

# Leo Thom

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## Conservation Filmmaker | Producer-Director | Creative Director

I am a filmmaker exploring community-led conservation stories at the intersection of people, place, and coastal ecosystems. I'm Creative Director at Mangrove Action Project (MAP), an international mangrove conservation NGO, and Founder of the Mangrove Photography Awards; a platform to raise the profile of mangroves and their conservation, through photography.

In this role, I lead the organisation's visual storytelling strategy, producing human-centred films that document **community-based ecological mangrove restoration (CBEMR)**, sustainable livelihoods, and local stewardship of coastal landscapes across tropical coastlines.

Once Emmy-nominated animator, with an MA in Wildlife Filmmaking with BBC Natural History Unit and a background in visual communication and motion graphics. My background in **animation, landscape architecture, and international field production** allows me to translate complex ecological processes into emotionally resonant, accessible visual narratives. I have worked across the UK and Asia for NGOs, broadcasters, and public institutions.

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## Skills

- Visual storytelling & narrative development
- Producer-director (self-shooting)
- Video production (development to delivery)
- International and remote-location filming
- Community-led conservation storytelling
- Drone operation (GVC certified, 2022)
- 2.5D animation & motion graphics (AE)
- Research, risk assessment & logistics
- Collaborative, culturally sensitive practice
- Fluent spoken Japanese

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## Selected Relevant Experience

2018 – PRESENT

### Creative Director & Visual Storytelling Lead / Mangrove Action Project, USA

#### Ongoing Leadership & Strategic Responsibilities

- Lead MAP's global **visual storytelling and film strategy**, aligning media outputs with organisational goals in conservation, education, and community empowerment.
- Develop film frameworks that support **community-based ecological mangrove restoration (CBEMR)** training, donor reporting, and public engagement.
- Work closely with scientists, community facilitators, and programme managers to ensure films accurately reflect ecological science and local knowledge.

- Build a long-term visual archive documenting restoration processes, socio-economic change, and ecosystem recovery.
- Mentor local partners and contributors in ethical storytelling and basic filmmaking practices.
- Deliver content used across **grant reports, donor updates, workshops, online education, and international advocacy.**

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## Selected Productions with Mangrove Action Project

APR 2025 – PRESENT

### **Producer Director / My Life, My Forest, Thailand**

A character-led and driven 20-minute documentary following the life of Khun Nit as she discovers that bees could transform not only her own life, but also the future of her community. Currently in post-production with local impact campaign

NOV 2023 – DEC 2025

### **Producer Director / Rita of the Sundarbans, Bangladesh**

A collaboration with local NGO, Bangladesh Environment and Development Society (BEDS), to produce a series of short films to capture the story and knowledge sharing impact of the mangrove restoration training and work on the local community. Community-voiced and mentored local partners

MAY 2025 - PRESENT

### **Director / Ecosystems 360°, Malaysia**

Education project in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo, for the University of Singapore, focused on how immersive VR storytelling can improve conservation learning and engagement among university students. Community engagement and student mentoring

OCTOBER 2024

### **Producer Director / A Global Mangrove Alliance, Indonesia**

Documented a mangrove restoration training conducted with the Global Mangrove Alliance's Indonesia National Chapter, to capture the knowledge and new skill gained. Collaboration across stakeholders

FEB 2023 – DEC 2023

### **Producer Director / Return of the Mangroves, El Salvador**

Short documentary of change in a local community and environment, following mangrove restoration training conducted by the MAP team. Impact through local and international screenings

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## Additional Selected Experience

2015 - PRESENT

### **Founder & Director / Mangrove Photography Awards, International**

Delivers and chairs an annual photography contest giving us fascinating insights into the world of mangroves all over the globe. Significant reach through major media outlets

SEPTEMBER 2020

### **Director & Camera Operator / Marine Conservation Society, UK**

Scripted, directed and filmed, a presenter led 12-minute introductory guide to rock pooling, to encourage families to explore their local coastlines.

APRIL - JUNE 2020

### **Animator / The Bristol Cable, UK**

Produced a series of animations for documentary *Lessons from Lockdown* to illustrate the negative impacts of air pollution on the people of Bristol. 18K views

DECEMBER 2019

### **Producer Director / MA Wildlife Filmmaking Project, UK**

Produced, directed and filmed a 6-minute short about a beekeeper called Heather, who passes on her devoted knowledge of bees to Rufus, a 5-year-old boy

APRIL 2016

### **Animator / Give Back Project, UK**

Produced a series of animations that would appear in natural history documentaries about Pakistan for educational purposes. Collaboration with wildlife filmmaker and conservationist Nisar Malik

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2014

### **Animation Specialist / Greater Mekong Subregion EOC, Thailand**

Produced a series of animations to describe the cross-border work being done to help to secure natural capital in the Greater Mekong Subregion

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## **Awards & Recognition**

[Tulum World Environment Film Festival](#) / A winning entry in Conservation Shorts (2025)

[Trees & Seas Film Festival](#) / A winning entry in Community Impact (2024)

[Conservation Optimism Short Film Festival](#) / A winning entry in Super Shorts (2019)

[MYM Animation Competition](#) / A winning entry *The Hidden Costs of Tropical Shrimp* (2017)

[Mid Atlantic Emmy Award](#) / Nominated for *Water Blues: Green Solutions* (2014)

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## **Education**

[MA Wildlife Filmmaking](#) / UWE, in affiliation with BBC NHU (2019- 2022)

[Landscape Architecture PGDipLA](#) / Kingston University London (2007- 2009)

[Landscape Architecture BAHons](#) / Kingston University London (2003- 2006), 1<sup>st</sup>

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## **References**

Dominic Wodehouse, Executive Director, MAP, +44 7491660032, [dominic@mangroveactionproject.org](mailto:dominic@mangroveactionproject.org)

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