

Christopher Riley

Writer / Director / Producer



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Christopher Riley is a BAFTA, RTS, Grierson & Emmy nominated filmmaker specialising in science and the history of science. He has directed and produced more than thirty documentary films for the BBC, Film4, Netflix, National Geographic, The Discovery Channel and the Smithsonian, and has written and directed commercial shorts and branded content for HSBC, Vodafone and architects Foster & Partners.

He is best known for his BBC film **The Girl who talked to Dolphins** – nominated for every major UK documentary award, and for his innovative experiential documentary **First Orbit** – recreating Yuri Gagarin's pioneering space flight; which premiered on over 1600 screens in more than 130 countries, and online to the largest audience for a long form film release in YouTube history at the time.

He conceived and co-produced the Sundance award winning Ron Howard feature documentary **In the Shadow of the Moon**, and produced the Netflix/BBC Storyville true crime thriller **Fear of 13**, which premiered at the London Film Festival and was nominated for a Grierson.

His recent films include:

Battle for the Black Swan – a ground breaking true crime documentary for National Geographic, uniting the treasure hunter team that recovered the long lost wreck of a Spanish galleon from almost a mile beneath the North Atlantic, and the legal team that fought to bring it back to Spain.

Future Fantastic – China's science revolution – a collaboration with the Chinese Academy of Sciences - five films profiling the work of China's top scientists and engineers; leading their fields in medicine, robotics, astronomy, particle physics and planetary science.

One Strange Rock – Episode 5 – "Survival" – the acclaimed National Geographic mega-doc made in collaboration with Darren Aronofsky, and hosted by Will Smith - telling the story of life on Earth through the experiences of a chorus of astronauts.

Chris has a doctorate in planetary science from Imperial College, University of London, and is a former visiting Professor of science and media at the University of Lincoln's School of Media.

Writing / Directing / Producing

One Cup, a Thousand Stories

Writer/Director

📺 **BBC Studios / BBC Worldwide / Migu China** 2021
1x50 min episode following the global tea industry.

The Wonderful: Stories from the Space Station

Associate Producer

📺 **Universal Pictures** 2019-2021
1x110 min feature documentary about the International Space Station.

Battle for the Black Swan. Drain the Oceans

Writer/Director

📺 **MSP / National Geographic / Disney** 2020-2021
1x44 min story bringing together the team that discovered the lost wreck of the Spanish Galleon Las Mercedes, with the team of lawyers in Spain who fought to get the treasure back.

Future Fantastic – China's Science Revolution.

Writer/Director

📺 **Crosswalk Films / CIPG / Chinese Academy of Sciences** 2019-2020
5x25 min series on how China is now leading the world in everything from genetics to high energy physics, quantum computing and industrial robotics.

Apollo 50: Go for the Moon

Writer & Film Director

📺 **59 Productions / Smithsonian Air and Space Museum** 2019
Acclaimed 1x17 min live show for the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11 projected onto the Washington Monument and screens along the National Mall in Washington D.C. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7ayx7CuKFs&t=7s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMHhXzpwupU>

Rise of the Rockets / Return to the Moon

Writer / Producer

📺 **Bigger Bang / PBS NOVA** 2018-2019
2x60 min docs on what drives society's biggest projects.

Revolutions – ideas that changed the world

Director / Producer

📺 **Bigger Bang / PBS / BBC Worldwide / Netflix** 2017-2018
6x60 min history of ideas series with Patrick Stewart.

One Strange Rock **Director / Producer**

📺 **Nutopia / National Geographic / Disney** 2016-2017
10x47min Darren Aronofsky / Will Smith mega doc series on the history of life on Earth and the chances of finding it beyond our home planet.
Winner 2018 Wildscreen Panda Award for Innovative story telling.
Winner 2018 Jackson Hole Science Media Award

Space Descent with Tim Peake (VR) **Writer**

📺 **Atlantic Productions / Alchemy VR / Science Museum Group** 2017
1x12min 360 degree 3D VR descent from the International Space Station
Nominated 2017 Museum Heritage Innovation Award.

The Fear of 13 **Producer**

📺 **DOX Productions / BBC Storyville / Netflix** 2015
1x95min emotionally charged feature doc on the redemptive power of love and literature, amidst the brutality & incarceration of America's death row.
London Film Festival 2015 Official Selection and Grierson nominated Politiken Audience Award, Copenhagen's documentary cinema festival

Survival in the Skies **Director / Series Producer**

📺 **Arrow Media / Smithsonian Channel / Discovery International** 2015
4x46min series on the technological breakthroughs behind our exploration of the upper atmosphere and beyond.

#Firsts - The Jump **Director**

📺 **OneTwoFour / AKQA / Vodafone** 2015
1x5min high end branded content for Vodafone's #firsts global campaign.

Hubble's Cosmic Journey **Director / Producer**

📺 **National Geographic / Bigger Bang Productions** 2014 / 2015
1x48min biography of the Hubble Space Telescope, made to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the world's most celebrated science instrument.
Nominated for a Primetime Emmy

The Girl who talked to Dolphins **Director / Producer**

📺 **BBC Scotland / BBC FOUR / Sheffield DocFest 2014** 2014
1x60 min story of an audacious 60s animal experiment.

Nominated for BAFTA, RTS & Grierson awards for single documentary

The Fantastic Mr Feynman

Director / Producer

📺 **BBC Scotland / BBC TWO / Netflix** 2013

1x60 min biography of the famous physicist Richard Feynman.

Neil Armstrong – first man on the Moon

Director / Producer

📺 **Darlow Smithson / BBC TWO / PBS Nova** 2012

1x60 min definitive biopic in collaboration with his family.

