

AWEinspiring!

CIWEM's Annual Dinner saw the presentation of the Institution's first AWEinspiring Award for arts and the environment to Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison, who have led the field of ecological art for over 40 years.

Since its formation in 2007, the primary vision of CIWEM's Art and Environment Network has been to put creativity at the heart of environmental policy and action. The Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World (CCANW) has joined CIWEM in creating the AWEinspiring (Art, Water & Environment) Award, giving it to The Harrisons in recognition of their unique contribution to public understanding of climate change through the vehicle of art and creativity, linked with science.

On receiving the award, The Harrisons said:

"It was simply marvellous to be recognised by CIWEM and CCANW in this way. The award is a good example of what we call 'eco-civility', so it was indeed an honour to be the first recipients."

The AWEinspiring Award is given particularly in recognition of their most recently acclaimed work, *The Force Majeure*. *The Force Majeure* is a distillation of works on the theme of global warming and climate change; a collection of 30 two-dimensional works and poetic texts, an artist's book, an animated film and a large-scale model with audio/visual programme.

Brought together and reworked for their New York show at Ronald Feldman's Gallery in January 2009, *The Force Majeure* incorporates *Greenhouse Britain: Losing Ground, Gaining Wisdom*, first shown at CCANW and supported by CIWEM and Arup when shown at City Hall in London two years ago. Turning the face of disaster to the face of opportunity, it considers the question; "The oceans will rise gracefully; can we withdraw with equal grace?" It also includes *Tibet is the High Ground*, created for the Dalai Lama, and *Peninsula Europe* and *The Book of the Seven Lagoons*. Each work envisions imminent environmental, cultural and spiritual collapse but offers us the potential means to address the situations.

The Force Majeure emerges as a philosophical meditation on global warming and climate change; it is a complex toolkit for sustainability, survival, and grace in governance.

CIWEM's Executive Director, Nick Reeves says:

"Art is the highest form of human expression, and the work of Helen and Newton Harrison epitomises the supreme power of art to inform and inspire action on climate change by harnessing the tools of science and creativity. The Harrisons are pioneers of an international eco-art movement and I'm delighted that their ground-breaking work has been recognised by CIWEM."