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Omar M. Yaghi wins 2021 Gerhard Ertl Lecture Award

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The US-american chemist is honoured for his outstanding accomplishments in the field of reticular chemistry.



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The 14th Gerhard Ertl Lecture Award goes to Omar M. Yaghi, Professor of Chemistry at the University of California, Berkeley, and elected member of the US National Academy of Sciences. The Award Committee, comprised of jurors Prof. Dr. Joachim Sauer (HU Berlin), Prof. Dr. Matthias Drieß (TU Berlin), Prof. Dr. Eckart Rühl (FU Berlin), as well as the Fritz Haber Institute's Board of Directors and Gerhard Ertl himself, have chosen to honour Prof. Yaghi because of his many accomplishments in the fields of reticular chemistry. "I am very much looking forward to an exciting lecture by a leading chemist on a fascinating class of materials", comments Nobel Laureate Gerhard Ertl.

With his discovery of indefinite two and three-dimensional metalorganic frameworks and covalent organic frameworks, Prof. Yaghi created the basis for the new field of reticular chemistry, which links molecular building blocks by strong bonds into crystalline extended structures. This new chemical space enabled him harnessing precision chemistry and important applications as he has shown for hydrogen storage, carbon oxide capture, and harvesting water from desert air.

"I am delighted and honored to receive the Ertl Prize. Gerhard Ertl's work unveiled how passion, discovery, and beauty are intermingled in science and how it is realized through the rigor of observation and study. I want to thank those who nominated and selected me for this honor," Prof. Yaghi says.

The Ertl Lecture Award was established in 2008 by the three Berlin universities (Humboldt University, Technical University and Free University) and the Fritz Haber Institute of the Max Planck Society to commemorate the awarding of the Nobel Prize to Gerhard Ertl in 2007. The prize, which is sponsored by BASF, includes a one-week research stay at the participating Berlin institutions and a festive evening lecture.


“In our more than 150-year history, collaborations with academic partners have played a decisive role from the very beginning. Innovations require both excellent fundamental research and strong partners who can transfer this knowledge into products and processes. It is therefore a great pleasure and an honor for us to present the Gerhard Ertl Lecture Award to Prof. Omar Yaghi, an outstanding scientist in his field,” said Dr. Detlef Kratz, President Process Research and Chemical Engineering, BASF SE.


The award ceremony is scheduled to take place on Friday, 10 December 2021, the anniversary of the Nobel Prize award to Gerhard Ertl. Prof. Yaghi will give a lecture with the title “Reticular Chemistry and Precision Reactions in Infinite 2D and 3D”.

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