

# Andrej Karpathy Joins Anthropic to Lead AI-Assisted Pretraining Research

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**Karpathy Joins Anthropic for Pretraining**  
OpenAI co-founder returns to frontier R&D

- 26.6M**  
Views on the announcement
- Same week**  
Stainless acquired, trial dismissed
- Pre-training**  
Using Claude to improve Claude

May 23, 2026

ToKnow.ai

Andrej Karpathy, co-founder of OpenAI and former director of AI at Tesla, [joined Anthropic](#) on May 19 to work on pretraining, the large-scale, compute-intensive training phase that gives Claude its core knowledge and capabilities. He joins under team lead Nick Joseph and will build a new group focused on using Claude itself to accelerate pretraining research. “I think the next few years at the frontier of LLMs will be especially formative,” Karpathy [wrote on X](#).

He holds a PhD in computer science from Stanford, led Tesla’s Full Self-Driving vision system from 2017 to 2022, returned briefly to OpenAI, and most recently founded [Eureka Labs](#), an AI education startup. He remains “deeply passionate about education” and plans to return to it eventually.

Karpathy is one of the few researchers who bridges LLM theory and large-scale training practice. His hire signals Anthropic sees AI-assisted research, not just raw compute, as the way to stay competitive with OpenAI and Google. The move came the same week Anthropic [acquired Stainless](#), the company behind every official Anthropic SDK. Elon Musk once called Karpathy “arguably the #2 guy in the world in computer vision,” per emails shown at the [Musk v. Altman trial](#) that concluded the day before.

The talent race at the frontier now looks like a three-body problem. OpenAI, Google, and Anthropic are pulling researchers from each other and from adjacent companies like Tesla and xAI. Hiring Karpathy specifically to build an AI-for-AI-research team suggests the next competitive edge comes from recursive improvement in the training process itself, not from stacking more GPUs.

Read More: [AI This Week: Erdős Conjecture, Karpathy, Gemini 3.5, OpenAI IPO](#)

Sources:

- [Anthropic Hires Karpathy \(CNBC\)](#)
- [Karpathy Joins Anthropic’s Pre-Training Team \(TechCrunch\)](#)
- [Former Tesla AI Boss Joins Anthropic \(The Verge\)](#)
- [Karpathy Announcement on X](#)

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