



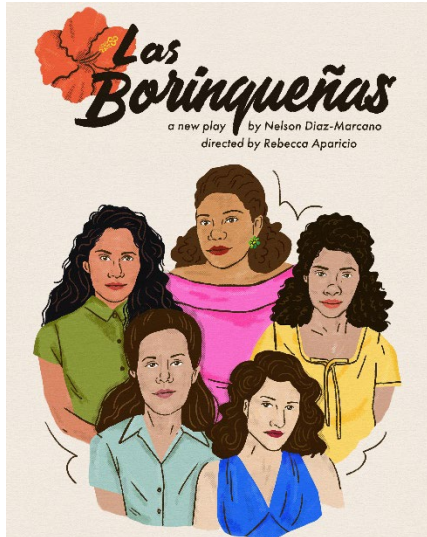
ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION

March 2024

Program Updates from VP and Program Director Doron Weber

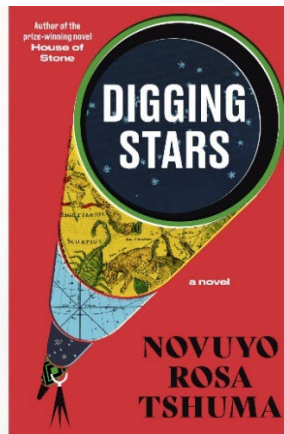
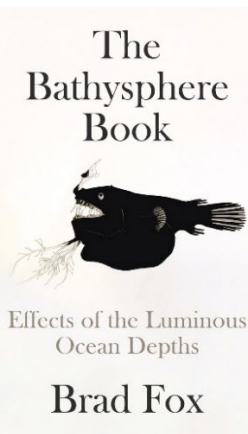
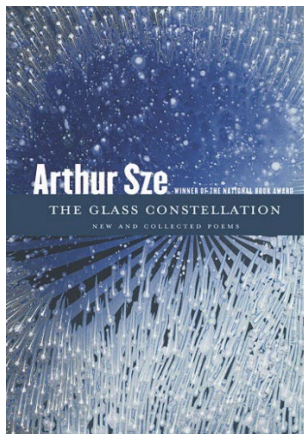
What's New This Spring

THEATER: New Play About Development of Birth Control Pill to Debut at Ensemble Studio Theatre



A new Sloan-commissioned play, [Las Borinqueñas](#), written by Nelson Diaz-Marcano and directed by Rebecca Aparicio, will debut as the Ensemble Studio Theatre (EST)/Sloan Mainstage Production on April 3, running until April 28. The play tells the story of five women in Puerto Rico in the 1950's who volunteer for preliminary trials for the first-ever birth control pill run by American researcher Dr. Gregory Pincus, and the consequences for them, their families and every woman's freedom of choice. The writing and production of *Las Borinqueñas* were supported by a 2022 Sloan grant to EST, one of Sloan's two flagship theater partners. The Sloan/EST Project has commissioned over 200 plays and supported dozens of productions across the US and internationally.

BOOKS: National Book Foundation Announces 2024 Sloan Science + Literature Award Winners



The [winners of the third annual Science + Literature Awards](#), established in partnership with the National Book Foundation (NBF) to honor books that celebrate excellence and diversity in science writing, were announced in all three categories: non-fiction, fiction and poetry.

Winners include Brad Fox's *The Bathysphere Book: Effects of the Luminous Ocean Depths* (nonfiction), about the history of the first deep-sea exploration; Novuyo Rosa Tshuma's *Digging Stars* (fiction), a coming-of-age story of a Zimbabwean astronomer; and Arthur Sze's *The Glass Constellation: New and Collected Poems* (poetry), a series of poems about our endangered planet with a fusion of Chinese, Japanese, Native American and Western experimentalist traditions. The winners will be celebrated in a ceremony at the Cooper Union on March 27, featuring readings and conversations with the selected authors. The Science + Literature Awards are supported by a 2021 Sloan grant.



