

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

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Museum of the Moving Image and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation announce 2024 Sloan Student Prize 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, Brittany Wang (USC) and Yoel Gebremariam (University of Michigan) Download image.

New York, New York, January 21, 2025 — Museum of the Moving Image and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation are pleased to announce the winners of the 2024 Sloan Student Grand Jury Prize and 2024 Sloan Student Discovery Prize, annual awards representing the best-of-the-best from Sloan’s nationwide film program. The winners of the Grand Jury and Discovery Prize are respectively: Brittany Wang (USC) for her series pilot *Thin Ice*, and Yoel Gebremariam (University of Michigan) for his feature script *Impact*. The winners were chosen from [nine nominees](#) by a jury of scientists and filmmakers that included Sebastian Alvarado (Queens College), Jeremy Greene (John Hopkins School of Medicine), Maureen E. Raymo (Columbia University), director Johan Renck (*Spaceman*, *Chernobyl*), actress/director Francesca Scorsese (*We Are Who We Are*, *Christmas Eve in Miller’s Point*), and Netflix Sustainability Officer Emma Stewart. The jury also awarded honorable mention to Discovery Prize finalist Hallie Stephenson (SUNY Purchase) for her series pilot *Abel’s Baby*. The winners will be honored at Museum of the Moving Image in March 2025 at the 14th annual First Look Festival.

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Brittany Wang and Yoel Gebremariam will each receive \$20,000, industry exposure, and year-round mentorship from both a science advisor and film industry professional.

“We’re delighted to give our annual Grand Jury and Discovery Prizes to Brittany Wang’s *Thin Ice* and Yoel Gebremariam’s *Impact*,” wrote Doron Weber, Vice President and Program Director at the Sloan Foundation. “While one story takes place in Antarctica and the other in outer space, both screenplays show the importance of empathy and mutual respect across gender and national differences.”

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 six public universities who each submit an original screenplay that has not previously won a Sloan prize.

This is the fourth year the Sloan Student Prizes were awarded under the stewardship of Museum of the Moving Image. Their stewardship is 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, with Sloan support MoMI will produce a work-in-progress reading of each winning project as part of its annual festival First Look in March 2025.

The jury gave the following citations for the winners of the 2024 Sloan Student Prizes:

The Sloan Student Grand Jury Prize winner is ***Thin Ice* by Brittany Wang (USC)**.

Logline: In 1999, graduate student Jane Willenbring embarks on a research expedition under legendary glaciologist David Marchant. But upon reaching the remote Antarctic camp, Marchant makes her life a living hell. Powerless, injured, and isolated from the world, Jane promises herself to take action someday. Seventeen years later, now an award-winning geomorphologist, will Jane risk the career that she’s built in order to bring her past abuser to justice?

Jury citation: “Developed in collaboration with its subject, *Thin Ice* tells the compelling true story of geologist Jane Willenbring, whose historic Title IX complaint not only led to profound social change within the sciences but illustrates an inspiring commitment to scientific

advancement in the face of adversity. Struck by the script's authenticity and impressed by its narrative structure, the jury is delighted to award the Sloan Student Grand Jury Prize to *Thin Ice*."

"Thank you to Museum of the Moving Image and Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for their incredible generosity, and their continued work in bringing stories of science and humanity to a wider audience," said Brittany Wang. "I am deeply grateful for this exciting opportunity to continue developing a project that properly honors Dr. Willenbring's inspirational story, and I can't wait for all that's to come."

Jane Willenbring's story in *Thin Ice* was part of a Sloan-supported documentary *Picture a Scientist* (2020). *Thin Ice* is also the recipient of the 2025 Sloan Commissioning Award at the Sundance Institute.

The Sloan Student Discovery Prize winner is ***Impact* by Yoel Gebremariam (University of Michigan)**. Gebremariam is the first filmmaker from University of Michigan to win the Discovery Prize. Logline: On the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11, an embattled American astronaut lands on the moon alongside India's first-ever astronaut. When a meteor storm strikes, stranding his partner in orbit, he's forced to join forces with India and learn what it means to leave an impact.

Jury citation: "*Impact* is an engrossing space thriller with tremendous blockbuster potential. Gebremariam's script has all the excitement and suspense that define the genre, while offering a fresh perspective on space programs beyond the United States and a nuanced portrayal of the engineering that makes spaceflight possible. The jury is thrilled to award the Sloan Student Discovery Prize to *Impact*."

"I'm so happy and honored to be chosen for this award, and I'm so thankful for the support of Cindy Davis, Dan Shere, the UM Screenwriting program, Chadd Harbold, and Susan Miller in taking *Impact* this far," said Gebremariam. "I'm excited to bring this story closer to the screen with Museum of the Moving Image!"

