



SXSW ANNOUNCES KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND FEATURED SESSIONS FOR THE 2026 CONFERENCE

Aza Raskin, Co-Founder for The Earth Species Project and the Center for Humane Technology, Joins List of Keynote Speakers

Featured Speakers Announced Include Leaders From Circle, Cloudflare, MIT Technology Review, Harvard Business Review, and SXSW Hall of Fame Inductee José Andrés

Austin, Texas – December 9, 2025 – South by Southwest® (SXSW®) has announced **Aza Raskin**, co-founder of The Earth Species Project, as a Keynote Speaker for SXSW 2026 (March 12-18), as well as the second wave of Featured Sessions for the Innovation Conference.

In his keynote, Aza Raskin will explore how AI is being used to decode the languages of other species—revealing complex, learned communication across the animal kingdom—and what breaking the interspecies language barrier will unlock for the future of humanity. Find more on Aza Raskin and his keynote [here](#).

“Aza’s work with The Earth Species Project is the kind of content the SXSW Innovation Conference was built on: experts breaking down scientific advancements that feel ripped from our wildest imaginations. We’re thrilled to have him deliver a keynote this year,” said Greg Rosenbaum, SVP of Programming for SXSW. “With groundbreaking keynotes, urgent featured sessions, and plenty of opportunities for attendees to immerse themselves in conference and festival programming, SXSW 2026 will be an experience you don’t want to miss.”

Featured Sessions

SXSW has added the following Featured Sessions to the 2026 Innovation Conference program:

- ***The Mythical Model: Next Gen Creator-Brand Partnerships***—Rhett & Link, co-founders of internet-first entertainment studio Mythical and Good Mythical Morning co-hosts, will share their innovative brand partnership model, in conversation with Scalable founder **Kaya Yurieff** and Co-Founder and CEO of Agentio, **Arthur Leopold**.
- ***The Internet of Value Meets the Internet of Intelligence***—Li Fan, Circle's Chief Technology and AI Officer, will discuss her vision for building compliant and scalable financial infrastructure to support the convergence of AI and blockchain.

- ***The Future of News***—Newsweek's **Jennifer H. Cunningham**, The New York Times' **Rebecca Grossman-Cohen**, The Guardian's **Betsy Reed**, and Stagwell's **Alexis Williams** will challenge assumptions and champion news, and explore how advertisers and marketers can re-engage with journalism.
- ***Craft Still Wins: The Irreplaceable Role of Human Instinct, Taste, and Emotion***—**Greg Greenberg**, Executive Creative Director at TBWA\Media Arts Lab, will explore the irreplaceable role of human instinct, taste, and emotional intelligence in the creative process in a world increasingly focused on AI.
- ***The Great Flip: Why Every Industry Is Running Backwards***—**Sam Jordan**, strategist and researcher at Future Today Strategy Group, shares a practical framework for identifying and leading inversions in your industry: reversing a traditional order of operations through technology.
- ***The Power of Storytelling: Shape Culture & Create Community***—**Cheryl Miller Houser** will share how brands and leaders can shape culture and achieve long-term connection, loyalty, and growth through storytelling.
- ***10 Breakthrough Technologies of 2026***—MIT Technology Review Executive Editor **Niall Firth** will share the publication's annual list of ten breakthrough technologies and how each will impact the way we live and work.
- ***Last Meals Live with Mythical Chef Josh***—The hit food-interview series Last Meals Live hosted by **Josh Scherer** will bring its signature blend of humor, heart, and existential reflection, featuring culinary conversations and special guests.
- ***The Internet After Search***—Cloudflare CEO and co-founder **Matthew Prince** will examine the post-search Internet, focusing on how AI systems and agents are breaking the traditional web funding model.
- ***Launch, Land, Orbit: The Future of Space with Firefly***—A fireside chat with CEO **Jason Kim** and VP of Engineering **Brigette Oakes** on will discuss what's on the frontier for the company and where the space industry is headed next.
- ***How Crypto is Building New Capital Markets for Everyone, not just Wall Street***—**Pedro Miranda** of the Solana Foundation and **Rodolfo Gonzalez** from Foundation Capital will examine the shifted on-chain economy and the emerging consumer crypto landscape powered by infrastructure built for financialized crypto.
- ***Why Work Feels So Unfair and How Hard Conversations Help***—Workplace expert **Amy Gallo** will reveal how the inability (or unwillingness) to have hard conversations at work is eroding trust in organizations, and what managers can do about it.
- **A conversation with Alex Blania**

