

RPS Lecture 7

Photography has the ability to document, but also to distort and reshape the world it records; the documentary photographer yields a picture of social construction over what or what which is represented and how it is represented."

Def: -

RPS Looking to the present, looking to the past. *Session 1 - Lecture 7: Documentary*
22/10/20

① - Origins of Documentary.

- Witnessing
- Evidence
- Change
- Being there - 1920s
- Idea of a higher level
- Views with emotions
- What do we project
- We judge - more impact to research
- Our own global knowledge

- James Nachtwey - Jakarta, 1998

Evidence - used as art work

Change

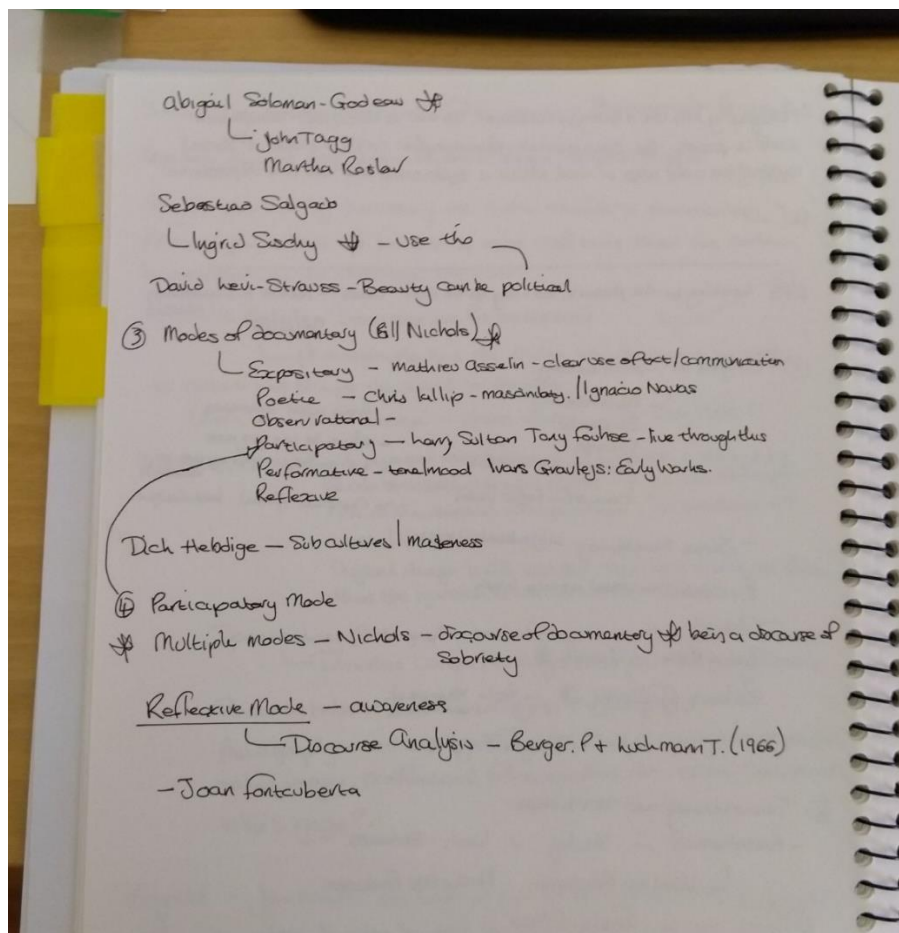
Being there - Quote #

Robert Flaherty # - Very staged.

Tony Tanaka

② Documentary and Aesthetics

- Aesthetics - Sussky v Levi-Stravos
- Walter Benjamin - Author as Producer
- 'Family of Man'
- Karl Blossfeldt
- Wright Morris - Fifty Key Writers in Photography #
- Lauren Deveney #
- Anne de Gelass #
- John Szarkowski - New Documents



Looking to the present, looking to the past

Series 1 – lecture 7: Documentary Matters with Colin Pantall

Lecture 7: Documentary matters – expanding the documentary view



1. Origins of Documentary
2. Documentary and aesthetics
3. Modes of documentary
4. The Reflexive Turn

Dictionary of Photography definition

‘...the term refers to a particular approach that emerged in the mid 20th century , typified by formal conventions such as clarity, frontality, centred images and static poses, and a socially or politically motivated engagement with reality.’

From The Dictionary of Photography (Natalie Herschdorger)

1. Origins of Documentary

- Witnessing
- Evidence
- Change
- Being there

- The idea of a higher level

Witnessing (but what are we witnessing?)

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?
- How?

