

What's New This Spring

THEATER New Play About Memory and Intergenerational Relationships Debuts at Atlantic Theatre

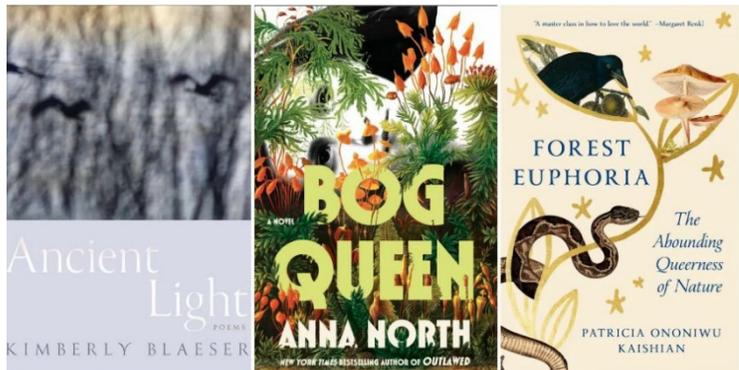


A new Sloan-commissioned play, [The Reservoir](#), written by Jake Brasch and directed by Shelley Butler, debuted February 24 at the Linda Gross Theater at the Atlantic Theater Company as the 2026 Ensemble Studio Theatre (EST)/Sloan Mainstage Production. Running until March 22 and starring Noah Galvin and Caroline Aaron, the play is an intergenerational comedy that follows alcoholic college student Josh who seeks to understand his own brain fog and memory loss in relation to his four beloved, aging grandparents. The play has received positive

reviews in [Vulture](#), [New York Theater](#), and [TheaterMania](#), among others. It was originally commissioned through the EST/Sloan Project in 2021. The production of *The Reservoir* was supported by a 2025 Sloan grant to EST, one of Sloan's two flagship theater partners, which joined with the Atlantic Theatre Company to reach a wider audience. The Sloan/EST Project has commissioned over 200 plays and supported dozens of productions across the US and internationally.

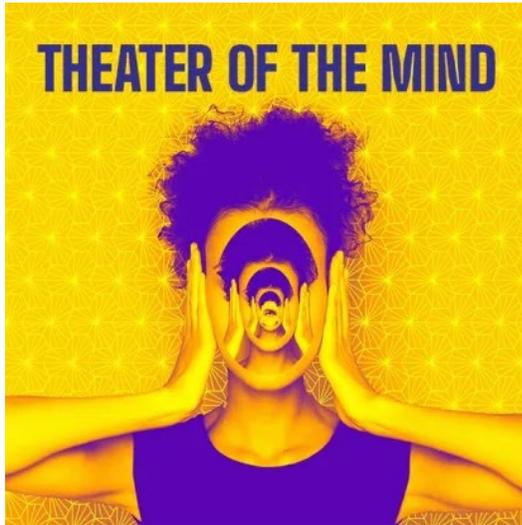
BOOKS National Book Foundation Celebrates 2026 Sloan Science + Literature Awardees

The winners of the [fifth annual Science + Literature Awards](#), established by Sloan in partnership with the National Book Foundation (NBF) to honor books that celebrate excellence in science writing, were announced in non-fiction, fiction and poetry. Winners include *Forest Euphoria: The Abounding Queerness of Nature* by mycologist Patricia Ononiwu Kaishian (nonfiction), which combines personal narrative and natural history to explore gender and neurodiversity through fungi, animals and plants; Anna North's *Bog Queen* (fiction), about a forensic anthropologist investigating a 2,000-year-old Celtic druid; and Kimberly Blaeser's *Ancient Light* (poetry), which reckons with ongoing environmental catastrophes and violence against Indigenous communities. The winners will be celebrated in a [ceremony at the Cooper Union](#) on March 11, featuring readings and conversations with the selected authors moderated by Science Friday host Flora Lichtman. The Science + Literature Awards are supported by a 2024 Sloan grant.





