



## ANTHROPOCENE: The Human Epoch

A film by: Jennifer Baichwal, Nicholas de Pencier, Edward Burtynsky

©: Anthropocene Films Inc.

Presented by: Mercury Films, Telefilm Canada, The Rogers Group of Funds through the Theatrical Documentary Program

In association with: Mongrel Media

Produced with the participation of: The Canada Media Fund, The Movie Network, Ontario Creates, Telus Fund, Rogers Documentary Fund, Bell Fund  
In association with: TVO

With the assistance of: The Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit

Executive Producers: Edward Burtynsky, Nicholas de Pencier, Daniel Iron, Nicholas Metivier

Produced by: Nicholas de Pencier

Associate Producer: Nadia Tavazzani

Written by: Jennifer Baichwal

Director of Photography: Nicholas de Pencier

Additional Camera: Mike Reid

Editor: Roland Schlimme

Original Music: Rose Bolton, Norah Lorway

Sound Design: David Rose

Re-recording Mixer: Lou Solakofski

Narrated by: Alicia Vikander

Canada 2018©

87 mins

Digital 4K

**This work contains flashing images which may affect viewers who are susceptible to photosensitive epilepsy.**

This is at 43 minutes in as a train travels through a tunnel. Duration less than 2 minutes.

These screenings coincide with BURTYSKY: Extraction/Abstraction at [saatchigallery.com](http://saatchigallery.com)

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## THE ANTHROPOCENE TRILOGY

# ANTHROPOCENE: The Human Epoch

+ panel discussion with Jennifer Baichwal, Nicholas de Pencier and Edward Burtynsky. Hosted by Farah Ahmed, Climate Justice Lead at *Julie's Bicycle*

## Director's Notes

It feels like our films keep getting bigger in scope. I am not sure if this is because getting older naturally brings a more global perspective, or if the urgency around problems we face at a global level demands it. For *ANTHROPOCENE* we were on six of seven continents in 20 countries and 43 different locations (n.b.: the film and project has been carbon offset). But these 'big picture' subjects, I have learned, fall apart without an appropriate balance of scale and detail. Sometimes you need to go up in the sky to convey place, but if you stay up there all the time, you float away from what is meaningful. I think that humans are not meant to remain at an omniscient level, though we like to contemplate from there and technology (helicopters, drones, satellite imagery) allows us to do so. It is in the relationship between scale and detail where our work and Edward Burtynsky's comes together.

*ANTHROPOCENE* is third in a trilogy of films that started in 2005.

*Manufactured Landscapes* (which I directed, Peter Mettler shot and Nicholas de Pencier produced) was the first, and followed Burtynsky's photographic essay of the industrial revolution in China. I was not interested there in making a portrait of the artist (as we did in *Let It Come Down: The Life of Paul Bowles*), nor a film that used the work as an arena to explore a philosophical or political problem (as we did in *The True Meaning of Pictures*). Rather, Burtynsky's photographs and the extraordinary places they conveyed, as well as the non-didactic way they conveyed them, were the starting point. The film tried to intelligently translate one medium into another – which meant in most instances trying to convey scale in time. Hence the eight minute long, single take opening sequence. But without intimacy, scale in film (and this was our last documentary actually shot on film – super 16mm) was not interesting. The vast Eupa factory floor would not have meant as much without the glances up from workers as the dolly passed them, or the person sleeping at his post after everyone left for lunch; the massive resettling of people and cities for the Three Gorges Dam would not have resonated without the woman sewing at the construction site.

In *Watermark* (which Burtynsky and I co-directed and Nicholas shot and produced), we tried to take the idea of human interaction with water and explore every facet of our use: survival and daily needs, industrial, recreational, religious. Here our biggest lesson was illumination through juxtaposition. The film did not have a lot of information about context; if you needed more than a few words to describe where you were, it wasn't going to work. So instead we put one place against another to sharpen the focus of both: the Buriganga river next to a pristine Lake Ealue in British Columbia; people taking a sacred bath in the Ganges at the Kumbh Mela next to girls cartwheeling on the beach in California. But here again it was the combination of big picture and particular focus that brought an experiential understanding of context. We could have

## THE ANTHROPOCENE TRILOGY

### ANTHROPOCENE: The Human Epoch

Fri 16 Feb 18:15 (+ panel discussion);

Wed 21 Feb 20:40

### Manufactured Landscapes

Fri 16 Feb 21:00 (+ intro by Jennifer Baichwal,

Nicholas de Pencier, Edward Burtynsky);

Tue 20 Feb 20:40

### Watermark

Sat 17 Feb 18:10 (+ Q&A with filmmakers

Jennifer Baichwal, Nicholas de Pencier and

Edward Burtynsky); Fri 23 Feb 20:40

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interviewed a water expert in the Colorado River Delta. But it was the testimony of Inocencia Gonzales from the Cucupá Nation, whose fishing community was decimated as a result of the dry delta, that made viewers understand that place.

