, which has been made possible by a significant contribution from MECCA's social change movement, M-POWER.

The first and only commission series of its kind in Australia, the annual commission creates a platform to present topical, world-premiere works of international significance to highlight the contributions and practices of female designers to the world.

Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV, said: 'We are delighted to announce Christien Meindertsma as the latest recipient of the MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission; an inspiring designer who is developing groundbreaking methods of production to revolutionise the global wool industry. The NGV is incredibly grateful to MECCA for their support of this design series which provides a vital platform to profile female designers.'

Jo Horgan AM, Founder & Co-CEO MECCA said: 'Christien Meindertsma is not only reshaping industries but also inspiring women to redefine the boundaries of design. Christien invites us to explore, question and even reinvent the world around us. An ethos we share at MECCA M-POWER, our social change initiative that seeks to make the world over, by dismantling the systems and narratives that hold women and girls back from being their best.'

Christien Meindertsma said: 'I feel very honoured to have been awarded this commission and am very much looking forward to making a new work. This opportunity will allow me to explore and push the possibilities of wool as a strong and at the same time soft material, in directions it has not gone before.'

In 2023, London-based designer Bethan Laura Wood presented the MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission, an installation titled *Kaleidoscope-o-rama*, consisting of two new major works conceived in dialogue with Regency era (c. 1811–20) works from the NGV Collection and presented among an immersive audio-visual display.

The 2024 MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission will be on display from 3 October 2024 – February 2025 at NGV International, St Kilda Road, Melbourne. Free entry. Further information is available via the NGV website: [NGV.MELBOURNE](https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au)

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Image caption: Designer Christien Meindertsma with *First there was a mountain* 2024 for the MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission, on display from 3 October 2024 – February 2025 at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Eugene Hyland

MECCA x NGV

WOMEN IN DESIGN COMMISSION

ABOUT THE MECCA X NGV WOMEN IN DESIGN COMMISSION

The MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission is MECCA's single largest commitment to an Australian cultural institution, through this significant contribution MECCA's support will strengthen the NGV's Collection of Contemporary Design and Architecture works by women and advance the NGV's ongoing efforts towards redressing historical gender imbalance in the Collection.

Over five years, commissioned designers will be revealed annually coinciding with International Women's Day in March, with the final work being revealed by year's end. The partnership will culminate in a major exhibition to showcase the five bodies of work and the remarkable Collection outcome.

The MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission is made possible by a significant contribution from MECCA through their social change movement, M-POWER. Driven by a vision to advance equality and address the global gender gap, M-POWER delivers programs that provide opportunities for women and girls.

ABOUT THE MECCA X NGV PARTNERSHIP

Since 2016, the NGV has partnered with MECCA on several ongoing initiatives designed to empower and engage female artists and designers, including Kaylene Whiskey, Tatiana Bilbao, Bethan Laura Wood, Nadia Hernández,

Naomi Hobson, Louise Zhang, Tammy Kanat, Claudia Moodoonuthi, Atong Atem, Rebecca Baumann and Tanya Schultz.

Each year, MECCA and the NGV collaborate with a female artist or designer to create the brand's annual limited-edition holiday packaging and campaign. As part of the collaboration, MECCA supports the NGV to acquire work by the selected artist for the NGV Collection, helping to enrich its holdings of contemporary art and design. The acquired work is also displayed at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia each year.

The NGV has also worked with MECCA on their M-POWER grant program which offers emerging female artists and designers a 12-month tailored mentoring program, professional development and networking opportunities, as well as ongoing learning opportunities with industry experts.

ABOUT THE NGV DEPARTMENT OF CONTEMPORARY DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

The NGV's Department of Contemporary Design and Architecture was the first of its kind for an Australian art gallery. The collection features an ever-growing selection of important examples of 21st-century international and Australian object design, product design, architecture, contemporary jewellery, craft, speculative and critical design.

The Collection holds internationally significant works by Patricia Urquiola, nendo, Faye Toogood, Fernando Laposse, Formafantasma, Neri Oxman, Teamlab, and Estudio Campana. The NGV presents a range of contemporary design and architecture programs and projects annually, including Melbourne Design Week, Melbourne Design Fair and the NGV Architecture Commission.

ABOUT MECCA

Since opening the doors to its very first store in Melbourne in 1997, MECCA has completely redefined the Australian beauty landscape, championing retail innovation and delivering the ultimate beauty experience to customers.

Founded by Jo Horgan AM, over the past 25 years MECCA has grown to become Australasia's largest prestige beauty retailer, serving more than four million customers each year. With more than 100 stores across Australia and New Zealand, as well as online stores in both countries. MECCA offers an exclusive edit of the best in beauty from more than 200 brands. Today, MECCA has a growing team of 7,000 spread across its Support Centre, Distribution Centre and store network, all working towards a shared purpose of helping people to look, feel and be their best.

From the very beginning, the MECCA team has shared a passion for education and equality. MECCA's social change program, M-POWER was established in 2017, and aims to educate, elevate and empower women and girls to help create a world where everyone has the same rights and opportunities.