

National Geographic Announces Line-Up of Four Projects from Free Solo's Award-Winning Documentary Duo, E. Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin

Following the success of E. Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin's Academy®, BAFTA and multiple Emmy® award-winning film, **FREE SOLO**, National Geographic revealed today a diverse lineup of four unscripted projects from the acclaimed storytelling duo as a result of their first-look deal announced in 2019. The dynamic unscripted slate directed by the pair and produced by their production company, Little Monster Films, includes two feature documentaries, a 10-part series and a one-hour pilot.

From inside a flooding cave in northern Thailand and the majestic landscapes of Patagonia to a sailing expedition in the Bahamas and a perilous journey across the Arctic tundra, the four titles will chronicle riveting true stories and awe-inspiring narratives while taking audiences on a visually spectacular adventure across the globe. The acclaimed filmmaking team will turn an intensely personal lens on world-renowned adventurers, including conservationist Kristine Tompkins and National Geographic's 2018 Adventurers of the Year, Paul Nicklen and Cristina Mittermeier.

Featured in this ambitious lineup is the feature doc **THAI CAVE RESCUE** (wt). Vasarhelyi and Chin will bring their signature filmmaking and nuanced character portraits to the against-all-odds story of the dramatic 2018 rescue of a boys' soccer team trapped deep inside a flooded cave in Thailand. With exclusive access and never-before-seen footage from the rescue, the film tells the story of the cave divers who challenged the limits of human potential and became the unlikely heroes of an edge-of-your-seat mission with life-or-death stakes.

"National Geographic shares our deep commitment to bringing honest and inspiring stories to audiences around the world," said directors Vasarhelyi and Chin. "We are thrilled to be working with them again on these powerful new projects that not only push the boundaries of filmmaking but also shine a light on the incredible resilience and determination of humankind."

"Chai and Jimmy are masterful storytellers who bring unparalleled artistry and distinctive vision to everything they do," said Carolyn Bernstein, executive vice president of Scripted Content and Documentary Films for National Geographic. "We are proud to continue our partnership with them to tell these profound stories in an authentic yet innovative way."

Upcoming Slate:

**All working titles*

THAI CAVE RESCUE

Feature Documentary (produced by John Battsek for Passion Pictures and Ventureland and Storyteller Productions' P.J. van Sandwijk; directed and produced by E. Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin)

On a cool June afternoon in the hilly region of northern Thailand, the Wild Boars youth soccer team

was finishing practice early so that they could attend a teammate's birthday party. Before heading to the party, the 12 boys and their assistant coach decided to explore a nearby system of caves—an outing that transformed into a two-week saga of survival and a story that would capture the attention of the world. **THAI CAVE RESCUE** will chronicle the dramatic 2018 rescue of the team trapped deep inside a flooding cave, the perilous world of cave diving, the bravery of the rescuers and the dedication of an entire community that made great sacrifices to save these young boys. A full 360° view of the crisis, told through unexpected angles and with untold stories, the film will bring to light the imagination and determination displayed during the heroic endeavor. Unlike most diving experiences in which one relies on a team, these rescue divers were in the water on their own, completely dependent on their gear and knowing that if it failed, that would be the end. There would be no turning back; life or death was literally a breath of air away.

TOMPKINS

Feature Documentary (produced and directed by E. Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin; produced by Anna Barnes and Bob Eisenhardt)

One day in 1991, Doug Tompkins walked into a restaurant in El Calafate, Argentina, and changed the life of Kristine McDivitt forever. Kristine and Doug had met before, but this time their meeting instantly sparked an intense connection, leading to a lifelong romance and partnership. She became Kristine Tompkins, and together they moved to a remote area of southern Chile on a mission to save the world. The feature documentary is an intimate portrait of conservationist and former CEO of Patagonia, Inc., Kristine Tompkins, and the organization that she and Doug founded together, Tompkins Conservation. Exploring Kristine and Doug's inspiring love story, as well as the national parks throughout Chile and Argentina that they helped create together, the film illustrates their incredible journey. It compels audiences to care about conservation and consider: What are you willing to live for?

INTO THE UNKNOWN

10-Part Series

This series takes audiences inside the minds of elite adventure athletes as they recount transformative stories of confronting fear, devastating personal loss and Mother Nature at her harshest. Through intimate interviews and self-shot archival footage from surfers, climbers, snowboarders, wingsuit jumpers, polar explorers and kayakers, learn how they prepare mentally, physically and emotionally for their high-stakes endeavors. While breaking down their process and their mindset, **INTO THE UNKNOWN** is a front-row seat to these risk-takers' adventures, uncovering how they adapt and evolve, even after something goes catastrophically wrong.

