



## What's New This Winter

### Guillermo del Toro's *Frankenstein* Wins Sloan Science in Cinema Prize



The [Sloan Science in Cinema Prize](#), which recognizes the compelling depiction of science in a narrative feature film, will be awarded in partnership with SFFILM to Guillermo del Toro's *Frankenstein* in a ceremony, screening, and panel on November 12. The film starring Oscar Isaac and Jacob Elordi reimagines the classic novel by Mary Shelley, about a brilliant scientist and the creature his monstrous

ambition brings to life. The screening will be followed by a panel about the scientific themes the film presages, such as genetic and tissue engineering and transplantation, biotechnology, synthetic biology, and artificial intelligence. Panelists will include the Academy Award-winning writer/director Guillermo del Toro and acclaimed scientist Dr. Jennifer Doudna, recipient of the 2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for her groundbreaking development of CRISPR-Cas9 as a genome engineering technology, as well as the film's sound designer Nathan Robitaille, VFX supervisor Dennis Berardi, and head of concept design Guy Davis. The Science in Cinema Prize is supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.

### New Episode on Isaac Newton Premieres on Hit YouTube Channel *SciShow*

[SciShow](#), the hit YouTube channel founded by YouTube icon Hank Green, published its second Sloan-supported deep dive titled "[Isaac Newton's Secret Quest for Gold](#)" on October 17. The 40-minute video, hosted by science YouTuber Tom Lum, explores Sir Isaac Newton's deep but little-known fascination with alchemy, particularly the pursuit of turning lead into gold via transmutation, at a time when not much was known about chemistry. Additional Sloan-supported content on *SciShow* will premiere over the coming months, including three 5-10 minute videos and three 60-90 second short form videos based on Sloan books such as *Air-Borne* by Carl Zimmer and *Collisions* by Alec Nevala-Lee. Videos will be posted across [SciShow TikTok](#), [Instagram Reels](#), and YouTube Shorts pages.

These videos follow a successful pilot partnership with *SciShow* last year, which included a 30-minute deep dive titled "The Stunning Violence of the Chimpanzee War." This year's Sloan-supported videos on the *SciShow* channel are supported by a 2025 grant.





FILM

Sloan Partnership with Toronto Film Festival Thrives



**Sloan Science and Technology Pitch Forum:** Sloan kicked off the third year of its new partnership with the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), the largest public film festival in the world, on September 8. Four screenwriters with draft scripts pitched their science and technology-themed projects at a special Industry Conference before a panel of leading producers and film executives who provided feedback. [This year's selected participants](#) included Daniel Wilner for “Why We Love,” based on Dr. Helen Fisher’s life and research in proving the neuroscience and biology of love; Lizzi Oyeboade for “Inverses,” about mathematician Emmy Noether; Tanju Özdemir for “The Rings of Saturn,” about an astrophysicist who traces her late mother’s origins in Turkey; and Nile Price for “McNair,” about African American astronaut Ronald McNair. Oyeboade previously received the 2024 Sloan Commissioning Grant at the Sundance Institute and Price received a 2023 Sloan Screenwriting Grant at NYU. Panelists included Sam Shafaghi (Esmail Corp), Julia Fidel (ZDF Studios), and Jennifer Weiss (Nice Picture Inc.).

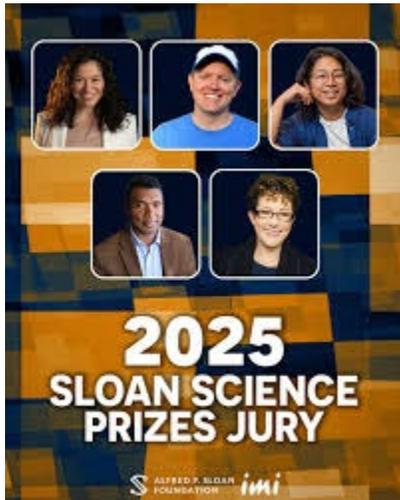
**Sloan Showcase Screening:** This year’s [Sloan Showcase at TIFF](#) featured *Silent Friend* by Ildikó Enyedi. The film starring Tony Leung and Léa Seydoux is about a Gingko biloba tree that silently observes humans as they seek to understand it over the centuries at a botanical garden in a German university. The screening was followed by a Q&A with the writer/director and Dr. Shelley Lumba, Professor of Cell & Systems Biology at the University of Toronto. Sloan programming at TIFF is supported by a 2025 grant.