NEW MEDIA David Byrne's *Theater of the Mind* Opens in Chicago



Theater of the Mind, an immersive theatrical experience inspired by neuroscience, opens at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago on March 11. Created by *Talking Heads* frontman David Byrne and Mala Gaonkar and directed by Andrew Scoville, *Theater of the Mind* takes viewers through a series of rooms over 75 minutes where they will participate in thought-provoking neuroscience experiences to show how perception and memory function. Examples of scientific phenomena explored include the tritone paradox and Adelson's checkerboard, illustrating how our brains evolved to prioritize interpretation over absolute perception. The show will run until May 31. *Theater of the Mind* was supported by a 2025 Sloan grant.

TELEVISION *Wired for Connection* to Premiere on PBS



Wired for Connection, an hour-long documentary directed and produced by Kiran Kapany, will premiere on PBS on June 1. Blending science and storytelling, the film explores the biology, sociology, and neuroscience of human connection and the vital role it plays in our mental and physical health. It will trace the decades-long collaboration between scientists across disciplines and continents to explore the evolutionary origins of our craving for human connection and provide

an intimate perspective on how human connection affects us at every stage of our lives. The film received an [Award of Excellence](#) at the Impact Docs Awards in February. The documentary is based on the Sloan supported book *Friendship: The Evolution, Biology, and Extraordinary Power of Life's Fundamental Bond* by Lydia Denworth published in 2020. The trailer is available to [watch on YouTube](#). *Wired for Connection* was supported by a 2021 Sloan grant.



Other Highlights

THEATER

Musical About “Father of Modern Astronomy” to Debut on Broadway

[Galileo](#), a musical directed by Tony Award-winner Michael Mayer, will debut at the Shubert Theatre on Broadway this November. With Emmy Award-winning writer Danny Strong, Drama Desk Award-nominated composer/lyricist Zoe Sarnak, and four-time Tony Award-nominated star Raul Esparza as Galileo Galilei, the musical will focus on Galileo’s personal and professional life. From his difficult relationship with his daughter and complex friendship with the Pope to his championing of Copernican heliocentrism and invention of the telescope, the musical



dramatizes the life and work of the pioneering scientist and explores how his discoveries revolutionized scientific inquiry. The musical was supported by a 2025 Sloan grant.

Particle Fever Musical Based on Sloan Documentary to Make World Debut

[Particle Fever](#), a musical by Obie Award-winner David Henry Hwang and directed by Tony Award nominee Leigh Silverman, will premiere worldwide at the Mandell Weiss Theatre at La Jolla Playhouse in February 2027. Based on the acclaimed documentary, *Particle Fever* follows a group of scientists at the most powerful particle accelerator in the world, the Large Hadron Collider in Geneva, as they discover the Higgs boson, or “God particle.”

The original documentary, directed by Mark Levinson and starring physicist David Kaplan, premiered at various festivals and broadcast on PBS in 2014 and received positive reviews in [Berkeley Science Review](#) and [The New York Times](#), among others. The documentary was supported by a 2011 Sloan grant and the musical was supported by a 2024 grant.



Manhattan Theatre Club Honors Sloan Partnership at Annual Spring Gala



Manhattan Theatre Club (MTC), one of Sloan’s two flagship theater partners, will honor the Sloan Foundation and more than two decades of the Sloan/MTC partnership at their 2026 Spring Gala on May 18. Since the inaugural Sloan-supported production of *Proof* by David Auburn in 2000, the Sloan Initiative has enabled MTC to commission, develop, and produce hundreds of new plays and musicals exploring science and technology and has launched the careers of numerous emerging playwrights. MTC’s most recent Sloan-supported production of Jonathan Spector’s *Eureka Day*, about vaccines and public health, debuted on Broadway and

won a 2025 Tony Award for “Best Revival of a Play.” *Proof* is returning to Broadway on March 31 starring Ayo Edebiri and Don Cheadle. The gala is supported by a 2025 Sloan officer grant.

