



Alfred P. Sloan
FOUNDATION

MARCH 2016

Program Updates from the VP and Program Director Doron Weber

THEATER

Two EST/Sloan Productions, *Please Continue* and *Boy*, Premiere in New York



This spring, the Ensemble Studio Theatre/Sloan Project produced two mainstage productions instead of one—a testament to the growing popularity of science-themed plays generally and the success of the EST/Sloan partnership specifically. *Please Continue*, a play written by Frank Basloe centering on the Stanley Milgram experiments, ended an extended run on March 6. The play received outstanding reviews and was selected as a [New York Times Critics' Pick](#).

Boy (through April 9), the second play to premiere this season as an EST/Sloan mainstage production, is co-produced with [Keen Company](#), building on the recent success of EST/Sloan plays co-produced with other theaters to reach broader audiences, such as this summer's [Informed Consent](#) co-produced with Primary Stages. Originally commissioned from playwright Anna Ziegler (*Photograph 51*) through the Manhattan Theatre Club/Sloan Initiative, *Boy* is based on the true story of a young boy in the 1960s who underwent gender reassignment under the care of psychologist John Money. *Boy* received a [major review](#) in the *New York Times*, along with [critical praise](#) from [other outlets](#).

Now in its second decade, the innovative EST/Sloan partnership has commissioned, developed, and produced hundreds of new plays that explore science and technology and challenge existing stereotypes of scientists and engineers. EST is the recipient of a three-year grant to commission, develop, produce, and disseminate new science plays in New York and across the country.



Nick Payne's *Incognito*, an MTC/Sloan Production, Opens in May



Directed by Tony Award winner Doug Hughes and starring Charlie Cox and Heather Lind, [Incognito](#), by acclaimed playwright Nick Payne, will run from May 3 through June 26 at the Manhattan Theatre Club. Supported by a special Sloan production grant, the play weaves together three interlinked science-themed stories about the idea that we are defined by what we remember. Payne wrote the Tony-nominated, Sloan-supported Broadway hit



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Constellations, an MTC/Sloan production in 2015. MTC is the recipient of a current three-year grant to support the MTC/Sloan Initiative commissioning, developing, and producing new science and technology plays. MTC was also the recipient of a separate grant for the production of *Incognito*.

FILM

***The Man Who Knew Infinity*, Sloan-Supported Film on Ramanujan, Opens in Theaters April 29**



The Man Who Knew Infinity, starring Dev Patel as mathematical prodigy Srinivasa Ramanujan and Jeremy Irons as his Cambridge mentor G.H. Hardy, will open in theaters on April 29, 2016. Jim Young, the film's producer, won a Film Independent/Sloan Producers Grant for the screenplay in 2008 and a TFI/Sloan Filmmaker Fund Production Award in 2015. This is the fifteenth completed feature film from the Sloan development pipeline and one of several recent Sloan-supported biographical stories of important figures such as Hedy Lamarr, Alan Turing, and Rosalind Franklin to be

produced. The script is based on the Sloan-supported book *The Man Who Knew Infinity: A Life of the Genius Ramanujan* by Robert Kanigel. Ahead of the film's release, Sloan will co-host special screenings and panel discussions featuring Dev Patel, the filmmakers, and mathematicians at Tribeca Film Festival on April 15 and at the San Francisco International Film Festival on April 24.

Coolidge Corner Theatre Organizes Third Annual National Evening of Science on Screen



Nineteen independent theaters across the country will participate in the third annual [National Evening of Science on Screen](#) on March 22, 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 47 cinemas across the

country and providing an important distribution channel for Sloan films. Each theater participating in the National Evening of *Science on Screen* will show an introductory video about the program, followed by a film and speaker presentation. The Coolidge has also launched a new website dedicated to the Science on Screen program, scienceonscreen.org, that features archival program information, a [library](#) of 36 Sloan-supported



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films, videos of past speaker programs, venue information, and grant guidelines. The Coolidge is the recipient of a current two-year grant to support the expansion of Science on Screen program to art house cinemas nationwide.

***Operator*, Developed Via Multiple Sloan Grants, Premieres at South by Southwest Film Festival**



[*Operator*](#), a film about a programmer creating an Interactive Voice Responsive System for the customer service line of a health insurance agency, [premiered](#) at the [South by Southwest Film Festival](#) on March 12. Written by Sharon Greene and Logan Kibens, *Operator* received Sloan support at multiple stages of development, including a Sundance Lab Fellowship in 2012 and a 2014 Fast Track Grant from Film Independent. [IndieWire](#) selected the film as one of “seven hidden gems in the 2016 South by Southwest features lineup.”

