



Alfred P. Sloan
FOUNDATION

October 2017

Program Updates from the VP and Program Director Doron Weber

THEATER

Sloan-Commissioned Play *Mosquitoes* Is a Hit at London's National Theatre



Mosquitoes, a new play by acclaimed playwright Lucy Kirkwood commissioned by Sloan and [Manhattan Theatre Club](#) in 2008, had a sold-out run at the National Theatre in London from July 18 through September 28. Rufus Norris, Artistic Director at the National Theatre, directed the production, which received very [positive reviews](#). The plot follows two sisters: Alice, a scientist living and working in Geneva, consumed by her work as a particle physicist on the Large Hadron Collider, and Jenny, in mourning from the loss of her daughter. During the play's run, the National

Theatre hosted several special events, including a screening of the Sloan-supported documentary [Particle Fever](#), about the discovery of the Higgs Boson. The play is expected to premiere in New York in the 2018-19 season. Sloan has partnered with the Manhattan Theatre Club to nurture playwrights and develop new plays about science and technology since 2000. The Foundation also has a relationship with the National Theatre, including a recent small grant to commission a play about Hungarian physician Ignaz Semmelweis and his breakthrough discovery on the importance of antiseptic practices in medicine.

FILM

Diane Kruger to Star in and Produce Sloan-Supported Hedy Lamarr Miniseries



Diane Kruger and Straight Up Films recently announced that Kruger, an international film star who won Best Actress at this year's Cannes Film Festival, will produce and play the lead in a Sloan-developed [miniseries adaptation](#) of [Hedy's Folly: The Life and Breakthrough Inventions of Hedy Lamarr, The Most Beautiful Woman in the World](#), a Richard Rhodes book commissioned by Sloan. Google has also joined as a funding partner for the miniseries. Sloan has long supported books,

films, and plays about technological pioneer Hedy Lamarr, beginning with an Ensemble Studio Theatre/Sloan commission in 2000 for the play *Frequency Hopping* by Elyse Singer, produced in New York in 2008, a



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screenplay award via Tribeca in 2004, a book grant for Rhodes' *Hedy's Folly* in 2009, a 2015 grant for the documentary *Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story*, and a 2013 development grant for this project.

Sloan-Funded *Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story* to Make Theatrical Debut in November



The Sloan-funded documentary [Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story](#), which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in April, will [open theatrically](#) on November 24 at IFC in New York, with a nationwide release to follow. After its theatrical run, the film will air on PBS's *American Masters* in 2018. Sloan funded the film with a major production grant in 2015 for a documentary on the remarkable life and scientific achievements of Lamarr. Based on the Sloan-supported book *Hedy's Folly* by Richard Rhodes and produced by Susan Sarandon and her company Reframed Pictures, *Bombshell* tells the little-known story of Lamarr, a major Hollywood star from the 1930s -1950s, who was also a pioneering inventor. Together with composer George Antheil, she developed a key "frequency-hopping" innovation that led to future advances like Wi-Fi and cell phones. The film features original material, including a newly discovered audio interview with Lamarr that serves as a voiceover. It has been featured in numerous film festivals across the country and has received [critical praise](#).

Sloan to Celebrate Nationwide Film Program at Triennial Film Summit in LA, October 27-29



Over 125 Sloan film grantees and partners will converge for the triennial Sloan Film Summit this October. Film Independent, one of the Foundation's longstanding film development partners, will co-host the three-day event in Los Angeles's Little Tokyo district. Programming highlights include: updates from Sloan-supported filmmakers on their award-winning projects; a screening of *Marjorie Prime*, the 2017 Sloan/Sundance Feature Film Prize winner; a panel on women in science; a keynote by acclaimed producer Lydia Pilcher,

whose films include *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, and the forthcoming Sloan-supported film *Radium Girls*; and a discussion on Virtual Reality (VR) with VR visionary Chris Milk, whose company Within produced the Sloan-supported short VR documentary *Listening to the Universe*, about LIGO and the Nobel Prize-winning detection of gravitational waves. The event is invitation-only for Sloan film grantees and partners, but select sessions will be open to the public.

