

ANNOUNCING  
THE HONOREES OF THE  
2024 BLAVATNIK  
REGIONAL AWARDS



## Nine Outstanding Postdoctoral Scholars for the 2024 Blavatnik Regional Awards for Young Scientists Announced

*Cutting-edge research includes the study of the human ribosome to combat cancer, interfacing machines with the human brain to better understand neurological characteristics, and decoding the “dark matter” of viral genomes to mitigate viral threats.*

NEW YORK – September 17, 2024 – The [Blavatnik Family Foundation](#) and The [New York Academy of Sciences](#) today announced the three Laureates and six Finalists of the 2024 [Blavatnik Regional Awards for Young Scientists](#). The Awards honor outstanding postdoctoral scientists from academic research institutions across New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

The Blavatnik Regional Awards jury, consisting of distinguished scientists and engineers, selected one Laureate in each category who will receive a \$30,000 unrestricted prize and two Finalists in each category who will be awarded \$10,000 each. The three Laureates and six Finalists were chosen out of 134 highly competitive nominations received from 24 academic institutions in the Tri-State area.

The announcement comes during the [National Postdoctoral Association](#)’s 15th annual celebration of [2024 National Postdoc Appreciation Week](#), which recognizes the significant contributions that postdoctoral scholars make to U.S. research and discovery.

The 2024 Blavatnik Regional Awards Winners and Finalists will be honored at the 2024 Blavatnik Awards for Young Scientists Ceremony at the American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West and 79<sup>th</sup> Street, on October 1, 2024.

“It is a great pleasure to congratulate and honor our outstanding Laureates and Finalists,” said Len Blavatnik, Founder of Access Industries and the Blavatnik Family Foundation, and member of the [President’s Council of The New York Academy of Sciences](#). “Their ongoing research and discoveries will contribute to the global scientific community for years to come.”

“Postdocs help drive research and innovation forward and are catalysts for new scientific ideas and applied technologies,” said [Nicholas B. Dirks](#), President and CEO of The New York Academy of Sciences. “We are incredibly proud to announce these outstanding postdoctoral honorees of the 2024 Blavatnik Regional Awards, especially during National Postdoc Appreciation Week — a week dedicated to recognizing the important contributions that postdoctoral scholars make to American research and discovery.”

**The 2024 Blavatnik Regional Awards Winners in the three award categories are:**

**Chemical Sciences:** [Arnaud Vanden-Broeck, Ph.D.](#), nominated by The [Rockefeller University](#)

Biochemist and structural biologist Arnaud Vanden-Broeck is leading groundbreaking work in uncovering the intricate processes behind human ribosome assembly, laying the foundation for treating cancers and diseases related to ribosome dysfunction.

**Physical Sciences & Engineering:** [Raghavendra Pradyumna Pothukuchi, Ph.D.](#), nominated by [Yale University](#)

The work of computer scientist Raghavendra Pradyumna Pothukuchi has led to unprecedented advances in creating a “brain-memex”, a system that interfaces computers with the human brain and could fundamentally shift our ability to understand neurological characteristics.

**Life Sciences:** [Shira Weingarten-Gabbay, Ph.D.](#), nominated by The [Rockefeller University](#)

Through her research, virologist Shira Weingarten-Gabbay has uncovered thousands of novel microproteins encoded in the “dark matter” of viral genomes, which has exposed previously unknown immune targets for vaccines.

**The following postdoctoral researchers have been named Finalists in their respective categories:**

*Chemical Sciences*

**[Juan D. Jiménez, Ph.D., nominated by Brookhaven National Laboratory](#)**

Chemical engineer Juan D. Jiménez is advancing sustainable industrial practices by developing novel catalytic materials that transform greenhouse gases like CO<sub>2</sub> and methane into valuable chemical products.

**[Arthur Neuberger, Ph.D., nominated by Columbia University](#)**

As a Professor of Molecular Bioimaging at LMU Munich, Arthur Neuberger conducts pioneering research on TRP channels, which has led to new ways of treating pain, cancer, and skin diseases, as well as deciphering the mechanism of how we sense temperature.

*Physical Sciences & Engineering*

**[Aavishkar Patel, Ph.D., nominated by the Flatiron Institute](#)**

Condensed matter theorist Aavishkar Patel is advancing a new theoretical understanding of “strange metals” and their tendencies towards superconductivity based on how microscopic irregularities in materials modify electron interactions.

**[Chiara Trovatiello, Ph.D., nominated by Columbia University](#)**

Nanotechnology materials scientist Chiara Trovatiello is developing new nano-engineered material platforms for optical computing, a critical step towards innovative imaging and information processing methods in quantum technologies.

*Life Sciences*

**[Nicole J. Lake, Ph.D., nominated by Yale University](#)**

Geneticist Nicole J. Lake is developing novel tools to study genetic variation in mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) to improve genetic diagnostics for patients with rare diseases.

**[Amy R. Strom, Ph.D., nominated by Princeton University](#)**

Molecular and cellular biologist Amy R. Storm is exploring the organization of biological “condensates” that physically compartmentalize target genes in the cell, influencing the expression of cancer-causing genes.

### **About the Blavatnik Awards for Young Scientists**

The Blavatnik Awards for Young Scientists, established by the Blavatnik Family Foundation in 2007 and independently administered by The New York Academy of Sciences, initially identified outstanding regional scientific talent among faculty and postdoctoral students in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. The Blavatnik National Awards, honoring faculty-rank scientists throughout the United States, were first awarded in 2014 and were expanded in 2017 to honor faculty-rank scientists in the United Kingdom and Israel. By the end of 2024, the Blavatnik Awards will have awarded prizes totaling \$17.4 million and, to date, has honored over 570 scientists.

Blavatnik Awards scholars are driving economic growth by embarking on new scientific trajectories to pursue high-risk, high-reward scientific research. To date, Blavatnik Awards honorees have founded 74 companies. After recognition by the Blavatnik Awards, 30% of past honorees obtained a patent or filed a patent application, 75% have started a new research direction, and 11% have started a new collaboration with another Blavatnik Awards honoree. Visit [blavatnikawards.org](https://blavatnikawards.org) for further information.

### **About the Blavatnik Family Foundation**

The Blavatnik Family Foundation provides many of the world's best researchers, scientists and future leaders with the support and funding needed to solve humankind's greatest challenges. Led by Len Blavatnik, founder of Access Industries, the Foundation advances and promotes innovation, discovery and creativity to benefit the whole of society. Over the past decade, the Foundation has contributed over US\$1 billion to more than 250 organizations. See more at [www.blavatnikfoundation.org](https://www.blavatnikfoundation.org).

### **About The New York Academy of Sciences**

The New York Academy of Sciences is an independent, not-for-profit organization that, since 1817, has been committed to advancing science for the benefit of society. With more than 20,000 members in 100 countries, the Academy advances scientific and technical knowledge, addresses global challenges with science-based solutions, and sponsors a wide variety of educational initiatives at all levels for STEM and STEM-related fields. The Academy hosts programs and publishes content in the areas of life and physical sciences, the social sciences, nutrition, artificial intelligence, computer science, and sustainability. The Academy also provides professional and educational resources for researchers across all phases of their careers. The Blavatnik Awards for Young Scientists is part of a series of prominent awards and scholarship programs that the Academy and its partners present each year to accomplished early-career and established scientists worldwide. These initiatives, along with education and professional development programs for students and

young scientists, reflect the Academy's broader commitment to strengthening and diversifying the pipeline for skilled and talented scientists globally. Please visit us online at [www.nyas.org](http://www.nyas.org).

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