

Documentary Film

Documentary films are films, too. "They are among the principal achievements in cinematic history, and involve a complex array of different potential styles and approaches" (Nowlan)

1. What is a "Documentary"?

- Content
- Elements
- Approaches
- Style
- Purpose

Content

- Presumably non-fiction
- Show and Tell.

Elements

- Archival Materials
 - Film/video clips
 - Photographs
 - Documents
- Interviews
 - Subjects
 - Witnesses
 - Experts
- Footage shot for the Documentary

Approaches

- Poetic
- Expository
- Participatory
- Observational
- Dramatic

Style

- Overall look
 - Titles/Layout
 - Lighting
 - Tone and Pace
 - Degree of Consistency
- Organization - how you tell the story

Throughout the recorded history of world cinema, three principal aims drive forward production and reception:

1. entertainment,
2. artistic expression, and
- 3. social critique as contribution to, or instrument of, social change.**

Documentaries do not simply record "the truth" in a purely neutral, objectively disinterested manner.

They argue for positions and critique others, often in the interest of providing inspiration for social change.