



Your Contact

Friederike Segeberg +49 6151 72-4081

## News Release

July 10, 2015

### **Johann Heinrich Merck Award of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany 2015 Goes to Gabriele Goettle**

- **Publicist to receive prize worth € 20,000 in October**
- **Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany grants renowned literature award, underpinning its commitment to corporate responsibility and history**

Darmstadt, Germany, July 10, 2015 – The journalist and author Gabriele Goettle is the winner of the Johann Heinrich Merck Award for Literary Critique and Essay 2015 of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. The German Academy for Language and Poetry will be presenting the prize worth € 20,000 together with the Georg Büchner Prize on October 31, 2015 in Darmstadt. The Johann Heinrich Merck Award of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany is one of the most important distinctions for literary critics and essayists. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany initiated the award in 1964 in memory of the writer and literary critic Johann Heinrich Merck, who lived in Darmstadt from 1741 to 1791.

"We see the promotion of literature as part of our good corporate citizenship," said Karl-Ludwig Kley, Executive Board Chairman and CEO of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. At the end of 2014, the company selected culture, in addition to health and the environment, as a strategic sphere of activity for its sustainability efforts. "As an innovative high-tech company, we know that science and culture are mutually inspiring, and both are part of a society worth living in. We therefore promote cultural projects around the world in order to strengthen music, literature and science," Kley added.

#### Merck KGaA

Frankfurter Strasse 250  
64293 Darmstadt  
Hotline +49 6151 72-5000  
[www.emdgroup.com](http://www.emdgroup.com)

Head Media Relations -62445  
Spokesperson: -9591 / -7144 / -6328  
Fax +49 6151 72-3138  
[media.relations@emdgroup.com](mailto:media.relations@emdgroup.com)



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The German Academy for Language and Poetry is granting the Johann Heinrich Merck Award for Literary Critique and Essay of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany to Gabriele Goettle because she "demonstrates in an exemplary way the affiliation between these two concepts." In the jury's opinion, "Gabriele Goettle's texts stroll between reportage, story and essay." The author presents her characters "with great feeling for the problems of our day, with sharp precision and humanitarianism." In this way, her books densify into a "penetrating, physiognomic panorama of our age and our society."

Gabriele Goettle, born in 1946 in Aschaffenburg, lives in Berlin, where she studied sculpture, literature, religion, and art history. Since the 1980s, Gabriele Goettle has been writing about everyday life in Germany. A collection of her early writings called "*Deutsche Sitten. Erkundungen in Ost und West*" (German Customs. Investigations into East and West) was published in 1991, making her known among a wider circle of readers. To date, nine volumes of her reports and essays have been published. Several of her texts were published earlier in various newspapers, mainly the "TAZ". Gabriele Goettle is a member of the German authors' association "PEN-Zentrum Deutschland". She was awarded the Ben Witter Prize for literature in 1995 and the Schubart Literature Prize from the city of Aalen in 1999.

In 1771, Johann Heinrich Merck founded a publishing house that initially produced inexpensive reprints of Western European literature in the original language, and then added contemporary German works as well. Merck's home was the gathering point of the "Darmstädter Kreis," a group of writers that promoted literary sentimentalism and included Johann Gottfried Herder and Franz Michael Leuchsenring. Merck had friendly ties to Goethe in his young years.

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany has been sponsoring the Johann Heinrich Merck Award of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, which builds bridges between literature and empathetic understanding, since 1964. In addition, the company has been awarding the Premio Letterario in Italy, which recognizes authors for building bridges between literature and science, since 2003. By contrast, building bridges between



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cultures is at the forefront of the literature awards in Japan (Merck Kakehashi Prize of Merck Japan Ltd., a subsidiary of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany) and India (Merck Tagore Award of Merck India, a subsidiary of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany), which Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany grants in cooperation with the Goethe Institut.

### Notes for editors:

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