

FALLING WALLS FOUNDATION

Falling Walls announces Science Breakthrough of the Year 2023 laureates in Science Engagement, Science Start-Ups, and Emerging Talents

- Today, the Falling Walls Foundation awarded the final three titles for the Scientific Breakthrough of the Year 2023
- The award winners Yamilée Toussaint (Science Engagement), Alessandro Grillini und start-up Reyedar (Science Start-Up), Joseph Bedard, Yizhou Yu and Emma-Anne Karlsen (Emerging Talents)
- All Science Breakthrough of the Year 2023 awardees will present their scientific breakthroughs on 9 November, the Breakthrough Day at the Science Summit
- The Summit programme is available online via a free livestream at falling-walls.com/science-summit/

Berlin, 7 November 2023. Which 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. The shortlisted participants in the categories **Science Engagement**, **Science Start-Ups** and **Emerging Talents** presented their projects live in front of the jury at the Summit.

In the **Science Engagement (Falling Walls Engage)** category, awards are given to projects that promote the transfer and co-creation of scientific knowledge, foster two-way Science Engagement and actively involve society in scientific processes. During the Pitch Day, 20 Falling Walls Engage participants from 19 countries presented their projects. This year **Yamilée Toussaint**, "Breaking The Wall to Diversity in STEM through Dance", received the main title. Her project „STEM From Dance“ focuses on STEM education for underrepresented minority girls through the creative and confidence-building aspects of dance to code lights, use drones to film, create music, and mutual support in STEM education.

"We are proud to have initiated Falling Walls Engage which has surpassed our expectations", 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: More than 200 projects from 70 countries with an impressive range of topics, methods, and ideas. Their impact on science backed evidence-based decision making cannot be overestimated."

In the **Science Start-Ups category (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 2023 went to **Reyedar**, the Dutch start-up that develops a patient-friendly medical device for the early detection of degenerative eye and brain diseases.

This year, 25 start-ups presented their projects from 13 countries at the Summit. Among the solutions presented were alternative packaging solutions from seaweed, a chip that works like the human brain, and a novel AI-based RNA delivery platform.

Manon Sarah Littek and **Gitte Bedford**, the venture jury members say: *"All pitches were at a very high level with exciting topics and technologies that can positively change the future. This makes Falling Walls Venture a unique deep tech event, not least because the funding side is directly involved in the process. Falling Walls and the participants have once again succeeded in awakening enthusiasm for science and the entrepreneurial spirit."*

In the **Emerging Talents category (Falling Walls Lab)**, the Falling Walls Science Breakthrough of the Year is awarded to students and early-career professionals for their innovative ideas. 100 participants from 64 countries presented their ideas on topics such as fake news detection, green hydrogen production and storage, and forever chemicals. This year's laureates are **Joseph Bedard**, Breaking the Wall of Alternative Plastics (Dalhousie University, Canada), **Yizhou Yu**, Breaking the Wall of Dementia (University of Cambridge, UK) and **Emma-Anne Karlsen**, Breaking the Wall of Cancer Therapy Resistance (The University of Queensland, Australia).

"It's wonderful to listen to 100 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 other entrepreneurs and to learn from them and to model (and even improve on) their behaviour and performance!" - Dame **Sarah Springman**, Principal, St Hilda's College, Oxford.

About the Falling Walls Science Summit

The Falling Walls Science Summit is a leading international, interdisciplinary, and cross-sectoral forum for scientific breakthroughs and scientific dialogue between leading scientists and society worldwide. The event takes place every year from 7 to 9 November in Berlin to commemorate the fall of the Berlin Wall. Featuring 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, government, media, and civil society to discuss 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.

falling-walls.com/science-summit/

About the Falling Walls Foundation

The Falling Walls Foundation was inspired by the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 and the dawn of a new era of freedom. The nonprofit foundation promotes breakthrough thinking and is building a growing network of leaders in academia, business, and the public sector to tackle grand challenges and bring groundbreaking ideas to society.

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