



What's New This Summer

On the Invention of Species Wins Sloan / SFFILM Science on Screen Prize



The Sloan Science on Screen Prize, which recognizes the compelling depiction of science in a narrative feature film, was awarded in partnership with SFFILM to [On the Invention of Species](#) on April 27 as part of the annual SFFILM Festival. The Spanish film, the first feature to be shot completely on location on the Galápagos islands, is about a young girl who navigates grief by exploring the historic archipelago that led to

Darwin's breakthrough studies on adaptation. The post-screening panel featured director Tania Hermida, creative collaborator Martín Durán, cast member Jeff Frazier, and evolutionary biologist Dr. Noah Whiteman. As part of Sloan programming, SFFILM also presented the world premiere of [Mabel by Nicholas Ma](#), a film about a young girl who befriends a plant. The film received the Sloan \$100K Feature Film Production Award at NYU in 2019 and the Sloan Screenplay Award from the Tribeca Film Institute in 2020. SFFILM's Science in Cinema programming also honored actor and director Chiwetel Ejiofor for his recent film [Rob Peace](#), about a science prodigy who struggles with his violent past as he enters the Ivy League. Ejiofor received the 2019 Sloan Feature Film Prize at the Sundance Film Festival for his film, *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*. The Science in Cinema awards and programming at SFFILM are supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.

Sloan Film *Join or Die* Featured in Special Screening and Panel

[Join or Die](#) by Emmy Award-winning documentary producer Rebecca Davis and author Pete Davis was screened at a special event at the Capitol in Washington D.C. on June 11. It was followed by a conversation with Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, Senator Chris Murphy, and the directors to discuss social connection in America, the loneliness crisis, and the relationship between community life and the fate of our democracy. The feature-length documentary follows the 50-year story of America's civic unravelling through pioneering Harvard social scientist and *Bowling Alone* author, [Robert Putnam](#), as he explores major trends in community engagement, culture wars and economic inequality. *Join or Die* features Hillary Clinton, Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, Pete Buttigieg, and Eddie Glaude Jr., among other scholars, and engages with community building groups across the United States. The film is supported by a 2020 Sloan grant.





Colorado Passes First-Ever Legislation to Protect Neural Data

Working with Sloan grantee the Neurorights Foundation, Colorado Governor Jared Polis signed into law the first bill to protect consumers against misuse and abuse of neural data. The historic bill incorporates heightened protections for neural data by expanding the definition of “sensitive data,” requiring businesses to obtain consent before collecting neural data, which the state defines as “data that concerns the activity of an individual’s central or peripheral nervous systems, including the brain and spinal cord, and that can be processed by or with the assistance of a device.” The bill had impressive bipartisan support and set the stage for other states to follow suit, with the

California State Senate recently approving *The Neurorights Act*, a similar bill which restricts businesses’ use of consumer data. It will now be sent to the California State Assembly. These bills are introduced in response to the rapid growth in the highly unregulated neurotechnology market, which is expected to reach \$21 billion by 2026. Both state bills were sponsored by the Neurorights Foundation, whose work protecting consumer privacy is supported by a 2022 Sloan grant.



Sloan’s Wide-Ranging Multimedia Approach to Science Highlighted in *Inside Philanthropy*



An article published in *Inside Philanthropy* on May 2 by Michael Kavate highlighted Sloan’s multidisciplinary approach to the complex and urgent issue of climate change. The article credits the program for being one of the few that directly supports nonfiction and narrative media – film, documentaries, television, and books – about this critical subject, including 20 climate-related films and TV shows, 30 screenwriting or production awards through Sloan film

partners, and 17 Sloan books in the past five years. Kavate writes, “The program has impressive geographic reach. Within the U.S., Sloan has backed climate projects related to Cape Cod, Long Island, Alaska, Kentucky, Texas and Washington state. Abroad, the list includes France, China, India, Australia, the Himalayas, the Cayman Islands, the Bahamas, Syria, Colombia, Greenland, Kenya and the Arctic Circle.” The article is available to read on the [Inside Philanthropy website](#).