YOUTUBE & TIKTOK

Popular YouTuber @BobbyBroccoli Wins Inaugural Sloan Buzzies Award at 2025 WCSFP in Brazil



Kevan MacKay (@BobbyBroccoli) accepted the first-ever [Sloan Buzzies Award](#) at the annual World Congress of Science and Factual Producers (WCSFP) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on December 11, 2025. The award is the conference’s seminal prize recognizing creators focused on digital content and honors an outstanding creator or team whose work brings clarity, creativity, and rigor to complex scientific topics. With more than 750K subscribers, @BobbyBroccoli engages a wide audience with the latest and most high-profile scientific controversies. In addition to the \$10,000 prize, Sloan support also enabled three other digital creators to join WCSFP’s Global Career Accelerator, a program designed to spotlight up-and-coming storytellers and provide them with mentorship and networking

opportunities. Sloan also supported a panel titled “Insider’s Guide to Digital Success” moderated by [Veritasium](#) creator Derek Muller with panelists Mitchell Moffit and Gregory Brown, creators and hosts of hit science channel [AsapSCIENCE](#), and physicist and science communicator Gabriela Bailas. WCSFP is supported by a 2025 Sloan grant.

Two Outstanding Creators Receive Sloan Science Prizes for YouTube at IMI Fest in Austin



Sloan honored the winners of the second annual [Sloan Science Prizes for YouTube](#) on November 15, 2025 at the third annual [IMI Fest](#). Awarded in partnership with the Independent Media Initiative (IMI), the winner of the \$100,000 Documentary Prize was Jeremy Fielding for “The Engineering of a Photograph,” where he’ll team up with National Geographic photographer Anand Varma to build a camera that captures a bumblebee frozen in flight. The winner of the \$50,000 Narrative Fiction Prize was Toby Hendy for “A Guide to Making Friends in the Fourth Dimension,” a mathematical fantasy based on her self-published book. Winners were

selected by a distinguished jury of scientists and creators: YouTuber/engineer Destin Sandlin (@SmarterEveryDay); 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 is supported by a 2025 grant.

FILM

SUNDANCE 2026: *In the Blink of an Eye* Wins 2026 Sloan Feature Film Prize at Sundance



[In the Blink of an Eye](#) was awarded the Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize at this year’s Sundance Film Festival, where it premiered on January 26. The feature film was written by Colby Day and directed by Andrew Stanton, who is best known as the director and co-writer of the Pixar animated films *Finding Nemo*, *WALL-E*, and *Finding Dory*. Starring Kate McKinnon, Rashida Jones, and Daveed Diggs, the film was cited by the jury “for its deft, moving depiction of three distinctive time periods separated by thousands of years but linked by an underlying human search for meaning and continuity, and for its expansive portrayal of science and scientists striving for progress and a shared, common humanity.” This year’s jury included filmmakers Sophie Barthes (*The Pod Generation*), Ari Handel (*Black Swan*), and Nicole Perlman (*Guardians of the Galaxy*) as well as Nobel Prize-winning astrophysicist Dr. Andrea Ghez and neuroscientist Heather Berlin. *In the Blink of An Eye* is now available to stream on Hulu and Disney+. The Sloan Feature Film Prize and other Sloan activities at Sundance (see below) are supported by a 2025 grant to the Sundance Institute.



SUNDANCE 2026: Three New Sloan-Winning Projects Celebrated at Award Ceremony

[Three exciting new projects](#) featuring scientific themes and characters were celebrated at the 2026 Sundance Film Festival and will now be developed at Sundance via the nationwide Sloan film pipeline.

