Jana Zscheischler Receives Research Prize "Transformative Science"

Transformative research concept for sustainable land management convinces jury The 25,000 Euro research prize "Transformative Science" of the Wuppertal Institute and the Zempelin Foundation in the Donors' Association for the Promotion of Humanities and Sciences in Germany (Stifterverband) is awarded for the fourth time this year. Dr. Jana Zscheischler, project manager at the Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF) e. V., convinced the jury with her distinctive transdisciplinary and transformative profile and her research concept for sustainable land management.

Wuppertal, 18 September 2020: Transformative science sees itself as a science that uses inter- and transdisciplinary methods to trigger social impulses, provides scientific support for them and involves civil society. This year’s research award focused on scientists and research teams who use their scientific work to research climate protection and climate adaptation and include stakeholders in their research.

The "Transformative Science" Research Award 2020 in the amount of 25,000 euros is awarded to Dr. Jana Zscheischler, who convinced the jury with her impressive transdisciplinary and transformative profile, her academic successes and her theoretically sound research, which she implements methodically and practically. She has worked continuously, consistently and in a very critical manner on the borderline between observation/analysis and action in the field of transdisciplinary methodology and has published on this subject. Her work on future potentials in sustainable land management is particularly noteworthy.

Prof. Dr. Manfred Fischedick, Scientific Managing Director of the Wuppertal Institute, congratulates: "Many sustainability problems, such as climate change and climate protection, depend on how the resource land is used. Therefore, we are pleased that the jury has selected a scientist whose research will further develop the potential for sustainable land use".

The scientist from the Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF) e. V. is co-head of the BMBF-funded junior research group "BioKum – Cumultative effects of bio-economic strategies for a more sustainable agriculture". They investigate bioeconomic strategies for a more sustainable agriculture, develop solutions and innovations and take into account the complex interrelationships, opportunities and conflicts of bioeconomic transformation processes on the way to more sustainable land use.

Selection criteria and use of the prize money

The jury put emphasis on the social relevance of the topic, the quality and innovativeness of the research design, as well as the exemplary character due to its critical examination of the challenges of transformative research, especially in the field of agriculture, and the integration and discussion of its actors. The jury agreed that the work of Jana Zscheischler is an outstanding example of a transdisciplinary research project in the context of sustainable agriculture. Jana Zscheischler: "I am really very pleased about this award. I will probably use the prize money to support a transdisciplinary process for the socially responsible use of digital data in agriculture".
On October 6, 2020, the “Transformative Science” research award will be officially presented at the “Darmstadt Days of Transformation” at 4 p.m. at the Schader Forum, Goethestrasse 2, in Darmstadt. Virtual participation is also possible. With the “Darmstadt Days of Transformation”, the Schader Foundation has established a format on topics of transformative research and science.

About the award winner Jana Zscheischler

The scientist studied communication sciences (M.A.) at the Technical University of Berlin and environmental protection (M.Sc.) at the University of Rostock. She completed her doctorate on “Transdisciplinary Research in the Field of Land Use Science” at the Albrecht Daniel Thaer Institute for Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences at the Humboldt University of Berlin with summa cum laude and is currently working on her habilitation on "Innovations for Sustainable Land Management". As spokesperson for the Early Career Scientists in Future Earth, she is also committed to the structural strengthening of transformative sustainability research at the academic level. The scientist has been working at the Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF) e. V. since 2010 and is co-head of the BMBF-funded junior research group "BioKum".

The seven jury members

Prof. Dr. Claudia Hornberg University of Bielefeld, Faculty of Health Sciences; Environment and Health

Prof. Dr. Heike Köckler Hochschule für Gesundheit (University of Applied Sciences), Dean of the Department of Community Health, Professor for Social Environment and Health

Prof. Dr. Jasmin Mantilla-Contreras University of Hildesheim, Institute of Biology and Chemistry; Ecology and Environmental Education

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Marquardt Chairman of the Board of Directors of Forschungszentrum Jülich Research Centre

Dr. Volker Meyer-Guckel Donors’ Association for the Promotion of Humanities and Sciences in Germany (Stifterverband), Deputy Secretary-General and member of the executive board, Head of Programmes and Funding

Prof. Dr. Roland Scholz Danube University Krems, Chief Senior Scientist and visiting professor in the Department for Knowledge and Communication Management

Dr. Steffi Ober Initiator and Head of the Forschungswende civil society platform

About the research prize

The Transformative Science research prize focuses on all forms of research that inspire social impetus and promote social change, thereby engaging civil society. Transdisciplinary research design plays an important role in this process. The research prize is endowed with 25,000 euros. The money goes to support the winners in implementing their project ideas in the field of transformative science. In addition to the prize money, the winning team also receives a sculpture forged from the steel rails of the Wuppertal suspension railway – the Schwebebahn – constructed in 1898.

Joint press release
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Dr. Jana Zscheischler, project manager at the Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF) e. V., wins the research award “Transformative Science” 2020, endowed with 25,000 Euros.

Katharina Richter
Sculpture In addition to the 25,000-euro prize money, the winner also receives a sculpture forged from the steel rails of the Wuppertal suspension railway – the Schwebebahn – constructed in 1898.
S. Michaelis