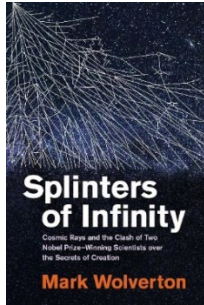
ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION

March 2024

Program Updates from VP and Program Director Doron Weber

What's New This Spring (cont'd)

BOOKS: *Splinters of Infinity: Cosmic Rays and the Clash of Two Nobel Prize-Winning Scientists over the Secrets of Creation* by Mark Wolverton to be Published on March 12



[*Splinters of Infinity: Cosmic Rays and the Clash of Two Nobel Prize-Winning Scientists over the Secrets of Creation*](#) by science writer Mark Wolverton will be published on March 12. Wolverton tells the little-known story of the rivalry between two of America's foremost physicists, Robert Millikan and Arthur Compton, over the origin of cosmic rays, which are enigmatic forms of penetrating radiation whose existence was confirmed in 1912. The book also explores what cosmic rays might reveal about black holes, distant galaxies, and the birth of the universe. *Splinters of Infinity* was supported by a 2022 Sloan grant.

BOOKS: *On the Move: The Overheating Earth and the Uprooting of America* by Abrahm Lustgarten to be Published on March 26



[*On the Move: The Overheating Earth and the Uprooting of America*](#) by environmental journalist Abrahm Lustgarten will be published on March 26. *On the Move* explores the causes and consequences of the impending climate migration that will drive tens of millions of Americans from the places they call home. Lustgarten introduces readers to homeowners in California, insurance customers in Florida, and ranchers in Colorado who are already affected by extreme climates and employs the most current predictive models to demonstrate how America's population will shift dramatically over the next decades. *On the Move* was supported by a 2021 Sloan grant.

TELEVISION: *The Cancer Detectives: The Trailblazers Who Landed the First Blow Against Cancer* to Premiere on PBS



[*The Cancer Detectives: The Trailblazers Who Landed the First Blow Against Cancer*](#), a documentary in the Sloan-supported *American Experience* series, will premiere on PBS on March 26. The film tells the untold story of the first-ever war on cancer, focusing on the people who created the life-saving cervical cancer test, also known as the pap smear: Dr. George Papanicolau, his wife Mary, Japanese artist Hashime

Murayama, African American OBGYN Dr. Helen Dickens, and a new class of female scientists known as cyto-screeners. After the pap smear was proven to be effective, the nation mobilized to successfully combat the number one cancer killer of women at the time. This documentary is the first of two produced through a major Sloan production grant to the WGBH Educational Foundation in 2023. The second documentary, *Poisoned Ground: The Tragedy at Love Canal*, is scheduled to premiere on April 22.



Winter Updates

FILM

SUNDANCE 2024: *Love Me* Wins 2024 Sloan Feature Film Prize at Sundance



[Love Me](#) was awarded the Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize at this year’s Sundance Film Festival and premiered on January 19. The narrative feature film, directed and written by Sam and Andy Zuchero and starring Kristen Stewart (*Twilight*, *Spencer*) and Steven Yeun (*Beef*, *Minari*), explores the limits of artificial intelligence through a love story between a buoy and a satellite in the aftermath of

humankind’s extinction. The film was cited by the jury “for its ambitious and formally inventive portrayal of a post-human Earth in which two machine-learning ‘life forms’ search for the cure to loneliness in the digital rubble of civilization, and for its original direction and engaging performances.” This year’s Sloan jury included filmmaker Matt Johnson (*BlackBerry*), astrophysicist Nia Imara, producer Theresa Park, biochemist Mandë Holford, and filmmaker Courtney Stephens (*Terra Femme*). The Sloan Feature Film Prize and other Sloan activities at Sundance are supported by a 2023 grant to the Sundance Institute.

