

SANDBOX FILMS

ABRAMORAMA

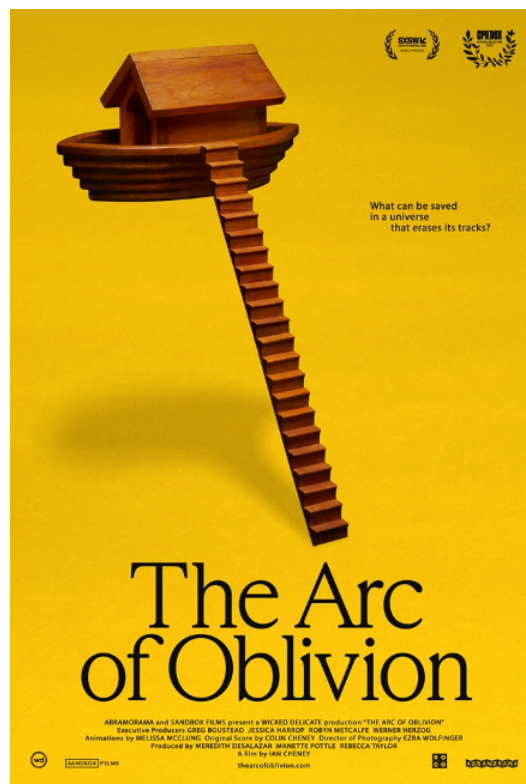


## THE ARC OF OBLIVION

From Executive Producer Werner Herzog & Academy Award-Nominated  
Sandbox Films (FIRE OF LOVE)

Directed by Ian Cheney (THE SEARCH FOR GENERAL TSO)

**IN SELECT THEATERS FEBRUARY 16, 2024**



Documentary Feature | U.S. | 2022 | 93 mins. | In English

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## SYNOPSIS

**THE ARC OF OBLIVION** explores a quirk of humankind: in a universe that erases its tracks, we humans are hellbent on leaving a trace. Set against the backdrop of the filmmaker's quixotic quest to build an ark in a field in Maine, the film heads far afield – to salt mines in the Alps, fjords in the Arctic, and ancient libraries in the Sahara – to illuminate the strange world of archives, record-keeping, and memory. Playfully weaving stop-motion animation, spellbinding cinematography and fascinating interviews from the director's inner circle and experts in the fields of science, culture and art – including documentarians Werner Herzog and Kirsten Johnson – **THE ARC OF OBLIVION** reveals how nature inspires the human drive behind filmmaking.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The universe, any physicist can tell you, is rife with decay and destruction. Stars peter out. Meteors crash. Lava flows. Oceans surge. Forests burn. Species perish. But humans want none of it! We fight oblivion, tooth and nail. We build pyramids, dig vaults, send golden records into space, and store an unprecedented amount of digital data on hard drives strewn across the planet's surface. To archive is to say *Come what may, this must last*.

Three years ago I was musing about this archival madness - which in my own life took the form of countless hard drives from 20 years of filmmaking and digital photographs from 7 years of fatherhood - when the archive of my friend and mentor Barry Lopez was burned to the ground in an Oregon forest fire. We lost Barry a few months later, to cancer. His wife sent me a photograph of him, days after the fire, kicking through the ashes to see what could be salvaged.

*Are we insane to imagine that anything can last?* I suspected I knew the answer to this question, but no matter. It was time to plunge into this world of archives and record-keeping and see what peace I could find. By building an ark, I could live through this thought experiment myself: why do we go to such great lengths to save anything at all? What I found along the way was a strange sort of salve. Everywhere I traveled, I found ubiquitous reminders that we're in this together, each of us navigating oblivion in our own ways. And not just people; the natural world is a tremendous repository of memories, from tree rings to rock layers and beyond. Perhaps, despite the ravages of entropy, saving our stories and photographs and rock art and all the rest isn't human folly. Perhaps it's the most natural thing in the world.