Quarterly Updates

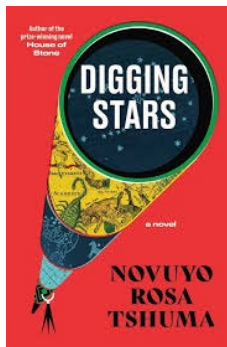
BOOKS

National Book Foundation / Sloan Science + Literature Winners Celebrated

The third annual Sloan Science + Literature Award Ceremony was held at The Cooper Union on March 27. In a novel partnership with the National Book Foundation that includes fiction and poetry for the first time, winning titles included Brad Fox’s *The Bathysphere Book: Effects of the Luminous Ocean Depths*; Novuyo Rosa Tshuma’s *Digging Stars*; and Arthur Sze’s *The Glass Constellation: New and Collected Poems*. The selected works were chosen by a committee of scientific and literary experts who focused on books that celebrate excellence and diversity in science writing. The Science + Literature Award winners were also highlighted in the [Associated Press](#).

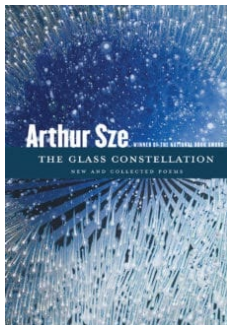


The National Book Foundation received a three-year grant from the Sloan Foundation in 2021 to establish these prizes. The three winners discussed their work in three individual events across the country (see below).



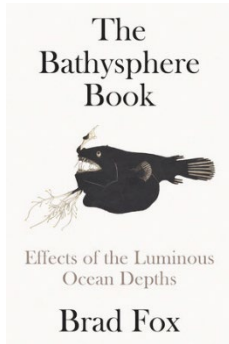
Novuyo Rosa Tshuma: Written in the Stars (Fiction Winner)

Novuyo Rosa Tshuma, author of *Digging Stars*, joined 2024 Science + Literature committee chair Ricardo Nuila on April 9 to discuss her work and the challenges of writing fiction through a scientific lens. The event was part of the Hermann Park Conservancy’s Garden and Nature Series in Houston. Tshuma’s second novel *Digging Stars* is a coming-of-age story about a Zimbabwean astronomer. It has received positive reviews in [The New York Times](#), [Kirkus Reviews](#), and [WBUR](#).



Arthur Sze: Nature’s Poetry and Peril (Poetry Winner)

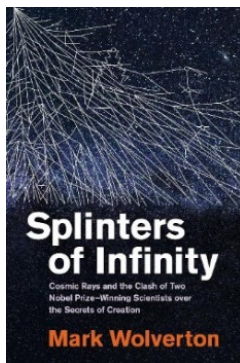
On April 25, at the Grandin Theatre in Roanoke, VA, author Arthur Sze joined Science + Literature selection committee member Brian Teare for a conversation on environmental poetry and how it can reframe the environmental crisis. Sze’s award-winning book, *The Glass Constellations: New and Collected Poems* is a series of poems about our endangered planet with a fusion of Chinese, Japanese, Native American and Western experimentalist traditions.



Brad Fox: A Research Voyage (Nonfiction Winner)

Brad Fox, author of *The Bathysphere Book: Effects of the Luminous Depth*, joined University of Utah professor of creative writing Michael Mejia on May 1 at the Bookmarked Literary Arts Festival to discuss why the scientific explorations and discoveries of the 1930s feel so timely today and how to make research come to life in narrative nonfiction. *The Bathysphere Book*, about the history of the first deep-sea exploration, received positive reviews in [The New York Times](#), [The Guardian](#), [Publishers Weekly](#) and [Kirkus Reviews](#).

