

Press Releases: 2017-18 Fulbright-National Geographic Digital Storytellers Announced

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

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The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the National Geographic Society announce the selection of the 2017-2018 [Fulbright-National Geographic Digital Storytelling Fellows](#).

The Fulbright-National Geographic Fellowship is a partnership between the U.S. Department of State and the National Geographic Society that provides a unique platform for U.S. Fulbrighters to undertake an in-depth exploration of globally relevant issues. Fellows utilize a variety of digital storytelling tools and media, including blogs, photography, video, and social media, to share their stories by providing content to a National Geographic Society [blog](#) and other platforms, with the support and mentorship of National Geographic's storytelling team. These storytelling tools are a powerful resource in building lasting ties across cultures, helping Americans and people from around the world better understand each other. This is the fourth group of five Fulbright-National Geographic Storytellers selected through a highly competitive, merit-based, multi-tiered application process.

The five American Fulbright-National Geographic Storytellers are:

- **Toby Cox**, who will explore the theme of religious identity in the **Kyrgyz Republic**, Kyrgyz citizens' relationships with Islam, and how their views have developed over time. She will use personal interviews as a way to gain insight into the many dimensions of Kyrgyz identity.
- **Isaí Madriz**, an entomologist and zoologist who will travel to **Chile** to hike, "bikepack," and "packraft" to unexplored areas and secluded fjords in search of some of the rarest insects on the planet, telling the story of deglaciation in the Northern Patagonia Ice Field.
- **Abby McBride**, an artist who will travel to **New Zealand** to sketch endangered seabirds – penguins, prions, storm-petrels, shearwaters, shags, gulls, gannets, mollymawks, and more – to tell the stories of New Zealanders' extraordinary efforts to save these species in the "seabird capital of the world."

- **Lillygol Sedaghat**, who will document the human narratives shaping Taiwan's waste management system and the innovations emerging in plastics and electronics recycling, using interactive photo galleries, audio files, and a live Instagram campaign.
- **Destry Maria Sibley**, who will travel to **Mexico** to produce a podcast series dedicated to telling the stories of *Los Niños de Morelia*, a group of more than 400 child refugees who fled the Spanish Civil War and settled in Mexico in 1937.

The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Since its inception in 1946, the Fulbright Program has provided more than 370,000 participants – chosen for their academic merit and leadership potential – with the opportunity to exchange ideas and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns.

The Fulbright-National Geographic Storytelling Fellowship was launched in 2013 as a component of the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. It sends U.S. citizens abroad to engage in an academic year of digital storytelling projects in up to three countries on globally significant themes. This Fellowship is made possible through a partnership between the U.S. Department of State and the National Geographic Society.

Interested media should contact the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at 202-632-6452 or eca-press@state.gov.

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