This is the sixteenth feature film to come out of the Sloan pipeline. Sloan will co-host a screening of the film at the San Francisco International Film Festival this April as part of its [Sloan Science in Cinema initiative](#).

***Embrace of the Serpent* Wins Sloan Feature Film Prize at Sundance 2016**



The Oscar-nominated [*Embrace of the Serpent*](#) won the Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize at this year’s Sundance Film Festival for “its original and provocative portrait of a scientist and a scientific journey into the unknown, and for its unconventional depiction of how different cultures seek to understand nature.” Set in the Amazon, the film was inspired by the journals of scientists Theodor Koch-Grünberg and Richard Evans Schultes. A jury of film and science experts selected the film and participated in a sold-out panel discussion

during the Festival about [“The Art of Getting Science Right”](#) in film.

This year’s Sundance/Sloan winners include Mark Levinson, recipient of the Sundance Institute/Sloan Fellowship for his script [The Gold Bug Variations](#), based on the 1991 Richard Powers novel that features two geneticists discovering the chemical structure of DNA, and Darcy Brislin and Dyana Winkler, winners of the Sundance/Sloan Commissioning Grant for their project *Bell*, which delves into the controversy surrounding Alexander Graham Bell’s invention of the telephone and his work with eugenics and the deaf. The Sundance



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Institute is the recipient of a current two-year grant to support a science and technology film program that includes screenwriting fellowships, feature film prizes, science and film panels.

TELEVISION

Sloan-Supported *American Experience* Film *Space Men* Premieres on PBS



[Space Men](#), the latest Sloan-supported *American Experience* film, premiered on March 1 on PBS stations nationwide. *Space Men* tells the story of the pioneering Air Force scientists and pilots whose Project Manhigh, which collected data about the biological and technical factors required to support human activity in space, lay the groundwork for the US space program. The full program is now available to stream

[online](#). NPR's *Morning Edition* [interviewed](#) Retired U.S. Air Force Col. Joseph Kittinger, a central figure in the documentary, about his experience free-falling from a balloon 103,000 feet above ground. WGBH Education Foundation, which produces *American Experience*, is the recipient of a current two-year grant to produce and broadcast four new documentaries on the role of science and technology in history.

Sloan-Supported Civil War Medical Drama *Mercy Street* Renewed for Second Season



PBS announced earlier this month that the Sloan-supported Civil War-era medical drama [Mercy Street](#) has been renewed for a second season. Blending hospital drama and historical saga, the series portrays the development of several important [medical innovations](#) such as blood transfusions, anesthesia, amputation, and other surgical procedures at a Union military hospital in 1862. It is the first original scripted drama produced by PBS in over ten years. Produced by Ridley Scott (*The Martian*) and starring Josh Radnor (*How I Met Your Mother*), the first season premiered on January 17 reaching more than 5.7 million viewers with ratings 67

percent higher than PBS's national primetime average. The series' six episodes reached an additional 2 million viewers via online streaming platforms. The PBS Foundation was the recipient of a pilot grant in 2013 for a six-part, fact-based historical drama about how the Civil War drove innovations in medical science.



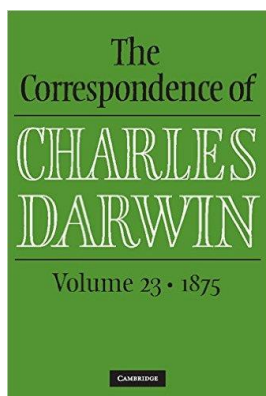
BOOKS

Science Blogging: The Essential Guide is Published



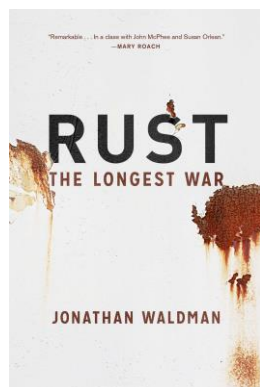
[Science Blogging: The Essential Guide](#), edited by Christie Wilcox, Bethany Brookshire, and Jason G. Goldman was published on March 1, 2016 by Yale University Press. The book, featuring contributions from 25 members of the National Association of Science Writers (NASW), is “an essential how-to guide for communicating scientific research and discoveries online” and addresses “a wide range of digital areas, including blogging, creating podcasts, tweeting, and more.” The book was supported by a 2013 grant for the research and writing of a comprehensive science blogging guide for writers of all experience levels. Sloan has previously supported the leading science writers organization, with grants in 1997 and 2003 to support the publication of the original and updated editions of NASW’s [A Field Guide for Science Writers](#).