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

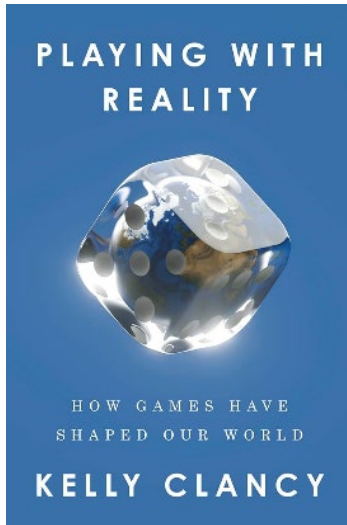


[*Splinters of Infinity: Cosmic Rays and the Clash of Two Nobel Prize-Winning Scientists over the Secrets of Creation*](#) by science writer Mark Wolverton was published on March 12. Wolverton tells the little-known story of the rivalry between two of America's foremost physicists, Robert Millikan and 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.

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

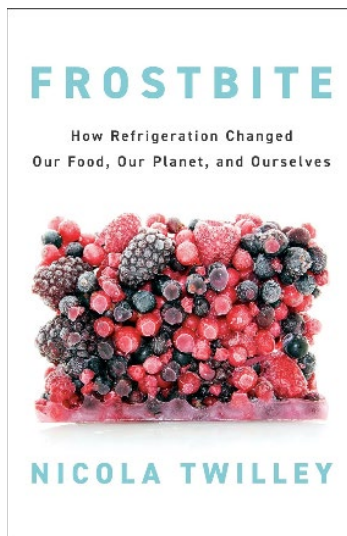


[*On the Move: The Overheating Earth and the Uprooting of America*](#) by environmental journalist Abrahm Lustgarten was published on March 26. *On the Move* explores the causes and consequences of the impending climate migration that will drive tens of millions of Americans from the places they call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



Playing with Reality: How Games Have Shaped Our World by Kelly Clancy Published on June 18

[Playing with Reality: How Games Have Shaped Our World](#) by neuroscientist and physicist Kelly Clancy was published on June 18. The book is an in-depth history of games and their role in human progress, from military theory and political science to evolutionary biology and artificial intelligence. Clancy delves into the ways game theory can warp our understanding of human behavior and argues that our fascination with games is the key to understanding human nature. The book has received positive reviews in [Scientific American](#) and [Publishers Weekly](#), among others. *Playing with Reality* is supported by a 2023 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 over 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 health and the definition of “fresh,” the consequences of our dependence on refrigeration for climate change, and how we can recalibrate our relationship with artificial cooling. The book was featured in [The New York Times](#) as a top pick for June. Twilley has also appeared on the [Atlas Obscura podcast](#) to discuss her book and published an excerpt in [The New Yorker](#). *Frostbite* is supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.

TELEVISION

The Cancer Detectives About Pap Smear Test Airs on PBS



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

American OBGYN Dr. Helen Dickens, and a new group of female scientists known as cyto-screener. 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. The film is available to stream on the [American Experience website](#) and [YouTube](#). On April 9, American Experience also hosted a virtual PAST FORWARD conversation exploring the ways narratives and biases surrounding female bodies determine and limit our understanding of women, featuring U.S. historian of race and medicine Dr. Ameenah Shakir, author and cognitive scientist Dr. Cat Bohannon, and moderator and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Pam Belluck. The panel is available to stream on the American Experience [YouTube](#) page. This documentary is the first of two produced through a major Sloan production grant to the WGBH Educational Foundation in 2023.

Secrets in Your Data Airs on NOVA

[Secrets in Your Data](#), a one-hour NOVA documentary about the data we inadvertently share while using the internet, premiered on PBS on May 15. Hosted by journalist, producer and physician Dr. Alok Patel, the film explains how we are sharing more personal data than we realize and how this poses a risk to our privacy and safety, while also opening the door to major advances in technology and medicine. Patel guides viewers through the latest efforts to maximize benefits of data shedding without compromising personal privacy. The film is available to watch on the [NOVA website](#) and [YouTube](#). The documentary was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant to WGBH Educational Foundation.





