

Toby Macdonald

producer/director • edit producer

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Curriculum Vitae

I am an experienced, freelance producer and director of documentary films. I also shoot and edit. I have won many awards, including an RTS award for “Life Before Birth”. I am flexible, dedicated and a strong team leader, able to deliver films on time, on budget and to brief. I aim to make films with passion, strong narrative and visual flair – great stories, beautifully told. Clips and a showreel can be seen at my website (tobymacdonald.co.uk).

Broadcast Credits

Horizon: Secrets of the Solar System writer/producer/director

BBC Factual for BBC2 • 60mins • documentary • 2014

It's a miracle our Earth is here at all. One of the biggest mysteries in astronomy is beginning to unravel. With Earth-shattering evidence from alien planets, astronomers are rewriting the history of the Solar System. It's time for a brand new model.

Horizon: How You Really Make Decisions writer/producer/director

BBC Factual for BBC2 • 60mins • documentary • 2013

As a species we like to think we're pretty smart. And yet we consistently make irrational and predictable mistakes. The film explores the battle between intuition and logic within the human mind, a battle that affects all our decisions – whether we realize it or not.

Horizon: What Makes Us Human? writer/producer/director

BBC Factual for BBC2 • 60mins • documentary • 2013

Professor Alice Roberts, pregnant with her second child, investigates what separates us from our closest living relatives. We share 99% of our DNA with chimpanzees and yet from the moment of birth, our lives are completely different. What it is about our bodies, our genes, and ultimately our brains that sets us apart from our furry cousins?

Horizon: How Small Is The Universe? writer/producer/director

BBC Factual for BBC2 • 60mins • documentary • 2012

A journey down the biggest rabbit hole in history. The film charts the hunt for the very smallest piece of the Universe, looking inside even the most fundamental particles. A whirlwind of strings, multiple dimensions and quantum foam.

Horizon: The Truth About Exercise writer/producer/director

BBC Factual for BBC2 • 60mins • documentary • 2012

Michael Mosley investigates the science behind exercise. Using himself as a human guinea pig, Michael discovers that some people will not get any fitter however much they exercise. And for others, all they need is just three minutes a week.

The Sex Researchers edit producer/writer

WAG TV for C4 • 2 x 50mins • documentary • 2011

Two in a series of three films delving into the history and contemporary investigations of sex researchers - documenting their triumphs and disasters.

Classic Goldie writer/producer/director/photography

BBC Classical Music for BBC2 • 2 x 60mins • documentary • 2009

Two observational documentaries following the drum n bass pioneer Goldie as he composes a piece of orchestral music for the Proms. An intimate portrait of an artist in a collision of two worlds.

Natural Wonders: Grand Canyon & Great Barrier Reef writer/producer/director

Impossible Pictures for Discovery HD Theater • 2 x 50 mins • documentary • HD • 2007/8

Two of a series of six films exploring the geology of natural wonders of the world. The life story of the Grand Canyon and the story of the formation of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Whale That Swam to London writer/director

Firefly for C4 • 50 mins • documentary • 2006

The story of the Thames whale leads into a bigger, more intriguing science story about the mysteries of whales and the seascape of planet Earth as it appears to them.

Discovery Atlas: France Revealed writer/director

Wall to Wall Television for Discovery HD Theater • 100 mins • documentary • HD • 2005

Part of a landmark series of 20 feature length documentaries. An epic and cinematic portrait of France, told through eight different documentary stories.

Life Before Birth (In The Womb) writer/producer/director

Pioneer Productions for C4 & National Geographic Channel • 100 mins • documentary • 2005

A unique vision of the odyssey from conception to birth. A fetus'-eye view of the transformation from a single egg into a complex creature capable of smiling, recognizing its mother's voice, and even dreaming.

