

Synopsis

Now brought completely up to date, the new edition of this classic work on documentary films and filmmaking surveys the history of the genre from 1895 to the present day. With the myriad social upheavals over the past decade, documentaries have enjoyed an international renaissance; here Barnouw considers the medium in the light of an entirely new political and social climate. He examines as well the latest filmmaking technology, and the effects that video cassettes and cable television are having on the production of documentaries. And like the previous editions, Documentary is filled with photographs, many of them rare, collected during the author's travels around the world. Covering the full course of the documentary from Louis Lumiere's first effort to recent landmark productions such as Shoah, this book makes the growing importance of a unique blend of art and reality accessible and understandable to all film lovers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I know that when you see a book receive the five star rating you think that the person reviewing is either tender-hearted or an ignoramus as it is inconceivable to think of a perfect book. However, since I am neither tender-hearted nor an ignoramus I give you my word that Barnouw's book is an amazing reference guide to the world of non-fiction films. Its an incredibly quick read, it took me a matter of days despite a hectic schedule, and though a lot of names and movies come flying at you they are easy to access and remember. So if you know nothing about documentaries you can quickly become knowledgeable by reading this book and then know what films you should seek

after. The book traces non-fiction films all the way from the early experiments of Muybridge and the actualities of Lumiere all the way up to the 1990s. It divides the films not by region but by their respective genre and in the order they emerged. Then in the final chapter, "Movement," it carries documentaries up into our days and explains what's going on and where it's headed. Again, though you wished Barnouw could have delved even deeper into certain aspects, or become more localized as this is mostly a globalized look, you realize that this book is only the stepping stone into a whole new world. Barnouw is merely opening the door and inviting us to enter.

Barnouw has taken a wealth of creativity and almost a century of filmmaking and not only made it manageable but intensely relevant and interesting. His breakdown of the various movements throughout the history of the documentary film is right on and remarkable. The research included in this masterpiece is unmatchable in other writings on the documentary. Filmmakers and non-filmmakers alike need to read this book. It is a history lesson on a all too often over looked art.

Not only is this a wonderful documentary film history text, it is also extremely well-written. Barnouw is a wonderful storyteller and knows his subject perhaps better than anyone.

Book I read some 15 years ago for documentary class. And I remembered it and was impressed with its honest appraisal of the war movies, especially the ones that were exaggerations, half truths or edited before they could be shown. Interesting information.

As far as cinema studies goes, this is one of the classics; full of valuable information, reliable interpretations and insightful comments. If you're interested in the numerous facets of documentaries, you could do much worse than start with Barnouw's seminal book. Also, this is a very good example of great academic writing: clever but intriguing (granted, it's easier to write like that in writing history than theory, but nevertheless, you'll probably read this book with great pleasure). Highly recommended!

I came across this book as a requirement for a class. Not knowing much - if anything - about documentary I found it to be a good read nice, concise history of the genre, lots of good information. I enjoyed reading it so much, when class was over - I did not sell it back. good introduction to the documentary genre !

Must have for all documentary filmmaking aficionados!! Like the bible of documentary filmmaking, very well written, very interesting. Recommended to all filmmaker, journalist and wannabes!!

If you are interested in Documentary Film, this is a great introduction to the genre. Barnouw brings you through history with ease and enjoyment. I found it extremely satisfactory; definitely not a disappointment.

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