The Sloan Student Discovery Prize honorable mention is ***Abel's Baby* by Hallie Stephenson (SUNY Purchase)**. Logline: A convict in the late 18th century discovers she is pregnant while aboard a prisoner transport ship on route to Australia and uses her expert knowledge of 18th-century physics, engineering, and chemistry to save herself and her unborn child.

ABOUT THE 2024 SLOAN STUDENT PRIZE JURY:

Dr. Sebastian Alvarado completed his Ph.D. at McGill University in the Department

of Pharmacology and was an A.P. Giannini Fellow at Stanford University in the Department of Biology. His research program is interested in how animals change color and behavior in response to their changing environment. Sebastian also consults for the entertainment sector with a firm he co-founded, Thwacke. Clients have included Warner Brothers, Marvel Entertainment, and Remedy Games. He has also written science-in-fiction articles for popular media outlets and published a book on the science of the Marvel Cinematic Universe with Simon and Schuster.

Jeremy A. Greene, MD, Ph.D., is William H. Welch Professor of Medicine and History of Medicine at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where he serves as Director of the Institute of the History of Medicine and founding Director of the Center for Medical Humanities & Social Medicine. In addition to his primary appointments, he serves as faculty and investigator in a variety of capacities at Hopkins. Dr. Greene's research explores the ways in which medical technologies influence our understandings of what it means to be sick or healthy, normal or abnormal, on personal, regional, and global scales.

Maureen E. Raymo is Co-Founding Dean Emerita of the Columbia Climate School, past Director of Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, and G. Unger Vetlesen Professor of Earth & Environmental Sciences. Professor Raymo's research focuses on the history and causes of climate change in the past, including understanding the consequences of climate change for sea level and ice sheet stability in the future. Her research has been profiled in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *The New Yorker*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Discover Magazine*, and elsewhere, and has been the subject of both a PBS Nova and BBC Horizon television documentary. In 2014 she became the first woman to be awarded the Wollaston Medal, the Geological Society of London's most senior medal. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions and as a scientific advisor to SeaLegacy.

Johan Renck began his career directing music videos for top artists, most recently David Bowie's final two videos *Blackstar* and *Lazarus*. His debut film *Downloading Nancy* premiered in competition at the Sundance Film Festival, which he followed with acclaimed Swedish limited series *The Fat and the Angry*. Johan directed all episodes and co-produced BAFTA nominated limited series *The Last Panthers* starring John Hurt and Samantha Morton. He also directed episodes of Emmy-winning *Chernobyl*. His latest film, *Spaceman*, starring Adam Sandler, Carey Mulligan and Paul Dano, premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in February 2024.

Francesca Scorsese has spent most of her life on sets, appearing in films such as *The Departed*, *The Aviator*, and *Hugo*, and is now forging her own path as an actress and director. Francesca starred as Britney in HBO's critically acclaimed 2021 coming-of-age series, *We Are Who We Are*, co-created and directed by Luca

Guadagnino, and her directorial debut came in the form of a segment in the Netflix series *Stories of a Generation with Pope Francis* that same year. Scorsese followed that with her short film, *Crimson Ties*, which premiered at the 2022 Tribeca Festival. Her latest short, *Fish Out of Water*, screened at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival and then premiered in competition at the 2023 Tribeca Festival. Francesca **also appeared in Tyler Taormina's** film *Christmas Eve in Miller's Point*, and the short, *Fame and Four Letter Words*.

Emma Stewart, Ph.D., is the inaugural **Netflix Sustainability Officer**, where she leads the cross-company effort to decarbonize operations at the speed prescribed by climate science, support creators who choose to represent sustainability into their film/series/games, and spotlight sustainability stories for the over half billion Netflix members who seek them ([Netflix Sustainability](#)). Previously Emma founded the Sustainability Solutions department at design software giant Autodesk and consulted for Fortune500 companies from within global energy company ENGIE, think tank World Resources Institute, and business membership organization BSR.

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 for 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, New Media, and YouTube & TikTok to reach a wide, nonspecialized 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, the Athena Film Festival, and the Toronto International Film Festival. It has supported over 850 film projects and has helped develop over 30 feature films. For more information visit [sloan.org](#) or follow @SloanPublic on X, Instagram or Facebook.

About Museum of the Moving Image

Founded in 1985, Museum of the Moving Image celebrates the history, art, technology, and future of the moving image in all of its forms. Located 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 most comprehensive 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.org.

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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 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.org

