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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NOVA “ANCIENT EARTH,”**

 **A BBC STUDIOS PRODUCTION WITH NOVA FOR PBS AND THE BBC, TAKES AUDIENCES ON AN ASTONISHING JOURNEY THROUGH THE EPIC 4.5-BILLION-YEAR STORY OF OUR PLANET**

**Five-Part Series Premieres Wednesdays,**

**October 4 — November 1, 2023 at 9pm ET/8C on PBS**

**Also available for streaming at** [**pbs.org/nova**](https://pbs.org/nova)**,** [**NOVA on YouTube**](https://www.youtube.com/user/NOVAonline)**, and the** [**PBS App**](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/)

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**BOSTON, MA; October 2, 2023—**The award-winning PBS science series, **NOVA**, a production of **GBH**, will premiere a dazzling new five-part series, **ANCIENT EARTH**, Wednesdays, beginning **October 4 at 9pm ET/8C on PBS**. The latest BBC Studios production with NOVA, **ANCIENT EARTH** tells the epic story of our planet, featuring the most dramatic events in Earth’s 4.5-billion-year history, from its birth to the emergence of humanity. The series will also be available for streaming at[**pbs.org/nova**](https://pbs.org/nova)**,** [**NOVA on YouTube**](https://www.youtube.com/user/NOVAonline)**,** and the [**PBS App**](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/).

How did Earth transform from a barren rock with no atmosphere into a lush, green, watery planet filled with life? From massive asteroid bombardments to extreme changes in climate to collisions of whole continents, **ANCIENT EARTH** takes viewers on a journey through our planet’s most astonishing moments, beginning with its early years as a volcanic hellscape through the rise of humans. Featuring stunning animation, based on the latest scientific research and an original music score, each of the five episodes brings to life long-lost worlds that ultimately led to the one we know today.

“We’re thrilled to be partnering again with PBS and BBC Studios on this extraordinary series. These are very special films that showcase the awesome complexity and sometimes, the wonderful weirdness of our planet that science has been able to reveal,” said **NOVA Co-Executive Producer Julia Cor**t. “This collaboration makes it possible to create incredibly beautiful, detailed, and accurate graphics that immerse viewers in fantastical worlds all based on scientific research.”

**ANCIENT EARTH** transports audiences to bygone eras when Earth looked more like an alien world, and explores the breathtaking transitions that brought us closer to the planet we know today. The series follows the very first drops of rain as they formed in the early atmosphere and splashed down on a searing Earth covered in molten lava and barren rock, setting the stage for the origins of life; journeys to 700 million years ago when the planet was a giant snowball cloaked in ice from pole to pole; moves on to a time when some of the earliest life emerged and invaded Earth’s barren and rocky landscape, transforming it into a lush green world; then leaps to 250 million years ago when a volcano-induced mass extinction wiped out around 90% of all species on the planet — yet life survived, setting the stage for the dinosaurs.

Lastly, the series reveals the sequence of extraordinary geologic events that led to the emergence of humans, a self-aware and technological animal species able to not only alter the course of Earth’s evolution, but study and understand the consequences of its actions. This final hour contemplates humanity’s role in Earth’s story, and challenges us to consider the capacity of our species to alter the trajectory of our planet’s future.

“**ANCIENT EARTH** gives audiences a perspective of deep time and constant change. Even though there’s only one Earth, it’s worn many guises,” said **NOVA Co-Executive Producer Chris Schmidt**. “Each episode tells the story of one of those surprising chapters in Earth’s history. Many people are familiar with events like the asteroid that wiped out the dinosaurs and allowed mammals to thrive, but there were many lesser-known events that utterly transformed our world. We hope these surprising and awe-inspiring moments, revealed beautifully throughout this series, will surprise audiences and offer a deeper appreciation of Earth’s amazing story.”

**ANCIENT EARTH** features interviews with scientists who radiate their passion for discovery and help bring to life billions of years of intertwined biological and geological history that made our planet what it is today. Scientists in the series include **Phoebe Cohen**, Williams College; **Peter Girguis**, Harvard University; **Robert Hazen**, University of Washington/Carnegie Institution for Science; **Kirk Johnson**, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History; **Michael Wong**,Carnegie Institution for Science; **Usha Lingappa**,University of California, Berkeley; **Rika Anderson**, Carleton College; **James Dottin III**,University of Maryland; **Monica Carvalho**, University of Michigan; **Ammie Kalan**, University of Victoria, Canada; **Chris Jackson**, Imperial College London; and many more.

