



## Watermark

Directed by: Jennifer Baichwal, Edward Burtynsky  
©: Sixth Wave Productions Inc.

Produced with the participation of: SKion,  
Ontario Media Development Corporation,  
Canada Media Fund, Rogers Documentary Fund  
Produced with the assistance of: Shaw Media,  
Hot Docs, Ontario Media Development Corporation,  
Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit  
Program

Presenting partner: Scotiabank

Executive Producers: Edward Burtynsky, Daniel Iron

Producer: Nicholas de Pencier

Writer: Jennifer Baichwal

Director of Photography: Nicholas de Pencier

Visual Effects Supervisor: Bret Culp

Editing: Roland Schlimme

Original Music: Martin Tielli, Roland Schlimme

Sound Design: David Rose

Location Sound Recording: Nicholas de Pencier

Re-recording Mixer: David Rose

Supervising Sound Editor: David Rose

Thanks: Atom Egoyan

Canada-Germany 2013©

91 mins

Digital

These screenings coincide with BURTYSKY:  
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## THE ANTHROPOCENE TRILOGY

# Watermark

+ Q&A with filmmakers Jennifer Baichwal, Nicholas de Pencier and Edward Burtynsky; hosted by Dr Eugénie Shinkle

### Director's Notes: Jennifer Baichwal

Water has a unique capacity to express scale and detail simultaneously. It can be a meandering, pastoral brook and the tiny trickle from the edge of an ice sheet, or it can be a monumental force, like Niagara Falls and the Pacific Ocean. And regardless of the diversity of expression it is, fundamentally, the same substance.

This capacity of water to express scale and detail, to be different and the same, became central to an intelligent translation of Edward Burtynsky's photographic essay into the medium of film. The big picture, often literally aerial in this case, floats away unless it is rooted in the intimacy of the particular. But the detailed vantage cannot begin to convey the breadth of water's reach, nor the extent to which we transform it to our needs. So it was in the relationship between these two views that the film emerged, and was what allowed us to navigate 20 stories from ten countries and somehow flow them together into a single, experiential stream.

The collaboration fell easily into a marriage of strengths in production. Burtynsky's primary focus was the wide view and a translation of scale – into both still and motion picture film. We used helicopters, remote-controlled helicopters, poles, lifts and a variety of aircraft to achieve this. My focus was more on finding the details, the narrative threads that give meaning to the wide view or saturate it.

Cinematographer Nick de Pencier had to do both: shooting from vertigo-inducing vantage points on the Xiluodu Dam and trying to convey what 30 million people in one place at the same time looks like (at the Maha Kumbh Mela), to balancing a handheld camera on wobbly 10-inch mud berms in Yunnan's rice paddies or magnifying details of ice crystals from Greenland ice core samples.

The collaboration in the edit room, which took 11 months, was also strong. Roland Schlimme (who also edited *Manufactured Landscapes* and *Act of God*) and I waded through 200 hours of original and archival (Greenland) material and then started trying to find the structure and rhythm of the film through a painstaking and somewhat inefficient process of trial and error (inefficiencies mine). This process was punctuated by screenings and more general discussions with Nick and Ed. It is hard to stitch together so many stories without falling into a predictable rhythm or completely losing focus. And the balance of how much information to give while preserving an immersive experience for the viewer is always extremely delicate. I really dislike didactic and mediated content in documentary unless it is mandated by the subject, because the treatment is so predictable that the viewer instantly becomes a passive ingester of material rather than an active partner in the exploration – which of course is the opposite of collaboration. I believe that collaboration also extends to the viewing experience.

As with all of our films, *Watermark* tries to create a space to think about something in a different way. After three years of almost total immersion, I will never turn on a tap with the same unconscious nonchalance that I did before we embarked on this challenging and deeply rewarding film. I hope the viewer feels the same.