*ANTHROPOCENE* steps one place back from the other two films in its premise, taken from the research of the Anthropocene Working Group: that humans change the Earth and its systems more than all natural processes combined. The film required a global perspective to drive home the fact that we humans, who have really only been up and running in modern civilisation for about 10,000 years, now completely dominate a planet that has been around for 4.5 billion.

How do you convey that domination? Here again it was tempting to stay in the realm of the big; the omniscient. The aerial perspective – through helicopter and cineflix or drones – is woven all through the film, and sometimes the only way you experience a place: the phosphate mines in Florida, for example, or the oil refineries in Houston, Texas. But when everything is big or far away and diagrammatic, scale becomes incomprehensible. So the carrot farmer, Nicole Thelen, whose farm is about to be displaced, illuminates the Bagger, the largest terrestrial excavating machine on the planet, chewing up the earth in the largest open pit coal mine in Germany. A timelapse of one small piece of bleaching coral tells the story of anthropogenic ocean acidification, and the tusks of seven thousand elephants, each one carefully weighed and recorded, becomes the way we understand human-directed extinction.

I think the balance of scale and detail is also where we have learned from each other over 13 years of collaboration. This film certainly deploys the big picture, and endeavours sometimes to convey a place in one wide frame. We have sought the highest resolution and production values possible, even in challenging environments, and have pursued the most innovative technology available to our budgets, to the point where we are launching new AR forms in the museum exhibitions of *ANTHROPOCENE*. But the film also seeks moments of intimacy – the detail needed to reveal, understand or encourage empathy within context. This is where the ethics of engagement are critical, and I would go further to say that ethics are the most important dimension of our filmmaking practice. When you go all over the world for your project, it is crucial to try and do so with humility, and an openness to what the context wants to tell you about itself, especially its overlooked margins or ignored corners.

Below are some stats on the film's production:

- Filmed over 3 years, 2 months and 22 days
- 50.77 TB of raw footage
- 202 hours and 57 minutes of material
- 43 locations, 20 countries, 6 of 7 continents
- 6 wrappers, 10 codecs, 29 cameras
- 10 months of editing
- Made without a traditional script

Jennifer Baichwal, also on behalf of co-directors Nicholas de Pencier and Edward Burtynsky

## IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

**TV Preview: This Town + Q&A with Steven Knight, cast members Michelle Dockery, Jordan Bolger, Ben Rose and Levi Brown, director Paul Whittington and executive producer Karen Wilson**

Mon 26 Feb 18:15

**Preview: Frank Capra: Mr America + Q&A with director Matthew Wells**

Fri 1 Mar 18:15

**Preview: Doctor Who: The Celestial ToyMaker (Animated)**

Sun 2 Mar 12:00

**Busting the Bias presents Special People + Q&A with director Justin Edgar and actors Dominic Coleman & David Proud**

Sat 2 Mar 15:50

**Funday Preview: Robot Dreams**

Sun 3 Mar 12:00

**Preview: La Chimera**

Sun 3 Mar 17:30

**Mark Kermode Live in 3D at the BFI**

Mon 4 Mar 18:30

**Preview: High & Low – John Galliano**

Mon 4 Mar 20:40

**Kinoteka Polish Film Festival London Premiere:**

**Green Border Zielona granica + Q&A with director Agnieszka Holland**

Wed 6 Mar 19:00

**Woman With A Movie Camera International**

**Women's Day Preview: Banel & Adama + Q&A with director Ramata-Toulaye Sy**

Fri 8 Mar 20:45

**TV Preview: Inside No. 9: The Final Series + Q&A with Reece Shearsmith, Steve Pemberton and executive producer Adam Tandy**

Mon 11 Mar 18:15

**TV Preview: Mandy + Q&A with Diane Morgan**

Tue 12 Mar 18:10

## REGULAR PROGRAMME

**Projecting the Archive: Dear Octopus (aka The Randolph Family) + intro by theatre director Emily Burns**

Tue 20 Feb 18:15

**African Odysseys: The Terry Jervis Story: From Hackney to Hollywood + Q&A with Terry Jervis and guests (via Zoom)**

Sat 24 Feb 14:00

**Families: Nimona**

Sun 25 Feb 13:00

**Relaxed Screening: Oska Bright Film Festival 2024 First Look + intro**

Mon 26 Feb 18:20

**Restored: The Dreamers + Q&A with producer Jeremy Thomas**

Tue 27 Feb 18:10

**Art in the Making: Ben Nicholson 1894-1982 + intro by Steve Foxon, Curator of Non-Fiction, BFI National Archive**

Wed 28 Feb 18:20

**Seniors' Free Archive Matinee: Blue Black Permanent + intro + Margaret Tait: Film Maker**

Fri 1 Mar 14:00

**African Odysseys: Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project + Q&A with musician and activist Chardine Taylor-Stone & guests tbc**