Sonia Kennebeck and Tatiana Anderson were awarded the Sloan Episodic Fellowship for *Speak for the Dead: Excited Delirium*, about America's first Black chief medical examiner hunting one of the worst serial killers in U.S. history; Daeil Kim was awarded the Sloan Development Fellowship for *Stem*, about scientist who discovers that a "miracle cure" to human disability is a scam; and Alan Fischer and Jonathan Cuchacovich were awarded the Sloan Commissioning Grant for *Cyborg Beast*, about a Latino student who develops a groundbreaking prosthesis for children. At the Sundance award ceremony, Andrew Stanton and Colby Day also accepted the Sloan Feature Film Prize on behalf of their film *In the Blink of an Eye*.



SUNDANCE 2026: Sloan Panel Brings Scientists and Filmmakers Together in Park City



Two filmmakers and two scientists gathered at Sundance to discuss humanity's relationship with science and the evolution of the portrayal of science in film. [The Big Conversation: From Fire to Flight – Humans, Technology, and Time](#) was moderated by neuroscientist Dr. Heather Berlin and featured *In the Blink of An Eye* writer Colby Day and director Andrew Stanton as well as Co-Founder and CEO of Aurelia Institute Ariel Ekblaw, and IHO Research Scientist and Professor at ASU Institute of Human Origins Denise Su. The panel featured a sneak peak of Stanton and Day's Sloan-winning film to a sold-

out crowd, followed by a lively Q&A with an enthusiastic audience.



Best-of-the-Best Student Filmmakers to be Celebrated at Sloan Awards Reception and Reading



The [winners of the Sloan Grand Jury and Student Discovery Prizes](#) were announced by Sloan and the Museum of the Moving Image (MoMI) on February 10. The Sloan Grand Jury Prize celebrates the “best of the best” winning screenplays submitted by Sloan’s six film school partners. The 2025 winner was Quinn Spicker (pictured left) from the American Film Institute. His feature script *God Makers* tells the fictionalized story of the battle between academic researcher Helen Toner and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman over the future of AI. An honorable mention for the Grand Jury Prize was awarded to Carnegie Mellon University’s Ellie Melick for her script *SLEDHEAD*, about an athlete who risks her career to help neurological researchers investigate the damage sports can cause to the brain.

The Sloan Student Discovery Prize celebrates an exceptional science or technology script from one of six new public universities

added to the program in 2019. Nora Kaye (pictured below) from Brooklyn College won the 2025 award for her feature script *The Head Cases*, which follows two brilliant women scientists who overcome their differences to test an unorthodox Alzheimer’s treatment.



The scripts were selected by a jury that included filmmaker Jonathan Bogarin (*306 Hollywood*), Dr. Gabriela Chiosis (The Gabriela Chiosis Lab at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center), Dr. Justus Keschull (The Keschull Lab at Johns Hopkins University), filmmaker Robert Kolodny (*The Featherweight*), filmmaker Eliza McNitt (*SPHERES*), filmmaker Tasha Van Zandt (*A Life Illuminated*), and Team ORCA founder Dr. Edie Widder. The winners will be celebrated [April 9 with a ceremony](#), reception, and live readings of excerpts from both winning scripts. The Sloan Student Prizes are supported by a 2025 Sloan grant.



Athena Film Festival Hosts Annual Reading for Sloan Screenplay and STEM Showcase



[Athena Film Festival](#) (AFF) hosted a full day of STEM programming as part of its annual film festival at Barnard College on March 8. The festival included a reception and staged reading to celebrate the winner of the 2025 Alfred P. Sloan Athena Screenwriting Fellow Rachel Caccese for her script *The Aquanauts*. The award is part of the Festival’s year-round Creative Development Program for outstanding science-themed projects by and about women supported by Sloan. *The Aquanauts* tells the true story of the first all-female team of marine biologists on a two-week underwater mission for the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration. For the annual STEM Showcase, Athena also screened *Late Shift*, a German film by Petra Biondina Volpe that follows an overworked nurse and reveals the human cost of an underfunded healthcare system. The screening was followed by a panel about the field of nursing in America and across the globe as well as how research, policy, and education are being leveraged for reform. Moderated by POLITICO healthcare reporter Maya Kaufman, the panel featured Brooklyn Hospital neonatal registered nurse