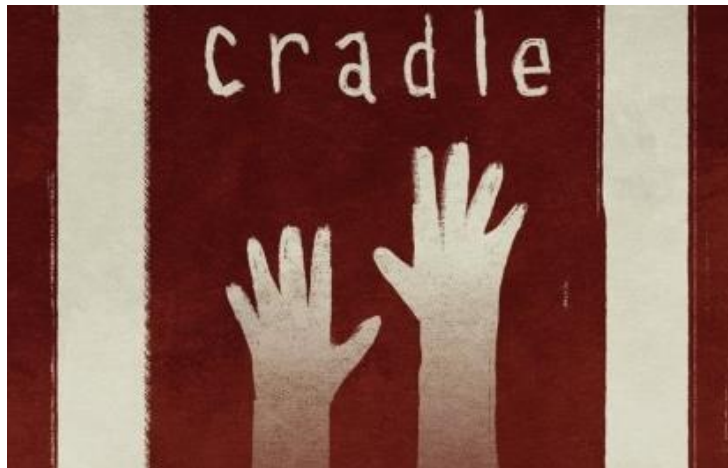


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Sloan-Supported Short Films Win 2 of 17 Student Academy Awards and Are Eligible for 2018 Oscars



[Two short films](#) supported through Sloan's film school partners were among the 17 [winners](#) of this year's 44th Student Academy Awards. The winning films were *Cradle*, written and directed by Devon Manney of the University of Southern California, and *Who's Who in Mycology*, co-written and directed by Marie Dvorakova of New York University, both of which received Sloan production grants. The films were [selected](#) from 1,587 submissions and will now be [eligible](#) for 2018 Oscars in the

short animation and short live action categories, respectively. A third Sloan-supported short, *Mira*, written and directed by USC student winner Amanda Tasse, was also a finalist.

Coolidge Corner Theatre Announces 36 New Science on Screen Theaters Across the Country



Coolidge Corner Theatre, which partners with Sloan to support screenings and science-related discussions of films at art house theaters nationwide, recently announced the 2017-18 Science on Screen grantee theaters. With Sloan funding, Coolidge awarded \$255,000 to 36 independent cinemas, museums, and community film programs across the country, from Hawaii to Nebraska. Each organization receives up to \$8,500 to present three or more Science on Screen events, pairing expert-led discussions of scientific topics with screenings of feature and documentary films. At least one of the films

shown must be a Sloan-developed or Sloan-awarded film. Popular choices include *Hidden Figures*, *The Martian*, *A Birder's Guide to Everything*, and *The Man Who Knew Infinity*. Since the Science on Screen grant program began in 2011, Sloan and the Coolidge have awarded 166 grants to 72 nonprofit cinemas.



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Museum of the Moving Image Releases Updated Teacher's Guide to Sloan-Funded Short Films



The Museum of the Moving Image's (MoMI) [Science & Film site](#), the comprehensive, go-to site for Sloan's nationwide film program, released an [updated version](#) of a free, online teacher's guide, featuring 50 Sloan-funded short science films supported through the Sloan film school program. All 50 films are [available to stream](#) for free on the Science & Film website. For each film, the guide includes a plot summary, science subjects addressed, appropriate grade ranges, suggested questions for discussion, links to

additional resources, and integration with New York City and national learning standards. Science fields covered by films in the guide include biology, chemistry, genetics, mathematics, physics, psychology/neuroscience, and technology, among others. MoMI is the recipient of a current grant to maintain and develop the Science and Film site for the nationwide Sloan Film program, its participating partners and the over 500 Sloan-supported film projects. A still from *Three Light Bulbs*, a short film featured in the guide, co-written and directed by former Columbia University student Min Ding, is pictured above at left.

