



THEATER

***Spill* Opens as 2017 Mainstage Production at Ensemble Studio Theatre/Sloan Project First Light Festival**



Spill, a play by Leigh Fondakowski about the 2010 BP oil disaster in the Gulf that claimed 11 lives, runs now through April 2 at Ensemble Studio Theatre (EST). The play, which received a commission from EST and Sloan in 2012, explores scientific questions around the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, such as the engineering behind deepwater drilling and different methods of oil clean-up, as it dramatizes the personal stories of those affected. Playwright Fondakowski used extensive reportage, incorporating details from transcripts of hearings and depositions as well as her own interviews with industry experts, surviving crew members, and the families of the victims into the narrative. The play is the result of an intensive five-year

development process and previously received production support from the EST/Sloan partnership for regional productions in Chicago and Baton Rouge. *Spill* is the mainstage production of this year's [EST/Sloan Project First Light Festival](#), an annual theater series highlighting science-themed plays with readings, productions, and special events. EST is the recipient of a current grant to commission, develop, produce and disseminate new science plays in New York and across the country.

FILM

Sloan-Supported Documentary on Hedy Lamarr to Premiere at Tribeca Film Festival



On April 23, [Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story](#) will premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival at a special screening event hosted by Sloan and the Tribeca Film Institute, part of the Foundation's signature 14-year film partnership with Tribeca. There will be a post-screening all-female panel with director Alexandra Dean and prominent women in entertainment and STEM fields. Sloan supported the film, based on the Sloan-supported book *Hedy's Folly* by Richard Rhodes, with a major production grant in 2015 for an *American Masters* documentary on the remarkable life and scientific achievements of Hedy Lamarr. Produced by Oscar-winning actress Susan Sarandon and her company Reframed Pictures, *Bombshell* tells

the little-known story of Lamarr, a major Hollywood star from the 1930s through the 1950s who was also a



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pioneering inventor. Together with composer George Antheil, she developed a key frequency-hopping innovation that led to future advances like WiFi and cell phones. The film includes never before seen material, including a remarkable, newly discovered audio tape interview with Lamarr that is used as a voiceover. Sloan has long supported books, films, and plays about Lamarr, beginning with an Ensemble Studio Theatre/Sloan commission in 2000 of the play *Frequency Hopping* by Elyse Singer, produced in New York in 2008. After the film's theatrical run, it will air on PBS's *American Masters* this fall.

***Hidden Figures* Nominated for Three Oscars and Is Box Office Hit**



Hidden Figures, the film about three extraordinarily gifted African American female mathematicians during the space race, based on a Sloan-supported book, was nominated for three Academy Awards, including Best Picture. The movie grossed \$163.1 million at the U.S. box office, making it the highest grossing Best Picture nominee of 2016. 98-year-old Katherine Johnson, a pioneering mathematician and physicist portrayed in the film, was brought on stage and received a

standing ovation during the Oscar ceremony. In addition to its Oscar nominations, *Hidden Figures* won the SAG Award for outstanding performance by a cast in a motion picture.

Coolidge Corner and Sloan Organize National Evening of Science on Screen on March 28



Twenty-eight independent theaters across the country will participate in the fourth annual [National Evening of Science on Screen](#) on March 28, organized by Coolidge Corner Theatre and Sloan. The national event is a celebration of the popular, year-round Science on Screen program, a partnership between the Coolidge and Sloan that provides grants to arthouse theaters nationwide to pair screenings of Sloan-supported and other science-related films with talks by science and technology experts. Sloan has supported the

program since 2010, expanding it to [57 cinemas across the country](#) and providing an important distribution channel for Sloan films and popular films with less obvious scientific themes. Each theater participating in the National Evening of Science on Screen will show an introductory video about the program, followed by the



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film and expert speaker presentation. Coolidge Corner Theatre is the recipient of a current grant to support the expansion of the Science on Screen program to art house cinemas nationwide.

Marjorie Prime Wins Sloan Feature Film Prize at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival



Marjorie Prime, a film about the role of artificial intelligence in human relationships directed by Michael Almereyda, won this year's Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Feature Film Prize, a \$20,000 cash award, at the Sundance Film Festival in January. The movie features an all-star cast including Jon Hamm (pictured), Geena Davis, Tim Robbins, and Lois Smith. A jury of five female science and film experts selected the film: cognitive neuroscientist Heather Berlin, flight systems engineer Tracy Drain, NPR correspondent Nell Greenfieldboyce,

screenwriter Nicole Perlman and director Jennifer Phang. The jurors recognized *Marjorie Prime* for its "imaginative and nuanced depiction of the evolving relationship between humans and technology, and its moving dramatization of how intelligent machines can challenge our notions of identity, memory and mortality."