Thomas Hoepker
9.11.01 New York



James Nachtwey, Jakarta 1998

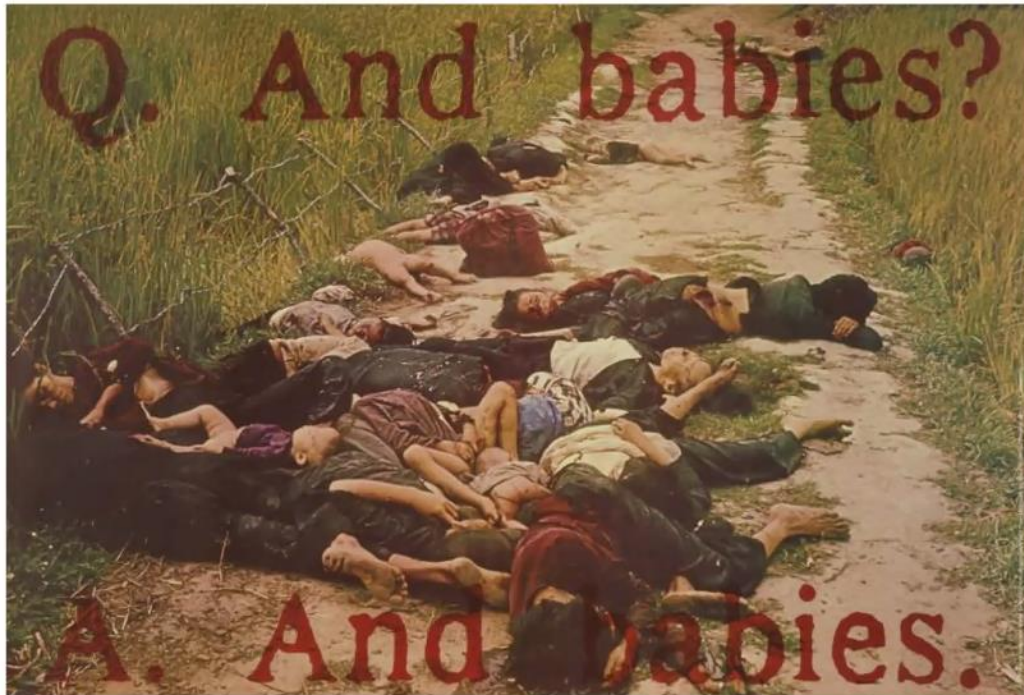


‘Obviously, these men and women are of the westernized side of Beirut, (maybe Christian, perhaps not). I think this photo is an interesting perspective on how a lot of westernized Lebanese, (those whose lives have not been destroyed), see this conflict: as a Hollywood stage set, cruising around with the top down, enjoying the sights. I mean, its disgusting! They remind me of actors and singers, doing a photo op, while their fellow citizens are suffering.

If this is what it means to become westernized in Lebanon then this should be a lesson to’

<https://www.readingthepictures.org/2006/08/cruising/all>.

Evidence



Art Workers' Coalition, Q.And babies? A.And babies., 1970

https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RDAR-Vol-IIIBook6.pdf



https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RD

AR-Vol-IIIBook6.pdf



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%E1%BB%B9_Lai_massacre



Change



Being there

Most historians credit Scots filmmaker and critic John Grierson with first applying the word documentary in 1926 to describe Robert Flaherty's nonfiction film *Moana* about the daily life of a Polynesian youth. Grierson noted that the film presented facts without any fictional overtones, suggesting that authenticity is fundamental to documentary work, that documentary suggests an interest in the actual, not the subjective, and acknowledging that documentary's Latin word root is doc, doct, or docere, meaning "to teach" or "instruct."

Michelle Bogle: Photography and Activism



Gary Larson

Robert Flaherty

- Nanook of the North
- Man of Aran
- Moana

Regarded as the inventor of the documentary film
Staged hunting scenes to highlight man v nature theme.
Got locals to wear traditional dress in Moana

This type of film is now known as docufiction



Nanook's real name was Allakariallak. Keen to play along with Flaherty's wish to represent the Inuit as living a simpler way of life, 'Nanook' was filmed hunting with a spear, despite the fact that in reality the tribe had long before abandoned spears in favour of guns.

In a scene at a trading post, 'Nanook' comes across a gramophone, and is filmed appearing to try and eat the record - in actual fact he'd seen one before as Flaherty shared his gramophone, tea, tobacco and biscuits with the Itivimuit in exchange for their help with filming.

Tanya Taqaq on Robert Flaherty, 2014

"I truly believe he had a real affection for the Inuit. In fact he was fucking one of the characters."

