



A New History of Documentary Film: Second Edition

By Betsy A. McLane

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A New History of Documentary Film: Second Edition By Betsy A. McLane

A New History of Documentary Film, Second Edition offers a much-needed resource, considering the very rapid changes taking place within documentary media. Building upon the best-selling 2005 edition, Betsy McLane keeps the same chronological examination, factual reliability, ease of use and accessible prose style as before, while also weaving three new threads - Experimental Documentary, Visual Anthropology and Environmental/Nature Films - into the discussion. She provides emphasis on archival and preservation history, present practices, and future needs for documentaries. Along with preservation information, specific problems of copyright and fair use, as they relate to documentary, are considered.

Finally, A History of Documentary Film retains and updates the recommended readings and important films and the end of each chapter from the first edition, including the bibliography and appendices. Impossible to talk learnedly about documentary film without an audio-visual component, a companion website will increase its depth of information and overall usefulness to students, teachers and film enthusiasts.

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A New History of Documentary Film: Second Edition By Betsy A. McLane Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #219234 in Books
- Brand: Bloomsbury Academic
- Published on: 2012-04-26
- Released on: 2012-04-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.03" h x 1.07" w x 6.05" l, 1.55 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 456 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

The timing couldn't be better for a knowledgeable survey of documentary films that acknowledges (and appreciates) the work of Robert Flaherty but continues through the era of cable TV, digital video, Michael Moore and *Born Into Brothels*. This thoughtful appraisal will be useful to students as well as moviegoers who want to learn more about the history of nonfiction filmmaking. Leonard Maltin

This book expands Ellis's *The Documentary Idea* (1989), a classic history of English-language social documentary film and video. Here Ellis (Northwestern Univ.) partners with Betsy McLane (past president, University Film and Video Association) to bring the subject of documentary film forward into the global sphere of digital image-capture technologies, satellite and Internet distribution and exhibition, and the "frenzy of TV reality shows." Like the earlier edition, the book is homage to documentary pioneer John Grierson, who coined the term "documentary" in 1926, and largely limits itself to the English-language "social documentary," i.e., "the mainline of the documentary tradition Grierson set in motion." Within those parameters, each of the 18 chapters offers a concise and useful historical overview of a particular time period, topic, or filmmaker and adds a list of relevant film titles and publications. Soviet propaganda and European avant-garde experimentation are discussed, though less comprehensively. As a carefully considered and reader-friendly volume, this book takes its place alongside Erik Barnouw's classic *Documentary* (1974). Specialists and advanced scholars may prefer Michael Renov's *The Subject of Documentary* (CH, Feb'05, 42-3312), which reconsiders the Griersonian "objective" ideal in the light of the subjective practices of the autobiographical vernacular." **Summing Up: Recommended. Lower-/upper-division undergraduates, graduate students, general readers.**

(CHOICE)

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(L. Clare Bratten)

Documentary (

1974)" -*Humanities-Performing Arts-Film* 2006<?xml:namespace prefix = o ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />

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(Sanford Lakoff)

About the Author

Betsy A. McLane is the Project Director of "The American Documentary Showcase" a presentation of the U.S. Department of State Bureau and Education and Cultural Affairs. Director Emerita of the International Documentary Association. She has taught courses on film and documentary at Loyola Marymount University, the University of Vermont, Emerson College and the University of Southern California. She is a Past President of the University Film and Video Association.

Users Review

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