SUNDANCE 2024: Three New Sloan-Winning Projects Celebrated at Award Ceremony

[Three exciting new projects](#) featuring scientific themes and characters were celebrated at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival and will now be developed at Sundance via the nationwide Sloan film pipeline. Emily Everhard was awarded the Sloan Episodic Fellowship for *Tektite*, about five female scientists who join NASA’s aquatic mission in the U.S. Virgin Islands; Sara Crow and David Rafeiledes were awarded the Sloan Development Fellowship for *Satoshi*, a potentially true story of the teenager who invented Bitcoin; and Lizzi Oyebode was awarded the Sloan Commissioning Grant for *Inverses*, about the lone Jewish professor and brilliant mathematician Emmy Noether’s resistance to the Nazi takeover of the world’s leading university math department. At the event, Sam and Andy Zuchero also accepted the Sloan Feature Film Prize on behalf of their film *Love Me*.





SUNDANCE 2024: Sloan Panel Brings Together Scientists and Filmmakers in Park City



Two scientists and three filmmakers gathered at Sundance to discuss cinema’s portrayal of artificial intelligence, including its capacity for emotion, its connection to humankind, and the complexity of consciousness. *The Big Conversation: Screen of Consciousness* was moderated by neuroscientist Dr. Heather Berlin and featured 2024 Sloan Feature Film Prize winners Sam & Andy Zuchero (*Love Me*), filmmaker Alex Rivera (*Sleep Dealer*), psychologist and neuroscientist Dr. Martin Monti and CEO of Cognitive

Insights for Artificial Intelligence Dr. Monica Lopez.

SUNDANCE 2024: Sloan Hosts Pioneer Works Panel with Jonathan Nolan

Sloan partner [Pioneer Works held a conversation](#) at Sundance with Academy Award and Emmy Award-nominated writer, director, and producer Jonathan Nolan moderated by astrophysicist and Chief Science Officer Janna Levin. The discussion explored Nolan’s catalogue of imaginative works, from the films he co-wrote with his brother Christopher Nolan (*Memento*, *Dark Knight*, *Interstellar*) to hit television series (*Person of Interest*, *Westworld*) and the influence of science in storytelling. Pioneer Works is supported by a 2023 Sloan grant for its online programming, which includes the broader *Science vs. Fiction* series inspired by the complementary nature of scientific discovery and fictional worldbuilding.



Sloan Documentary About Photographer Roman Vishniac Released in Select Theaters



[Vishniac](#), by award-winning documentary filmmaker Laura Bialis and producer Nancy Spielberg, was released in select theaters nationwide on January 19. The feature length documentary explores the career of renowned photographer Roman Vishniac, who is best known for his photographs of Jewish life in Eastern Europe from 1935 to 1938 but was also a pioneer in the field of microscopic

photography of nature. Many of his scientific images were featured in magazines such as *Nature* and popular biology textbooks of the time. Narrated by his daughter, Mara Vishniac Kohn, the film delves into the stories behind the photographs in his collection of over 10,000 images. The film received a Sloan production grant in 2021.



Next Generation of Filmmakers Celebrated at Sloan Awards Reception



The winners of the Sloan Grand Jury and Student Discovery Prizes were [announced at an awards reception](#) hosted by Sloan and the Museum of the Moving Image (MoMI) on January 11. The winners participated in a discussion with film critic and writer Beatrice Loayza after the ceremony. The Sloan Grand Jury Prize celebrates the “best of the best” winning screenplays submitted by Sloan’s six film school partners. The 2023 winner was Justine Beed from the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts. Her pilot script *La Forza* is a semi-historical romantic dramedy about the first salaried female science professor, physicist Laura Bassi. The Sloan Student Discovery Prize celebrates an exceptional science or technology script from one of six new public universities added to the program. Lara Palmqvist from the University of Texas, Austin won the 2023 award for her script *The Garden*, about a passionate plant breeder who tries to secure his family’s future by