## YOUTUBE & TIKTOK

### Second Annual Sloan Science Prizes for YouTube to be Awarded November 15



Sloan will announce the winners of the second annual [Sloan Science Prizes for YouTube](#) on November 15 at the third annual [IMI Fest](#). Awarded in partnership with the Independent Media Initiative (IMI), the prizes include a \$100,000 Documentary Prize for the production of a nonfiction video or series of videos about science or technology on YouTube and/or TikTok; and a \$50,000 Narrative Fiction Prize for the production of a science-themed short film or series pilot. Winners will be selected by an esteemed jury of scientists and creators: YouTuber/engineer Destin Sandlin ([@SmarterEveryDay on YouTube](#)); Hollywood screenwriter Nicole Perlman (*Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Captain Marvel*); co-creator and co-host of the [YouTube channel Answer in Progress](#) Sabrina Cruz; physicist and jazz

musician Stephon Alexander; and co-founder of IMI Elaine Sevier. IMI Fest will also host a Sloan-supported panel titled “Inventing Tomorrow: Stories from the Frontier,” about the ways scientific discovery becomes public imagination. Moderated by last year’s Sloan Science Prize for YouTube winner for narrative fiction Joe Posner, the panel will feature NASA astronaut and creator Matthew Dominick and Karen Wilcox, director of the Oden Institute at UT Austin. The prizes and core support for IMI Fest are supported by a 2025 grant to IMI.

### Inaugural Sloan Buzzies Award to be Announced at Annual WCSFP

In partnership with the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers (WCSFP), the inaugural [Sloan Buzzies Award](#) to honor outstanding digital-first creators will be announced at the annual conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil December 8-11. The award is the conference’s sole prize recognizing creators focused on scientific content on digital platforms such as YouTube and TikTok. In addition to the \$10,000 prize, Sloan support will also enable three other digital creators to join WCSFP’s Global Career Accelerator at this year’s conference, a program designed to spotlight up-and-coming storytellers and provide them with travel funds, personalized mentorship, and networking opportunities. The annual conference will also host a Sloan-supported panel on YouTube and digital media including how to build and grow sustainable platforms, the editorial process, audience engagement and trust, and monetization. WCSFP is supported by a 2025 Sloan grant.





**Howtown Co-Host Joss Fong Wins Prize for Excellence in Science Communication**



Joss Fong, co-host of the Sloan-supported YouTube channel *Howtown* with Adam Cole, received the top prize for the [Eric and Wendy Schmidt Awards for Excellence in Science Communications](#) in the *Science Communicator: Independent* category. The award is presented by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine and includes a \$40,000 cash prize. Launched in May 2024, *Howtown* produces longform science videos that answer the question “how do we know this?” The citation for the award writes, “Joss Fong’s outstanding work as co-creator and host of *Howtown* blends rigorous research with playful, visually captivating storytelling. Her episodes, which cover topics that can be both complex

and whimsical, stand out for their clarity, depth, and creativity, making intricate issues both entertaining and accessible to broad audiences. With high production value, strong narrative instincts, and a gift for raising thoughtful questions, her work embodies excellence in digital science communication.” The award also honored three Sloan-supported episodes: “How do they know which animals are sentient?,” “How they really count the calories,” and “How accurate was the COVID death count?” With Sloan support, the channel has grown to amass 1.1 million subscribers. *Howtown* is supported through the YouTube Incubation Program in partnership with the Independent Media Initiative, which received a Sloan grant in 2025.

