



Will the Next Margaret Mead Please Stand Up? The SAPIENS-Allegra Competition to Discover New Public Anthropologists

written by Allegra
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The anthropologist is a peculiar creature. We study the world, yet too often do not share our insights with the world.



Our work explores some of the most exciting and relevant issues that face humanity. We study our collective origins, the origins of violence, economic injustice, health disparities, our relations to family, constructions of “race,” education systems, how cities organize themselves, how we talk, climate change, emerging digital worlds, and so much more. But all too often we conclude our research into these vitally important topics with texts that are accessible only to a narrow group of academics.



To encourage anthropologists to write about their work for a broader audience [Allegra](#) and [SAPIENS](#) have partnered to launch a competition for more engaged types of anthropological writing.

We invite submissions for timely and engaging articles that are accessible yet authoritative, exciting yet not sensationalistic. In particular, we welcome narrative-driven submissions that will appeal to a broad, adult college-educated readership, while demonstrating how anthropology contributes to a shared understanding of our world.

The contribution that most aptly fits these criteria will be awarded 1.000 USD, and 500 USD each for second and third prize. The best pieces will be published in 2016 in SAPIENS and Allegra.

For examples of successful writing about anthropology, consider the work of a handful of anthropologists have successfully made their work accessible today—ranging from [Graeber’s “Debt, the First 5,000 Years”](#) to [Gillian Tett’s “Fool’s Gold”](#), to T.M. Lurhmann’s regular columns in the *New York Times*. What



unites the most inspiring and memorable anthropological accounts are not a common theoretical framework. Neither is it a shared subject. Instead, they are bound by the potency of their narratives.

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You might also consider this recent [piece](#) in the *National Geographic* or a more personal essay, like [this one](#) in the *New Republic*. As illustrated [in this piece](#) in *The Atlantic*, even the topic of museum dioramas can be turned into a dramatic story that tackles an essential question: What do dioramas reveal about humans' relationship with nature?

Anthropologists, more than other scientists, hold a pivotal role in improving our common understanding of our increasingly complex world. However, too often we hide our message behind a veil of obscure jargon, murky narrative, and muddled theoretical convolutions—all to the great detriment of our discipline. As experts who investigate the complexity of our contemporary world, we are ideally positioned to become its narrators. Now, let's start writing!

Rules

- Anyone who holds a degree in anthropology (undergraduate or graduate), or is currently enrolled in an anthropology degree program, may enter the competition
- The subject may cover any branch of anthropology.



- Contributions can be single authored, co-authored or written by a collective of individuals.
- Authors must be able to vouch that their text is solely their own work and has not been published elsewhere.
- Texts should be no more than 3,000 words in length—and include no references, notes, or other scholarly apparatus.
- Follow the [SAPIENS Style Guide](#).
- We encourage the use of photography (no more than 5 pictures can be used to illustrate the text) and other multimedia formats such as sound files and videos. Sketches and drawings are also welcome. All images should be uploaded on flickr and a URL link should be provided. Sound files should be uploaded on soundcloud and short video clips on youtube and URL links should be provided. Keep in mind that the use of multimedia is not a guarantee of originality.
- Texts must be submitted as a double-spaced Word document. The first page should provide your name, address, and e-mail.
- By your submission, you are agreeing to Allegra's and SAPIENS's Terms of Use policies.
- The deadline for submission of entries is **July 1, 2016**. Texts must be submitted electronically, to submissions@allegralaboratory.net
- Submissions will be read anonymously and adjudicated by a panel selected by Allegra Lab and Sapiens editorial team members.
- The result of the competition will be announced in **October 2016**.
- If a winner or invited, you are agreeing to work with Allegra and SAPIENS editorial staff for online publication.
- Questions concerning the competition should be directed to submissions@allegralaboratory.net.

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