Ian Cheney

## **ABOUT THE FILM TEAM**

### **About Director IAN CHENEY:**

Ian Cheney is an Emmy-nominated and Peabody Award-winning documentary filmmaker. He has completed ten feature documentaries, including King Corn (2007), The Greening of Southie (2008), The City Dark (2011), The Search for General Tso (2014), Bluespace (2015), The Most Unknown (2018), The Emoji Story (2019), Thirteen Ways (2019), Picture a Scientist (2020) and The Long Coast (2020). His short films include Two Buckets (2006), Truck Farm (2010), The Melungeons (2013), The Smog of the Sea (2016) and The Measure of a Fog (2017). He received bachelor's & master's degrees from Yale University, and an MFA in Film from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. A former MacDowell Fellow & Knight Science Journalism Fellow at MIT, he lives in midcoast Maine.

### **About SANDBOX FILMS:**

Sandbox Films is an Academy Award-nominated and Emmy Award-winning film studio that specializes in creative and boundary-breaking documentaries rooted in scientific ideas that inform society and culture. Launched in 2020, their films include: Fire of Love (nominated for an Oscar for Best Documentary Feature; "Hands down, documentary of the year," according to Rolling Stone); All Light, Everywhere (Sundance 2021 special jury prize winner; released by Neon and Hulu); Fireball (co-directed by Werner Herzog; released by Apple); Fathom (which won an Emmy Award for Best Sound in a Documentary); and Human Nature (which was nominated for three Emmys). Their films have premiered at top-tier festivals around the world – including Sundance (winning jury prizes in back-to-back years), SXSW, Telluride, Tribeca, Toronto, and CPH:DOX. Sandbox Films productions have gone on to be acquired and released globally by the world's leading platforms and distributors — including Netflix, National Geographic Documentary Films, Apple Original Films, NEON, BBC, and PBS, among others.

### **About ABRAMORAMA:**

Abramorama is the preeminent global media distribution and marketing company for nonfiction and music films. An innovator in the focused, personalized form of film distribution, marketing, promotion, and live and event cinema, Abramorama provides customized services to filmmakers, networks, digital services, and IP owners, across all platforms and in all territories. In its over 20 years of operation, Abramorama has been the trusted film partner to many of the most respected global brands in entertainment, including The Beatles, Dolly Parton, Metallica, Pearl Jam, Stevie Nicks, Neil Young, Laurie Anderson, Jimi Hendrix, Green Day, National Geographic, Discovery, AARP, MSNBC, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, HBO, Showtime, Hulu, Universal Music Group, Atlantic Records, Warner Music Group, Sony, Concord Music Group, and many others. Through a powerful global network of cinemas, digital media outlets, and affinity marketing partners, Abramorama strategically implements a unified distribution and audience activation plan for each title. Abramorama is expert at maximizing reach, engagement,

marketing spends, and the ROI for content created for target audiences. For more information, visit [abramorama.com](http://abramorama.com).

**About ROCO Films:**

Founded in 2000, ROCO Films is a leading global documentary film distribution agency. With an educational division aimed at bringing these compelling films to schools, libraries, corporations, and other semi-theatrical environments, ROCO broadens the impact and influence of these films by mobilizing communities to host, organize and execute their own screening events. In addition to being a premiere distribution partner, ROCO offers a range of impact services for select titles to enhance engagement.

Over two decades, ROCO has distributed exceptional documentaries to the global and educational markets including many Oscar-nominated feature documentaries and festival award-winners such as *Born Into Brothels*, *Hoop Dreams*, *Jesus Camp*, *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, *Street Fight*, *How to Survive a Plague*, *Chasing Ice*, *Miss Representation*, *A place at the Table*, *The Invisible War*, *Particle Fever*, *After Tiller*, *The Internet's Own Boy*, *Inequality for All*, *Girl Rising*, *Cartel Land*, *The Hunting Ground*, *Life Animated*, *Trapped*, *DOLORES*, *Human Flow*, *An Inconvenient Sequel*, *The Fourth Estate*, *Human Nature*, *RBG*, *The Fight*, *Picture a Scientist*, *John Lewis: Good Trouble*, *Kiss The Ground*, *The Biggest Little Farm*, *Flee*, *On The Record*, *The First Wave*, and *Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America*. Find out more at [rocofilms.com](http://rocofilms.com).

## CREDITS

**Director:** Ian Cheney

**Executive Producers:** Greg Boustead, Jessica Harrop, Robyn Metcalfe, Werner Herzog

**Producers:** Meredith Desalazar, Manette Pottle, Rebecca Taylor

**Cinematographer:** Ezra Wolfinger