**THEATER**

**EST Hosts Virtual Artist Cultivation Panel for Sloan Theater Program**

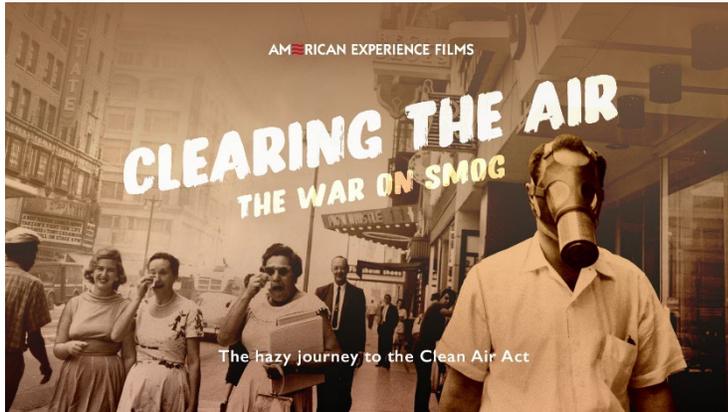
The Ensemble Studio Theatre hosted a Sloan Artist Cultivation Panel on September 30 to publicize the unique opportunities afforded by the EST/Sloan commissioning program, which commissions 8-10 new plays every year. At the event, actress and writer Rachel Lin moderated a discussion on what makes a great science play with EST/Sloan playwrights Jake Brasch (*The Reservoir*) and Carla Ching (*Fast Company*) as well as Peabody Award-winning science journalist and *Radiolab* co-host Lulu Miller. The panel also included Dr. Heather Berlin, Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Neuroscience at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and Dr. Evelyn M. Hammonds, Professor of the History of Science, Professor of African and African American Studies at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. The 2025 cultivation event was supported by a 2025 Sloan grant to EST.





## TELEVISION

### *Clearing the Air: The War on Smog* Premieres on American Experience

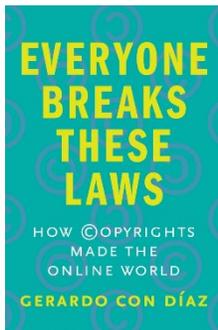


[Clearing the Air: The War on Smog](#), a documentary in the Sloan-supported American Experience series, premiered on PBS on August 26. The film explores the impact of smog in the Los Angeles region in the 1940s, which caused severe health problems for LA residents and significant crop loss. *Clearing the Air* follows Dr. Arie Haagen-Smit, who proved the smog was the result of sunlight breaking down incompletely

burned gasoline and other hydrocarbons found in car emissions, and toxicologist Mary Amdur, who discovered that the combined effects of air pollutants, even when not lethal, could cause permanent damage to lungs. These discoveries eventually resulted in citizen-led protests that culminated in the Clean Air Act, one of the nation's first environmental laws. This documentary was supported by a production grant to WGBH Educational Foundation in 2025.

## BOOKS

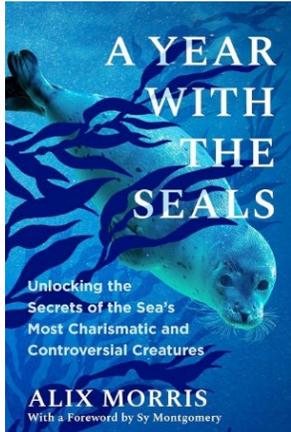
### *Everyone Breaks These Laws: How Copyrights Made the Online World* by Gerardo con Diaz Published on June 17



[Everyone Breaks These Laws: How Copyrights Made the Online World](#) by historian of digital law Gerardo con Diaz was published on June 17. The book traces the history of American copyright law and its impact on the digital and technological landscape. From the inception of online copyrights in the 1990s to today's AI-driven era, Diaz explores how our immersion in digital media leads to the erosion of creative ownership and provides a framework for the future of online rights. The book was supported by a 2020 Sloan grant.

