

# FALLING WALLS FOUNDATION

## Falling Walls announces the Science Breakthroughs of the Year in Science Engagement, Science Start-Ups, and Emerging Talents

- Today the Falling Walls Foundation awarded the last three “Science Breakthrough of the Year 2022” titles.
- The laureates are Anna Berti Suman from Italy (Breaking the Wall to Civic Evidence of Environmental Harms), Simon Gröblacher and start-up QPhox from the Netherlands (Breaking the Wall of Scalable Quantum Computing) and Amlyn Sasha Naidu from Pretoria (Breaking the Wall of Acid Mine Drainage).
- All ten “Science Breakthrough of the Year 2022” laureates will present their scientific breakthroughs on 9 November, the Breakthrough Day at the Science Summit and the anniversary of the peaceful fall of the Berlin Wall.
- Tomorrow Falling Walls Science Summit continues with Falling Walls Circle, a day of Plenary and Round Table discussions on science in Ukraine, planetary health, advances in fusion energy, food security and trust in science.
- Free livestream available at [falling-walls.com/](https://falling-walls.com/)

**Berlin, 7 November 2022.** What are the next walls to fall in science and society? Today, on the first day of the Falling Walls Science Summit the Falling Walls Foundation awarded the last three “Science Breakthrough of the Year” titles. Shortlisted participants in the categories Science Engagement, Science Start-Ups and Emerging Talents pitched their projects live to the jury at the Science Summit.

In the category **Science Engagement (Falling Walls Engage)**, the award recognises projects that promote scientific knowledge transfer, strengthen science communication, and include society into scientific processes. This year the prize went to Anna Berti Suman and her project Sensing for Justice (Breaking the Wall to Civic Evidence of Environmental Harms). The project researches the potential of grassroots-driven environmental monitoring as a source of evidence in environmental justice litigation, and as a tool for environmental mediation.

*“We initiated Falling Walls Engage to break the walls between science and society”,* says Henry Alt-Haaker, Jury Co-Chair and Senior Vice President Strategic Partnerships and Robert Bosch Academy at Robert Bosch Stiftung, founding partner of Falling Walls Engage. *“We have been impressed by the variety of this year’s applications: 193 projects from 66 countries. Their impact on science backed evidence-based decision making cannot be overestimated.”*

Special Award for Inclusive Science Engagement went to Carrie Boyce and the projects Science Is a Drag from Canada (Breaking the Wall to queerer STEM Culture). Science is a Drag is the first fully science-themed drag show created to challenge cis- heteronormative stereotypes of scientists and provide a safe platform for queer scientists and science communicators.

During the day of pitches, 20 Falling Walls Engage winners from 17 countries presented their projects. The topics varied from science and STEM literacy initiatives for children and underrepresented communities, water monitoring, offline access to knowledge and science drag shows.

In the category **Science Start-Ups (Falling Walls Venture)**, the main prize is awarded to a start-up idea that best combines research expertise and entrepreneurial excellence. The “Science Breakthrough of the Year” was awarded to QPhox, a start-up from the Netherlands that works on the first quantum modem that will help scale quantum computers and connect them into a future quantum internet network.

*“Only science coupled with entrepreneurship will ensure sustainable prosperity on our planet. This is an issue of highest importance which matters to all actors in our societies”* – says Head of Venture Jury Stefan von Holtzbrinck.

This year 25 start-ups pitched their projects live at the Science Summit. Among the presented topics were fast and early diagnostics of illnesses, nutrition of the future and new methods of meat and protein production and software solutions to accelerate research and development with special focus on pharmaceuticals.

In the **Emerging Talents (Falling Walls Lab)** category, the “Falling Walls Breakthrough of the Year” is awarded to students and early-career professionals for their innovative ideas. A total of 80 winners from 54 countries pitched their breakthrough ideas, tackling such modern-day challenges as vaccine equity, global warming, and the tracking & removal of space debris. The Winner of the Falling Walls Pretoria Tamlyn Sasha Naidu won the main prize with her pitch on Breaking the Wall of Acid Mine

Drainage. Tamlyn's project tackles mining related water pollution and land loss. She uses waste products from the refining and agricultural sectors to treat mining wastewater, resulting in a nutrient rich sludge which can be used for hydroponic farming. As Dame Sarah Springman, Principal of St Hilda's College, Oxford and Falling Walls Lab jury chair says: *"It's really great to listen to 80 young entrepreneurs from around the world, diverse in every which way, as they pitch, persuade, network and knock those walls down. I believe that it is a really important informal part of a young person's education to be able to expose and present their ideas, within a relatively supportive growth environment, and on a more intimate stage than they will meet later in life. Nonetheless, to back onto the prestigious Falling Walls event as a Labster, and on these historical anniversaries, offers the opportunity to attend and observe more advanced entrepreneurs and to learn from them and to model (and even improve on) their behaviour and performance!"*.

Emma Horn, Winner of Falling Walls Lab Cape Town, won second place for her pitch on Breaking the Wall of Tile Manufacturing. Emma's work explores the first bio-tile binder jet 3D printer. The printing of the sustainable and aesthetic bio-tiles is highly scalable and requires a negligible energy input. Ayushi Chauhan, Winner of Falling Wall Lab India, won third place at the global Falling Walls Lab finale for her pitch on Breaking the Wall of Tuberculosis. Ayushi's project addresses the lack of an accessible tool for proper monitoring of DR-TB cases. She is working on a new generation of portable devices that will enable the rapid detection of point mutations responsible for DR-TB. A total of 80 winners from 54 countries pitched their breakthrough ideas, *tackling such modern-day challenges as vaccine equity, global warming, and the tracking & removal of space debris.*

More about the events and speakers in the Summit programme at [falling-walls.com/programme](https://falling-walls.com/programme)

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### **About the Falling Walls Science Summit**

Falling Walls Science Summit is a leading international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral forum for scientific breakthroughs and science dialogue between global science leaders and society. The event takes place every year from 7–9 November in Berlin, commemorating the fall of the Berlin Wall. With formats Falling Walls Pitches (7 November), Falling Walls Circle (8 November) and Falling Walls Science Breakthroughs of the Year (9 November), the Falling Walls Science Summit is the leading forum for global science leaders from academia, business, politics, the media, and civil society to debate the potential of scientific breakthroughs to solve grand challenges and shape a sustainable future. The Falling Walls Science Summit is organised by the non-profit Falling Walls Foundation. More: [falling-walls.com/science-summit/](https://falling-walls.com/science-summit/)