***Poisoned Ground* About 1970s Environmental Catastrophe Airs on PBS**

[*Poisoned Ground: The Tragedy at Love Canal*](#), a two-hour documentary in the Sloan-supported American Experience series, premiered on PBS on April 22. The film tells the story of the residents of Love Canal, a working-class neighborhood in Niagara Falls, New York, who in the 1970s discover that their town was built on a chemical waste dump leaking toxic substances and causing extensive health



issues. Primarily led by housewives-turned-activists, the residents of Love Canal created a grassroots movement that led to the landmark Superfund Bill, which established a program to investigate and clean up sites contaminated with hazardous substances. The film is available to stream on the [American Experience website](#) and [YouTube](#). American Experience also held two in-person preview and discussion events in Washington D.C. and New York City featuring writer/producer/director Jamila Ephron, former resident of Love Canal Carol Jones, and historian Richard Newman. This documentary is the second of two produced through a major Sloan production grant to the WGBH Educational Foundation in 2023.

THEATER

New Play About Development of Birth Control Pill Debuts at Ensemble Studio Theatre



A new Sloan-commissioned play, [*Las Borinqueñas*](#), written by Nelson Diaz-Marcano and directed by Rebecca Aparicio, debuted as the EST Mainstage Production from April 3 to May 5. 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. *Las Borinqueñas* was part of this year's annual First Light Festival, a two-month-long series by EST featuring Sloan-commissioned plays. Public readings included Jacob Marx Rice's *Binding Energy*; Jacquelyn Reingold's *Fear Less*; Melisa Tien's *Disrupted*; Sandra Daley-Sharif's *Amma's Wit*; Karina Billini's *Apple Bottom*; Meghan Brown's *Bigfoot*; Allyson Morgan's *Teenage*

Huntress; and Zhu Yi and Yoonmi Lee's *Frozen: The Egg Freezing Musical*. 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.



**Manhattan Theatre Club (MTC) Reading Series Presents Public Reading of Sloan Play
*Asilomar***



Asilomar by Dipika Guha (pictured left), a Sloan/MTC-commissioned play, was presented in a public reading at MTC's City Center Stage I on March 18 as part of the Theatre's Ted Snowdon Reading Series. The reading followed a week-long developmental workshop with director Jess McLeod, a cast of actors, and the support of MTC's Artistic Development staff. The play explores the culture of competition in science, the ethics that accompany scientific discovery, and the implications of gene editing technology through the story of Dr. Annie Roy, who makes a discovery with grave implications for the human species. The play was commissioned in 2017 as a part of MTC's Sloan Initiative. Sloan's ongoing partnership with MTC is supported by a 2022 grant.

FILM

BIPOC Medical Students in the Bronx Star in *The Calling*, Premieres at DC/DOX



The Calling by Emmy Award-winning director Asako Gladsjo premiered at documentary film festival DC/DOX on June 16. The feature-length documentary, shot in verité style, follows the lives of BIPOC medical students over the course of a year in varying phases of their medical education at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx and its world-class teaching hospital, Montefiore Medical

Center. Through their stories, the film exposes the most challenging issues faced by medical students today, including their uphill battle with deeply rooted medical inequity in the American healthcare system. Both Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Montefiore Medical Center recently made headlines earlier this year when they received a \$1 billion donation from Ruth Gottesman, longtime professor at the school, to allow all incoming students to attend for free. The production of *The Calling* is supported by a 2022 grant.



Sloan Hosts Virtual Sloan Film Summit



More than 50 award-winning Sloan filmmakers from the past five years gathered to network and celebrate at the second annual Virtual Sloan Summit on May 1. Hosted by Sloan with long-time partner [The Museum of the Moving Image](#), the Summit featured updates from all six Sloan film partners: Athena Film Festival, Film Independent, SFFILM, Toronto International Film Festival, The Black List and Sundance Institute. The evening also included a filmmaker spotlight on Sloan grantee [Nicolas Ma](#) (pictured left), recipient of the Sloan \$100K Feature Film Production Award at NYU in 2019 and the Sloan Screenplay Award from the Tribeca Film Institute in 2020 for his recent film *Mabel*, which debuted at SFFILM in 2024. The event offered updates and networking opportunities for other attendees. The Summit was supported by a 2022 Sloan grant to the Museum of the Moving Image.