See a clip of her accompaniment to Nanook of the North here

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iV-YQSQI_FE&ab_channel=TIFFOriginals

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vghllwoPgB4&ab_channel=LizHargreaves



2. Documentary and aesthetics

- Walter Benjamin – The author as Producer
- New Objectivity
- David Levi-Strauss
- Sebastiao Salgado

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73u7eugbbu8>

Aesthetics

Ingrid Sischy (1991)

Salgado is too busy with the compositional aspects of his pictures—and with finding the “grace” and “beauty” in the twisted form of his anguished subjects.

David Levi-Strauss (1992)

‘To represent is to aestheticise; that is, to transform.’

Walter Benjamin ‘The Author As Producer,’

He talks about correct production (which is a certain engagement)

He admires John Heartfield turning the book cover into a political object

He writes of ‘the way certain modish photographers proceed in order to make human misery an object of consumption.’

https://monoskop.org/images/9/93/Benjamin_Walter_1934_1999_The_Author_as_Producer.pdf



ADOLF, DER ÜBERMENSCH: Schluckt Gold und redet Blech

But now follow the path of photography further. What do you see ? It becomes ever more nuance, ever more modern; and the result is that it can no longer record a tenement block or a refuse heap without transfiguring it. Needless to say, photography is unable to convey anything about a power station or a cable factory other than, "What a beautiful world!" The World Is Beautiful-this is the title of the well-known picture anthology by Renger Patzsch, in which we see New Objective photography at its peak. For it has succeeded in transforming even abject poverty-by apprehending it in a fashionably perfected manner-into an object of enjoyment.

New ObjectivityNeue Sachlichkeit

- Albert Renger-Patzsch – made the book Die Welt ist Schon (1928)
- The idea that
- Was criticised by Walter Benjamin and everybody else in turn for its sentimental focus on beauty
- Focus on formality of image

Albert Renger –Patzsch – intro to The World is Beautiful

‘There must be an increase in the joy one takes in an object, and the photographer should be fully conscious of the splendid fidelity of reproduction made possible by his technique.’



Karl Blossfeldt



Wright Morris

Documentary Photography is 'confirmation' as a way 'to hold on to what was passing.'

Uses text – poems, prose, essays – to combine an 'interior and exterior psychology of a rapidly vanishing America.'

Asked what comes first – the photograph or the photographer?

Fifty Key Writers on Photography

'I couldn't go out and make a new world for myself to photograph and it wasn't advisable. This is a revisitation. In fact a repossession.'







John Szarkowski

In *Mirrors and Windows*, Szarkowski split American photography since the 1950s into photographers who 'think of photography as a means of self-expression' and those who think of it as a method of exploration.

There is the romantic (Minor White) and the realist (Robert Frank)

He curated *New Documents* (Arbus, Winogrand, Friedlander)

'Most issues of importance cannot be photographed'

Diane Arbus's photographs best memorialized the 'moral frailty and failure' of the Vietnam War

‘The thing that made the world of Winogrand, Friedlander, and Arbus possible, that made it so wonderful, like absolutely the first breath of spring air coming through this smoggy city, was that what had come to be called the documentary tradition had gotten so leaden, tired, boring, dutiful, automatic, Pavlovian...’

In Photoshow, edited by Alessandro Mauro





Describing an Image

- Who are the people in the image

Name

Age

Job

Personality

Neuroses

- Two of the people in the image are partners.

How did they meet

What is the attraction

What does their future hold

Abigail Solomon-Godeau

Said Szarkowski failed to address photography's involvement in 'issues of spectacle, voyeurism, and the visual appropriation of the world that followed in the wake of colonialism and imperialism.'

See also John Tagg

And Martha Rosler

Sebastiao Salgado: Sierra Pelada Goldmine







Ingrid Sischy on Salgado, The New Yorker, 1991

Salgado is too busy with the compositional aspects of his pictures—and with finding the “grace” and “beauty” in the twisted form of his anguished subjects. And this beautification of tragedy results in pictures that ultimately reinforce our passivity toward the experience they reveal. To aestheticize tragedy is the fastest way to anaesthetize the feelings of those who are witnessing it. Beauty is a call to admiration, not to action

Richard Mosse - Incoming



David Levi-Strauss – Beauty can be political

The Documentary Debate: Aesthetic or anaesthetic? Or What's so funny about Peace, Love, Understanding and Social Documentary Photography?

'To represent is to aestheticise; that is, to transform.'

Beauty can be a form of resistance. It can be used to slow people down in the 'pandemonium' of images.

Mark Reinhardt (in *Picturing Violence*) says Strauss never considers what effects beauty has on the viewer

The idea that the more transformed or "aestheticized" an image is, the less "authentic" or politically valuable it becomes, is one that needs to be seriously questioned.

