

Pic: PHILIPPE VOGELZANG



A WORLD AWAY

In a South London penthouse, close to East Street Market, the icon of fabulousness, famous for smashing up mirrors into sculpture, and appearing as a manifestation of both man and woman, Andrew Logan, recites the years he thinks he's done 14 Alternative Miss Worlds: "1972, 1975, '78, '81, '85, '86, '91, '95, '98, 2004, 2009, 2014 — and this one, coming up in 2018." He forgot 1973, must have been a good year. Alternative Miss World, like Logan, comes from the days before RuPaul's Drag Race. Homosexuality was decriminalised in 1967, but labels of gayness were very much in a closet where alternative expressions came in colour and Polari. Brackets were far less defined than the multi-identities of today's non-binary spectrum. "London was interesting in the '70s: there was no club culture, there were about three clubs in London, it was a very small artistic community," Logan says. "Most people went to work, went home, and watched the telly, there wasn't much of an outlet, and because I had big studios, and have always loved giving parties, since I was 11, I got inspired. Oh, Alternative Miss World. In those days alternative was not used at all.



1972 "There was no difference between audience and participants, or men and women — it was in my old flat in Hackney, in a converted jigsaw company, in Downham Road, a long thin space, and we built a catwalk out of old boxes and things, and an old friend of mine, Peter Davis, actor, MC'd it, and people just took part. It was all ages, all genders. It was a party, and that's how it began.

1973 "So of course, we had to do one the following year, I had friends as judges: Robert Medley, the lady from Ugly Agency, David Hockney — he hadn't gone to America then — and it kind of took off. David Bowie was trying to get in, Angie, his wife, was judging, and there were so many people coming through the windows. It was packed. You could not move.

1975 "I went to Butlers Wharf. Towering Inferno the film had just happened and it was very dramatic — there was a fire, everyone panicked, Molly Parkin was abusive to the audience, and I'd built a little swimming pool, so she got thrown in. It was before punk, before Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood started that whole rage thing, but there was a lot of rage, and a lot of the costumes reflected that, and it was a feeling of the time. It's very interesting how Alternative Miss World reflects what's going to happen in the future.

1978 "Richard Gaynor shot Alternative Miss World, the film, in a circus tent on Clapham Common. That was a brilliant one. That was with my great friend Divine who I met in 1977 with Zandra [Rhodes, fashion designer]. He didn't even realise it was being filmed. It's a wonderful movie, beautifully crafted. The first premiere was at Cannes Film Festival, that was the time of Breaking Glass — and all we did was party.

1981 "We thought fabulous, we'll go big: Grand Hall Olympia. The catwalk was 250ft long, with horses, a great wheel. We lost £20,000, which at that time was a huge amount of money. So all my

friends came together and we paid off our debtors. David Hockney gave a painting, and then we had a benefit at Heaven, and other people helped, and we made enough to pay it back. Up till then, you thought you'd just been giving parties, so we cooled off for a few years.

1985 "The Academy, Brixton. The theme was water, and I love a theme. No-one ever takes any notice of them, but for myself that is the décor, and it started off with my brother Richard doing the settings, and my brother Peter doing the music, and my mother judging, and my father coming, and we just do it, everyone volunteers. And for me, I come as the host and hostess, and you get this feeling of warmth that's incredible, and I'll continue to do it until I die, actually. It's such a wonderful thing, it's unique, there is nothing else like it. It's been copied and I've inspired people.

1986 "We were supposed to do 'earth' at Chislehurst Caves, but the police stopped it because they weren't sure about where people would go to the toilet, and the AIDS virus was going to go down the gutters, up into people's houses, and everyone was going to die. That was the ignorance, they believed that, so it was banned. Luckily, the Academy Brixton were wonderful, marvellous guy there, so we did it there.

1991 "Air. We held it in the daytime, when Kinky Gerlinky was emerging, and my friends were horrified, being out in daylight. Lovely Burnel Penhaul won.

1995 "I did a co-production with the ICA, and we did the Clapham Grand on the theme of fire, and that was a stunning one.

1998 "My favourite: VOID, at the 291 Gallery on Hackney Road, a church, and you couldn't hear anything, and the lights were all over the place, and it was amazing, and that was when Pani Bronua won, Russian, ex-Soviet. Russians take on this event. They get it. They're very good.

2004 "That was with Matthew Glamore, and the clubs by then were big. We did it in the Hippodrome in Leicester Square, which is now a casino, but it was all mafia and it was very funny — the Russians won that one. Jes Benstock documented the event, and realised this is more than just an event, it was deeper and greater, and he started to make a movie.

2009 "The Roundhouse, and Jes's film A British Guide To Showing Off: it's a brilliant film, lots of animation, and very sensitive, wonderfully crafted, we went around the world with it.

2014 "Shakespeare's Globe came up, and I don't know why they allowed us to do it, and they were reticent and nervous, but it was a marriage made in heaven. We don't do rehearsals for this event, it all just happens, neon numbers was the theme. That was a Russian, and she's coming back to hand over her crown this year, again at the Globe. You need to get tickets fast, because they have a habit of selling out. It would kill it to do it every year. I work on it for six months, it makes no money."

If you can't make it to Alternative Miss World 2018, and want to go to mid-Wales, experience Andrew Logan at his Museum Of Sculpture in Berriew, SY21 8AH — andrewloganmuseum.org — and stay at his new Lion Hotel lionhotel-berriew.co.uk