developing genetically enhanced seeds. An honorable mention for the Grand Jury Prize was also awarded to New York University’s Emma Zetterberg for her script *The Light in Your Eyes*, about Swedish Nobel-Prize winner Allvar Gullstrand and his rivalry with Albert Einstein. The scripts were selected by a jury that included MIT Professor in Science, Technology, and Society Dr. Dwaipayan Banerjee, President of Oscilloscope Laboratories Dan Berger, filmmaker Sophie Barthes (*The Pod Generation*), filmmaker/actor Anna Konkle (*PEN15*), HHMI Tangled Bank Studios Science Communication Fellow Dr. Reyhaneh Maktoufi, and Arizona State University Professor of Computing and Augmented Intelligence Dr. Katina Michael. Live readings of excerpts from both winning scripts will be staged at MoMI as part of the First Light Festival on March 16. MoMI received a 2023 grant to manage these awards for the Sloan Film Program.

Oppenheimer Wins Sloan / SFFILM Science in Cinema Prize



The [Sloan Science in Cinema Prize](#), which recognizes the compelling depiction of science in a narrative feature film, was awarded in partnership with SFFILM to *Oppenheimer* in a ceremony, screening, and panel on December 12, 2023. The film, by Academy Award-winning director Christopher Nolan (*Interstellar*, *The Dark Knight*) and starring Cillian Murphy (*Peaky Blinders*, *Inception*) is based on the Sloan-supported, Pulitzer Prize-winning

book *American Prometheus* by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin. It tells the life story of American theoretical physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, known as “the father of the atomic bomb” for his role in the Manhattan Project. The award was accepted by *Oppenheimer* editor Jennifer Lamé, production designer Ruth de Jong, and sound designer/supervising sound editor Richard King who also participated in a panel with theoretical physicist Dr. Ben Safdi moderated by SFFILM Director of Programming Rod Armstrong. The film went on to win seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture, on March 10. The Sloan Science in Cinema Award is supported by a 2023 grant to SFFILM.

BlackBerry Selected for Sloan Showcase by Toronto International Film Festival

The Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) hosted a screening and Q&A of *BlackBerry* as part of their year-round, Sloan-supported science programming and included *BlackBerry* in Canada’s Top Ten, an annual honor compiled by TIFF to promote the year’s best Canadian films. The film by writer/director Matt Johnson, who also stars alongside Jay Baruchel and Glenn Howerton, is a wry exuberant depiction of the rise and fall of the world’s first smartphone, the BlackBerry. The post-screening Q&A, moderated by TIFF programmer Norm Wilner, discussed the role of technology in our lives with director Johnson and Vass Bednar, Executive Director of McMaster University’s MPP in Digital Society. The Q&A is [available to stream on TIFF’s Youtube page](#). TIFF is a new Sloan film partner supported by an inaugural 2023 grant.



Athena Film Festival Hosts Annual Celebration for Sloan Screenwriter and STEM Showcase



[Athena Film Festival](#) (AFF) hosted full day of STEM programming as part of its annual Festival at Barnard College on March 3, including a reception and staged reading to celebrate the winner of the 2023 Alfred P. Sloan Athena List Development Grant, Mrittika Sarin for her script *Scarce*. The award is part of the Festival’s year-round Creative Development Program to outstanding science-themed projects by and about women. *Scarce* tells the story of a cynical software engineer who discovers the siphoning of treated water from an underprivileged community in Bangalore, India. The reading was followed by a Q&A with Sarin and AFF Artistic Director Melissa Silverstein. For the annual Sloan STEM Showcase, Athena also screened *The Disappearance of Shere Hite* followed by a panel. The

documentary by Nicole Newnham discusses Shere Hite’s pioneering study of women’s sexuality, documented in the bestselling book, *The Hite Report*. The screening was followed by a panel on “Data, Science, and Feminism” that discussed methods for collecting statistical data and the lack of research focused on women and sexuality with Co-Chair of Columbia’s Center for Data, Media and Society Susan McGregor, medical anthropologist Gina Jae, award-winning author and maternal/infant health advocate Kimberly Seals Allers and moderator and computational social scientist Saima Akhtar. The Athena Film Festival is supported by a 2021 Sloan grant to Barnard College.



