Website address:
https://www.gesundheitsindustrie-bw.de/en/article/press-release/advancement-award-heidelberg-molecular-biologist

Advancement Award for Heidelberg Molecular Biologist

For her ground-breaking scientific studies in the field of synthetic biology, the 2024 Alfried Krupp Advancement Award is to go to Prof. Dr Kerstin Göpfrich. The award, endowed with one million euros in funding, is granted annually by the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Foundation to young academics holding their first professorship in the natural and engineering sciences.

It provides for a flexible, independent organization of research and teaching over a period of five years. Kerstin Göpfrich has taught and done research as a professor at the Center for Molecular Biology of Heidelberg University (ZMBH) since 2022.

Prof. Göpfrich's research area is molecular engineering. The goal of her investigations is to construct artificial cells with an essential feature of life – the ability to continue developing. For this purpose, she uses innovative tools such as DNA nanotechnology, microfluidics or 3D printing. That is meant to gradually lead to the emergence of an artificial model cell able to produce its own molecular "hardware". Explaining its choice of laureate, the Foundation states that the research by the molecular biologist and biophysicist to describe and make use of life processes not only opens up new prospects for science and industry but could also revolutionize the fundamental understanding of life.

Kerstin Göpfrich studied physics at the University of Erlangen and the University of Cambridge (UK), where she also obtained her doctorate in 2017. A period of postdoctoral research followed at the Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems in Stuttgart. In 2019 she transferred to the MPI for Medical Research in Heidelberg before being appointed professor of molecular biology at Heidelberg University's Faculty of Biosciences. At the ZMBH she heads the research group "Biophysical Engineering of Life". Kerstin Göpfrich has already received multiple awards for her work, including an ERC Starting Grant from the European Research Council and funding from the Human Frontier Science Program for innovative basic research in biology.

The Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Foundation has, since 1968, financed individuals and projects in the arts and culture, education, science, health and sports. Its Advancement Award, initiated in 1986, supports early-career scientists in the natural and engineering sciences during their first professorship at a German university. The 2024 Alfried Krupp Advancement Award will be awarded to Kerstin Göpfrich at a ceremony in Essen in autumn this year.

Press release

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Further information

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