Sat 2 Mar 14:00

**Jennifer Baichwal** has been directing and producing documentaries for 25 years. Among other films, installations and lens-based projects, she has made 10 feature documentaries which have played all over the world and won awards nationally and internationally. These features include: *Let It Come Down: The Life of Paul Bowles* (International Emmy); *The Holier It Gets* (Best Canadian and Best Cultural Film, Hot Docs); *The True Meaning of Pictures* (Best Arts Doc, Geminis); *Manufactured Landscapes* (Best Canadian Film, TIFF, AI Gore Reel Current Award); *Act of God* (opening night film, Hot Docs); *Payback* (Sundance); *Watermark* (Berlin, Best Canadian Film, TFCA, and Best Feature Doc, CSA); *Long Time Running* (TIFF Gala); and *ANTHROPOCENE: The Human Epoch* (TIFF, Sundance, Berlin, Best Canadian Film, TFCA, and Best Feature Doc, CSA).

Most recently, Baichwal directed *Into the Weeds: Dewayne "Lee" Johnson vs. Monsanto Company* (2022). The documentary follows the story of groundskeeper Lee Johnson and his fight for justice against agrichemical giant Monsanto (now Bayer), the manufacturer of the weed killer Roundup. It won Best Film Testimony at Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival.

Baichwal sits on the board of Swim Drink Fish Canada. She was a Director of the Board of the Toronto International Film Festival from 2016 – 2022.

**Nicholas de Pencier** is a documentary Director, Producer, and Director of Photography. Select early credits include *Let It Come Down: The Life of Paul Bowles* (International Emmy), *The Holier It Gets* (Best Canadian Doc, Hot Docs), *The True Meaning of Pictures* (Gemini, Best Arts), *Hockey Nomad* (Gemini, Best Sports), *Manufactured Landscapes* (TIFF, Best Canadian Feature; Genie, Best Doc), and *Act of God* (Hot Docs, Opening Night Gala). He was also the Producer and Director of Photography of *Watermark* (Special Presentation, TIFF & Berlin; Toronto Film Critics Award, Best Canadian Film; CSA, Best Documentary) and *Black Code* (TIFF), which he also directed. With Jennifer Baichwal, he is the Co-Director (and also DOP) of *Long Time Running*, a feature documentary on the Tragically Hip's iconic Man Machine Poem tour from the summer of 2016, which premiered at TIFF 2017. The Anthropocene Project, de Pencier's third collaboration with Baichwal and Edward Burtynsky, included a major touring exhibition which debuted simultaneously at the Art Gallery of Ontario and the National Gallery of Canada, a feature documentary film which premiered at TIFF 2018, an art book published by Steidl, and an educational program in partnership with the Royal Canadian Geographical Society.

De Pencier's video art installations include *Watermark Cubed* at Nuit Blanche (2014), *Music Inspired by the Group of Seven* (2015) with Rheostatics in Walker Court at the Art Gallery of Ontario, and *Ice Forms*, a video installation room as part of the Lawren Harris Exhibition at the AGO in the summer of 2016.

De Pencier's latest projects have included producing and directing a 4-part documentary series chronicling the 1972 Canada/Russia hockey summit, *Summit 72*, which premiered on CBC in fall 2022, and producing the feature documentary *Into the Weeds: Dewayne "Lee" Johnson vs. Monsanto Company* (2022), which follows the story of groundskeeper Lee Johnson and his fight for justice against agrichemical giant Monsanto.

De Pencier has won awards for his cinematography including, most recently, Best Cinematography in a Feature Length Documentary at the Canadian Screen Awards (2023).

**Edward Burtynsky** is regarded as one of the world's most accomplished contemporary photographers. His remarkable photographic depictions of global industrial landscapes represent over 40 years of his dedication to bearing witness to the impact of human industry on the planet. Burtynsky's photographs are included in the collections of over 80 major museums around the world, including the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa; the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Guggenheim Museum in New York; the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid; the Tate Modern in London, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in California.

