

# **NOVA *THE IMPOSSIBLE FLIGHT***

**Two-Hour Special Premieres Wednesday, January 31, 2018 at 9PM/8C on PBS  
(check local listings)**

## **WINTER 2018 TCA PRESS TOUR PANELIST BIOS**

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### **PAULA S. APSELL**

#### **Senior Executive Producer, NOVA, and Director, WGBH Science Unit, WGBH Boston**

Paula Apsell began her work in broadcast typing the public broadcaster WGBH Boston's daily logs, a job, she notes, that is now mercifully automated. While at WGBH-FM, her next move, she developed the award-winning children's drama series *The Spider's Web* and served as an on-air radio news producer. She then joined WGBH's pioneering science documentary series NOVA, producing, among several other programs, *Death of a Disease*, the first long-form documentary about the worldwide eradication of smallpox. Moving to WCVB, the ABC affiliate in Boston, she became senior producer for medical programming, working with Dr. Timothy Johnson. She then spent a year at MIT as a Knight Science Journalism Fellow until she took over the leadership of NOVA, where she is now senior executive producer and director of the WGBH Science Unit. In 2016, Apsell became the second woman and first from the profession of journalism and communications to receive the Galien Foundation's annual Pro Bono Humanum Award, which recognizes contributions leading to improvements in the state of human health. She is also a recipient of the Bradford Washburn Award from the Museum of Science, Boston; the Carl Sagan Award, given by the Council of Scientific Society Presidents; the American Institute of Physics Andrew Gemant Award; and the Planetary Society's Cosmos Award, among many others. She has served on the board of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, the Brandeis University Sciences Advisory Committee and the International Documentary Association.

### **ANDRÉ BORSCHBERG**

#### **Co-founder, CEO and Pilot of Solar Impulse**

Fueled by a drive to push the boundaries of the possible in both technology and human endeavors, André Borschberg is an entrepreneur whose passion for exploration is matched only by his persistence to drive economic, environmental and spiritual growth.

Heading the Solar Impulse project together with Bertrand Piccard, André Borschberg converted the vision of a solar airplane of unlimited autonomy into reality building up the technical team, leading the design, construction and test of the two prototypes as well as organizing the flight missions. The result was the successful completion of the first-ever circumnavigation of the globe in a solar airplane without a drop of fuel. In addition to conceiving the revolutionary aircraft and piloting it around the globe, André he has led the evolution of aviation technology into new, energy efficient solutions that will also serve and transform a number of industries.

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In 2015, during the Japan-to-Hawaii leg of the mission, André flew for the first time ever 5 days and 5 nights non-stop over the Pacific Ocean breaking the world record for the longest solo flight in an airplane of any kind. He had previously achieved recognition for the first-ever day and night flight in a solar airplane flying Solar Impulse 1 in 2010, followed by a number of different world records.

A graduate engineer from EPFL and holder of a management science degree from MIT, he also is an entrepreneur of several new projects and startups. Thanks to his wife Yasemin, André discovered yoga and meditation, which have been essential to his successes in both exploration and entrepreneurship. These practices have helped him develop the right mindset to become an explorer. Important was to have and keep the right attitude to constantly welcome and be open to new and unforeseen situations. Developing and flying a solar airplane with unlimited endurance was considered impossible by the aeronautical industry.

Fascinated by aviation from his early youth, he learnt to fly with the Swiss air force and holds an assortment of professional airplane and helicopter pilot's licenses. He also does aerobatics in his spare time.

As a leader in pioneering technologies, André enjoys sharing his experiences as a speaker and lending his point of view on topics ranging from 'Making the Impossible Possible'; 'The Pivot Point from Explorer to Leader'; to 'From Vision to Reality'; and 'Turning Obstacles into Opportunities'.

## **BERTRAND PICCARD**

### **Initiator, Chairman and Pilot of Solar Impulse**

It is in Piccard's DNA to go beyond the obvious and achieve the impossible, as he did with his two round-the-world flights, recently in a solar-powered airplane, and before that non-stop in a balloon. The ocean depths and the stratosphere attracted his father and grandfather; the challenges of our time fascinate him. Rather than new territories, he wants to discover new ways of doing and thinking, in particular in the field of clean technologies for a better quality of life.

Piccard is the initiator and visionary behind Solar Impulse, the first airplane capable of flying perpetually without fuel. Taking turns at the controls with André Borschberg for the first flight around the world on solar power, his ambition is to leverage pioneering spirit for a useful contribution to the cause of renewable energies. This is why he spent the last 15 years bringing together the major partners providing technologies and funds for this adventure. Together with his wife, Michèle, he conceived the Solar Impulse project as a widely recognized platform to raise public awareness and encourage political actions in favor of clean technologies and energy efficiency, the next stage of which includes the establishment to this end of the World Alliance for Efficient Solutions under the aegis of the Solar Impulse Foundation. The inspiration he received from other explorers and pioneers during his childhood gave him the desire to inspire young generations in return.

## **NOEL DOCKSTADER (IN AUDIENCE) AND QUINN KANALY (ON STAGE)**

### **Co-directors/Producers**

Creative partners for more than a decade, filmmakers Noel Dockstader and Quinn Kanaly tell thought-provoking, impactful stories about science, history and exploration. When they learned of Solar Impulse's audacious zero-fuel flight, they knew it had the potential to be one of the most important

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pioneering adventures of our time—and they felt compelled to capture it. Over 10 months, Dockstader and Kanaly found themselves on opposite sides of the world, tracking the unfolding drama both on the tarmac and at mission control—connected only by their cell phones and a shared vision for the film.

Prior to embarking on the Solar Impulse project, Dockstader and Kanaly's collaborative works at Far West Film (San Francisco, CA) have been broadcast in the U.S. and internationally on National Geographic, Discovery, Smithsonian and PBS. Previous films include *Extreme Ice* for NOVA and *Collapse*, a two-hour special for National Geographic based on the book by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jared Diamond.

## **ADDITIONAL ONSITE TALENT:**

### **CHRIS SCHMIDT**

#### **Senior Producer, NOVA**

Chris Schmidt is an award-winning show runner, executive producer, writer director and filmmaker with a focus on documentary and non-fiction television programming. He has traveled the world to produce and direct films and television programs for PBS, Dreamworks Animation, The Discovery Channel, History Channel, National Geographic, Animal Planet and others. Since joining NOVA in 2012 as senior producer, he has developed, produced, written and executive produced dozens of programs—including news-driven quick-turnaround films, multi-part series and content for digital platforms.

Prior to joining the NOVA staff, Schmidt served as VP of special projects and VP of production for Powderhouse Productions, one of the largest factual production companies in the Northeast. While at Powderhouse, he developed and executive-produced the NOVA miniseries *Making Stuff*, as well as a two-hour NOVA special, *Hunting the Elements* – hosted by popular tech writer David Pogue. He also served as showrunner/executive producer for more than 100 hours of factual programming in series such as *Extreme Engineering*, *Build It Bigger*, *Mega Engineering* (Discovery Networks), *Sliced*, *The Works* (History Channel), *Dogs 101* (Animal Planet) as well as numerous limited series and one-offs for PBS, National Geographic Channel and others.

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### **PR CONTACTS:**

Eileen Campion  
Roslan & Campion Public Relations  
212.966.4600  
[eileen@rc-pr.com](mailto:eileen@rc-pr.com)

Jennifer Welsh  
NOVA /WGBH  
617.300.4382  
[jennifer\\_welsh@wgbh.org](mailto:jennifer_welsh@wgbh.org)