

## A biography of Yann Arthus-Bertrand

Yann Arthus-Bertrand (born in 1946) has always had a passion for the animal world and the natural environment. In 1967, he settled in central France and became the director of a nature reserve.

At the age of 30, he travelled to Kenya with his wife with whom he carried out a three-year study on the behaviour of a family of lions in the Massai Mara reserve. He quickly started using a camera to capture their observations and to enhance the written reports they compiled. He earned his money as a hot-air balloon pilot. It was then that he properly discovered the earth from above and his interest in viewing what he was studying from afar, which gave him the advantage of having an overall picture of an area and its resources. This is how he discovered his calling: to demonstrate the Earth's beauty in pictures in order to raise awareness of the importance of preserving it.

His first book, *Lions*, was borne of this adventure – he likes to call these lions his “first photography teachers”.

Upon his return to France, he became a photographer for specialised coverage of adventure, sport and nature.

In 1991 he founded Altitude, the world's first aerial photography agency bringing together photographs from all over the world, and, in his own work turned his attention towards long-term projects, books and exhibitions, that examined the links between man and nature: *The Earth from Above, Animals, Horses, 365 Days to Think about our Planet...*

In 2003, Yann Arthus-Bertrand launched the project “Six Billion Others”, which was exhibited in Paris's Grand Palais in January and February 2009 and is now on tour.

A team of film directors went to meet men and women all over the world and recorded on video the testimonies they received on general themes (such as life, death, love, hate etc).

[www.6milliardsdautres.org](http://www.6milliardsdautres.org)

[www.6billionothers.org](http://www.6billionothers.org)

He then founded GoodPlanet, a non-profit organisation that aims to raise public awareness public on environmental issues, and to develop concrete solutions towards a more sustainable way of life - one that is more respectful of our planet and its inhabitants.

[www.goodplanet.org](http://www.goodplanet.org)

In partnership with ADEME (the French Agency of the Environment and Energy Management) he developed Action Carbone, which offers institutions, companies and individuals the possibility to calculate, reduce and offset their greenhouse gas emissions by changing their own impact and by funding renewable energies, energy efficiency or reforestation projects, carried out by NGO's in the global South.

[www.actioncarbone.org](http://www.actioncarbone.org)

This was followed by projects such as Why Sustainable Development? in collaboration with the French ministries of Education and of Environment. This is an educational exhibition free to schools with his aerial photographs accompanied by a series of texts that can be used for educational purposes by teachers ([www.ledeveloppementdurable.fr](http://www.ledeveloppementdurable.fr)). Other projects include GoodPlanet.info, an information website on the state of the world regarding environmental issues in a broad sense, and GoodPlanet Conso, which encourages the individuals to take steps to consume less and better.

[www.goodplanet.org/conso](http://www.goodplanet.org/conso).

In August 2008, Yann Arthus-Bertrand also initiated the project GoodPlanet Junior in collaboration with the French League of Education (Ligue de l'Enseignement) that offers vacation schemes to disadvantaged youngsters and teaches them about eco-citizenship whilst spending time in protected natural surroundings.

All these projects have in common Yann Arthus-Bertrand's desire to act by suggesting concrete solutions to the public that will enable us to put the environment at the core of our consciences.

It is due to this involvement that Yann Arthus-Bertrand is nowadays considered more of an environmentalist than a photographer.

Indeed, Yann Arthus-Bertrand was designated Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Environment Programme on Earth Day (April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009) in recognition of his outstanding advocacy work for the environment. He was also named a UNEP 2009 Champion of the Earth in the category « Inspiration and Action ».

At the same time, he is also the author of *Seen From Above*, a documentary series of several one-and-a-half hour episodes, shown on the French public television. Interspersed with sequences filmed from the sky and interviews with experts or people on the ground, each episode of *Seen From Above* explores an environmental issue. It is currently being distributed for broadcast in 40 countries.

[www.vuduciel.fr](http://www.vuduciel.fr)

Emboldened by his television experiment, Yann Arthus-Bertrand undertook to produce a full-length cinema film: *HOME*. It deals with the state of our planet and the challenges we will have to face if we do not protect it. The film, whose producer is the French film-maker Luc Besson, was released on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2009 on television, on the internet, on DVD and in cinemas simultaneously worldwide, mostly free of charge. More than 100 million people have seen it since.

[www.home-2009.com](http://www.home-2009.com)

Yann Arthus-Bertrand and his foundation attended the UN Conference on climate in Copenhagen in December 2009 with a new film 6 Billion Others – Climate Voices and organised a film festival showing documentaries on climate and the environment at the Danish Film Institute.