Burtynsky was born in 1955 of Ukrainian heritage in St. Catharines, Ontario. He received his BAA in Photography/Media Studies from Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University) in 1982, and has since received both an Alumni Achievement Award (2004) and an Honorary Doctorate (2007) from his alma

**Silent Cinema: Hell's Heroes** + intro by BFI  
National Archive curator Bryony Dixon  
Sun 3 Mar 15:15

**Art in the Making: A Sign is a Fine Investment** +  
intro by Steve Foxon, Curator of Non-Fiction, BFI  
National Archive + **Exit No Exit + 1 in a Million**  
Mon 4 Mar 18:15

**Projecting the Archive: Dance Pretty Lady** + intro  
by Marc David Jacobs, writer and film nerd  
Tue 5 Mar 18:30

**Restored: Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**  
Tue 5 Mar 20:45

**Experimenta:**

**The Blue Description Project: Blue** + discussion  
Fri 8 Mar 18:15

**Filmmaking for Artists:**

**Beginners Filmmaking Workshop**  
Sun 10 Mar 10:30–16:30 (one session)

**Filmmaking for Artists:**

**Intermediate Filmmaking Workshop**  
Sun 31 Mar 10:30–16:30 (one session)

## NEW RELEASES

**The Zone of Interest**

From Fri 2 Feb

**American Fiction**

From Fri 9 Feb

**All of Us Strangers**

From Fri 9 Feb

**The Taste of Things** La Passion du Dodin-Bouffant

From Fri 16 Feb (Preview on Wed 14 Feb)

**Getting It Back: The Story of Cymande**

From Fri 16 Feb (Preview + Q&A on Tue 13 Feb)

## RE-RELEASES

**Days of Heaven**

From Fri 2 Feb

**City of God** Cidade de Deus

From Fri 23 Feb

He is still actively involved in the university community, and sits on the board of directors for The Image Centre (formerly Ryerson Image Centre).

Exhibitions include: *Anthropocene* (2018) at the Art Gallery of Ontario and National Gallery of Canada (international touring exhibition); *Water* (2013) at the New Orleans Museum of Art and Contemporary Art Center in Louisiana (international touring exhibition); *Oil* (2009) at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. (five-year international touring show), China (toured internationally from 2005-2008); *Manufactured Landscapes* at the National Gallery of Canada (toured from 2003-2005); and *Breaking Ground* produced by the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography (toured from 1988-1992). Burtynsky's visually compelling works are currently being exhibited in solo and group exhibitions around the globe.

As an active lecturer on photographic art, Burtynsky's speaking engagements have been held at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa; the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.; George Eastman House in Rochester, New York; the Canadian Center for Architecture in Montréal; the Art Gallery of Ontario, Moses Znaimer's ideacity and at Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University) in Toronto; and the TED conference in Monterey, California. His images appear in numerous periodicals each year including *Canadian Art*, *Art in America*, *The Smithsonian Magazine*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Flash Art*, *Blind Spot*, *Art Forum*, *Saturday Night*, *National Geographic*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The Walrus*, *FT Weekend*, and *Vogue*.

Burtynsky's distinctions include the inaugural TED Prize (which he shared with Bono and Robert Fischell), the Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts, the Rencontres d'Arles Outreach Award, the Roloff Beny Photography Book Award, and the Rogers Best Canadian Film Award. He sits on the board of directors for CONTACT: Toronto's International Photography Festival and The Image Centre (formerly Ryerson Image Centre). In 2006 he was awarded the title of Officer of the Order of Canada and in 2008 he was awarded the International Center of Photography's Infinity Award for Art. In 2018 Burtynsky was named Photo London's Master of Photography and the Mosaic Institute's Peace Patron. In 2019 he was the recipient of the Arts & Letters Award at the Canadian Association of New York's annual Maple Leaf Ball and the 2019 Lucie Award for Achievement in Documentary Photography. In 2020 he was awarded a Royal Photographic Society Honorary Fellowship and in 2022 was honoured with the Outstanding Contribution to Photography Award by the World Photography Organization. Most recently he was inducted into the International Photography Hall of Fame and was named the 2022 recipient for the annual Pollution Probe Award. Burtynsky currently holds eight honorary doctorate degrees.

Burtynsky is represented by: Nicholas Metivier Gallery, Toronto; Paul Kuhn Gallery, Calgary; Robert Koch Gallery, San Francisco; Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York and Hong Kong; Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York; Flowers Gallery, London; Admira Photography, Milan; Galerie Springer, Berlin; and Weinstein Hammons Gallery, Minneapolis.

**Host: Farah Ahmed** is the Climate Justice Lead at Julie's Bicycle. She supports the curation of events and the Creative Climate Justice programme, developing resources, training and advocacy, connecting environmental, racial and social justice, and creative activism. Her interest lies in how art can centre stories and solutions from the frontlines of climate impacts, and how we can imagine and enact decolonial and anti-capitalist ways of being. Farah is also co-founder and facilitator of Diaspora Futures, a reflective space for people of colour to centre collective care in the face of the climate crisis. She is a trustee for Platform London, an art, activism, education and research organisation campaigning for social and ecological justice. She was on the sounding board for Arvae, a site-specific experiment in collaborative work between artists, scientists and regional environmental experts in Arosa, Switzerland, and was also on the oversight board for Art For The People, a citizen's assembly on arts and culture in Coventry. She is an alumni of the peer-led accelerator programme Huddlecraft and is also an Arts Emergency mentor, supporting young people into careers in the arts.