

“OBSESSION WITH POSSESSION” WINS STUDENT ESSAY AWARD

An outstanding essay on the detrimental effects of consumerism upon the environment has been announced as the winning entry of a leading student award.

Penelope Court, a BSc Psychology student from the University of Bath, received her prize for the IEMA Student Essay Award at Tuesday's (12th June) ceremony during the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) Annual Dinner. Russell Foster, Chief Executive of the IEMA, announced her as the winner as she was presented with a trophy, a certificate, an £800 prize, a module leading to Associate membership (Associate Certificate Course) and one year's free membership at the dinner, held as part of the IEMA Annual Conference & Exhibition at the Palace Hotel in Manchester.

Jo Mylan from the University of Manchester and Russell McKenna from the University of Bath were announced as the runners' up, each winning £150, a framed certificate and a free one-day place at the conference.

Penelope's Essay focuses on how western culture for possessions, ownership and consumerism is resulting in climate change, rising sea levels, increased famine, drought and the destruction of rainforests, leading to the eventual devastation of the very land, air, water, plants and animals that are necessary for the future of our planet.

Penelope's essay begins "In the West we are living longer, owning bigger houses, and spending more on luxurious meals, exotic holidays and sophisticated cars. 'To have is to be' apparently. Every generation aspires to be richer than the last and governments are condoning this ambition as viable and indeed commendable... Our obsession with possession is suicide. We have brainwashed ourselves in believing that quality of life cannot be achieved without constant economic growth and material satisfaction. This mania is making us greedy for wealth and the cost of this foolishness will ultimately be the demise of our sacred earth."

Russell Foster says "Passionate words indeed from Penelope, whose salient message in the opening paragraph has you 'hooked' to read the whole essay – a very worthy winner of this year's award."

The Student Essay Award, generously sponsored by the University of Bath, was judged by Prof Stephen Hill of the University of Plymouth, Dr John Brady from Consilience Media, Louisa Frears from the University of Bath and Louise Ellis from the University of Leeds.

A full edition of this essay is published in Issue 48 of The Environmentalist, the flagship magazine of the IEMA which is the principal professional body devoted to the promotion of environmental sustainability and to the professional development of individuals involved in the environmental profession. Call +44 (0)1522 540069 for more information.

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