Voyager: to the final frontier

Director / Producer

📺 **BBC Scotland / BBC FOUR** 2012

1x60 minute doc presented by Dallas Campbell.

Shortlisted - 2013 British Science Writer Award

Space Shuttle: The Final Mission

Producer

📺 **Ricochet Television / BBC TWO** 2011

1x60 minute fast turn around, access all areas, doc for the BBC.

First Orbit

Director / Producer

📺 **The Attic Room / Google/YouTube / BBC Big Screens** 2011

1x105 minute film for 50th anniversary of human spaceflight.

The most watched long form film release in YouTube history in 2011

Destination Titan

Associate Producer

📺 **The Attic Room / BBC FOUR** 2011

1x60 minute story of the team who landed a spacecraft on Saturn's largest moon – Titan.

Dust

Executive Producer

📺 **The Attic Room / Stylus Films / Shorts International** 2010

A short drama premiered at Edinburgh & London Film Festivals.

HSBC TV

Director

📺 **The Rocket Science Group / HSBC TV** 2009-2010

10x5 minute series on the financial industry with the Chairman of HSBC.

Moonwalk One – the director's cut.

Producer

- 📺 **The Attic Room / Discovery Channel** 2009
1 x 107 minute feature film, Discovery Channel.

Opening the time Capsule, making Moonwalk One

Director / Producer

- 📺 **The Attic Room / Discovery Channel** 2009
1x30 minute making of doc on the classic feature doc.
The highest rating show in the channel's history in 2009

Jeffery's Story

Director / Producer

- 📺 **The Attic Room / UCL / Bebo** 2009
5x3 minute medical physics teen drama mini-series for Bebo.

Moon Machines

Director / Executive Producer

- 📺 **Dox Productions / Discovery Channel** 2007-2008
6x50 minute definitive series on the 400,000 engineers who turned the dream of landing a man on the Moon, into reality.
Winner Grand REMI, Houston International Film Festival 2009

In the Shadow of the Moon

Producer & Assistant Director

- 📺 **Dox Productions / Film4 / ThinkFILM / Discovery Films** 2005-2007
1x100 minute feature doc about the men who walked on the Moon.
Winner 2007 Sundance World Cinema Audience Award
Winner 2007 Boulder International Film Festival Grand Prize
Winner Florida Film Festival Audience Award Best Int. Feature
Winner World Documentary Audience Award, Indianapolis International Film Festival 2007

Rough Science, Colorado, season six

Director / Producer

- 📺 **BBC / Open University** 2005
6x30 minute actuality documentary series with Kate Humble.

Space Odyssey: Voyage to the Planets

Producer / Director

- 📺 **BBC ONE / Impossible Pictures / Discovery / ProSieben** 2003-2004
2x60 minute drama mega-doc mini-series from the 'Walking with' team.
1x50 minute documentary – *The Robot Pioneers*, to accompany the series
Winner 2005 Arthur Clarke Award Best TV & Radio Presentation

Print Journalism and Writing

Books

Author – Where once we stood – Harbour Moon Publishing – 2019

- **nominated for Kate Greenaway Award**

Author – Haynes - Voyager Spacecraft – an owner's workshop manual 2015

Author – Joan Feynman – from Auroras to Anthropology, Ada Lovelace 2013

Co-Author – Haynes – Lunar Rover, an owner's workshop manual, 2012

Co-Author – British Council - Gagarin in Britain, 2009

Author – Haynes - Apollo 11 – an owner's workshop manual 2009

Author - Space Odyssey: Voyage to the Planets, BBC Books 2004

Contributing author – Harper Collins Encyclopaedia of the Universe 2002

Contributing writer – The Planets, BBC Books 1999

Articles

Worlds Apart, **Medium** 01-02-21

<https://christopher-riley.medium.com/worlds-apart-4ecd9fa8e27f>

Return to Moon vital for human survival, **The Standard** 19-07-19

<https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/going-back-to-the-moon-is-vital-for-the-survival-of-the-human-race-a4193871.html>

Hubble's Unsung Heroes, **The Guardian** 20-04-15

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/apr/20/twenty-five-years-on-hubbles-unsung-heroes>

The Dolphin who Loved Me. **Observer/Guardian** 08-06-14

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jun/08/the-dolphin-who-loved-me>

Richard Feynman: Life, the universe and everything. **Telegraph** - 09-05-13

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/10036024/Richard-Feynman-Life-the-universe-and-everything.html>

Tire tracks to our future. **America Space** - 08-01-13

<http://www.americaspace.com/?p=29639#more-29639>

Apollo 40 years on. **Guardian** - 16-12-12

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2012/dec/16/apollo-legacy-moon-space-riley>

The maths that made Voyager possible. **BBC News Online** - 22-10-12

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-20033940>

More at www.chris-riley.net

Education

- ☐ University of London 1990-1995
Ph.D. Imperial College – Conoco Scholar
The Morphotectonics of the Spanish Sierra Nevada,
a study using digital terrain models
- ☐ University of London 1990-1995
Diploma of Imperial College
- ☐ University of Leicester 1986-1989
B.Sc. (2i) Applied Geology

Academic Positions

- ☐ Visiting Professor of Science & Media 2011-2021
Lincoln School of Media, University of Lincoln
- ☐ Senior Visiting Fellow 2007-2011
Department of Media Production, University of Lincoln
- ☐ External Examiner 2009-2012
M.Sc. Science Media Production,
Imperial College, University of London
- ☐ Visiting Lecturer 1992-1993, 2001-2009, 2013-pres
M.Sc. Science Communication,
Imperial College, University of London