WINNER – BEST SPECIAL EFFECTS, RTS CRAFT AWARDS 2005

NOMINEE – BEST SCIENCE & NATURAL HISTORY FILM, RTS AWARDS 2006

WINNER – REMI SPECIAL JURY AWARD, WORLDFEST HOUSTON 2006

BBC Young Musician: What Does it Take? writer/producer/director/photography

BBC Classical Music for BBC2 • 90 mins • documentary • 2004

Feature length observational documentary following the competitors in the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition. An intimate portrayal of the ambition, the talent, the work, and the pressure experienced by some of the Britain's most gifted performers.

Flashers Uncovered writer/producer/director

Mentorn TV for Channel 4 • 50 mins • documentary • 2004

Flashing is the most common of all sexual crimes. 50% of women in the UK can expect to be flashed at some time in their lives. Flashers Uncovered meets the flashers, the psychologists, and the victims, and seeks to reveal the damaged roots of this menacing behaviour. Controversial, uncomfortable and compulsive.

Mysterious Hanging Coffins of China writer/producer/director

Bang Productions for Discovery HD Theater • 50 mins • documentary • HD • 2003

In the remote mountains of Southwest China, precarious hanging coffins are all that remain of the mysterious Bo people. The film follows a team of archaeologists into the unexplored depths of Yunnan.

WINNER – BEST DOCUMENTARY: ASIAN TV AWARDS 2004

Extreme Machines: Oil Rig writer/producer/director

Pioneer Productions for Discovery HD Theater • 50 mins • documentary • HD • 2003

Charts the progress of the Eirik Raude offshore rig as it leaves the safety of Halifax Harbour in Nova Scotia to begin drilling for oil in treacherous waters. The first HD documentary produced in the UK for Discovery.

Edge of the Universe – Final Frontier writer/producer/director

Pioneer Productions for Channel 4 • 50 mins • documentary • 2002

The very latest in cosmological thinking. Follows the launch of a satellite that could finally tell us the shape and size of the Universe. Filmed on location in Chile, Florida, Australia and Tenerife.

WINNER - GOLD SPECIAL JURY PRIZE, WORLDFEST HOUSTON 2003

Poison! writer/producer/director

Survival Anglia for Channel 5 and Discovery • 50 mins • documentary • 2001

This film peels back the skin of some victims of deadly attacks to find out how and why animals such as the Taipan, the Black Widow, and the Box Jellyfish have particularly deadly weapons.

*Credits from the Twentieth Century include **Gardeners' World** and **Real Gardens** (both presented by Monty Don), **The Art Club** (presented by Bettany Hughes and Tim Marlow), **The Pier** (presented by Bettany Hughes, Chris Packham and Simon Fanshawe). Details are available on request.*

Training & Education

Open University

I am currently studying part-time for a degree in Physics.

National Film and Television School

Postgraduate 3 year course in film making. Graduated in 1992. While at the NFTS my tutors included Jiri Menzel, Jim O'Brien, David Puttnam and Jan Fleischer.

University of Durham

I studied Anthropology, Psychology and Maths, graduating with a BA (class II) in 1986. While at Durham, I founded the Durham University Film Unit and directed my first films.

King's College School, Wimbledon

3 'A' Levels: Chemistry (A) Physics (A) Maths (A1)

Reviews of “Life Before Birth”

“Life Before Birth is genuinely fascinating...amazing...a spectacular sight...magic on screen.”

The Observer

“Mesmerising and hugely informative...Life Before Birth abided, more or less entirely, by Lord Reith’s three central tenets of broadcasting – it informed, educated and entertained.”

The Daily Telegraph

“The fabulous Life Before Birth. It was a documentary so utterly beautiful and informative as to deserve being issued to every school in the land... a masterpiece of a film.” *Glasgow Herald*

“Mesmerising and compelling.” *The Guardian*

“A cool, beautiful movie.” *New York Times*

“Breathtakingly beautiful in parts and wondrous in its revelations... fabulous, informative, thought-provoking stuff.” *The Sunday Times*

Professional Memberships

Member of the Directors’ Guild of Great Britain

Graduate of the National Film and Television School

Additional Skills

Camera: I shoot, but only when the time is right.

Editing: Final Cut Pro, Avid

Stills Photography

PADI Advanced Diver

French (conversational)

References

Available on request.