



# CLIMATE STORIES PLAYLIST

Short films exploring the climate crisis

A British Council + Doc Society touring programme

docsociety  
**THE CLIMATE  
STORY** UNIT



# CLIMATE STORIES PLAYLIST

## INTRODUCTION

Across cultures and across histories, we have communed with nature, negotiated with it, and lived our lives trying to claim it, in our specific ways. The climate crisis, therefore, manifests itself in unique ways which, sadly, often get flattened by the generalised views taken by our media cycles.

The Climate Stories Playlist is a collection of short films from around the world that explore what the climate crisis means to different people — personally, politically, and culturally. The films delve into the past to draw inspiration from indigenous cultures as they try and create a roadmap that envisions a future of hope. The Playlist invites audiences to engage and reflect upon the ways they've been accustomed to think of their relationships with nature, and climate change. As it acquaints us with global narratives, the Playlist brings us out of our silos and encourages us to open our minds, reassess what we know, and learn how we can perhaps do better within our precarious worlds.

We meet farmers, politicians, activists, survivors, fighters, artists — all trying to make sense of a situation that has been decades in the making, but seems urgent in its need for combat and redressal. Then we meet young citizens who fearlessly take on the responsibility to fix the world they've inherited from often-failing adults.

The programme moves away from viewing the climate crisis as an impending doom, like most narratives around us do. Instead, it bases its vision on hope, courage, change, and inspires us to learn from knowledge systems shepherded by indigenous cultures. The films urge us to lean in to our communities, tap into collective wisdom, and envision a collective re-rendering of our world. They remind us that we are all in it together and the only way out is through a collective undertaking. When so many people around continue to stress on our personal agency to combat change, the Playlist also highlights the parallel need to build a collective resistance.

The programme welcomes global audiences in all stages of their cinephilic journey. Inspiration, they say, can strike from anywhere. Maybe the next one awaits within our Playlist.

**Bedatri Datta Choudhury**

Bedatri Datta Choudhury studied literature at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, and cinema at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. She writes on gender, popular culture, films, and many other things. She is Arts & Entertainment Editor at The Philadelphia Inquirer, an associate programmer at DOC NYC and the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles.

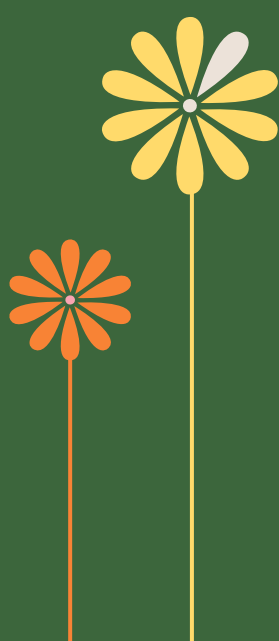
[bedatri.com](http://bedatri.com)



*Songs of the Earth*



*Blackthorn*





# FILMS

## BLACKTHORN

Sam Robinson plies the thousand-year-old craft of dry stone walling in Cumbria, in the north of England. Working in all weathers to make and maintain the lie of the land, his philosophy is one of protest, pride and authenticity – a counter-vision to a Britain bound in consumerism, the people removed from the work that once grounded their communities. For Sam, resistance is the honesty of work and words.

Dom Bush was brought up on a smallholding in northern Cumbria and is closely connected to the landscape and traditions of the rural northwest. He set up his production company Land & Sky Media in 2011 to make films that explore an instinctive bond to the land. His films, including a short for Guardian Documentaries, have been screened internationally and broadcast.

**18 MINUTES / 2020 / UK**  
**DOM BUSH / DIRECTOR**  
**SAM ROBINSON / POETRY AND MUSIC**

Made with support of the BFI Doc Society Fund



## EVE

Eve is the intimate story of a nine year old girl living in one of the oldest off grid communities in the UK. Following her journey returning to school and becoming a young climate activist, her story encapsulates the human complexity of navigating the environmental crisis and what moving to live off grid really means for a UK family.

Joya Berrow and Lucy Jane make films that focus on climate justice, land and ocean regeneration, extreme sports and amplifying marginalised voices in the climate movement to use film as a tool for positive social change. Their work has been broadcast by National Geographic, Guardian, Nowness, VICE, and others.

**21 MINUTES 7 SECONDS / 2020 / UK**  
**JOYA BERROW, LUCY JANE / DIRECTORS**



## THE ELVERMEN

As the sun sets on the banks of the River Severn on the outskirts of a city, UK, a group of men gather in a race to catch a vanishing creature: the elusive elver – a baby eel. *The Elvermen* explores how a rite of passage has changed into a fight for values: of tradition, community, and a connection to nature in an environment of impending change.

Isla Badenoch is a writer-director and artist - an intuitive storyteller whose work has an individual style grounded in her roots as a documentary filmmaker. Her films have been shown at festivals including Sheffield Doc/Fest, Vision Du Reel, London Short Film Festival and Glasgow Short Film Festival.

