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Dream Chemistry Award: The prize for a dream-project is waiting for chemists with imagination

Are you a professor who knows a young scientist with an interesting, ambitious research project that is still awaiting implementation, in the field of chemistry or its borderline with physics, biology, medicine or materials engineering? It's your last chance to nominate candidates for the next edition of the prestigious international Dream Chemistry Award contest.

Visionary ideas, research that goes beyond contemporary paradigms, projects that are currently too technically difficult or too expensive to be implemented – now these have another opportunity to attract the attention of the scientific community: the next edition of the prestigious Dream Chemistry Award is just about to start. The contest, directed at young PhDs in natural and technical sciences, was established in 2013 by the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IPC PAS) in Warsaw. Since last year, the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences (IOCB Prague) has been co-organizer, this has made it possible for the contest to now be transformed from a 2-yearly into an annual event. At present, the finals of subsequent editions take place alternately in Warsaw and Prague. The winner of this year's edition of the competition will receive 10,000 euros and a statuette.

“When the dreams of ordinary people are fulfilled, their lives change. When the dreams of scientists come true, quite often it is the whole world that changes. These days, which are dominated by research designed to give quick and tangible results, it is not easy for scientists to reach for real challenges with a potentially revolutionary character. We are trying to support the brave. We do it in the hope that our contest will spur them on to transform their dreams into reality,” says Prof. Robert Holyst (IPC PAS), who together with Prof. Pavel Jungwirthem (IOCB Prague) is responsible for coordinating the contest.

The importance of the contest is evidenced by the fact that the Honorary Committee of the Dream Chemistry Award includes such eminent chemists as Nobel Prize winner Prof. Richard Schrock (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), creator of the ATRP polymer synthesis method and one of the most cited chemists in the world Prof. Krzysztof Matyjaszewski (Carnegie Mellon University), Prof. Bartosz Grzybowski, under whose direction the well-known package *Chematica* came into being for designing and optimizing the routes of synthesis of chemical compounds; and Prof. Josef Michl (University of Colorado Boulder, IOCB Prague).

Among the current winners of the Dream Chemistry Award are: Dr. Jessica R. Kramer (2017) from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City; Dr. Mircea Dincă (2015) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, USA; and Dr Evan Spruijt (2013) from the École Supérieure de Physique et de Chimie Industrielles in Paris. The award-winning scientific dreams were: the development of new anti-cancer medicines through analysis of cancer cell covers (Dr. Kramer); the minimization of energy and environmental costs associated with the production of chemical products through the use of efficient catalytic reactions inspired by cell biology (Dr. Dincă); and the production of self-increasing and dividing water drops modeling the most important features of living cells (Dr. Spruijt). The 2015 winner's Warsaw lecture can be viewed on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DiXgDU9s2uE>.

The current edition of the Dream Chemistry Award is addressed to scientists born in 1981 or later who presented their doctoral thesis in 2011 or later. For their submission to be accepted, the candidate must have been nominated by a researcher holding the academic doctoral degree or higher, with at least ten years' experience in exact/life sciences since the date of publication of his/her first scientific paper. Nominations should be sent electronically by 31st July, 2018 using the form on the competition website (www.dreamchemistryaward.org). Candidates who qualify should send their applications by 31st August. The five finalists selected by the Contest Committee will be invited to the headquarters of the Institute of Physical Chemistry PAS in Warsaw, where they will be able to present their ideas personally on 3-4 December. From among the finalists, the Contest Committee will select one winner.

"We invite all young scientists to participate, including those with projects that may sometimes be too ambitious, but always based on sound scientific foundations. We believe that such projects, breaking today's paradigms, can lead to progress worthy of the Nobel Prize," encourages Prof. Holyst.

The Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences was established in 1955 as one of the first chemical institutes of the PAS. The Institute's scientific profile is strongly related to the newest global trends in the development of physical chemistry and chemical physics. Scientific research is conducted in nine scientific departments. CHEMIPAN R&D Laboratories, operating as part of the Institute, implement, produce and commercialise specialist chemicals to be used, in particular, in agriculture and the pharmaceutical industry. The Institute publishes approximately 200 original research papers annually.

The Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences is the leading scientific institution in the Czech Republic. It deals with basic research in the fields of chemical biology and medicinal chemistry, organic and material oriented chemistry, biochemistry, molecular biology and physical chemistry, theoretical chemistry, and analytical chemistry. The Institute has a long tradition and expertise in medicinal chemistry and collaboration with the pharmaceutical industry. Antivirals discovered here and developed further in collaboration with by the American pharmaceutical concern Gilead Sciences have revolutionized the treatment of AIDS and hepatitis B, significantly improving the lives of millions of people around the globe.

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The Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences (<http://www.ichf.edu.pl/>) was established in 1955 as one of the first chemical institutes of the PAS. The Institute's scientific profile is strongly related to the newest global trends in the development of physical chemistry and chemical physics. Scientific research is conducted in nine scientific departments. CHEMIPAN R&D Laboratories, operating as part of the Institute, implement, produce and commercialise specialist chemicals to be used, in particular, in agriculture and pharmaceutical industry. The Institute publishes approximately 200 original research papers annually.

CONTACTS:

Prof. **Robert Holyst**
Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences
tel. +48 22 3433123
email: rholyst@ichf.edu.pl

Prof. **Pavel Jungwirth**
Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences
tel. +420 220 183184
email: pavel.jungwirth@uochb.cas.cz

LINKS:

<http://www.dreamchemistryaward.org/>
The website of the Dream Chemistry Award.

<https://www.uochb.cz/>
The website of the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

<http://www.ichf.edu.pl/>
The website of the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

<http://www.ichf.edu.pl/press/>
Press releases of the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

IMAGES:

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HR: http://ichf.edu.pl/press/2018/07/ICHF180719b_fot01.jpg

The Dream Chemistry Award statuette and 10,000 euro wait for a chemist-visionary with the most interesting future-oriented research project. The annual global Dream Chemistry Award Contest is organised for young researchers by the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw and the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. (Source: IPC PAS, Grzegorz Krzyzewski)