Michelle Gonzalez, Montefiore neurosurgery registered nurse Johnaira Dilone-Florian, NYU global healthcare researcher Dr. Allison Squires, Columbia health services researcher Dr. Allison Andreno Norful, and New York Presbyterian nurse educator Pres Averbach Lorenzo. The Athena Film Festival is supported by a 2024 Sloan grant to Barnard College.

Documentary About Scientist John Lilly to be Released in Theaters

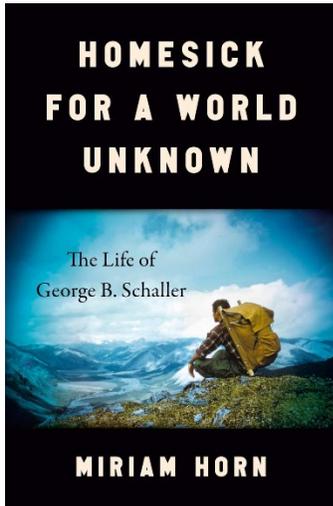
[John Lilly and the Earth Coincidence Control Office](#), a documentary by Michael Almereyda and Courtney Stephens about controversial neuroscientist and biologist John Lilly, will be released in select theaters on March 27. Narrated by award-winning actress Chloë Sevigny, the film combines historical footage, home movies, pop culture, and interviews with Lilly’s contemporaries in science and art to explore the iconoclastic scientist’s work in the 1960s, from his invention of the isolation tank to his experiments with dolphins and hallucinogens that expanded our understanding of animal and human consciousness. The film first premiered at the International Film Festival Rotterdam on February 7, 2025. The film was featured in [The Hollywood Reporter](#), [The Film Stage](#) and [Filmmaker Magazine](#) among others. *John Lilly and the Earth Coincidence Control Office* was supported by a 2022 grant.





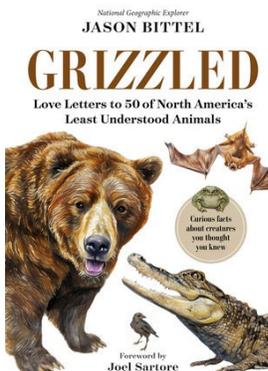
BOOKS

George Schaller Biography Published in Sloan Book Series with Leon Levy Center



[Homesick for a World Unknown: The Life of George B. Schaller](#), a biography from Sloan’s partnership with The Leon Levy Center for Biography, will be published on April 21 by 2020 Sloan Leon Levy Fellow Miriam Horn. The book explores George B. Schaller’s life and accomplishments as one of the world’s leading field biologists and conservationists. Drawing on Schaller’s journals, letters, and interviews, the book traces his life beginning with a childhood upended by atrocity and displacement all the way to his mentorship of Jane Goodall and groundbreaking studies of chimps, tigers, lions, pandas, and brown bears. The Sloan Fellowship for Science Biography is an annual award for biographers working on books that elucidate the lives of scientists or technological innovators. Since 2018, Sloan has been supporting the Leon Levy Center for Biography at CUNY, the only academic institution in the country that awards a master’s degree in biography and is devoted to promoting the practice of biography full-time.