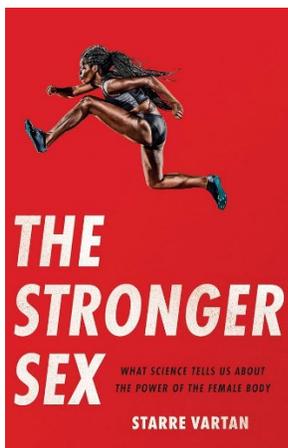


***A Year with the Seals: Unlocking the Secrets of the Sea's Most Charismatic and Controversial Creatures* by Alix Morris Published on July 15**



[\*A Year with the Seals: Unlocking the Secrets of the Sea's Most Charismatic and Controversial Creatures\*](#) by environmental journalist Alix Morris was published on July 15. The book follows Morris as she spends a year with seals to learn more about their intelligence, their relationship with each other, their ecosystems, and the impact of climate change on their population. She also investigates the effects of their return from the brink of extinction on various populations, from local fisherman whose livelihood is diminished by competing seals to tribes who rely on seal-hunting for food, clothing, and medicine. The book has received positive reviews in [Publishers Weekly](#) and [Kirkus Reviews](#) among others. *A Year with the Seals* received a 2021 Sloan grant.

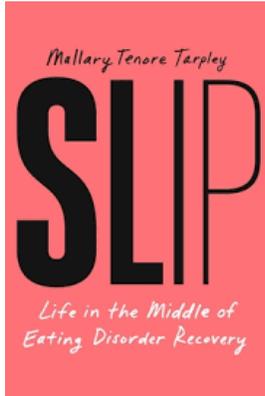
***The Stronger Sex: What Science Tells Us About the Power of the Female Body* by Starre Vartan Published on July 15**



[\*The Stronger Sex: What Science Tells Us About the Power of the Female Body\*](#) by science journalist Starre Vartan was published on July 15. The book uses the latest research to prove that women's bodies surpass men's in endurance, flexibility, immunity, pain tolerance, and longevity. With interviews from dozens of biologists, anthropologists, physiologists, and sports science experts, as well as first-hand accounts from athletes, woodchoppers, firefighters and more, *The Stronger Sex* combats the myth of women as "the weaker sex." The book has received positive reviews in [Library Journal](#), [Kirkus Reviews](#), and [Publishers Weekly](#) among others. *The Stronger Sex* received a 2023 Sloan grant.

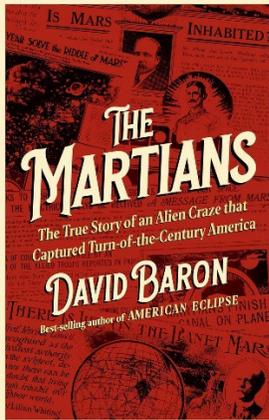


***Slip: Life in the Middle of Eating Disorder Recovery* by Mallery Tenore Tarpley Published on August 5**



[Slip: Life in the Middle of Eating Disorder Recovery](#) by journalist Mallery Tenore Tarpley was published on August 5. The book weaves Tarpley’s own personal narrative and childhood struggle with anorexia with insight from other patients, doctors, and researchers to provide a new framework for understanding eating disorder recovery. Backed by cutting-edge science, Tarpley proposes that there is a “middle place” between sickness and full recovery, where “slips” are accepted as part of the process toward progress. Tarpley’s findings were featured in [The New York Times](#) and she has written about this topic in [Teen Vogue](#). *Slip* was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.