The Feature Film Prize was announced at an awards reception that also recognized recipients of the Sundance/Sloan Commissioning Grant, Jamie Dawson and Howard Gertler, for a film about the 1960s smallpox eradication project led by DA Henderson, whose memoir received a Sloan book grant; the winners of the Sundance/Sloan Lab Fellowship, Darcy Brislin and Dyana Winkler, for their screenplay about Alexander Graham Bell, *Bell*; and the winner of the Sundance/Sloan Episodic Storytelling Grant, Adam Benic, for his television series *Levittown*. Prior to the reception and prize announcement,

the jurors participated in a panel about the on-screen representation of women in science. The Sundance Institute is the recipient of a current grant to support a science and technology film program that includes screenwriting fellowships, feature film prizes, science and film panels.



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New Yorker Article Explores Real-Life Basis for Character in Sloan-Supported Film *Afronauts*



A Sloan-supported short film from director Frances Bodomo, *Afronauts*, inspired a [Newyorker.com piece](#) on Edward Mukuka Nkoloso, a Zambian science teacher who received widespread attention from international press when he launched an ill-fated Zambian Space Program in the 1960s, just after Zambia's independence. The article's author credits her first awareness of Nkoloso to watching *Afronauts*, which premiered at Sundance in 2014 and is a fictionalized account of Nkoloso and the group of teenagers in his unofficial astronaut-training program. After supporting

the successful 13-minute short, Sloan is helping to develop the project into a full-length feature film via grants with multiple partners in the film program pipeline: an NYU/Sloan First Feature Award, a Tribeca Film Institute/Sloan Filmmaker Fund Grant, and a Film Independent/Sloan Producer's Grant. Bodomo is currently working on the feature and plans to shoot in Africa this fall.

TELEVISION

American Experience Airs Two New Sloan-Supported Documentaries



In January, *American Experience* broadcast two new Sloan-supported documentaries on PBS stations nationwide. The first, "[Rachel Carson](#)," tells the story of the pioneering conservationist, writer, and marine biologist and features new scholarship on her life and work. Tony, Emmy, and Golden Globe winner Mary-Louise Parker serves as Carson's voice. The broadcast was timed to the fifty-five year anniversary of the publication of Carson's seminal work *Silent Spring*, widely credited with originating the modern environmental movement. The *New Yorker*, where *Silent Spring* first appeared as a serial, re-published excerpts of the book to coincide with the January premiere on *American Experience*. The broadcast reached 4 million viewers, significantly larger than the PBS average, and received wide coverage, including in the [New York Times](#).



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“[The Race Underground](#),” another new Sloan-supported *American Experience* documentary, also premiered in January. The film, based partially on the book by Doug Most, tells the dramatic story of two rival American cities—New York and Boston—and the race to build America’s first subway while dealing with political and engineering obstacles. The film, which reached 3.2 million viewers, received a positive review in the [Boston Globe](#) and was a [Los Angeles Times](#) Critic’s Pick. WGBH is the recipient of a current grant to produce and broadcast new documentaries on the role of science and technology in history on PBS's *American Experience*.



Six-Part Series on the History of Africa, Co-Funded by Sloan, Premieres on PBS



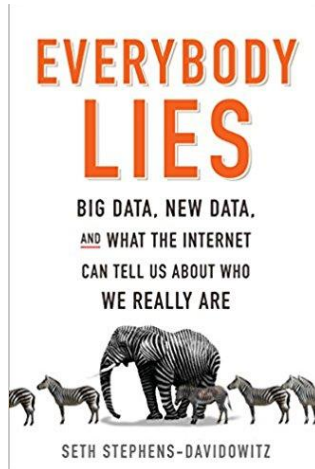
In late February and early March, PBS stations aired a six-part series, [Africa’s Great Civilizations](#), produced by WETA and hosted by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and Director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University. The series presents a dynamic and comprehensive history of Africa, showing the pivotal role the continent’s civilizations have played in shaping all aspects of human history—including science, technology, and engineering—

from ancient history to the present day. The production crew traveled across the continent to South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, Nigeria, Ghana, Angola and Morocco, to visit key sites and to interview African scholars. Sloan support for the documentary included funding for four scientific experts to the show’s advisory committee. The broadcast reached millions of viewers, and the show was covered in several major media outlets, including the [New York Times](#), [NPR](#), and [Variety](#).