Science on Screen Sponsors the Independent Film Exhibition Conference

After a four-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the Independent Film Exhibition Conference (IND/EX) will return from June 25-28 in Chicago with Sloan-supported Science on Screen as an event sponsor. IND/EX, taking place at the Chicago Cultural Center and the Gene Siskel Film Center, provides a mix of educational programs, workshops, speakers, and exhibits to advance the reach of film festivals and independent exhibitors. Science on Screen, a national program facilitated by Coolidge Corner Theatre for events that pair screenings of films with panels of scientists and filmmakers, will host a panel to encourage art houses to apply to the program, focusing on ways in which grantees have used Science on Screen as a vehicle to promote diverse voices in film and in STEM. Science on Screen is supported by a 2023 grant to the Coolidge Corner Theatre.



RADIO

WNYC Hosts Health Convening on *The Brian Lehrer Show*



WNYC hosted its annual Sloan-funded Health Convening virtually on June 18. This year the convening took place live as part of *The Brian Lehrer Show*, an award-winning call-in program that connects listeners to WNYC health reporters and top local and national public health officials. Featuring Dr. Siddhartha Mukherjee, Dr. Shinjini Kundu, and Dr. Paul Friedman, the event was a roundtable conversation about how artificial intelligence is interacting with healthcare, including AI's role in diagnosing diseases,

creating medication and patient billing. The discussion also covered concerns related to AI and patient privacy, as well as bias in algorithms. The 2024 Health Convening was supported by a 2024 grant to WNYC to support story-driven healthcare reporting, which now reaches over 10 million listeners in the tri-state area and has won wide acclaim since the COVID-19 pandemic.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

University of Washington's BRAINS Program Publishes in *Neuron*

The [BRAINS \(Broadening the Representation of Academic Investigators in NeuroScience\)](#) program at the University of Washington published an article in [Neuron](#) explaining the lessons they have learned to advance excellence and diversity in the neuroscience field, including the importance of centering relationships, providing ongoing engagement, and leveraging programmatic expertise. With Sloan support, BRAINS launched a [public online directory](#) of Fellows, Affiliates, and other neuroscientists associated with the program, with over 100 community members to date. BRAINS uses a unique cohort-based professional development approach to advance the inclusion, retention and progress of neuroscientists from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups. The directory was supported by a 2020 Sloan grant to provide an accessible list of young neuroscientists of color who could serve as advisors or subjects of public understanding projects.





Sloan Co-Sponsors Two-Day Summit *Trust. News. Democracy*



As part of Sloan’s participation in *Press Forward*, a major effort to preserve and revitalize local journalism spearheaded by the MacArthur Foundation, Vice President and Program Director Doron Weber attended the *Trust. News. Democracy* Summit in Austin, Texas. The conference focused on solutions to the local news crisis, fragmented national media, and threats posed by advancements in digital technologies including AI and social media misinformation. Hosted by the LBJ Foundation and More Perfect, the conference featured panels and conversations with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, award-winning author, podcast host, and journalist

Kara Swisher, and former anchor and Emmy and Peabody-award winning broadcast journalist Judy Woodruff. The Summit was supported by a 2024 Presidential Grant.

Sloan to Attend 2024 VidCon Convention for YouTube

The Public Understanding of Science and Technology team will be attending this year’s VidCon Convention in Anaheim, California from June 25-29 to engage STEM Creators on YouTube and TikTok. Founded by John and Hank Green, two of the most prominent educators on YouTube, VidCon is an annual convention for influencers and executives that features leading video creators across the internet. As signaled in the 2023 Board Presentation, the Public Understanding program is currently exploring the YouTube and TikTok space to collaborate with STEM Creators.



The Public Understanding Program Welcomes Swan Griffith!



This spring, Sloan’s Public Understanding of Science and Technology team welcomed Swan Griffith as the new Program Assistant. Swan joined the Foundation in 2022 as an Office Assistant. Prior to joining the Foundation, Swan worked for nonprofit organizations supporting education and workforce development. We are thrilled to have her join the Public Understanding program!

Program Team: Doron Weber, *Vice President, Programs and Program Director* | Shriya Bindwale, *Program Associate* | Swan Griffith, *Program Assistant*