***The Martians: The True Story of an Alien Craze that Captured Turn-of-the-Century America* by David Baron Published on August 26**

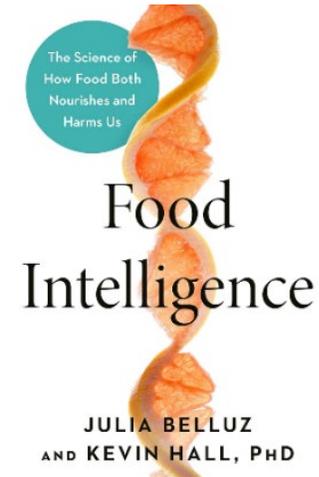


[The Martians: The True Story of an Alien Craze that Captured Turn-of-the-Century America](#) by science writer David Baron was published on August 26. The book follows astronomer Percival Lowell, who gained notoriety in the early 1900s for his grand theory that Mars was home to a utopian society. Though popular figures such as Nikola Tesla also claimed to have received radio signals from Mars, Lowell was eventually discredited. Baron explores the history of Mars’ grip on public imagination, from its role in creating the science fiction genre in 1916 to the idea that Mars is humanity’s first step toward becoming an interplanetary species today. The book has received positive reviews in [The New York Times](#), [The Wall Street Journal](#), and [KQED](#). It was also listed as one of New Yorker’s [Best Books of the Year \(So Far\)](#)

and Literary Hub’s [10 Best Books of August](#). *The Martians* was supported by a 2021 Sloan book grant.

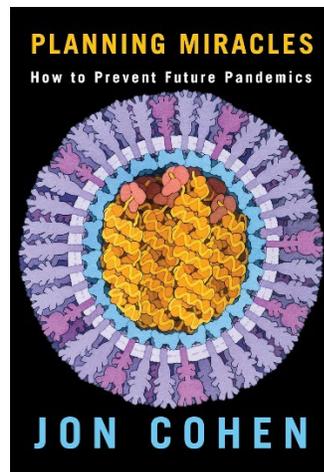


***Food Intelligence: The Science of How Food Both Nourishes and Harms Us* by Julia Belluz and Kevin Hall Published on September 23**



[\*Food Intelligence: The Science of How Food Both Nourishes and Harms Us\*](#) by health and science journalist Julia Belluz and former NIH nutrition and metabolism scientist Dr. Kevin Hall was published on September 23. The book combats misinformation on diet fads and “superfoods” by explaining how our metabolism works and how the world around us shapes our eating behaviors. Using the latest research on nutrition, *Food Intelligence* reveals how protein, fat, carbohydrates, and vitamins are broken down and impact our bodies and examines how current food systems have led to the rise in diseases such as obesity and type 2 diabetes. The book received positive reviews in [The Wall Street Journal](#), [The New York Times](#), and [Undark](#), among others. The book was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.

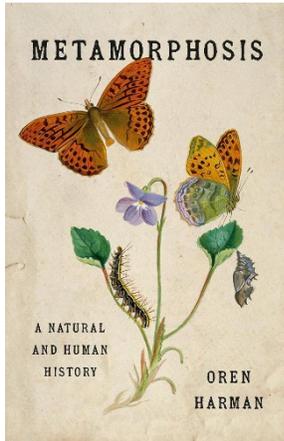
***Planning Miracles: How to Prevent Future Pandemics* by Jon Cohen Published on October 7**



[\*Planning Miracles: How to Prevent Future Pandemics\*](#) by science journalist Jon Cohen was published on October 7. The book weaves together history and reporting to outline the past, present, and future of pandemics, from the development of the polio vaccine in 1955 and the global effort toward a COVID-19 vaccine in 2020 to the scientists around the world creating new interventions for potential threats. Cohen visits labs from Vietnam to the Amazon to explore the advancements to improve equitable distribution of vaccines, diagnostics, and data sharing, as well as the unexpected links between climate change and the spread of disease. The book received positive reviews in [Science](#), [KQED](#), and [Kirkus Reviews](#) among others. *Planning Miracles* received a 2021 Sloan grant.



***Metamorphosis: A Natural and Human History* by Oren Harman Published on October 14**



[Metamorphosis: A Natural and Human History](#) by writer and historian of science Oren Harman was published on October 14. Tracing a path from Aristotle to Darwin to cutting-edge science today, the genre-defying book explores the mystery of metamorphosis – from tadpoles to frogs, caterpillars to butterflies, and elvers to eels – as well as the transformation humans undergo throughout our lifetime. Harman weaves history of discovery with philosophy and his own personal journey as a father to answer one of nature’s greatest mysteries: why do so many creatures transform? The book received a positive review in [Undark](#) and Harman discussed his book on [The Good Fight](#) podcast with Yascha Mounk. *Metamorphosis* was supported by a 2025 Sloan grant.

