

NEW BOOKS & MEDIA

Science in Exile

The World Academy of Sciences, 2017

When researchers threatened by repressive governments or terrorist groups are forced to flee their homes and universities, it can be hard enough to find a place where they will be safe, let alone one where they can continue their work. This 38-minute documentary by Italian filmmaker Nicole Leghissa follows the lives and work of four refugee scientists from Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.



The film is a powerful picture of the toll that leaving their home countries has taken on these scientists and an inspiring story of the important research they are still managing to do. *Science in Exile* also draws attention to organizations, including the Institute of International Education, the Council for At-Risk Academics, and the Lebanese Association for Scientific Research, that are working to find support for displaced scholars. The film is available to screen for universities and scientific organizations; contact scienceinexile@twas.org for information. For more on refugee and at-risk scientists, see the story on page 24 of this issue.

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One Strange Rock

National Geographic Channel
Nutopia, 2018

Director Darren Aronofsky (*Black Swan*) brings his striking visual style to this 10-episode documentary miniseries about planet Earth. Actor Will Smith narrates, but the most prominent voices in the series are those of eight astronauts—including Chris Hadfield, Jerry Linenger, Mae Jemison, and Nicole Stott—who provide scientific background and their own often poetic stories of what Earth looks like from space. Episode 1, “Gasp,” focuses on the global movement of oxygen. Hadfield contributes the harrowing story of venting his precious oxygen to get rid of contamination in his spacesuit; Linenger describes watching dust storms over Africa move across the Atlantic Ocean and over the Amazon rainforest. The episodes can occasionally feel meandering, but the stunning visuals will keep viewers watching. One early standout sequence follows astrobiologist Felipe Gómez and his team as they walk over the colorful, toxic banks of an acid lake in Ethiopia (above). *One Strange Rock* airs Mondays on the National Geographic Channel. For a full review, see physicstoday.org/OSR.

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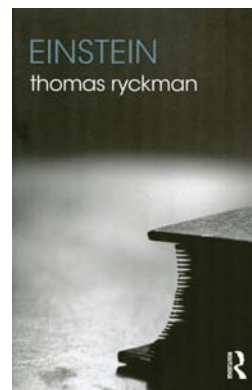
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL

Einstein

Thomas Ryckman
Routledge, 2017. \$35.95

Readers interested in the life and work of Albert Einstein have no shortage of books to consult, but Stanford University philosopher of science Thomas Ryckman's elegant, thoughtful volume should not be lost in the sea of popular biographies. Ryckman considers the fundamental beliefs about the world that underlie Einstein's physics. Einstein's belief in the universal validity of certain physical principles led to his greatest achievement—general relativity—but also lay behind his famous rejection of quantum mechanics. Ryckman also considers Einstein's impact on 20th-century philosophy of science. The book begins with a chronology of Einstein's life, and each chapter offers a short list of books and articles for further reading.

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Theories of Everything

Frank Close
Profile Books, 2017. \$12.95 (paper)

Part of a series called Ideas in Profile—billed as “small introductions to big topics”—*Theories of Everything* focuses on revolutionary scientific breakthroughs from the 17th century to the present. In fewer than 200 pages, author Frank Close, an emeritus professor of physics at Oxford University, describes scientists' attempts to come up with a single, comprehensive set of laws that explain all physical aspects of the universe. Such a theory has proven to be a moving target, however, as new instruments are developed and new discoveries are made. From Newton's laws of motion to Maxwell's equations for electromagnetism and light to Einstein's general relativity, “the quest for the ultimate theory of everything goes on,” says Close.

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