

2019 FILM JURY

Ben Ayers



Ben Ayers is a National Geographic Explorer, filmmaker, and Executive Director of a Nepal-based non-profit called 'dZi.' Ben has lived and worked in Nepal for over 20 years. In 1999, he founded Porters' Progress, an organization dedicated to improving working conditions for mountaineering workers, which merged with dZi in 2006, and currently brings life-changing support to over 40,000 people in Nepal's most isolated communities. He has produced and directed a number of films that have appeared at Banff including *The Last Honey Hunter* (2017, Best Film: Mountain Culture) and *Mothered by Mountains* (2018).

Billy Choi



Billy CHOI majored in Film Studies at the graduate school of Dongguk University in South Korea. She worked at numerous film organizations including Jeonju International Film Festival, Seoul International Women's Film Festival, Korean Film Council, and Korean Barrier Free Film Committee. She joined Ulju Mountain Film Festival as a part of the preparation team in 2014. And she has been working as a programmer of Ulju Mountain Film Festival since 2015.

Joachim Hellinger



As co-founder and managing partner of Moving Adventures Medien, Hellinger sits at the creative helm of the European Outdoor Film Tour, now Europe's biggest media platform for outdoor films. Moving Adventures also acts as one of the largest International partners of the Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival World Tour, hosting shows in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and The Netherlands. Based on the success of E.O.F.T., Hellinger invested his longstanding passion for surfing and the oceans in launching the International OCEAN FILM TOUR in 2013. The program raises awareness of critical marine environmental issues, made accessible to a larger audience through stunning visuals and powerful storytelling. Through his film production unit, HelliVentures, Hellinger produces adventure documentaries and high-profile commercials/content for blue-chip companies. Forever and essentially a filmmaker, he has directed an array of award-winning documentaries and international commercial campaigns. He holds degrees from the University of Film and Television (HFF) in Munich and the F.E.M.I.S in Paris, France. In addition to his entrepreneurial roles, Hellinger teaches at University of Film and Television (HFF) in Munich.

Lynn Robinson



Lynn Robinson is the President of the British Mountaineering Council (BMC), the first woman to be elected into this position in the organisation's 75-year history. She has been involved with the BMC for over 25 years, volunteering in various roles and working on many rock climbing guidebooks. Her proudest contributions are as co-editor of *Froggatt to Black Rocks*, a BMC definitive rock climbing guidebook, and seeing one of the guidebooks she contributed to win the Mountain Exposition prize at the Banff Mountain Book Festival in 2006. In 2017, she received the BMC George Band Award for Outstanding Voluntary Contribution to British Mountaineering.

Lynn is a climber, hillwalker and mountaineer, passionate about equity in the outdoors and sees mountain films as an important medium to inspire and to reflect. She is a longstanding adventure film festival regular and is an active supporter of the British-based Women in Adventure Film Festival.

Niobe Thompson



Anthropologist Niobe Thompson made the jump from the university to expedition filmmaking a decade ago, and quickly established a reputation for taking his audiences on wild adventures to remote locations, while making a laboratory of his body and mind.

For the 2012 documentary, *The Perfect Runner*, he ran Canada's 125-km Death Race as an experiment in human endurance. For *The Great Human Odyssey*, he learned to breath-hold with Badjao free-diving nomads living in a Philippine war zone. For *Equus – Story of the Horse*, Niobe rode with horse nomads in some of the most extreme environments on Earth, from the Arabian Desert to northern Siberia. Combining the roles of producer, director and on-screen host, Niobe has developed a unique style of adventure and science storytelling the *Globe & Mail* calls “incredible, but brilliant.”

This year, Niobe's short film *Fast Horse* joined the Banff World Tour, before winning a Special Jury Award at Sundance and beginning its run for a 2020 Oscar. The series *Equus* won three Canadian Screen Awards, including the Rob Stewart Award for Best Science and Nature Program. He received his second Emmy nomination for his recent documentary on organ transplant science, *Transplanting Hope*. Niobe is the founder of Handful of Films.