TELEVISION

Sloan-supported "Black Hole Apocalypse," First NOVA Special with Female Host, to Air in January 2018



"[Black Hole Apocolypse](#)," the first NOVA special to be hosted by a woman scientist, will air on January 10, 2018. Astrophysicist and author Janna Levin (pictured at left), professor of physics and astronomy at Barnard College of Columbia University, will explore the frontiers of black-hole science during the two-hour special. The documentary will follow cutting-edge research examining what black holes can reveal about the nature of space, time, and gravity and will introduce viewers to the astronomers and

physicists leading this research. The special is accompanied by a free app, [available now](#) in the iTunes store, that allows players to simulate a star that becomes a black hole over time, hurling across spacetime and navigating fields of neutron stars and quasars. Sloan supported the documentary and app with a major production grant in 2014.



Silicon Valley: The Untold Story, Sloan-Backed Documentary, to Air on Science Channel in January 2018

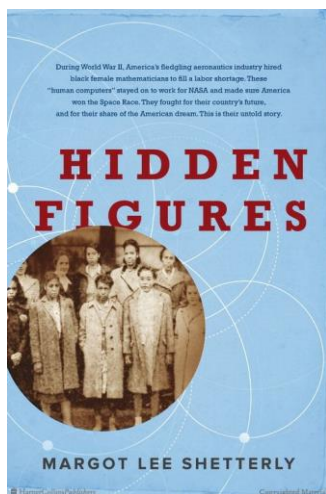


Silicon Valley: The Untold Story, a three-part documentary series from the award-winning team at Kikim Media, will air in January on the [Science Channel](#). The series provides television’s first comprehensive look at the century-and-a-half history of this unique region and its unending stream of innovation. It includes interviews with such key Valley figures as Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, WhatsApp co-founder Jan Koum, and Alphabet chairman Eric Schmidt, as well as

with leading scholars and historians. The first hour explores the unique mix of ingredients—the secret sauce—that fueled the Valley’s rise to becoming the world’s technological and economic powerhouse. The second hour examines the forces—including government and military funding—that have made the Valley a magnet for innovators from all over the world. And the third hour charts the circuitous paths and lucky accidents that lie behind some of the Valley’s greatest success stories, and reveals that even in a place celebrated for inventing the future, no one can really predict it. Sloan supported *Silicon Valley: The Untold Story* with a major production grant in 2012.

BOOKS

Hidden Figures Honored with National Academies Communication Award



Margot Lee Shetterly’s Sloan-supported book [Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race](#) received a [2017 Communication Award](#) from The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. The award, which includes a \$20,000 prize, “recognizes excellence in reporting and communicating science, engineering, and medicine to the general public.” The book was specifically cited as “a hitherto little-known episode in the history of pioneering aerospace engineering and computing brought to light so engagingly that, along with the blockbuster movie it inspired, has had an unprecedented impact on the American public.” Sloan supported *Hidden Figures* with an early grant in 2014 to then unknown first-time author Shetterly. The book debuted at number seven on the *New York Times* bestseller list and went on to become an Oscar-nominated hit film, which won the 2016 Sloan Science in Cinema Prize presented by the San

Francisco Film Society.



NASA Names New Research Facility after Katherine Johnson, Key Figure Profiled in *Hidden Figures*



NASA recently named a new research facility in honor of Katherine Johnson, one of the African-American mathematicians featured in *Hidden Figures*. Johnson was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2015 for her role in calculating the trajectories for many important missions, including the moon landing. Author Shetterly spoke at the dedication ceremony in September, which Johnson (pictured at left next to the new building) attended. To Johnson, Shetterly said “Telling your story

has been an honor. ... Your work changed our history and your history has changed our future.”

NEW MEDIA

LIGO Detection of Gravitational Waves, Featured in First Sloan-Supported VR Documentary, Wins Nobel



[MIT's Rainer Weiss and Cal Tech's Barry Barish and Kip Thorne](#) were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics this month for the discovery of gravitational waves through the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO). LIGO and the detection of gravitational waves were the subject of “Listening to the Universe,” a first-ever Sloan-supported VR documentary produced by the leading VR company Within. Sloan sought to encourage VR filmmakers to grapple with how to depict a complex, cutting-edge scientific discovery and to set an important precedent in the emerging medium of VR, educating its early pioneers. The film takes viewers on a

wide-ranging journey—from the MIT offices and labs of lead LIGO scientists Rainer Weiss (pictured at left) and Professor of Astrophysics Nergis Mavalvala, to inside one of the LIGO Observatories, and into space, where black holes collide 1.2 billion light-years from Earth. Cosmologist and Columbia University professor Janna Levin, mentioned earlier, acted as the project’s science advisor.



