

NIOBE THOMPSON

niobe@handfuloffilms.ca / www.handfuloffilms.ca / +1 780 757 9777

Bio and Filmography

Cambridge-trained anthropologist-turned-filmmaker **Niobe Thompson** (PhD Cantab 2015) is known to audiences around the world for his infectious fascination with the human journey, from our evolutionary origins to the present day. An informed but accessible on-screen presence, Niobe has a reputation for making his body into a living laboratory, bringing science to life in ways that delight, inspire and often shock his audiences. From free-diving with the nomadic Badjao in the Philippines to joining Chukchi reindeer herders on a winter migration, from running a 125-km ultra-marathon in the interests of science to following the archaeological breadcrumbs of our human journey out of Africa, Niobe transforms scientific inquiry into a gripping adventure of discovery.

Since embarking on his filmmaking career in 2009, Niobe has received two Canadian Screen Awards for "Best Science and Nature", and his films have been awarded 21 Alberta Film Awards, two "Special Jury" awards at the Jackson Hole Science Media Awards, an Emmy nomination and 20 Canadian Screen Award nominations.

Many of his projects begin with CBC's "The Nature of Things" and Canada's National Film Board, before airing on prestigious documentary strands of the world's leading broadcasters, including Arte, PBS, NHK, France Televisions, RAI, and ZDF.

2018 *Equus - The Story of the Horse*, Producer, Director, Host. A three-part documentary series exploring the extraordinary influence of horses on human history.

Season launch for CBC's The Nature of Things; 2019 broadcasts on PBS "Nature" and "NOVA", ZDF "Terra X", Arte and DR.

2018 *Fast Horse*, Producer. A narrative short documentary following the rise of a Blackfoot Indian Relay horse-racing team and their debut at the Calgary Stampede.

Awards: Sundance Film Festival ("Special Jury Award for Direction"), Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour 2019 ("Selected"), Imaginative Film Festival ("Best Short Documentary")

2018 *Boy Nomad*, Producer and Director. A narrative short documentary about a 9-year old Mongolian nomad as he joins the company of men and becomes a herder.

- Awards:** Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour 2019 ("Selected")
- 2016 *Vital Bonds*,** Writer & Director of an hour-long documentary for CBC's "The Nature of Things" examining how science is rapidly transforming transplant medicine.
- Awards: Special Jury Award,** Jackson Hole Science Media Awards; **Grand Prize,** Szolnok Film Festival. Alberta Film Awards for **Best Music** and **Best Screenwriter.** Selected **Silbersalz Festival, Academia Film Olomouc.**
- 2016 *Memento Mori*,** Writer & Director of a feature-length documentary for the National Film Board of Canada exploring with intimate access the human drama of transplant medicine inside Canada's busiest transplant hospital.
- Awards: Best Documentary,** Cinequest Film Festival. Alberta Film Awards for **Best Director, Best Editor, Best Sound.** Selected **Atlantic Film Festival.**
- 2015 *The Great Human Odyssey.*** Producer, Director, Writer and Host of a three-part documentary series for CBC "The Nature of Things" and PBS NOVA, exploring the evolution and survival of *Homo sapiens* on an unpredictable planet.
- Awards:** Canadian Screen Awards for **Best Science and Nature Documentary Program or Series** and **Best Original Music.** 6 Alberta Film Awards, including **Best Documentary Series** and **Best Director.** Nominated for an Emmy Award for **Best Science and Technology** and at Jackson Hole Film Festival for **Best Nature and Humans. Edmonton Film Award.**
- 2012 *The Perfect Runner*,** Producer, Director, Writer & Host; one-hour documentary for CBC, Smithsonian Channel and Arte France celebrating the emergence of humans as the finest distance runners in nature.
- Awards: Best Social Science Documentary** at the Jackson Hole Science Awards; **Best Documentary, Best Director, Best Cinematography, Best Editor, Best Screenwriter** at the 2012 AMPIA awards; inaugural **2012 Edmonton Film Prize;** nominated for **Best Science and Nature Documentary, Best Screenplay, Best Photography** at the 2013 Canadian Screen Awards. **Edmonton Film Award.**
- 2011 *Tipping Point: The End of Oil*,** Producer, Co-Director, Writer; feature-length documentary for the CBC (co-produced by NHK, NRK, Al Jazeera English) following the struggle of First Nations Canadians living with the toxic effects of the Alberta tar sands.
- Awards: Gemini Nominations** for **Best Direction** and **Donald Brittain Award for Best Social/Political Documentary; Best Director, Best Editing, Best Screenwriting** at the 2011 AMPIA awards; **Nominee** for **Best Environmental Documentary** at the **2011 Banff World Media Awards**

2011 Code Breakers, Producer, Co-Director, Writer & Host; one-hour documentary for the CBC examining new discoveries that change what we understand about the first peopling of the Americas.

Awards: Gemini Awards for Best Science and Nature Documentary and Best Photography; Best Documentary, Best Sound, Best Cinematography at the **2011 AMPIA awards**

2009 Inuit Odyssey, Producer, Co-Director, Writer & Host; one-hour documentary for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Aboriginal Peoples' Television Network exploring the origins of the modern Inuit in the Thule migration, shot in Siberia, Greenland, and Arctic Canada.

Awards: Best Science and Technology Documentary at the 2009 Banff **World Television Awards** - nominee for **Most Innovative Documentary** at the 2010 New York **History Makers -SCIC Global Issues Award** at the 2010 **Yorkton Film Festival; Best Cinematography, Best Editing** at the **2009 AMPIA awards**

Writing & Publications

2008. *Settlers on the Edge: Identity and Modernization on Russia's Arctic Frontier.* Vancouver: UBC Press, 312 pp.

2008. "Accidental Settlers: The Post-Soviet Experience and Settler Belonging in the Russian North," in E. Halbmayer, P. Schweitzer and E. Mader (Eds.), *Identities Under Construction: Translocal Connections and the Transformation of Bodies, Persons and Social Entities*, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

2005. "The Nativeness of Settlers: Constructions of Belonging in Soviet and Contemporary Chukotka," unpublished PhD. Thesis, Scott Polar Research Institute (University of Cambridge).

2004. "Migration and Resettlement in Chukotka: A Research Note," *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 45(1): 73-81.

2004. "Chukotkskii Autonomous Okrug," in Mark Nuttall (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Arctic*. New York: Routledge.

2003. "The Native Settler: Contesting Local Identities on Russia's Resource Frontier," *Polar Geography*, 27(2): 136-158.

2002. "Administrative Resettlement and the Pursuit of Economy: The Case of Chukotka," *Polar Geography*, 26(4): 270-288.

2001. *Justice Delayed: The Judiciary in Sierra Leone*. London: Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. (Fact-finding mission report, pp.58.)

1999. *Over a Barrel: Light Weapons and Human Rights in the Commonwealth*. London: Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. pp. 365 + xii.

Education

2007. Killam Postdoctoral Fellow, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Alberta

2005. PhD, Social Anthropology, Jesus College, University of Cambridge
(Commonwealth Scholarship)

1998. MA, Russian Studies & Translation, School of Slavonic and East European
Studies, University of London (Commonwealth Scholarship)

1996. BA, Humanistic & Russian Studies, McGill University (Honours with Distinction)

Languages

Media-ready English & Russian

Working knowledge Danish & French