



Winners of the first Heineken Young Scientists Awards announced

Amsterdam, 7 July 2010 – The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) has announced the winners of the Heineken Young Scientists Awards. This is the first year that the Academy is presenting these awards. The winners are **Puck Knipscheer**, **Menno van Zelm**, **Remco Breuker**, **Appy Sluijs** and **Paola Escudero**. Each of them will receive EUR 10,000 and a work of art designed especially for the awards.

The Heineken Young Scientists Awards are intended to give talent extra encouragement. "Science and scholarship depend on young researchers who jump in at the deep end and sometimes make the biggest discoveries," says Robbert Dijkgraaf, President of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. "The idea of rewarding young researchers is entirely in keeping with the vision and aims of the Foundation," says Mrs Charlène de Carvalho-Heineken, chairwoman of the Alfred Heineken Fondsen Foundation, which makes the awards possible. "The awards emphasise the relevance of research to society and represent an important addition to the Heineken Prizes, which are among the most prestigious science awards in the world."

The winners of the Heineken Young Scientists Awards are active in the same fields of science and scholarship as the laureates of the Dr. H.P. Heineken Prize and the Dr. A.H. Heineken Prizes. The particular fields are indicated below, along with a link to the relevant 14 April press release.

Dr Puck Knipscheer is receiving the *Heineken Young Scientists Award for Biochemistry and Biophysics* for her research at the interface of biochemistry and molecular cell biology. Her PhD research at the Netherlands Cancer Institute has generated important new insights into the way that protein activity is regulated in cells. As a postdoc at Harvard Medical School, Puck Knipscheer studied how the genes responsible for Fanconi anaemia (a genetic disease that leads to bone marrow failure and in many cases to cancer) are involved in repairing damage to DNA. She will be establishing a research group at the Hubrecht Institute in Utrecht in late 2010.

The Dr. H.P. Heineken Prize for Biochemistry and Biophysics will be presented to Franz-Ulrich Hartl, managing director of the Max Planck Institute for Biochemistry in Martinsried, Germany, who works in the field of molecular cell biology. See the press release [here](#).

Dr Menno van Zelm is receiving the *Heineken Young Scientists Award for Medicine* for his research on the cellular and molecular mechanisms that cause antibody deficiencies, i.e. serious immune system disorders. His research is important for our understanding of immune disorders, how the body fights infection, and what causes inflammatory diseases and serious bone marrow and lymph node disorders. Menno van Zelm works at Erasmus Medical Centre Rotterdam.



The Dr. A.H. Heineken Prize for Medicine will be presented to Ralph Steinman, professor at Rockefeller University in New York, who works in the field of immunology. See the press release [here](#).

Dr Remco Breuker is receiving the *Heineken Young Scientists Award for History* for his research on Korean identities. He places Korean medieval history within the broader theoretical context of community and identity. His PhD research led to new perspectives on how societies can be founded on contradictory principles – a field that is far from being exhausted. He depicts Korea's past as a complex and discontinuous whole full of contrasts, paradoxes and ambiguity, but one that was nevertheless decisive in constructing Korean identities. Remco Breuker works at the University of Leiden.

The Dr. A.H. Heineken Prize for History will be presented to Rosamond McKitterick, professor at Cambridge University, who works in the field of medieval history. See the press release [here](#).

Dr Appy Sluijs is receiving the *Heineken Young Scientists Award for Environmental Sciences* for his research into the changes that arose in the earth's ecosystems millions of years ago. He reconstructs sudden climate changes caused by natural processes in the past. His research helps us understand the variability of ecosystems, the climate and natural processes on both human and geological timescales. Sluijs focuses in particular on climate changes in the past that resemble those in the present, making it possible to consider the influence of humankind (for example CO₂ emissions) in a geological context. Appy Sluijs works at the University of Utrecht and is a member of the Royal Academy's Young Academy.

The Dr. A.H. Heineken Prize for Environmental Sciences will be presented to David Tilman, professor at the University of Minnesota, who works in the field of ecology. See the press release [here](#).

Dr Paola Escudero is receiving the *Heineken Young Scientists Award for Cognitive Science* for her research on second language speech learning. Her PhD research at the University of Utrecht concerned phonological categories in polyglots. Paola Escudero has developed a model within the context of Optimality Theory that describes the cognitive processes that speakers go through when forming sounds that are unknown in their native language. As a postdoc, she is currently conducting psycholinguistic research in order to test her theoretical model experimentally. Paola Escudero works at the University of Amsterdam.

The Dr. A.H. Heineken Prize for Cognitive Science will be presented to Michael Tomasello, co-director of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, who works in the field of language and language acquisition. See the press release [here](#).



About the Heineken Young Scientists Awards

The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences presents the Heineken Young Scientists Awards every other year to five scientists whose outstanding scientific or scholarly work sets an example for other young researchers. Eligible researchers work for a Dutch research organisation and received their doctoral degrees no more than five years previously. The Heineken Young Scientists Awards will be presented on Thursday 23 September at the Beurs van Berlage Building in Amsterdam. The Heineken Prizes will be presented at the same ceremony.

For more information, please contact

Gertske Kuiper, Royal Academy Communications Department

Phone +31 (0)20 551 0863 or +31 (0)6 1419 1624.

E-mail: gertske.kuiper@bureau.knaw.nl.

Address: Kloveniersburgwal 29, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Correspondence: PO Box 19121, NL-1000 GC Amsterdam

See also the [Royal Academy website](#).