“Earth is an incredibly ambitious project that seeks to immerse the viewer in Earth’s dramatic past and reveal how historic events have shaped and created our world today,” said **BBC Executive Producer Rob Liddell**. “Based on meticulous research and attention to detail it has been a thrill for the production team to work closely with over 200 scientists and experts to reproduce periods of Earth’s past that are rarely visualised.”

**The series’s five one-hour episodes are as follows:**

**NOVA “ANCIENT EARTH: BIRTH OF THE SKY” Premieres Wednesday, October 4, 2023 at 9pm ET/8C**

Today, Earth is enveloped by a thin veil of gas, a narrow band of atmosphere that protects a world covered in lush green vegetation, deep blue oceans, and abundant life. But 4.5 billion years ago, Earth was a very different place: a hellscape of molten lava and barren rock, under relentless bombardment from meteors, and with no atmosphere whatsoever. So how did our familiar blue sky come to be? Breathtakingly realistic animations and a chorus of science experts reveal how the primordial inferno first gave rise to an orange-hued cauldron of toxic gases that would be deadly to us today. Witness how the first drops of rain splashed down on the searing planet, setting the stage for the evolution of life, and discover how life itself helped create the air we all breathe today.

**NOVA “ANCIENT EARTH: FROZEN” Premieres Wednesday, October 11, 2023 at 9pm ET/8C**

700 million years ago, Earth was a giant snowball cloaked in ice from pole to pole – a global freeze that held the planet in a stranglehold, threatening the survival of the earliest complex life. How did life manage to hold on in this forbidding world? Leading scientists investigate how this catastrophe may have become a catalyst for life to evolve in creative new ways as it bounced back from the brink – setting the stage for the astonishing complexity we see today.

**NOVA “ANCIENT EARTH: LIFE RISING” Premieres Wednesday, October 18, 2023 at 9pm ET/8C**

For billions of years, life teemed in the oceans of planet Earth while the land was desolate and inhospitable. So how did life make the leap to land? Scientists explore how some of the earliest life emerged and invaded a barren, rocky landscape, eventually transforming it into a verdant, green world. Gripping visual effects reveal an alien landscape dominated by towering fungi before the arrival of plants. Witness how the first plants made landfall and partnered with fungi to create soil that would sustain them. And discover how, once life emerged on land, it fundamentally altered the very ground it grew on.

**NOVA “ANCIENT EARTH: INFERNO” Premieres Wednesday, October 25, 2023 at 9pm ET/8C**

252 million years ago, the most devastating mass extinction of all time abruptly wiped out around 90% of all species on Earth. The culprits were the biggest volcanic eruptions the world has ever seen, emitting some 700 thousand cubic miles of magma and rock. Volcanic gases permeated the atmosphere and acidified the oceans while toxic gases destroyed the ozone layer, bathing the planet in destructive ultraviolet radiation. The event – now called “The Great Dying” – came close to wiping out all life on the planet. Follow scientists as they piece together geologic evidence from the deep past and clues from today’s ecosystems to discover how life made it through and evolved into the astonishing variety we see around us today.

**NOVA “ANCIENT EARTH: HUMANS” Premieres Wednesday, November 1, 2023 at 9pm ET/8C**

The story of Earth can only be told because now, 4.5 billion years into its existence, a technological and self-aware animal species roams its surface, able to study the very planet that gave rise to it. But how exactly did Earth give rise to humans? Through stunningly realistic animation, witness the cataclysmic asteroid strike that wiped out the dinosaurs, the tumultuous changing climates that allowed early primates to spread across the planet, and the geologic events that created the conditions for the evolution of an animal that walks upright on two legs. Explore the power and paradox of humanity’s profound impact on our planet, and ponder the question of how we may shape its future.

**NOVA “ANCIENT EARTH**,” a five-part series, premieres Wednesdays, October 4 — November 1, 2023 at 9pm ET/8C on PBS and will be available for streaming at[**pbs.org/nova**](https://pbs.org/nova)**,** [**NOVA on YouTube**](https://www.youtube.com/user/NOVAonline)**,** and the [**PBS App**](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/).

**NOVA “ANCIENT EARTH”** is a BBC Studios Production with NOVA and GBH for PBS and the BBC. The partnership provides a pipeline of the high-quality, entertaining factual programs that PBS and BBC audiences have come to expect. Executive Producers for BBC Studios are Head of BBC Studios Science Unit Andrew Cohen, and Executive Producer Rob Liddell. **NOVA “ANCIENT EARTH”** was commissioned for BBC Two by Jack Bootle, Head of Commissioning, Science & Natural History, and executive in charge for PBS Bill Gardner, Vice President of Programming and Development. Executive Producers for NOVA are Julia Cort and Chris Schmidt. Senior Producer for NOVA is Caitlin Saks. NOVA is a production of GBH. BBC Studios is handling global distribution.

