

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

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MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE AND THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE 2023 SLOAN STUDENT PRIZE JURY AND WINNERS

A jury of science and entertainment professionals has selected two winners of the Sloan Student Prizes, each to receive \$20,000 to develop their new science-themed screenplays



L–R, Justine Beed (USC) and Lara Palmqvist (University of Texas at Austin) [Download image.](#)

New York, New York, December 18, 2023 — Museum of the Moving Image and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation are pleased to announce the winners of the 2023 Sloan Student Grand Jury Prize and 2023 Sloan Student Discovery Prize, respectively: Justine Beed (USC) for her series pilot *La Forza*, and Lara Palmqvist (University of Texas at Austin) for her feature script *The Garden*. The winners were chosen from [ten nominees](#) by a jury that included Dr. Dwaipayan Banerjee (MIT), Dan Berger (President, Oscilloscope Laboratories), writer/director Sophie Barthes (*The Pod Generation*), actor/writer/director Anna Konkle (*PEN15*), Dr. Reyhaneh Maktoufi (Howard Hughes Medical Institute), and Dr. Katina Michael (Arizona State University). The jury also awarded honorable mention to Emma Zetterberg (NYU) for her feature script *The Light in Your Eyes*. The winners will be honored at an event on January 11, 2024 at Museum of the Moving Image.

Established in 2011 (Grand Jury Prize) and expanded in 2019 (Discovery Prize), the Sloan Student Prizes aim to advance the professional paths of diverse, emerging filmmakers as they transition out of school and into the film industry. For the past 25 years, the Sloan Foundation has awarded annual prizes in screenwriting at six partner film schools and each school nominates one winning candidate for the best-of-the-best Grand Jury Prize. The Discovery Prize represents an expansion of the Sloan film program to public universities not regularly affiliated with the Foundation.

Justine Beed and Lara Palmqvist will each receive \$20,000, industry exposure, and year-round mentorship from both a science advisor and film industry professional. This is the third pair of Sloan Student Prize winners awarded under the stewardship of Museum of the Moving Image, part of the Museum's wider [Sloan Science & Film initiative](#), which provides opportunities for the creation, distribution, exhibition, and discussion of films that amplify understanding of scientific themes.

In keeping with the Museum's programs that foster the work of emerging artists, MoMI will produce a work-in-progress reading of each winning project as part of its annual festival First Look in March 2024.

The jury gave the following citations for the winners of the 2023 Sloan Student Prizes:

The Sloan Student Grand Jury Prize winner is ***La Forza* by Justine Beed (USC)**. Project description: A semi-historical, romantic dramedy about the electric life of physicist Laura Bassi—the first female professor—and the husband who was her assistant.

Jury citation: *La Forza* is an exceptional treatment for a series—full of wit and romance—that tells the story of an underappreciated woman in science. The jury was impressed by the way in which the writer depicts eighteenth-century science and brings the characters to life. The jury is delighted to award the Sloan Student Grand Jury Prize to *La Forza*.

The Sloan Student Grand Jury Prize honorable mention is ***The Light in Your Eyes* by Emma Zetterberg (NYU)**. Project description: Allvar Gullstrand, a Swedish scientist who won the Nobel Prize in 1911 for his contributions to understanding eyesight, is blinded by his own grief over losing his legacy and decides to prevent Albert Einstein from winning a Nobel Prize.

Jury citation: A gracefully written historical drama that explores scientific rivalry and a complex family relationship. The jury was moved by the honest dialogue, articulate storytelling, and the potential to visualize scientific

concepts. The jury is pleased to award honorable mention to *The Light in Your Eyes*.

The Sloan Student Discovery prizewinner is ***The Garden* by Lara Palmqvist (University of Texas, Austin)**. Project description: Drawing on timely concerns of climate change, biodiversity loss, and agricultural innovation, *The Garden* follows a passionate plant breeder as he tries to secure his family's future by developing genetically enhanced seeds while working for a controlling socialite who wants to transplant an elaborate garden onto her Kentucky estate. An ecological drama interested in interconnection, drawing links between social and environmental justice; opulence and exploitation; and food and the people who bring it to our plates.

Jury citation: The jury found *The Garden* to be an impressive portrayal of a world grappling with the many devastating effects of climate change. The script is carefully attentive to the complexity of issues related to food production, plant genetics, and agricultural science. It is an original, poetic, and mythological, yet grounded, story. The jury is thrilled to award the Sloan Student Discovery Prize to *The Garden*.

ABOUT THE 2023 SLOAN STUDENT PRIZE JURY:

Dr. Dwaipayan Banerjee is an Associate Professor of Science, Technology, and Society (STS) at MIT. Professor Banerjee is the author of two books: *Enduring Cancer: Life, Death and Diagnosis in Delhi* (Duke University Press) and *Hematologies: The Political Life of Blood in India* (Cornell University Press). His research has been funded by the Mellon Foundation, the National Science Foundation, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, and the Levitan Prize. He is also the writer and director of *The Beloved Witness*, a documentary on the life and death of Kashmiri-American poet Agha Shahid Ali.

