## drupa 2016 - Press Release No. 5 / 3 June 2013

# drupa Prize 2013 goes to 33-year old David Hommen:

## Outsider theory in the philosophy of mind is centre stage

The philosopher Dr. des. David Hommen from Viersen has received the drupa Prize 2013 for his dissertation "Mentale Verursachung, innere Erfahrung und handelnde Personen. Eine Verteidiauna des Epiphänomenalismus" (Mental Causation, Inner Experience and Acting Individuals. In Support of Epiphenomenalism). The Award was presented by Claus Bolza Schünemann (Chairman of the Board at Koenig & Bauer AG and President of drupa 2016), Werner M. Dornscheidt (President & CEO of Messe Düsseldorf) and Prof Dr Dr H. Michael Piper (Principal of Heinrich-Heine University Düsseldorf) as part of a celebratory event at the "Industrieclub Düsseldorf" on 3 June.

In his award-winning doctoral thesis Hommen deals with epiphenomenalism. According to this theory, in the philosophy of the mind mental phenomena are caused by physical processes but cannot drive the physical mechanics of the brain. In simple terms, epiphenomenalism describes the following: the mind, which is a "waste product" of the brain, so to speak, produces no effects on physical activities. Following the argument of epiphenomenalism there are no understandable or reasonable reasons for human actions.

In his dissertation the 33-year old Hommen has addressed an "outlier" topic in philosophy. In the German-speaking region the supporters of epiphenomenalism can almost be counted on the fingers of one hand; on a global scale there are only several dozens of philosophers openly admitting to epiphenomenalism. It was the controversial nature of this – anything but mainstream theme – that especially fascinated David Hommen and motivated him to defend epiphenomenalism. Towards the end of his studies he had already dealt with the philosophy of the mind, effortlessly moving between such sciences as psychology, philosophy and neurology and ethical and moral philosophies. With this approach he precisely hones in with the USP of philosophy because it also differs from all other sciences since it does not limit itself to a specific area or a determined methodology.



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Öffentliche Verkehrsmittel: U78, U79: Messe Ost/Stockumer Kirchstr. Bus 722: Messe-Center Verwaltung It rather distinguishes itself from other sciences by the manner of asking questions and the special way of approaching its varied subject areas. The Faculty Board therefore referred to the work, awarded with "summa cum laude", as an "impressive document for aspirational philosophy".

David Hommen was born in Viersen in 1980 and after obtaining his schoolleaving certificate studied philosophy, communication and media science and musicology at the Heinrich-Heine University. From 2009 to 2012 he served as a scientific assistant to a research group of the "Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)" and to a DFG special research area of Düsseldorf University. Last year he earned his doctorate at the Chair for Practical Philosophy. Since 2012 Hommen has worked as a lecturer at the University Duisburg-Essen.

## On the drupa Prize

Every year Messe Düsseldorf presents the drupa Prize to the best doctoral thesis at the Philosophical Faculty of HHU. Since 1978 it has honoured outstanding humanities works produced at the Düsseldorf University and promoted their publication and dissemination with prize money of EUR 6,000. The awarding is decided on by a body of experts each year that is composed of the Principal and Prorector of Heinrich-Heine University Düsseldorf, the President of drupa and the President & CEO of Messe Düsseldorf.

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