Nine Science Festivals Get Boost from Science Festival Alliance Accelerator Program



Nine start-up science festivals completed a six-month Science Festival Accelerator training program developed by the Science Festival Alliance, a MIT-based group that fosters a professional community dedicated to improving the quality and quantity of science and technology festivals. The start-up festivals received professional development support and are each eligible for a \$10,000 matching grant. Three experienced “lead” festivals—Flagstaff Festival of Science, Indian River Lagoon Science Festival, Maine Science

Festival—were chosen to mentor the new festivals throughout the training process. The nine new festivals are: City of STEM Science Festival in Los Angeles; “Fall in Love with Science” in Oahu; Gulf Coast Science Festival in Florida; Mississippi Science Festival; North Bay Science Festival in Ontario; Roswell Festival of Science and Art in New Mexico; Siskiyou Science Festival in California; SKy Science Festival in Kentucky; and Topeka Science and Tech Fest. Sloan has supported the Science Festival Alliance since 2012.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

New Study Shows Wikipedia’s Positive Influence in Science Communication

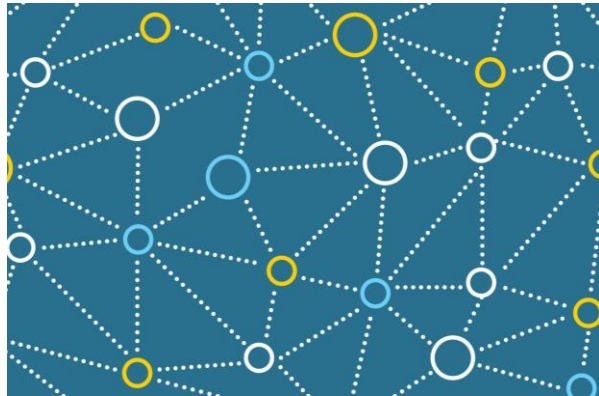


A [study](#) conducted by MIT Sloan School of Management Assistant Professor Neil C. Thompson and University of Pittsburgh Assistant Professor of Economics Douglas Hanley shows that Wikipedia beneficially [influences](#) how scientists write about science. This effect was more pronounced in developing countries where access to scientific journals is limited but was true for the U.S. as well. Dr. Thomson said, “Public sources of scientific information such as Wikipedia are incredibly important for spreading knowledge to people who are not usually part of the conversation.” Overall, the study demonstrates that “increased provision of information in

accessible repositories, such as Wikipedia, is an important way to advance science and make science more inclusive.” The Sloan Foundation’s [Universal Access to Knowledge](#) program, which seeks to harness advances in digital information technology to facilitate the openness and accessibility of all knowledge for the widest public benefit, has supported Wikipedia since 2008.



Digital Public Library of America Launches Pilot Ebook Exchange and Hub Membership Network



With Sloan support, the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) launched [DPLA Exchange](#), America's first library-owned eBook marketplace with thousands of popular ebooks and e-audiobooks as well as free public domain ebooks. Six libraries from across the country will pilot the Exchange in this initial launch phase and explore expansion to additional institutions. The DPLA was the recipient of a major Sloan grant in 2016 to support the creation of a free eBook collection available nationwide and to develop a pilot eBook marketplace.

Last month, the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) also launched a new [hub membership network](#). Although DPLA has long relied on a hub model, this new membership program gives hubs “a formal voice and increased ownership of the network,” enabling better communication and collaboration. Two new governing bodies, the Network Council and the Advisory Council, will more deeply engage hubs with the DPLA, and the DPLA Board will now include two member representative seats. This is an important step for DPLA in creating a strong, self-sustaining network. Sloan has supported the DPLA since its inception in 2013.