

Te Kāhui
Whaihanga
New Zealand
Institute of
Architects



Winners of New Zealand's architecture writing competition announced

Delnaz Patrawala, a post-graduate architecture student at the University of Auckland, has won the Open category of the sixth annual Warren Trust Awards for Architectural Writing, New Zealand's leading essay competition for design writing.

Ms Patrawala's winning essay drew upon her family's Iranian heritage in discussing the role of architecture in forming cultural identity.

The Writing Awards jury, comprising convenor Sally Conor, Communications Manager of Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects, Auckland author Diana Wichtel and the former head of the Unitec School of Architecture, Tony van Raat, said the winning essay "is remarkable for its deft and vivid evocation of home as a place that exists in the distant past, as well as in bricks and mortar."

The competition's Secondary School category was won by Mishbah Patel, a Year 13 student at Auckland's Zayed College for Girls, whose essay was inspired by the Black Stone, an element of the great Masjid al-Haram mosque in Mecca.

"Mishbah's essay is a well-written meditation on architecture and faith," the jury said. "The energy, playfulness and profundity of the essay stayed with us long after we had read it."

The jury made three Highly Commended awards. One went to Heidi North, an Auckland author who has won recognition for her poetry and prose writing, for her essay on the design by her architect father for a chapel that was never built.

"Heidi's essay shows that a building doesn't have to be completed to occupy an evocative space in the mind of the architect and in the lives of his family," the jury said.

Nick Denton, a Wellington architecture graduate, received a Highly Commended award for his essay about the Wellington house in which he lives.

"We appreciated this essay because it personalises the impacts that modest buildings can have by their ability to interweave whanau and territory. In doing this space is transformed into place and becomes a significant actor in the lives of communities," the jury said.

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The third Highly Commended award went to Wellington architect Michael Davis, who wrote about the Island Bay Community Centre.

“Michael’s essay is an artful, subtly provocative appraisal of a beloved Wellington community centre as it is, and as it might be in a world where the social good it represents is truly valued,” the jury said.

Entrants in the 2020 Warren Trust Awards for Architectural Writing were asked to write about a building in their community, and why it had personal and social significance.

Alternatively, with a nod to the confined circumstances we now find ourselves in, writers could discuss a building or a place they wanted to visit, one day.

Awards convenor Sally Conor said the jury was impressed with the standard of the submitted essays.

“Despite having been written amid lockdowns, economic uncertainty and general unease, this year’s essays imagined a world where accessibility and belonging are the norm, communities thrive, and our buildings facilitate our relationships with our environment and each other,” Conor said.

“The overall message was one of optimism and hope,” Conor said. “The thread that united our winners was faith – both religious, in the case of our Secondary School winner, and faith in humanity overall, as well as in the potential of architecture to nurture, uplift and empower.”

The Warren Trust Architectural Writing Awards is a programme of Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA), supported by the educational trust established by the eminent New Zealand architect, Sir Miles Warren.

The Awards carry prizes of \$2,000 for the Open category winner, \$1,000 for the Secondary School winner and \$500 for the three Highly Commended entries.

The NZIA will publish a book of selected essays from the 2020 Warren Trust Awards for Architectural Writing in early 2021.

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