Sloan Showcase Film at Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) Released in Theaters

Fitting In by Molly McGlynn and starring Maddie Ziegler was released in theaters on February 2. The film, a coming-of-age comedy drama about a teenage girl diagnosed with the rare reproductive condition Mayer–Rokitansky–Küster–Hauser (MRKH) syndrome, was selected for the first-ever Sloan Science-in-Film Showcase at TIFF in September 2023. *Fitting In* has received positive reviews in [Observer](#) and [Punch Drunk Critics](#), among others, with a 95% rating on Rotten Tomatoes. TIFF is supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.





Sloan Hosts Presentation at the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers



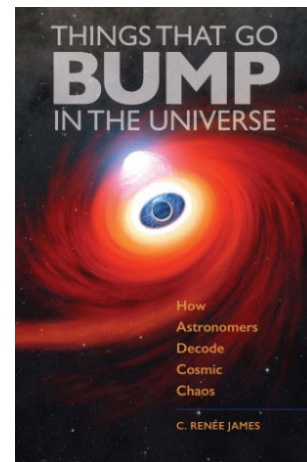
Vice President and Program Director Doron Weber led a virtual session focused on the Sloan film program’s work with factual content, including past success stories and future priorities for Sloan documentaries, at the [2023 World Congress of Science and Factual Producers \(WCSFP\)](#). With more than 100 science producers, broadcasters and other stakeholders of the global factual content community in attendance, the presentation featured trailers and clips from Sloan documentaries, including *Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story*, *How to*

Survive a Pandemic, and *Coded Bias*, and was followed by a Q&A. Sloan support for WCSFP also included sponsorship of a separate session “Scoop or Scooped: Filming Science as it Happens” on the challenges of creating science documentaries and support for four American-based emerging science content producers from historically underrepresented groups to attend the 2023 WCSFP in Seattle. Sloan programming at the WCSFP was supported by a 2023 officer grant.

BOOKS

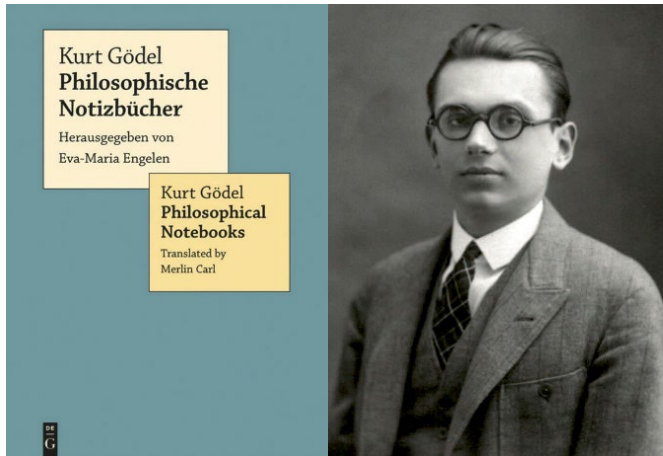
Things That Go Bump in the Universe: How Astronomers Decode Cosmic Chaos by C. Renee James Published on November 14

[Things That Go Bump in the Universe: How Astronomers Decode Cosmic Chaos](#) by astronomer and science writer C. Renee James was published on November 14, 2023. James introduces readers to her colleagues around the world who are using revolutionary techniques to examine everything from the Big Bang to dark energy. The book captures the drama of a wild, violent cosmos by exploring the incredible discoveries being made in the field, the tools used to detect cosmic events, and the astronomical mysteries that have yet to be solved. The book has received positive reviews in [The New York Times](#) and [The Space Review](#), among others. *Things That Go Bump in the Universe* was supported by a 2021 Sloan grant.