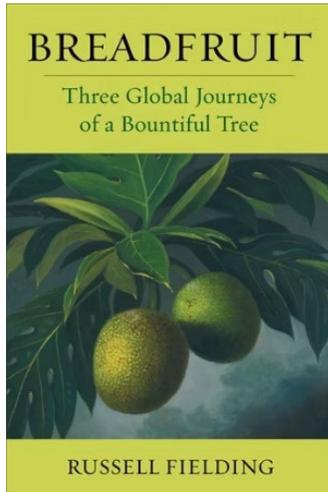
***Why Whales Sing* by Eduardo Mercado III Published on November 4**



[Why Whales Sing](#) by bioacoustician and cognitive scientist Dr. Eduardo Mercado III was published on November 4. The book presents a novel theory about whale song, which after 50 years of field research has led most scientists to conclude that humpback whales sing to attract mates. Mercado posits that since whales are known to sing even when they are alone with no listeners nearby, whale song must serve as a tool for echolocation. *Why Whales Sing* provides insight into cetacean communication and behavior and challenges how we conceive of whale intelligence and acoustic mastery. The book was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.



***Breadfruit: Three Global Journeys of a Bountiful Tree* by Russell Fielding Published on November 5**



[\*Breadfruit: Three Global Journeys of a Bountiful Tree\*](#) by geography and food systems professor at Coastal Carolina University Dr. Russell Fielding was published on November 5. The book explores the global history and present-day uses for breadfruit, a cantaloupe-sized, green-skinned fruit that resembles potatoes and is mainly grown in the tropics. Moving from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century British failure to introduce breadfruit to enslaved African laborers to its modern-day utility as a superfood and tool in sustainable development, Fielding brings together research and interviews with local chefs and scientists to tell the story of this relatively unknown fruit and speculate on its future potential. *Breadfruit* was supported by a 2021 Sloan book grant.

**RADIO & PODCASTS**

***EFF Wraps Sixth Season of How to Fix the Internet***



[\*How to Fix the Internet\*](#), a Sloan supported podcast from the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) that tackles the thorniest issues of the modern web, wrapped its sixth season on September 10. The final episode of the season, hosted by EFF’s Executive Director Cindy Cohn and Associate Director of Digital Strategy Jason Kelley was titled “Building and Preserving the Library of Everything.” The episode featured Brewster Kahle (top left), the founder and digital librarian of the Internet Archive, which is among the world’s largest libraries, and discussed AI’s role in digitizing and preserving information. Other guests on this season included Rafael Yuste (top right) and Jared Genser, from the Sloan-supported

Neurorights Foundation; technology journalist and podcaster Kara Swisher (bottom left), and author of *AI Snake Oil* Arvind Narayanan (bottom right). *How to Fix the Internet* is supported by a 2025 grant to EFF.



## SPECIAL INITIATIVES

### Wikipedia Celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



Wikipedia, the largest encyclopedia in human history and the seventh largest website in the world, celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a special event in New York City on October 29. The event featured remarks from Wikipedia co-founder Jimmy Wales and Manoush Zomorodi, host of NPR's TED Radio Hour. The nonprofit Wikipedia, which has been translated into over 300 languages, has received major ongoing support from Sloan, beginning in its early formative years before it was widely accepted. The most recent grant supports a new initiative

to harness advances in artificial intelligence to improve Wikipedia's core function—access to reliable knowledge for half a billion people each month—and to suggest edits more efficiently and accurately, boost translation capabilities, and protect the site from vandalism.

**Program Team:** Doron Weber, *Vice President and Program Director* | Shriya Bhindwale, *Senior Program Associate* | Swan Griffith, *Program Coordinator*