

# MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

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## MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE AND THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE 2022 SLOAN STUDENT PRIZE FINALISTS AND MENTORS

***Promising student filmmakers with science-themed screenplays will work with mentors through the summer, with two winners to be announced in the fall, each to receive \$20,000.***

New York, New York, July 13, 2022 — Finalists for the prestigious Sloan Student Prizes from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's nationwide Film Program were announced today by Museum of the Moving Image (MoMI) and Sloan. Awarded to two outstanding screenplays for feature films or scripted series that integrate science or technology themes and characters into dramatic stories, the Sloan Student Grand Jury and Discovery Prizes feature a cash prize of \$20,000 and year-round, dedicated mentorship from a scientist and film industry professional. Winners will be honored at an awards ceremony at MoMI in the fall, with work-in-progress presentations to be featured as part of the Museum's First Look Festival in spring 2023.

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 participating in Sloan's career-length Film Program as they transition out of graduate school and into the film industry. The Sloan Foundation gives annual awards in screenwriting at each of its six original partner film schools, who each nominate 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 submit scripts for the first time.

The Prizes are being administered by Museum of the Moving Image for the second year, and are 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. The Museum was recently awarded a major grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for this work.

The Prizes are also part of the Museum's endeavor to foster the work of emerging artists, a path that leads from media education for youth to spaces for creative collaboration and to artist recognition and industry participation.

"We are thrilled to continue our partnership with the Museum of the Moving Image and to honor the best-of-the-best screenplays from our partner film schools while also discovering new screenwriters who integrate science and technology into their work," said Doron Weber, Vice President and Program Director at the Sloan Foundation. "The 2022 nominees for the Sloan Student Prizes represent an incredibly strong selection of young filmmakers across the country, and we are excited to help develop their stories and bring them to the attention of the film industry."

“We are looking forward to working with this excellent group of screenwriters and helping them reach the next stage of their careers,” said Sonia Epstein, Executive Editor of [Sloan Science & Film](#) and MoMI Associate Curator of Science and Film. “With projects that explore the complexity of fertility treatments, living with climate change, and the history of injustice in the sciences, the 2022 nominees for the Sloan Student Prizes show the relevance of science to everyday, human issues. With guidance from the six industry professionals who have come aboard to mentor them, these filmmakers and their projects will soon be ready for wider exposure.”

See below for 2022 finalists and confirmed mentors.

The 2022 SLOAN STUDENT GRAND JURY PRIZE Finalists:

Nominated by six graduate film programs that have year-round partnerships with the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to award screenplay grants for science-themed narratives.

***Kokoro* by James Séamus Bearhart** (Feature)

American Film Institute (AFI)

***One Hand Washes the Other* by Malique Guinn** (Feature)

Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama

***When It Thaws* by Anika Benkov** (Feature)

Columbia University

***Vemork* by Malcolm Quinn Silver-Van Meter** (Feature)

NYU Tisch School of the Arts

***Until We Keep Breathing* by Samantha Sewell** (Pilot)

UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television

***Toxic Bloom* by Ezra Lerner** (Pilot)

USC School of Cinematic Arts

The 2022 SLOAN STUDENT DISCOVERY PRIZE Finalists:

Nominated by public film programs without year-round screenplay development partnerships with the Sloan Foundation.

***In Vitro Veritas* by Cat Loerke** (Pilot)

Brooklyn College Feirstein School of Cinema

***Woodside* by Gerard Symonette** (Feature)

Florida State University

***Broken* by Zachary Tyler Vickers** (Pilot)

Temple University

***u, me, and catastrophe* by Ben Servetah** (Feature)  
University of Michigan

***Highland* by Beverly Chukwu** (Pilot)  
University of Texas at Austin

The 2022 Sloan Student Prize writing mentors:

Guidance from the following six film industry professionals will inform the finalists' script revisions as they prepare a final draft for jury consideration this fall. The jury will be announced in fall 2022.

**Barnett Brettler** is a previous winner of the Sloan Student Grand Jury Prize for his scientific thriller *Waking Hours* (2013). He was named on *Tracking Board's* 2016 Young and Hungry List when he adapted *The Monolith* for Lionsgate and 3 Arts, and has since adapted such novels as *Kill Someone* by Luke Smitherd; *Allan Quatermain* by H.R. Haggard; and *Black Mad Wheel* by Josh Malerman, which is being produced by Ridley Scott. He is also a union story analyst and has worked with various studios, agencies, and production companies in development.

**Michelle McPhillips** is the Development Coordinator at Paper Pictures, a Los Angeles-based film and television production company. She previously worked in feature development at Warner Bros. Pictures and in the book-to-film department of Creative Artists Agency. She holds a B.A. in English & Film Studies from Barnard College of Columbia University.

**Gabrielle Nadig** is the Head of Development and Production at Storm City Films. Projects produced by Gabrielle have premiered at Sundance, Tribeca and SXSW. Her previous films include *Little Woods*, *Outside the Wire*, *Standing Up Falling Down*, *The Sunlit Night*, and *King Jack*. Gabrielle is a 2013 Sundance Creative Producing Fellow, a 2016 Women at Sundance Fellow, a Producers Award finalist at the 2019 Film Independent Spirit Awards, and an alumnus of the 2015 Rotterdam Producing Labs and the 2015 Cannes Film Festival Producers Network.

**Nicole Poritzky** is a Creative Executive at Impact, where she uses her creative development background to help emerging writers cultivate their stories and find a path to success. Previously, she worked at Mandeville Films and Paradigm Talent Agency. Nicole received her B.A. from USC School of Cinematic Arts and is originally from outside Boston, Massachusetts.

**Clay Pruitt** is the Head of Programming, Impact Distribution at Seed&Spark in Los Angeles. He has worked for the Sundance Institute, Palm Springs International Film Festival & ShortFest, AFM, Outfest, Film Independent, WME, and in a development role for Michael Sucsy. He was a writer and producer on *I'm Fine* (Dekkoo), an Associate Producer on *United Skates*, a 2018 Film Independent Producing Lab Fellow with *Bell*, and a recipient of the Sloan Producing Lab Grant.

**Ioana Uricaru** is a Romanian-American filmmaker whose work, such as her feature *Lemonade* (2018), has screened in the Official Selections at the Cannes, Berlin, Sundance, Tribeca, and AFI film festivals. Ioana was nominated for the Independent Spirit 'Someone to Watch' Award and is a recipient of the Sloan Production Award and the Sundance Sloan Commissioning

Grant. Ioana is a Guggenheim Fellow, a Fellow of the American Academy in Berlin, and of the American Academy in Rome.

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 dramatic, accurate, and inclusive 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 North Fork TV Festival, and has supported over 750 film projects, and has helped develop over 30 feature films. For more information visit [sloan.org](http://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](http://movingimage.us).

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### **Press Contacts:**

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### MUSEUM INFORMATION

Hours: Thursday, 2:00–6:00 p.m. Friday, 2:00–8:00 p.m. Saturday–Sunday, 12:00–6:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: \$15 adults; \$11 senior citizens (ages 65+) and students (ages 18+) with ID; \$9 youth (ages 3–17). Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Free gallery hours are offered every Thursday, 2:00–6:00 p.m.

Address: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street), Astoria (Queens), NY, 11106

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. W (weekdays only) or N to 36 Ave.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: [movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us)

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

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Unless noted, tickets are \$15 adults / \$11 students and seniors / \$9 youth (ages 3–17) / free or discounted for Museum members. Advance online purchase is recommended.

Please note safety protocols for visiting the Museum.

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 the Governor 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).