

Definition of a Documentary

Before next week class students will read and familiarise themselves with the terms below and research into the documentary genre links below. This is vital for the module and developing your awareness for the styles, genres and practises you will be undertaking over the year.

• **How do we categorise a document?**

- The Poetic Mode ('reassembling fragments of the world', a transformation of historical material into a more abstract, lyrical form, usually associated with 1920s and modernist ideas)
- The Expository Mode ('direct address', "voice of god syndrome" social issues assembled into an argumentative frame, mediated by a voice-of-God narration, associated with 1920s-1930s, and some of the rhetoric and polemic surrounding WW2)
- The Observational Mode (as technology advanced by the 1960s and cameras became smaller and lighter, able to document life in a less intrusive manner, there is less control required over lighting etc, leaving the social actors free to act and the documentarists free to record without interacting with each other)
- The Participatory Mode (the encounter between film-maker and subject is recorded, as the film-maker actively engages with the situation they are documenting, asking questions of their subjects, sharing experiences with them. Heavily reliant on the honesty of witnesses)
- The Reflexive Mode (demonstrates consciousness of the process of reading documentary, and engages actively with the issues of realism and representation, acknowledging the presence of the viewer and the modality judgements they arrive at. Corresponds to critical theory of the 1980s)
- The Performative Mode (acknowledges the emotional and subjective aspects of documentary, and presents ideas as part of a context, having different meanings for different people, often autobiographical in nature)
- Political reflexivity "develops the audience's awareness of the issue.

Documentary Genres

- [Docufiction](#), [Ethnofiction](#), [Docudrama](#), [Mockumentary](#), [Mondo film](#)
- Check: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Documentary_film

Make use to follow the links above and become aware of the different genre definitions of documentary and find the ones not listed above.