



# Alysson Muotri: Neanderthal Brains in a Bottle

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<https://peacefulscience.org/articles/muotri-neanderthal/>

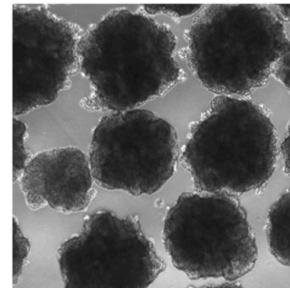
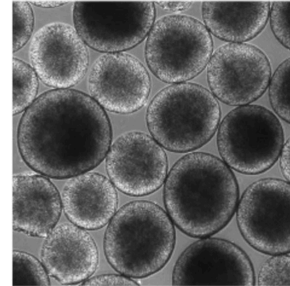
**S**o this is not exactly a Neanderthal brain in a bottle, but it gestures in that direction. Here, we are finding a new way of understanding what makes us human and how we became human.

Alysson Muotri just published a study of Neanderthal brains that seems to be taken straight out of science fiction. His team took a mutation from Neanderthals, and edited into human cells. These cells were grown up into “brain organoids” in a dish. Because of that single mutation, the brain organoids looked differently and worked differently too.

How did they pick the mutation? How did introduce it into the cells? What are organoids any ways? These questions are the starting point.

But greater questions loom. What does this experiment really tell us about how we became human? There may be more questions here than answers.

In the end, we are approaching the grand question again, this time from a very new direction. Come wonder about this question with Dr. Muotri, Dr. Lents and myself. *What does it mean to be human?*



## References

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neanderthal>

<https://science-sciencemag-org.libproxy.wustl.edu/content/371/6530/eaax2537/tab-pdf>