**13 MINUTES 49 SECONDS / 2020 / UK**  
**ISLA BADENOCH / DIRECTOR**

Made with support of the BFI Doc Society Fund



## THE FOURFOLD

Based on the ancient animistic beliefs and shamanic rituals in Mongolia and Siberia, *The Fourfold* explores the indigenous worldview and wisdom. With hand-crafted animation, it sets out to reclaim ideas of animism for planetary health and non-human materialities.

Alisi Telengut is a Canadian artist of Mongolian origin. She creates animation frame by frame under the camera with mixed media to generate movement, and explore hand-made and painterly visuals for her films. Awards include Best Short Film at Stockholm Film Festival (Sweden), Best Animated Film at Mammoth Lakes Film Festival (USA) and the Jury Award at the Aspen Shortsfest (USA).

**7 MINUTES 14 SECONDS / 2020 / CANADA**  
**ALISI TELENGUT / DIRECTOR**

Supported by Main Film (Montréal), Cinémathèque québécoise, Canada Council for the Arts, Toronto Animated Image Society - TAIS, National Film Board of Canada - Filmmaker Assistance Program.



## TO KEEP AS ONE

Climate change has pushed erosion within feet of the remote Alaska Native community of Newtok. Albertina Charles and the rest of the village residents know that relocating Newtok is the only option. Will Federal funding arrive soon enough or will this community be separated forever?

Katie Basile is a documentary filmmaker and photographer based in Bethel, Alaska, USA. Her work focuses on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region of Alaska and explores adaptation and resilience in a changing world. Alongside editorial work Katie frequently collaborates on community engagement projects.

**12 MINUTES 24 SECONDS / 2020 / USA**  
**KATIE BASILE / DIRECTOR**



## THE PROMISE

Based on the book by Nicola Davies & Laura Carlin, *The Promise* is an urban fairy tale that plays out on the mean streets of a mean city. A young thief tries to snatch an old woman's bag but she cannot have it without giving something in return: The Promise.

Chi Thai works across features, documentary, animation & immersive. She has been a Cannes Lions finalist three times and is a recipient of the British Film Institute Vision Award. Her ambition is to dismantle the conditions that marginalise stories & storytellers, creating films that tell of a greener and fairer world.

**6 MINUTES 42 SECONDS / 2020 / UK**  
**CHI THAI / DIRECTOR**  
**SIMON RATLIFF / ILLUSTRATION AND ANIMATION**

Commissioned by the BBC



## SAMARITAN

An immigrant doctor, fearing deportation and living off the grid, stumbles upon the body of recently kidnapped politician. He takes the stranger back to his cabin to nurse him, and when the stranger awakes, their conversation reveals their opposing political ideals.

Dustin Curtis Murphy is a filmmaker from Los Angeles who now lives in London. His films have screened around the world. *Samaritan* won Best International Short at the Sedona International Film Festival and the Grand Prize at The Weather Channel's #EarthFilmChallenge.

**12 MINUTES / 2020 / UK**  
**DUSTIN CURTIS MURPHY / DIRECTOR**







## TO CALM THE PIG INSIDE (ANG PAGPAKALMA SA UNOS)

*To Calm the Pig Inside* is a contemplation on the effects a typhoon leaves on a seaside city. Myths are woven in to try to understand how people cope with the devastation and trauma. A girl divulges bits and pieces of her own memory of her grandmother and mother to tie in the experiences she felt visiting this ravaged port city.

Joanna Vasquez Arong studied Political Science at Boston College and took a Master's in Development and Environmental Studies at the London School of Economics before she decided to become a filmmaker. Her first feature documentary *Neo Lounge* (2007) recounts intimate stories of foreigners who went to Beijing to break away from their past. *Sunday School* (2010), filmed in Zambia, was commissioned by International Film Festival Rotterdam. *To Calm the Pig Inside* premiered and won the Grand Jury Prize at Slamdance Film Festival and nominated for the International Documentary Association Awards for Best Short.

18 MINUTES 30 SECONDS / 2020 / PHILIPPINES  
JOANNA VASQUEZ ARONG / DIRECTOR

Supported by National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Philippines.



## SONGS OF THE EARTH

*Songs of the Earth* is film and music album response to climate change, weaving issues from climate migration, extreme weather to ocean pollution, deforestation and sustainable fashion through original narrative, songs and immersive visuals. It follows the story of Asha, a young climate refugee from Bengal, as she searches for her missing father through the flood banks of the Sundarban delta, burning forests and melting polar ice caps, highlighting the plight of the Global South.