The Correspondence of Charles Darwin, Volume 23 is Published



[The Correspondence of Charles Darwin, Volume 23](#) was published on March 7, 2016 by Cambridge University Press. This is the latest volume to be published in an award-winning, definitive, 30-volume edition of letters by Charles Darwin, scheduled for completion by 2022. *Volume 23* includes letters from 1875, the year Darwin published the important botanical work *Insectivorous Plants* and began writing *Cross and Self-fertilization in the Vegetable Kingdom*. The Foundation has supported *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin* since its inception in 1985. The latest volumes were supported by a final multi-year grant in 2010 to the American Council of Learned Societies to ensure the editorial integrity and timely completion of the print edition of *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin* and the online publication of all 15,000 letters.

Rust Named as Finalist for LA Times Book Prize



[Rust: The Longest War](#), the acclaimed first book by science writer [Jonathan Waldman](#), was named as a finalist for the LA Times Book Prize in the science and technology category. The book takes a fresh approach to exploring corrosion and the scientific, technological, and engineering techniques used to fight against it. Waldman was the recipient of a 2012 grant to support the research and writing of a book about rust and the engineering efforts required to combat it.



NEW MEDIA

World Science Festival Returns for a Ninth Year



The World Science Festival, supported by Sloan since its founding in 2008, will return for its ninth year June 1st through 5th with over fifty events. The Festival continues to attract hundreds of thousands of attendees with its unique mix of mainstage discussions, performances, salons, and interactive experiences. In-person and online audiences have grown steadily, and this year the Festival will continue its outreach to local schools and bring its programming to new venues such as

city parks. The World Science Festival is the recipient of a final three-year grant to support the production and execution of the annual World Science Festival and related year-round live and digital activities.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

DPLA/White House Open eBooks Initiative Reaches 1 Million Low-Income Students

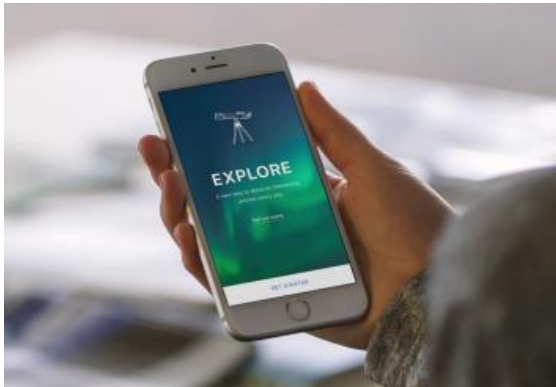


On February 24, the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) [officially launched](#) its [Open eBooks initiative](#) with a [video message](#) from First Lady Michelle Obama. Within 24 hours, more than 174,000 students in need—from Title I schools—signed up for the program. Announced by President Obama in April 2015 as part of the White House’s ConnectED Initiative, the Open eBooks Initiative is a partnership between the DPLA, The New York Public Library, and the non-profit First Book, with help from Baker &

Taylor. Open eBooks launched with free eBooks worth \$250,000,000, including the latest in-copyright bestsellers, from over 10 major publishers available to qualified low-income children. The books are selected by a DPLA “[curation corps](#)” and are accessible via an app on personal mobile devices. To date, more than 1 million low-income children have used the service, a remarkable achievement and a game-changer for the DPLA. In addition to supporting the DPLA since its inception, Sloan made two special grants to the DPLA to develop the open eBooks initiative, help the program to reach its potential, and enable the DPLA to play this important nationwide role.



Wikipedia Launches New App for iOS



On March 10, Wikipedia [released](#) a [new app](#) for iOS that delivers an enhanced mobile experience for Wikipedia users. The new “Explore” feed is a personalized feature that enables users to seamlessly browse through customized content including a featured article of the day, picture of the day, top-read articles, and recommended articles based on those previously read. The app also allows users to read and search in multiple languages, search with emojis, navigate using 3D touch, view high-resolution image galleries, and easily share articles via

social media or email. The Wikimedia Foundation is the recipient of a final five-year grant to bolster Wikipedia’s readership and editors, including more women, expand its mobile presence, and strengthen its technical infrastructure as it moves to self-sustainability.