



**CHILDREN OF THE ARCTIC premieres on AMERICA REFRAMED**  
**A film by Nick Brandestini**

**Tuesday, April 5, 2016 at 8 p.m.**  
**on Public Television's WORLD Channel**

[AMERICA REFRAMED](#)

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“... important and timely. Every aspect of their daily lives, family history, customs, language, way of life and the environment that sustains them is at great risk of extinction.  
- Phyllis de Picciotto and Chaz Ebert, Jurors, Santa Barbara International Film Festival.

March 22, 2016 – (New York, NY) – Nick Brandestini's documentary **CHILDREN OF THE ARCTIC** will have its U.S. television premiere **Tuesday, April 5, 2016, at 8 p.m.** on WORLD Channel ([check local listings](#)), as part of the fourth season of **AMERICA REFRAMED**, public media's newest documentary series hosted by Natasha Del Toro. The film will be available for free streaming on [www.worldchannel.org](http://www.worldchannel.org) starting April 6, 2016.

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At the Arctic edge of America, Native Alaskan teenagers strive to be both modern American kids and the inheritors of an ancient whaling culture and tradition

**CHILDREN OF THE ARCTIC** is a year-in-the-life portrait of Native youth coming of age in Barrow, Alaska. For Josiah, Flora and Maaya, growing up is more complicated than it was for their ancestors, who originally named the place “Ukpiagvik” (“where we hunt snowy owls.”). They belong to a remote people and culture that has endured for millennia on an isolated tundra (a large area of flat land in northern parts of Alaska with no trees and frozen ground). As descendants of Alaska's Iñupiat Eskimo people, they are inheritors of a centuries-old way of life that emphasizes traditional mores about community, the role of elders and the Iñupiat relationship to nature.

Proud of their Native heritage, the teens are also modern Americans facing stark realities: a fast-changing culture and climate, modern consumer economies and the impact of oil-drilling; the teens think about leaving Barrow for city life and what they will make of their future.



However, the community of Barrow is actively reclaiming its language, culture and traditions. Central to communal way of life is whale hunting, but the melting icecaps make the hunt more dangerous than ever. Native Rights Activist and community elder, George Edwardson speaks with authority about the present state of affairs, “In some areas the ice is melting or gone and the water is too warm. The animals are in shock.” Aerial photographs offer evidence of massive ice cracks in the region.

Alaska’s ecosystem is not the only foreboding loss. Maaya, whose cinematic talent won her a school award for her suicide awareness campaign, travels to Point Lay, a rural community with a population of only 247 residents. Concerned about the rate of suicide attempts and deaths, she speaks to young people about feelings of isolation and depression.

Meanwhile, Josiah and Flora, both 18 years old, have recently married and Flora earns a prestigious scholarship, diverting their future for the time being, despite caring deeply about the preservation of their Iñupiat culture. They move to Fairbanks, but, their connection to the land—and especially their desire to spend precious time with their aging grandparents—calls them back home. Will Josiah be able to build a life with Flora as a whaling captain? Will the young couple strike a balance between the ways of their forefathers while making the most of a western education?

Nick Brandestini’s portrait of the contemporary lives of these teenagers and the decisions they have to make about their futures will take viewers away from the average city and into a remote place in the American landscape. As viewers meet and hear Josiah, Flora and Maaya talk about their fears and dreams, they help us understand the divergent values each tries to reconcile.

In 2015, **CHILDREN OF THE ARCTIC** was named Best Documentary Film at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival. The film also won awards at the Zurich Film Festival, the Rhode Island International Film Festival, the Guam Film Festival, and the Oxford Film Festival among others.

**Film Credits**

Director: Nick Brandestini  
Producer: Vesna Eckert



### **About AMERICA REFRAMED**

**AMERICA REFRAMED** is a co-production of the WORLD Channel and American Documentary, Inc. and is hosted by journalist Natasha Del Toro.

Season 4 of AMERICA REFRAMED curates a diverse selection of films highlighting innovative and artistic approaches to storytelling from emerging and veteran filmmakers alike. Viewers will be immersed in personal stories from the streets of towns big and small to the exurbs and country roads that span the spectrum of American life. The documentaries invite audiences to reflect on topics as varied as culture, healthcare, politics, gun violence, religion and more. Several episodes feature a roundtable discussion moderated by host Natasha Del Toro with special guest commentators and filmmakers.

In 2015, AMERICA REFRAMED won a GRACIE Outstanding Series award, and was nominated for an EMMY award as well as an Independent Documentary Association award for best curated series. In its first season, AMERICA REFRAMED received five 2013 CINE Golden Eagle Awards, and one Imagen Awards nomination.

### **AMERICA REFRAMED Series Credits**

Executive Producers: Justine Nagan, Chris Hastings, Chris White  
Series Producer: Carmen L. Vicencio  
Host: Natasha Del Toro

### **Web and Social Media**

AMERICA REFRAMED can be accessed online via  
<http://worldchannel.org/programs/america-reframed/>  
and,  
<https://www.facebook.com/WorldChannel>  
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### **AMERICA REFRAMED Co-Producers**

**American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc)** is a multimedia arts organization dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. AmDoc is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. For more information, visit: [www.amdoc.org](http://www.amdoc.org)

**The WORLD Channel** delivers the best of public television’s nonfiction, news and documentary programming, including original content by and about diverse communities, to U.S. audiences through local public television stations and streaming online at [worldchannel.org](http://worldchannel.org). WORLD reached 35.8 million unique viewers 18+ last year (55% adults 18-49) and over-indexes in key diversity demographics. Online, the WORLD Channel expands on broadcast topics and fuels dialogue across social media, providing opportunities for broad and diverse audience interaction.

WORLD is programmed by WGBH/Boston, in partnership with American Public Television and WNET/New York, and in association with PBS and National Educational Telecommunications Association. Funding for the WORLD Channel is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Ford Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Kendeda Fund. For more information about The WORLD Channel, visit [www.worldchannel.org](http://www.worldchannel.org)

### **Media Contact**

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