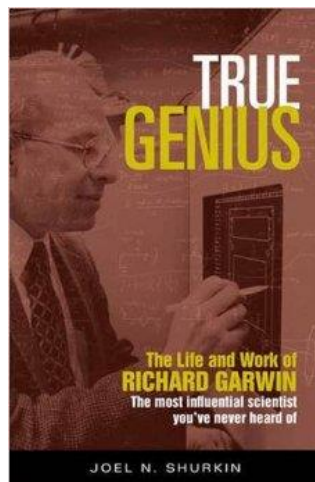
BOOKS

Everybody Lies, a Book on Big Data, to be Published in May



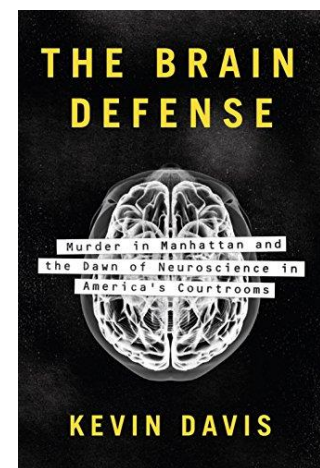
[Everybody Lies: Big Data, New Data, and What the Internet Can Tell Us About Who We Really Are](#), by Harvard-trained economist, former Google data scientist, and *New York Times* columnist Seth Stephens-Davidowitz will be published by Dey Street Books on May 2. In the book, Stephens-Davidowitz draws on data from Google searches to gain insights into the human psyche and what drives the conscious and unconscious decisions we make. By covering diverse topics such as race, sports, sex, and gender, Stephens-Davidowitz shows how big data affects our everyday life. The book includes a forward by cognitive scientist and author Steven Pinker.

Two New Sloan Books Published in February



[True Genius: The Life and Work of Richard Garwin, The Most Influential Scientist You've Never Heard of](#) was published by Prometheus in February. The book profiles Richard Garwin (b. 1928), the American physicist who helped design the first hydrogen bomb in 1952. He became a disarmament advocate and served on the President's Science Advisory Committee, was chair of the State Department Arms Control and Nonproliferation Advisory Board, and is a longtime member of the JASON Defense Advisory Group. His research contributed to the development of many technologies, such as GPS navigation, air-traffic control systems, and touch screens. Garwin was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2016.

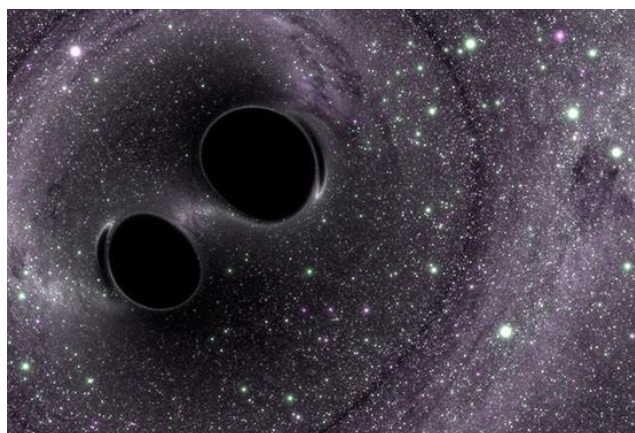
[The Brain Defense: Murder in Manhattan and the Dawn of Neuroscience in America's Courtrooms](#), by journalist and author Kevin Davis, was also published in February by Penguin Press. The book uses a 1991 murder case—the first time a judge allowed a brain scan as evidence to support a claim of innocence—to explore the intersection between neuroscience and criminal justice and to consider how the legal system has changed along with our understanding of the human brain. The book was reviewed in several outlets, including the [Wall Street Journal](#).





NEW MEDIA

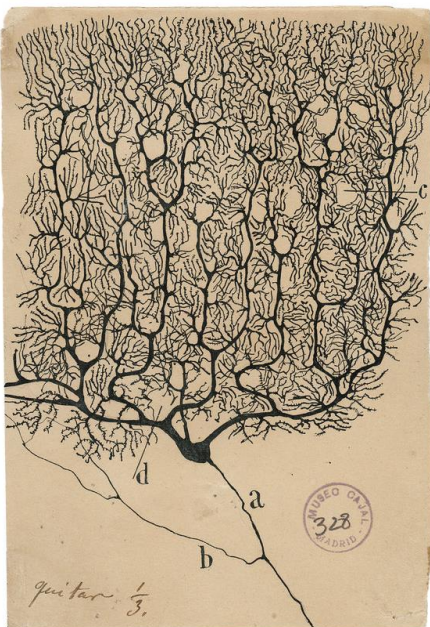
Sloan-Supported Virtual Reality Documentary on Gravitational Wave Discovery Is Released