PHOTOGRAPHER

1-Hour Pilot

World-renowned conservation photographers and National Geographic's 2018 Adventurers of the Year Paul Nicklen and Cristina Mittermeier are passionate about exploration, the oceans and each other. **PHOTOGRAPHER** turns the lens on the pioneering duo as they embark on an ambitious four-year expedition aboard the SeaLegacy One on its maiden voyage to the Bahamas. Faced with incredible risks—physical, personal and financial—the vérité pilot explores their powerful partnership and the journey that led them on this extraordinary mission to create and protect healthy oceans through inspiring images. Each subsequent episode will focus on a different National Geographic photographer.

For National Geographic Documentary Films, Carolyn Bernstein and Ryan Harrington are executive producers for **THAI CAVE** (wt) and **TOMPKINS** (wt). For National Geographic Television, Chris Kugelman is executive producer for **INTO THE UNKNOWN** (wt) and **PHOTOGRAPHER** (wt). Matt

Renner is vice president, Production. Alan Eyres is senior vice president, Production and Development. For Little Monsters, Pagan Harleman and Anna Barnes are executive producers.

National Geographic Documentary Films previously released the enormously successful feature documentary, **FREE SOLO**, co-directed and co-produced by Vasarhelyi and Chin. The Academy Award and BAFTA Award-winning film took home seven Emmy awards in 2019, making it the most Emmy-winning documentary in history. **FREE SOLO** also earned the highest per-screen average of any documentary during its opening weekend in the United States (Sept. 28, 2018). After opening in theaters in China (Sept. 6, 2019), it became the highest-grossing international documentary ever released in China. Among its countless accolades, it also ranks as Nat Geo's most-viewed unscripted special ever (P2+) and the No. 1 on demand and download in the network's history.

About National Geographic Partners

National Geographic Partners LLC (NGP), a joint venture between The Walt Disney Company and the National Geographic Society, is committed to bringing the world premium science, adventure and exploration content across an unrivaled portfolio of media assets. NGP combines the global National Geographic television channels (National Geographic Channel, Nat Geo WILD, Nat Geo MUNDO, Nat Geo PEOPLE) with National Geographic's media and consumer-oriented assets, including National Geographic magazines; National Geographic studios; related digital and social media platforms; books; maps; children's media; and ancillary activities that include travel, global experiences and events, archival sales, licensing and e-commerce businesses. Furthering knowledge and understanding of our world has been the core purpose of National Geographic for 133 years, and now we are committed to going deeper, pushing boundaries, going further for our consumers ... and reaching millions of people around the world in 172 countries and 43 languages every month as we do it. NGP returns 27 percent of our proceeds to the nonprofit National Geographic Society to fund work in the areas of science, exploration, conservation and education. For more information visit natgeotv.com or nationalgeographic.com, or find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Pinterest](#).

About Little Monster Films

Founded by Academy Award-winners E. Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin, Little Monster Films is a full-service production company committed to telling character-driven stories underneath the backdrop of thrilling and otherworldly visuals. Working in both the unscripted and scripted arenas, their mission is to capture humanity at its best, aiming to reflect a diverse world both in front of and behind the camera, they strive to present grounded narratives with intensity and depth while showcasing the extraordinary among us and the power of what we can individually achieve.

About Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin

Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin are the co-directors and co-producers of the Academy Award- and BAFTA-winning film **FREE SOLO**, from National Geographic Documentary Films. The film earned the highest per screen average of any documentary during its opening weekend (Sept. 28, 2018) and took home seven Emmy awards in 2019.

Vasarhelyi's films as a director include "Meru" (Oscars shortlist 2016, Sundance Audience Award 2015); "Incorruptible" (Truer Than Fiction Independent Spirit Award 2016); "Youssou N'Dour: I Bring What I Love" (Oscilloscope 2009), which premiered at the Telluride and Toronto Film Festivals; "A Normal Life" (Tribeca Film Festival, Best Documentary 2003); and "Touba" (SXSW, Special Jury Prize Best Cinematography 2013).

Chin is a professional climber, skier, mountaineer, longtime member of The North Face Athlete Team

and National Geographic Explorer. Consistently over the past 20 years, Chin has led or participated in cutting-edge climbing and ski mountaineering expeditions to all seven continents and made the first and only American ski descent from the summit of Mount Everest. He is also a filmmaker and National Geographic photographer. He has worked with many of the greatest explorers, adventurers and athletes of our time, documenting their exploits in the most challenging conditions and locations in the world. His 2015 documentary “Meru,” which was co-directed by Vasarhelyi, won the Audience Award at Sundance and was nominated for best documentary by the DGA and PGA. “Meru” was also shortlisted for an Oscar.

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