



New Zealand Institute of Architects Incorporated

Winners of new architectural writing competition announced

A final year university student and a year 12 high school student have won the top awards in the inaugural Warren Trust Awards for Architectural Writing.

Tessa Forde, who is this year completing a Masters degree at the University of Auckland's School of Architecture, received the award in the Open category, and Matthew Connolly, who attends Auckland's Sacred Heart College, won the Secondary School category.

The Architectural Writing Awards were launched this year by the New Zealand Institute of Architects, with the support of the educational trust established by the eminent New Zealand architect, Sir Miles Warren.

The purpose of the awards programme is to encourage writing and commentary about architecture.

New Zealand Institute of Architects spokesperson John Walsh said there was a heartening response to the competition.

"We received more than eighty entries, which was a pretty good score in the Awards' first innings," Walsh said. "It was especially encouraging that half of the entries were from secondary school students, and that those students are from schools all around the country, from Ahipara to Dunedin."

"The submissions in both categories demonstrate public interest in architecture and also in the essay writing format. These days, even a 1500-word essay - which was the Open category limit - constitutes long-form writing."

Open category winner Tessa Forde's essay, Heavens' Embroidered Cloths, took as its subject matter a new "studio retreat" and a guest house in Nepal.

"Tessa's essay is an ambitious exercise that brings together her experiences of two places which have suffered serious earthquakes," Walsh said. "The writing conveyed a strong and poetic response to two damaged but resilient places."

Secondary school category winner Matthew Connolly wrote about a cottage in the grounds of the Wilson Home, a children's rehabilitation and respite facility in Takapuna, Auckland.

"Matthew produced a sensitive evocation of a little building that provides a retreat for families going through some very difficult times," Walsh said. "He bravely attempts to describe a personal appreciation of a place experienced in trying conditions."

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In addition to the two award-winners, three essays were highly commended, two in the Open category, written by Auckland writer Heidi North-Bailey and Wellington architecture graduate Stuart Taylor, and one in the Secondary School category, written by Marlborough Boys' College student Steven Simpson.

The 2015 Warren Trust Awards for Architectural Writing judging panel comprised Pip Cheshire (President of the New Zealand Institute of Architects), Julia Gatley (senior lecturer at the University of Auckland School of Architecture and Planning); Jeremy Hansen (editor of Home NZ magazine), and John Walsh.

A booklet including the winning and highly commended essays will be published by the NZIA before the end of 2015. The competition will be held again in 2016. A call for entries will be made in April.

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