

NIOBE THOMPSON

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Bio and Filmography

Anthropologist **Dr. Niobe Thompson** is a Canadian filmmaker and science host, well known around the world for his engaging and adventurous on-screen presence. An experienced Producer and Director, Canada's *Globe & Mail* calls his unique approach to science storytelling "indescribable, but brilliant."

Niobe's work as a Director and Producer has thrice been awarded Canada's highest honour for science and nature documentaries at the Canadian Screen Awards and he has twice won "Best Human and Social Sciences" at the Jackson Hole Science Media Awards. His 2019 miniseries *Equus - Story of the Horse* received more national screen awards than any other Canadian documentary of its year.

After winning a Special Jury Award at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival for the short film *Fast Horse*, Niobe received his second Emmy nomination for his documentary on transplant medicine, *Transplanting Hope*. This was the first film in history to capture on screen the death of a patient and the decision of his family to donate his organs, and it helped transform Canada's organ donation rate.

Niobe is the founder of the boutique production company Handful of Films. Following the 2022 feature documentary *Carbon - An Unauthorized Biography*, he directed the 2024 feature *Hunt for the Oldest DNA*, which premiered at CPH:DOX and on PBS, followed by broadcasts on BBC, ZDF, NHK, and France Televisions. He is currently making a one-hour documentary about a neurodiverse paleontologist called *Frozen in Time* for CBC "The Nature of Things".

Current and Forthcoming

2025 *Frozen in Time*, Producer & Director for an hour-long documentary for CBC's "The Nature of Things" following the long journey of a leading Canadian paleontologist to overcome brain injury and return to science.

2024 *Hunt for the Oldest DNA*, Producer & Director of a feature-length first-ever journey into the living world before the Ice Age, using ancient DNA, with Tangled Bank Studios for PBS NOVA, BBC, France Televisions, ZDF, DR, and SVT.

Awards: Audience Award and **Student Jury Award** at AFO24; Science Selection at CPH:DOC24; in competition at Innsbruck Nature Film Festival,

Ji'hlava Film Festival, Silbersalz Science Film Festival; Opening night film at Silbersalz Science Media Awards.

2024 *Animal Pride*, Executive Producer of an hour-long exploration of queer behaviour in the animal kingdom, for CBC's "The Nature of Things".

Delivered

2023 *True Survivors*, Executive Producer of a heartfelt one-hour passing-the-torch portrait of Sarika Cullis-Suzuki and her dad David Suzuki, after 44 years of hosting "The Nature of Things" for CBC. (Broadcast Premiere, 24 February 2023)

2022 *Carbon - The Unauthorized Biography*, Co-Producer & Co-Director of a feature-length exploration of the nature's most consequential element, a story told in her own words, for CBC, ABC, and ARTE.

Awards: Green Impact Award, Buzzies 2022; Nominated, **Rob Stewart Award for Best Science & Nature Documentary**, 2024 Canadian Screen Awards. Many international honours and film festival selections, including **Grand Prix** at Deauville FF, **Grand Prize** at Cinemambiente FF, **Spirit Award** at Illuminate FF, **Student Jury Award** at AFO, and Jackson Hole Finalist.

2020 *A Bee's Diary*, Co-Producer. A Germany-Canada coproduction, this feature and one-hour documentary depicts the life of a single bee, through her own eyes. CBC The Nature of Things, Love Nature and ARD.

2020 *The Long Today*, Director and Producer. A short documentary, exploring the bond between father and son against a backdrop of four decades of wilderness canoe tripping. Premiered at the Banff Mountain Film Festival and selected for the Banff World Tour 2021.

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.

Awards: Canadian Screen Awards for **Best Science and Nature Documentary Program or Series**, **Best Cinematography in Documentary**, and **Best Original Music**.

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**"), Traverse City Film Festival ("**Best Short Documentary**"), Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour 2019 ("**Selected**"), Imaginative Film Festival ("**Best Short Documentary**"), **Vimeo Staff Pick 2019**

Handful of Films

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: Selected for the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour, Kendal Mountain Festival, Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival and many others.

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. Broadcast in the USA on NOVA as ***Transplanting Hope***

Awards: Emmy Nominated ("Best Science & Technology"), **Special Jury Award**, Jackson Hole Science Media Awards; **Grand Prize**, Szolnok Film Festival.

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. 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**. Nominated for an Emmy Award for **Best Science and Technology** and at Jackson Hole Film Festival for **Best Nature and Humans**. Winner of the **Edmonton Film Prize**.

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. Winner of the inaugural **2012 Edmonton Film Prize**; nominated for **Best Science and Nature Documentary, Best Screenplay, Best Photography** at the 2013 Canadian Screen Awards.

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**; **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.

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 Banff World Television Awards; SCIC Global Issues Award at the Yorkton Film Festival.

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 Great Distinction)

Languages

Native Speaker English

Media-ready Russian & Danish

Working knowledge French