Funding for NOVA and **ANCIENT EARTH** is provided by Viking Cruises, the NOVA Science Trust, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and PBS viewers.

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**About NOVA**

[NOVA](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/?utm_source=promourl&utm_medium=direct&utm_campaign=nova_2019) is the most popular primetime science series on American television, demystifying the scientific and technological concepts that shape and define our lives, our planet, and our universe. The PBS series is also one of the most widely distributed science programs around the world, and is a multimedia, multiplatform brand reaching more than 55 million Americans every year on TV and online. NOVA’s important and inspiring stories of human ingenuity, exploration, and the quest for knowledge are regularly recognized with the industry’s most prestigious awards. As part of its mission to make the scientific enterprise accessible to all, NOVA is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all its work, from the production process to the range of stories we tell and the voices we amplify. In addition, science educators across the country rely on NOVA for resources used in the classroom as well as in museums, libraries, and after-school programs. NOVA is a production of GBH; more information can be found at [pbs.org/nova](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/?utm_source=promourl&utm_medium=direct&utm_campaign=nova_2019), or by following NOVA on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NOVApbs/), [Twitter,](https://twitter.com/novapbs?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor) or [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/novapbs/?hl=en).

**About PBS**

[PBS](http://www.pbs.org/), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 120 million people through television and 26 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature, and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS’s broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry’s most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirms that PBS’s premier children’s media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math, and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV — including a 24/7 channel — online at  [pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org/), via an array of mobile apps, and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [PBS.org](http://pbs.org), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following  [PBS on Twitter](https://twitter.com/pbs), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/pbs) or through  our  [apps for mobile and connected devices](http://www.pbs.org/anywhere/home/). Specific program information and updates for press are available at  [pbs.org/pressroom](http://pressroom.pbs.org/) or by following [PBS Communications on Twitter](https://twitter.com/PBS_PR).

**About The Science Unit, BBC Studios Productions**

The BBC Studios Science Unit produces a plethora of bold and trail-blazing content with an unmatched network of experts and access to some of the world’s most advanced scientific institutions. From blue-chip landmark series to drama-documentary and popular consumer health programming, we use quality journalism, innovation, and pioneering technology to make complex scientific ideas accessible to truth-seeking audiences across the globe. Known for high production values and visual flair, the Science Unit supplies content to a range of broadcasters and platforms across the UK, US and Europe, including the BBC, C4, C5, ZDF, PBS, Discovery Science, Netflix and YouTube. Recent output includes YouTube’s ***The Edge of Science***, the multi award-winning science strand ***Horizon***, landmark series ***The Planets***, the critically acclaimed ***8 Days: To the Moon and Back***, and established series like***The Sky at Night***, *The* ***Truth About*… and *Stargazing Live***.

BBC Studios, a global content company with British creativity at its heart, is a commercial subsidiary of the BBC Group. Award-winning British programmes made by the business are internationally recognised across a broad range of genres and specialisms, including factual, drama, entertainment and comedy. BBC Studios has offices in 22 markets globally, including six production bases in the UK and production bases and partnerships in a further nine countries around the world. The company, which makes around 2,500 hours of content a year, is a champion for British creativity around the world and a committed partner for the UK’s independent sector.

**About GBH**

GBH is the leading multiplatform creator for public media in America. As the largest producer of content for PBS and partner to NPR and PRX, GBH delivers compelling experiences, stories and information to audiences wherever they are. GBH produces digital and broadcast programming that engages, illuminates and inspires, through drama and science, history, arts, culture and journalism. It is the creator of such signature programs as MASTERPIECE, ANTIQUES ROADSHOW, FRONTLINE, NOVA, AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, *Arthur* and *Molly of Denali,* as well as WORLD Channel and a catalog of streaming series, podcasts and on-demand video. With studios and a newsroom headquartered in Boston, GBH reaches across New England with GBH 89.7, Boston’s Local NPR®; CRB Classical 99.5; and CAI, the Cape and Islands NPR® station. Dedicated to making media accessible to and inclusive of our diverse culture, GBH is a pioneer in delivering media to those who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired. GBH creates curriculum-based digital content for educators nationwide with PBS LearningMedia and has been recognized with hundreds of the nation’s premier broadcast, digital and journalism awards. Find more information at [wgbh.org](https://www.wgbh.org/).

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