SXSW Hall of Fame

Each year, SXSW honors those who have made an indelible mark on their industry, the SXSW community, and the world. SXSW is excited to announce celebrated chef, restaurateur and humanitarian **José Andrés** will be inducted into the SXSW Hall of Fame for 2026.

José Andrés has been a fixture at SXSW for nearly a decade, from early appearances with Anthony Bourdain and Austin pitmaster Aaron Franklin to his first panel in 2018 on the power of food to change the world. A documentary on his disaster relief efforts through World Central Kitchen, 'We Feed People,' premiered at SXSW in 2022, and in 2023 he delivered a keynote on using storytelling to move people to act for the greater good.

"SXSW has always been a place where ideas from every corner of culture sit at the same long table, challenging us to think bigger and act bolder - and reminding us that we all have the power to spark real change," said José Andrés. "I'm humbled by this recognition and deeply grateful for the connections and inspiration this festival has brought to my work as a chef, storyteller, and humanitarian."

In addition to his Hall of Fame induction, Andrés will participate in a Featured Session as well. For more information, visit José Andrés' speaker page [here](#).

Crossover Day

Thursday, March 12th will be Crossover Day, where the final day of SXSW EDU coincides with the first day of SXSW, offering special access and co-programming available to SXSW and SXSW EDU attendees. This year, with all SXSW programming running simultaneously across Innovation, Film & TV, and Music, for the first time ever SXSW EDU attendees will have access to SXSW Innovation, Film & TV and Music programming (with some exclusions) on Crossover Day.

Announced last week, **Jennifer B. Wallace**, award-winning journalist, bestselling author and founder of The Mattering Institute, will deliver the Crossover Day Keynote on mattering: the feeling that we are valued and have an opportunity to add value. Wallace introduces a new framework to confront the loneliness, burnout, and lack of purpose so many of us face today and shares the importance of finding meaning and value in your work, education and in life. Find more on Jennifer B. Wallace and her keynote [here](#).

Featured Sessions co-programmed by SXSW and SXSW EDU include:

- ***Moonshots that Move the Needle***—Arati Prabhakar, Kumar Garg, Jamie Sterling, and **Eden Xenakis** will discuss how to design and fund programs that use moonshot-centered models to turn potential into impact and accelerate breakthroughs in teaching and learning.
- ***Strategy in the Times of Chaos: Imagining Futures of Education***—Marina Gorbis and **Dr. Maisha T. Winn** will share foresight techniques for imagining radically different futures and detecting signals of reinvention and scholarship on how

communities depicted as under-resourced create practices and institutions of their own.

Additional information and programming for Crossover Day will be announced in the coming weeks.

About SXSW

SXSW dedicates itself to helping creative people achieve their goals. Founded in 1987 in Austin, Texas, SXSW is known worldwide for conferences and festivals that celebrate the convergence of technology, film and television, music, education, comedy and culture. The annual event serves global professionals through sessions, showcases, screenings, exhibitions, and networking that consistently generates unexpected discoveries when diverse communities come together. SXSW 2026 runs March 12-18 in downtown Austin, preceded by SXSW EDU March 9-12. Learn more at sxsw.com.

SXSW's expansion into the Asia Pacific region, with SXSW Sydney starting in 2023 and Europe with SXSW London in 2025, provides new possibilities at this iconic experience. These events, each with their own distinct flavor, make South By an indispensable three-stop tour for the global creative community.

SXSW 2026 Driven by Rivian.

Media accreditation is now open for SXSW 2026 through February 13, 2026. Please visit our [press center](#) to submit your application.

Press Contacts:

SXSW
Brett Cannon
Alex McClure
press@sxsw.com

One Strategy Group
Liz Stein
liz.stein@onestrat.com

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