Soumik Datta is Bengali-born British Indian musician and composer, and a virtuoso player of the sarod, performing classical Hindustani music around the world, as well as jazz, Indo-blues, drum'n'bass, and more. He studied at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London. He was invited by Jay-Z to play at the Royal Albert Hall and has performed on stage with Beyoncé and at the Glastonbury Festival.

25 MINUTES / 2021 / UK  
SOUMIK DATTA / DIRECTOR AND MUSIC  
SACHIN BHATT, ANJALI KAMAT / ANIMATION

A British Council Creative Commission for COP26.

## ABOUT THE BRITISH COUNCIL

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. We do this through our work in arts and culture, education and the English language. We work with people in over 200 countries and territories and are on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2021–22 we reached 650 million people.

## ABOUT DOC SOCIETY

Doc Society was founded in 2005 and is committed to enabling great documentary films and connecting them to audiences globally. Based in London and New York works with filmmakers and partners all over the world. Its mission is to bring people together to unleash the transformational power of documentary film.

The Climate Story Unit is dedicated to supporting transformative storytelling to advance a climate just and biodiverse future. Across the Unit's programs, artists, impact producers, and movement builders come together to catalyse stories and their impact campaigns.

## RESOURCES

[britishcouncil.org/film](https://britishcouncil.org/film)  
[britishcouncil.org/climate-connection](https://britishcouncil.org/climate-connection)  
[docsociety.org](https://docsociety.org)  
[goodpitch.org](https://goodpitch.org)  
[bfi.org.uk](https://bfi.org.uk)

## CLIMATE STORIES PLAYLIST FILMMAKERS

**Blackthorn** / Dom Bush / [landandskymedia.co.uk](https://landandskymedia.co.uk)  
**Eve** / Joya Berrow, Lucy Jane / [therighttoroam.com](https://therighttoroam.com)  
**The Elverman** / Isla Badenoch / [islabadenoch.com](https://islabadenoch.com)  
**The Fourfold** / Alisi Telengut / [alisitelengut.com](https://alisitelengut.com)  
**To Keep As One** / Katie Basile / [katiebasile.com](https://katiebasile.com)  
**The Promise** / Chi Thai / [chithai.me](https://chithai.me)  
**Samaritan** / Dustin Curtis Murphy / [dcmfilmmaker.com](https://dcmfilmmaker.com)  
**To Calm the Pig Inside** / Joanna Vasquez Arong / [oldfoolfilms.com](https://oldfoolfilms.com)  
**Songs of the Earth** / Soumik Datta / [soumikdatta.com](https://soumikdatta.com)

## UK DOCUMENTARY FESTIVALS

**Sheffield Doc/Fest** / [sheffdocfest.com](https://sheffdocfest.com)  
**Climate Crisis Film Festival** / [climatecrisisff.co.uk](https://climatecrisisff.co.uk)  
**Factual Animation Film Festival** / [factualanimation.com](https://factualanimation.com)  
**Open City Documentary Film Festival** / [opencitylondon.com](https://opencitylondon.com)

## ORGANISATIONS

**Scottish Documentary Institute** / [scottishdocinstitute.com](https://scottishdocinstitute.com)  
**The Grierson Awards** / [griersontrust.org](https://griersontrust.org)  
**One World Media** / [oneworldmedia.org.uk](https://oneworldmedia.org.uk)  
**Albert: environmental sustainability for film + TV** / [wearealbert.org](https://wearealbert.org)  
**United Nations Climate Change** / [unfccc.int](https://unfccc.int)  
**Climate Outreach** / [climateoutreach.org](https://climateoutreach.org)  
**SPARK** / [sparkachange.eu](https://sparkachange.eu)  
**The All We Can Save Project** / [allwecansave.earth](https://allwecansave.earth)

## ARTICLES+REPORTS

**Confronting injustice: racism and the environmental emergency**  
[greenpeace.org.uk](https://greenpeace.org.uk)

**The century of climate migration: why we need to plan for the great upheaval, Gaia Vince**  
[theguardian.com/news/2022/aug/18/century-climate-crisis-migration-why-we-need-plan-great-upheaval](https://theguardian.com/news/2022/aug/18/century-climate-crisis-migration-why-we-need-plan-great-upheaval)

**Mothers of Invention / On feminist climate change solutions from (mostly) women around the world.**  
[mothersofinvention.online](https://mothersofinvention.online)

## PODCASTS

**Hot Take** / [hottakepod.com](https://hottakepod.com)

Podcast and newsletter taking a holistic, irreverent, honest look at the climate crisis and all the ways media and society are talking - and not talking - about it.

**Damages** / [podlink.to/damages](https://podlink.to/damages)

A courtroom drama podcast that follows over 200 climate lawsuits currently active in courtrooms all over the world.

**Race Against Climate Change**

[nationalobserver.com/podcast/race-against-climate-change](https://nationalobserver.com/podcast/race-against-climate-change)

Podcast from Canada's National Observer, which reports on climate, environment and society.