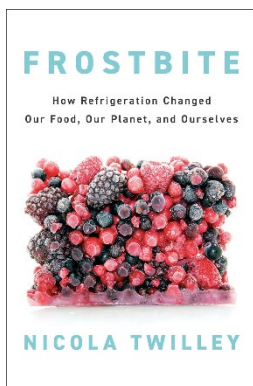
English Translation of Volume 5 of Kurt Gödel's *Philosophical Notebooks* Published on December 31



[Volume 5 of Kurt Gödel's *Philosophical Notebooks*](#) was published on December 31, 2023 as part of a broader effort to publish the first complete, historical-critical, bilingual edition of Gödel's works. Gödel is considered one of the most significant logicians in history, with discoveries in the foundations of mathematics that led to the publication of Gödel's incompleteness theorems. Edited by Dr. Eva-Maria Engelen of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Volume 5 dives deeper into

his philosophical considerations and reveals a previously unknown interpretation of his second incompleteness theorem. The publication of Kurt Gödel's *Philosophical Notebooks* is supported by a 2020 Sloan grant.

Frostbite: How Refrigeration Changed Our Food, Our Planet, and Ourselves by Nicola Twilley to be published on June 25



[Frostbite: How Refrigeration Changed Our Food, Our Planet, and Ourselves](#) by journalist and co-host of Sloan podcast [Gastropod](#) Nicola Twilley will be published on June 25. The book explores the introduction and impact of artificial refrigeration throughout the past century, and takes readers on a tour of the “cold chain” from farm to fridge. Twilley also investigates the impact of refrigeration on our definition of “fresh,” the consequences of our dependence on refrigeration for climate change, and how we can recalibrate our relationship with artificial cooling. *Frostbite* is supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.

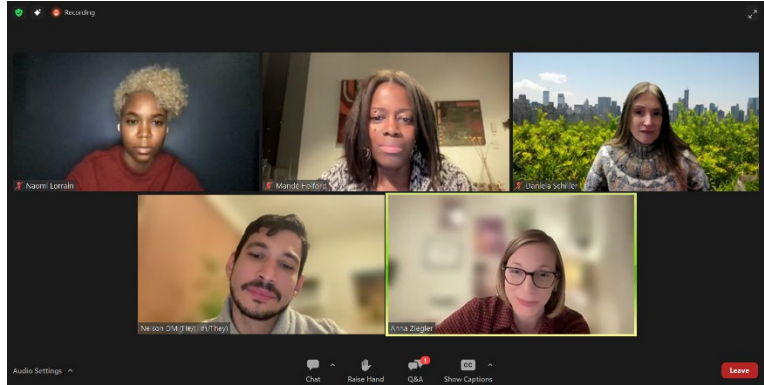
Check out our [latest ad](#) in the March edition of the *New York Review of Books* honoring Sloan book grantees whose books were published in 2023!



THEATER

EST Hosts Virtual Artist Cultivation Panel for Sloan Theater Program

The Ensemble Studio Theatre hosted a Sloan Artist Cultivation Panel in November 2023 to publicize the unique opportunities afforded by the EST/Sloan commissioning program, which commissions 10-12 new plays every year. At the event, playwright and actor Naomi Lorrain moderated a discussion on what makes a great science play with EST/Sloan playwrights Nelson Diaz-Marcano (*Las Borinqueñas*) and Anna Ziegler (*Photograph 51*). The panel also included Dr. Mandë Holford, Associate Professor in Chemistry at Hunter College, and Dr. Daniela Schiller, lead of the Affective Neuroscience Lab at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. The 2023 cultivation event was supported by a 2022 Sloan grant to EST.