### Artist's Statement: Edward Burtynsky

I began to think about water as a subject for my work in 2007, while on a production tour photographing gold mines in Australia – the first continent in this era to begin drying up. Stories about farmers leaving as their land dehydrated were everywhere in the news. While there I met a photojournalist who recounted a story about an incident he had experienced in a bar in Adelaide. He ordered a beer and a glass of water, finished his beer, paid the bill and was about to leave when the bartender stopped him and instructed him to finish his glass of water. Suddenly water took on a new meaning for me. I realised water, unlike oil, is not optional. Without it we perish.

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SIGHT  
AND  
SOUND

## 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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I thought about ways that I could build a body of work around the idea of water. Unlike my Oil and China projects, with Water I had no preconceived notions about what the images in such a project might look like. I trusted that my intuition would lead me to the pictures.

In 2008 my research started in earnest. I wanted to find ways to make compelling photographs about the human systems employed to redirect and control water. I soon realised that views from ground level could not show the enormous scale of activity. I had to get up high, into the air, to see it from a bird's-eye perspective. Determined by the specifics of each location, I would find a way to depict the most telling viewpoints. The ensuing four years found me at work in nine countries: employing location crews, using man-lifts, small fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters (both remote and piloted) and a specially designed 50-foot pneumatic mast with camera mount and fibre-optic remote. This pulling away from the earth has allowed me to see our world in ways once unavailable to artists. In addition, the evolution of high-quality digital camera equipment has allowed me to create crisp, finely detailed images from moving aircraft – something that could not be easily accomplished with older, analogue film systems.

As production on the Water project began to roll out I categorised the images into: distress, control, agriculture, aquaculture, waterfront, and finally source. Distress included landscapes such as the Colorado River Delta, that has not seen a drop of water from that river in over 40 years, and is now a desert; or Owens Lake, that saw its water diverted to Los Angeles in 1913 and is now a dry toxic lakebed. Agriculture represents – by far – the largest human activity upon the planet. Approximately 70 percent of all fresh water under our control is dedicated to this activity. I went to China and Spain to see the process of farming fish and seafood. The section, Aquaculture provides a glimpse into a quickly growing and increasingly important food source. Waterfront looks at the way we shape land to create manufactured waterfront properties, and speaks to me about the human need and desire to be near water – even if it is artificial. I went to India to witness the largest pilgrimage on the planet with 35 million people arriving on the holiest day to bathe in the Ganges and release them of their sins – an ancient spiritual belief in the cleansing power and sacredness of water. Source comes from my journey to those places where a critical stage in the hydrological cycle takes place; in the mountains, containing glaciers and pure fresh snow. I went to northern British Columbia and Iceland to capture these images. They are the first landscapes in over 30 years I have taken that focus specifically on pristine wilderness, instead of the imposition of human systems upon it.

I feel this project encompasses some of the most poetic and abstract work of my career. I was seven years old when I discovered my love of making art, while painting landscapes alongside my father who painted as a hobby. I loved the tubes of oil paint and the smell of the linseed oil and the names of their colours: burnt umber, chromium blue, cadmium red. When I was 11 I got my first camera and a complete darkroom. I immediately fell in love with photography and never looked back. However, I never lost my love for painting and have tipped my hat to it a number of times throughout my work.

While executing the Water project, I was pleased to see images emerging that referenced some of my favourite painters, including: Caspar David Friedrich, Jean Dubuffet, David Shapiro, and Richard Diebenkorn. The aerial perspective that I adopted for this project, as well as its subject matter, allowed those influences to seep into my photographs.

Over the past five years I have learned a few things about water. When disrupted from its natural course there are always winners and losers. The moment water cannot find its own way back to the ocean or be absorbed by the ground, we are changing the landscape. When a stream or river is diverted, all life downstream is affected and remains altered until water returns. Insects, plants, frogs, the salamanders and countless other creatures – including people – have paid an enormous price because of our voracious appetite for water – and what we do to the earth while getting at it.

Production notes

## 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.

**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

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 mater. 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: Dr Eugénie Shinkle** is a photographer and writer based in East London. She is Editor of the online photobook platform C4 Journal, and is Reader in Photography at the University of Westminster.