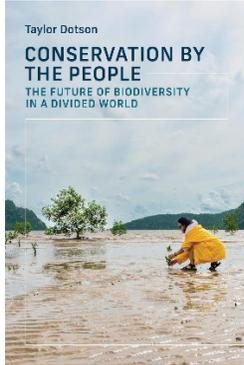
Grizzled: Love Letters to 50 of North America’s Least Understood Animals by Jason Bittel Published on March 3



[Grizzled: Love Letters to 50 of North America’s Least Understood Animals](#) by science journalist Jason Bittel was published on March 3. Bittel uses a comedic and witty approach to reveal little-known details about fifty of the most well-known animals in North America, from fireflies and hummingbirds to alligators and sharks. The book is a collection of fifty brief essays and vivid illustrations that answers questions such as “How many jellyfish can a sea turtle eat?” and “How do butterflies emerge from sentient goo?” An excerpt of the book was published in Slate titled [“Americans Are Uniquely Infatuated With Bald Eagles. Too Bad Most of Us Have No Idea What They’re Actually Like.”](#) The book was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.

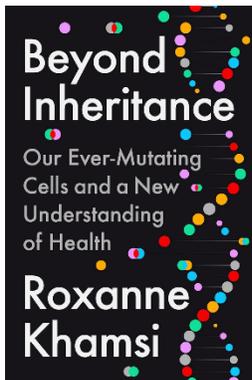


***Conservation by the People: The Future of Biodiversity in a Divided World* by Taylor Dotson to be published on March 31**



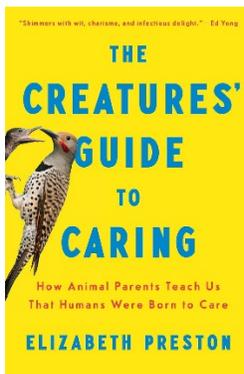
[*Conservation by the People: The Future of Biodiversity in a Divided World*](#) by social scientist Taylor Dotson will be published on March 31. Dotson advocates for community-driven solutions and collective experimentation to address growing biodiversity loss. Challenging the dominant and overly catastrophic narrative of environmental decline, the book argues that a top-down, purely scientific approach cannot decide the future of conservation and that scientists must collaborate with other communities to work toward a “wilder” planet that accommodates human existence. *Conservation by the People* was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.

***Beyond Inheritance: Our Ever-Mutating Cells and a New Understanding of Health* by Roxanne Khamsi to be published on April 21**



[*Beyond Inheritance: Our Ever-Mutating Cells and a New Understanding of Health*](#) by science writer Roxanne Khamsi will be published on April 21. The book explores the ways our DNA mutates over the course of our lives and argues against the common misconception that this molecular blueprint stays stagnant. Khamsi describes our bodies as “active landscapes of mutation” and uncovers how Darwinian evolution operates within our own tissues, from mutant blood cells increasing the risk of heart attacks to liver cells evolving to handle excess calories. Khamsi wrote about this subject in [The Atlantic](#). The book was supported by a 2024 Sloan grant.

***The Creatures' Guide to Caring: How Animal Parents Teach Us That Humans Were Born to Care* by Elizabeth Preston to be Published on May 5**



[*The Creatures' Guide to Caring: How Animal Parents Teach Us That Humans Were Born to Care*](#) by science journalist Elizabeth Preston will be published on May 5. The book explores the evolution of caretaking on Earth across species, from tropical birds incubating their friends’ eggs to poison frog dads carrying tadpoles on their back. Using cutting-edge research, Preston reveals how and why animals care for their young and argues that humans evolved to raise kids in cooperative groups. The book was supported by a 2024 Sloan grant.



SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Second Senior Congressional Staff Seminar on Artificial Intelligence to Kick Off at MIT



MIT will host a three-day seminar to educate senior Congressional staff on the future of AI from March 31 to April 2. The program, which will have both virtual and in-person components, aims to improve the technological literacy of government staffers. The conference will include panels on the current state of large language models, including their strengths and limitations, AI's potential to transform transportation systems and education, and the implications of AI for US national security. In tandem with the in-person program, MIT's Open Learning division will publish online modules that will include short instructional

videos from MIT experts, executive summary PDFs that explain key points, and infographics. This three-day seminar is the second of two supported by a 2024 Sloan grant. The first program brought together 25 bipartisan senior Congressional staffers in 2025.

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