On February 9, a leading virtual reality (VR) production company, [Within](#), released “[Listening to the Universe](#),” a Sloan-supported VR documentary experience about [Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory](#) (LIGO), which led to the 2016 discovery of gravitational waves, first predicted by Einstein. “Listening to the Universe” is part of the first VR documentary series ever produced and marks the first time VR filmmakers have grappled with how to depict a complex, cutting-edge scientific discovery, thus setting an

important precedent in the emerging medium of VR and educating its early pioneers. Cosmologist and Columbia University professor Janna Levin acted as the project’s science advisor. Audiences can watch the film with VR headsets via the Within app or in 360 format on the web. The film takes viewers on a wide-ranging journey—from the MIT offices and labs of lead LIGO scientists Rainer Weiss and Nergis Mavalvala, to inside one of the LIGO Observatories, and into space, where black holes collide 1.2 billion light-years from Earth. Just one week after the launch, “Listening to the Universe” was the number-one viewed VR experience on the Within app. The documentary generated 100,000 views on the app, 500,000 views on Facebook, 415 comments, 7,500 shares, 5,000 reactions on social media, and [press coverage](#).

New York Times Features Exhibition and Catalog of Santiago Ramón y Cajal’s Illustrations



Following major NPR coverage both online and on-air, the *New York Times* published a [feature](#) with extensive illustrations from [The Beautiful Brain: The Drawings of Santiago Ramón y Cajal](#), a catalog featuring the stunning drawings of Santiago Ramón y Cajal, the father of modern neuroscience, that was published to accompany a traveling exhibition. The book features 90 color illustrations, including the image of an apurkinje neuron from the human cerebellum, pictured at left. The exhibition, currently on view at the Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota, will travel to Vancouver, Cambridge, Chapel Hill, and New York, where it will be on from January 9 through March 31, 2018 at NYU’s Grey Art Gallery. Sloan supported the exhibition and catalog with an officer grant to the University of Minnesota Foundation in 2016.



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World Science Festival Returns to New York May 30 through June 4



This spring, the Tenth Annual World Science Festival (WSF) will be held May 30 through June 4 in venues throughout New York City. Sloan has supported WSF since its founding in 2008. Now in its tenth year, the Festival draws hundreds of thousands of attendees each year with a wide range of programming, including mainstage discussions, performances, salons, and interactive experiences. This year's programs will put special emphasis on the achievements of women in science and the impact of teachers on the future of scientific discovery. The World Science Festival is the recipient of a final grant to support the production and execution of the annual Festival and related year-round live and digital activities

UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

Digital Public Library of America Bolsters Ebook Efforts with Key Sloan-Supported Hires



Michele Kimpton, a highly respected technology and community engagement strategist, joined DPLA this month as Director of Business Development and Senior Strategist to help guide the organization as it expands its efforts to provide users with access to eBooks. She will develop strategic partnerships, create new DPLA services, raise funds, and develop community support models. Micah May, former Senior Director of Partnerships at Innovation at the New York Public Library and the key liaison with publishers for the White House Open eBooks Initiative, is now a consultant for DPLA, advising the organization on publisher relations and eBook services. DPLA is the recipient of a current Sloan grant to leverage its national network for the creation of a free eBook collection available in 50 states and a pilot eBook marketplace for thousands of libraries and schools, critical initiatives that will be significantly advanced by these two newly filled positions.



Annual Reviews Appoints Editor for New Sloan-Funded Digital Magazine



[Annual Reviews](#), a non-profit publisher of a prestigious series of multi-author reviews in 50 discipline-specific fields in science and social science, appointed [Eva Emerson](#) to lead a new, Sloan-sponsored digital magazine. The magazine, set to launch later this year, will engage a non-expert audience and demonstrate the real-world significance of the research covered in Annual Reviews journals. Emerson will join Annual Reviews from Science News, where, as Editor in Chief, she managed the shift to digital journalism, the creation of a new website, and development of a social media strategy. Annual Reviews is the recipient of a 2016 grant to publish a digital magazine that unlocks scientific research to inform the public discourse in multiple subjects with compelling, timely, and impartial knowledge.

SLOAN IN THE NEWS

What Business Leaders Can Learn from Sloan



TheStreet, a finance and business online publication, recently published [an article](#) about what business leaders can learn from the Public Understanding and Universal Access programs' approach to developing projects over time. The article describes Sloan as being "at the cutting edge of science and innovation" while functioning as "a nonprofit multimedia company that commissions and produces content with a bent toward science and technology." Drawing from an interview with Sloan Vice President, Programs Doron Weber and using examples such as the film program's development pipeline, the Foundation's role in the formation of DPLA, and Sloan's early

support of the book *Hidden Figures*, the article distills three key takeaways for business leaders: "real change takes time," "stay with a good idea," and "tell imaginative stories."

Program Team: Doron Weber, *Vice President, Programs and Program Director* | Eliza French, *Program Associate* | Delia DiBiasi, *Senior Program and Investments Assistant*