Sophie Barthes is a Franco-American filmmaker. Her directorial debut, *Cold Souls* (2009) with Paul Giamatti and Emily Watson was released by Samuel Goldwyn. *Cold Souls* played in competition at the Sundance Film Festival. Barthes is a Sundance Screenwriters & Directors Lab alumna and a Columbia University graduate. Her second feature *Madame Bovary* with Mia Wasikowska was released in 2015 after premiering at Telluride. Her film *The Pod Generation* (2023) premiered at Sundance where it received the Sloan Feature Film Prize.

Dan Berger runs Oscilloscope Laboratories, a film distribution company founded by Adam Yauch, aka MCA of Beastie Boys. Berger has been with O-Scope since its inception more than 15 years ago and has overseen releases as varied as *Kedi*, *Samsara*, *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, *Wendy and Lucy*, and *Embrace of the Serpent*. Oscilloscope has received eight Academy Award nominations among

countless other accolades and critical distinctions. Previously Berger worked at THINKFilm. He is a graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

Anna Konkle is a co-creator/co-star of PEN15, the critically acclaimed television series for Hulu which received Emmy nominations for Best Comedy Series, and Outstanding Writing in a Comedy Series for both seasons. Anna also directed two episodes in Season 2, including the cult favorite “Spring Break Animated Special.” She was recently featured in a standout role on season 2 of Apple TV+ series *The Afterparty* and can be seen in the Hulu romantic comedy *The Drop*. Other acting credits include *Together Together*, *Ramy*, *Baskets*, *Shameless*, and *Rosewood*. Anna is currently writing a U.S. adaptation of Joachim Trier’s acclaimed feature *Thelma* for FilmNation, which she will also direct. Her forthcoming memoir will be published by Random House.

Dr. Reyhaneh Maktoufi is a DC-based, Iranian researcher and science communicator. She is the co-producer, host, and illustrator of PBS|NOVA's digital series *Sciencing Out*, a mini-series on women in history who have used different strategies to communicate their science. Rey received her Ph.D. in Media, Technology, and Society at Northwestern University. She is an HHMI, Tangled Bank Studio Fellow in Science Communication, where she designs and runs evaluation and impact campaigns that connect science and culture. As a researcher, media strategist/consultant, and impact producer, her main fields of interest are eliciting hope, curiosity, and trust and building impact campaigns that combine science and culture.

Dr. Katina Michael is a professor in the School for the Future of Innovation in Society and School of Computing, Informatics and Decision Systems Engineering at Arizona State University. She researches predominantly in the area of emerging technologies and has secondary interests in technologies used for national security and their corresponding social implications. Michael has published six edited books, coauthored two 500-page reference volumes, and written more than 200 peer-reviewed papers. Previously Michael was associate dean international at the University of Wollongong (UOW), Australia, overseeing UOW engineering and information science courses in eight campuses in five countries.

For more information about the Sloan Student Prizes and to see a list of past winners, visit [this page](#).

About the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation is a New York–based, philanthropic, not-for-profit institution that makes grants in three areas: research in science, technology, and economics; quality and diversity of scientific institutions; and public engagement with science. Sloan’s program in Public Understanding of Science and Technology, directed by Doron Weber, supports books, radio, film, television, theater and new media to reach a

wide, non-specialized audience and to bridge the two cultures of science and the humanities. Sloan's Film Program encourages filmmakers to create more realistic and compelling stories about science and technology and to challenge existing stereotypes about scientists and engineers in the popular imagination. Over the past two decades, Sloan has partnered with a dozen leading film schools and established annual awards in screenwriting and film production. The Foundation also supports screenplay development programs with the Sundance Institute, SFFILM, Film Independent, the Black List, and the Athena Film Festival. The Sloan Film Program has supported over 750 narrative film projects and has helped develop over 30 feature films. For more information visit sloan.org or follow @SloanPublic on Twitter or Facebook.

About Museum of the Moving Image

Museum of the Moving Image (MoMI) is the only institution in the United States that deals comprehensively with the art, technology, enjoyment, and social impact of film, television, and digital media. In its acclaimed facility in Astoria, New York, the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, and creative leaders; and education programs. It houses the nation's largest collection of moving image artifacts and screens over 500 films annually. Its exhibitions—including the core exhibition *Behind the Screen* and *The Jim Henson Exhibition*—are noted for their integration of material objects, interactive experiences, and audiovisual presentations. For more information about the MoMI, visit movingimage.us.

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MUSEUM INFORMATION

Hours: Thurs, 2:00–6:00 p.m. Fri, 2:00–8:00 p.m. Sat–Sun, 12:00–6:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: \$20 adults, \$12 senior citizens (ages 65+) and students (ages 18+) with ID, \$10 youth (ages 3–17). Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. General admission is free every Thursday, 2:00–6:00 p.m.

Film Screenings: Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and as scheduled. Unless otherwise noted, tickets: \$15 adults, \$11 students and seniors, \$9 youth (ages 3–17), free or discounted for Museum members (depending on level of membership). Advance purchase is available online. Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M or R to Steinway Street. N or W to 36 Ave or Broadway.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: movingimage.us

Membership: movingimage.us/join-and-support/become-a-member or 718 777 6877

Museum of the Moving Image is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and has received significant support from the following public agencies: New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York City Council; New York City Economic Development Corporation; New York State Council

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on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature; Institute of Museum and Library Services; National Endowment for the Humanities; National Endowment for the Arts; and Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation). For more information, please visit movingimage.us