TELEVISION

Inside China's Tech Boom Airs on NOVA



[Inside China's Tech Boom](#), a one-hour NOVA documentary about China's meteoric rise to the forefront of global innovation, premiered on PBS on November 8. The key story in the film focuses on Huawei, one of the largest corporate investors in research and development, and its quest to lead the development of a new global internet based on 5G technology. Featuring both Chinese and Western experts, the film explores China's manufacturing infrastructure,

the country's top-down approach, the factors that drive their bid for technological supremacy, and the implications for the world. In partnership with the Asia Society, NOVA also hosted a special screening on November 14 followed by a panel discussion moderated by NOVA producer Chris Schmidt with filmmaker David Borenstein, tech reporter Kaiser Kuo, and Consulting Editor of Tech Buzz China Rui Ma. The documentary is accompanied by several educational resources distributed on PBS LearningMedia. The film is available for streaming on the PBS website and [NOVA's YouTube Channel](#). *Inside China's Tech Boom* was supported by a 2021 Sloan grant.



RADIO

EFF Launches Fifth Season of *How to Fix the Internet* and Wins Silver Anthem Award



[How to Fix the Internet](#), a Sloan supported podcast from the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) that tackles the thorniest issues of the modern web, launched its fifth season on February 27. The first episode of the season, hosted by EFF’s Executive Director Cindy Cohn and Associate Director of Digital Strategy Jason Kelley and titled [“Open Source Beats Authoritarianism.”](#) featured Taiwan’s first Digital Minister Audrey Tang (top left) and discussed artificial intelligence as a tool to surface areas of agreement, the importance of radical transparency from government officials, and methods for developing a strong public and civic digital infrastructure. Future guests on this season will include author and journalist Cory Doctorow

(top right), former Special Assistant to the President for Technology and Competition Policy Timothy Wu (bottom left), and U.S. Senator for Oregon Ronald Wyden (bottom right). Earlier this year, the podcast was also [awarded a Silver Anthem Award in the Responsible Technology](#) category. *How to Fix the Internet* is supported by a 2023 grant to EFF.

NEW MEDIA

New York Academy of Medicine Hosts Opera about Ignaz Semmelweis



[Semmelweis](#), an opera inspired by the tragic story of pioneer obstetrician Ignaz Semmelweis, premiered in the US on December 5 in New York City. Composed by the Brooklyn-based American Opera Project, the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) hosted a special performance that explores the story of Dr. Semmelweis and how it is related to public health today. The 45-minute opera was followed by a discussion with the composer Ray Lustig and NYAM Senior Scholar-in-Residence Dr. Elaine Larson about the development of the opera and the impact of Semmelweis’ work. The performance was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant. The opera is not connected to Sloan play *Dr. Semmelweis* at the National Theatre in London starring and co-written by Mark Rylance, which ran for three months last fall.



SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Online Ukrainian Center Highlights Science at Risk



The Ukrainian Science Centre of Excellence, launched by Sloan grantee and Ukrainian NGO Kunsht, completed the first phase of its [“Science at Risk”](#) Initiative to promote Ukrainian scientists’ expertise, find international partners and donors, and tell the stories of Ukrainian scientists during the war to a broader audience. The Initiative brought together think tank experts to collaboratively develop comprehensive white papers outlining short and long-term strategies for

preserving, communicating, and restoring science during conflicts, social crises, and natural disasters. The evidence-based policy recommendations have set the groundwork for reforming and strengthening Ukraine’s scientific sector as the country continues its fight against the Russian invasion, informing the work of Ukraine’s Ministry of Education and Science and organizations such as UNESCO, Scholars at Risk, and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. The white papers, published on the Science at Risk website, include [“Preserving Museum, Archival, Library, and Scientific Collections During the War.”](#) [“Science Popularization During Wars and Crises: Challenges and Opportunities.”](#) and [“Systematization of Practices and Recommendations of Ukrainian Institutions with Damaged and Destroyed Research Infrastructure.”](#) The Initiative also developed a database of Ukrainian science projects in need of outside collaborators, published dozens of articles reporting on science at risk in Ukraine, and hosted several international presentations on the results of their research.

Program Team: Doron Weber, *Vice President and Program Director* | Shriya Bhindwale, *Program Associate* | Delia DiBiasi, *Senior Program and Investments Assistant*