The anti-aesthetic tendency can easily become an anaesthetic one, an artificially induced unconsciousness to protect oneself from pain, and to protect the "hypocritical frontiers" of propriety and privilege. It is unseemly to look right into the face of hunger, and then to represent it in a way that compels others to look right into it as well. It is an abomination, an obscenity, an ideological crime.

3. Modes of documentary (Bill Nichols)

- Expository
- Poetic
- Observational
- Participatory
- Performative
- Reflexive

1. The Expository Mode Voice of God-

- This mode is what we identify with documentaries.
 - It emphasises verbal commentary – often using a narrator.
 - Addresses the spectator directly, with titles or voices that propose a perspective, advance an argument or recount history.
-
- Most associated with Television News programming
 - Sober voice
 - In photography, uses straight framing, grids, measurement
(and that as we have seen, connects to surveillance, anthropology, the panopticon)

Main characteristics of Expository Documentary

A commentator

- Rhetorical questions
- Facts Opinions
- Persuasive Techniques
- Images become subordinate to the voice-over narration. They serve to illustrate, what is being said by the author.
- In photography, perhaps the extended text begins to dominate
- Design matters!

Expository Documentary Photography

Yann Migard: Deposit

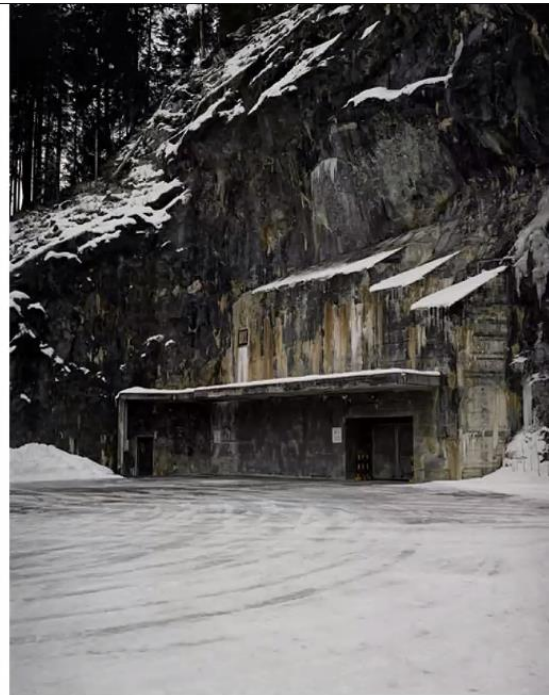
Examines the storage facilities

Looks at plants, animals, humans, data

Switzerland is a global leader in
Storage and security



Agribusiness
Anthropocene
Anthropocentrism
Apocalypse
Bank
Black box
Cave
Classification
Crisis
Cryonics
Data
Dingpolitik
DNA
En-/Decode
Ethics
Expert
F
Genealogy
Genesis
H



Mathieu Asselin: Monsanto

- 5 year project
- Focussed on environmental effects of Monsanto products
- Used advertising imagery
- Used first person testimony
- Advocacy focussed
- Clear design
- Clear use of text

Monsanto®: a Photographic Investigation.

by Mathieu Asselin

THE HOUSE OF THE FUTURE & THE RED RIVER.

2, 4, 5-T, AGENT ORANGE.

MONSANTO® CITY: AN UNREGULATED PARADISE.

THE CONTRACT.

WARNING:
THE FOLLOWING ROOM
CONTAINS PICTURES
THAT MAY BE DISTURBING
TO SOME VIEWERS.
VIEWER DISCRETION
IS ADVISED.

Without chemicals, life itself would be impossible.



Some people think anything "chemical" is bad and anything "natural" is good. Yet nature is chemical.

Plant life generates the oxygen we need through a chemical process called photosynthesis. When you breathe, your body absorbs that oxygen through a chemical reaction with your blood.

Life is chemical. And with chemicals, companies like Monsanto are working to help improve the quality of life.

Chemicals help you live longer. Rickets was a common childhood disease until a chemical called Vitamin D was added to milk and other foods.

Chemicals help you eat better. Chemical weed-killers have dramatically increased the supply and availability of our food. But no chemical is totally safe, all the time, everywhere. In nature or the laboratory. The real challenge is to use chemicals properly. To help make life a lot more livable. • Monsanto Company 1977

For a free booklet explaining the risks and benefits of chemicals, mail to: Monsanto, 800 N. Lindbergh Blvd., St. Louis, Mo. 63106, Dept. A3NA-NGZ.

Name

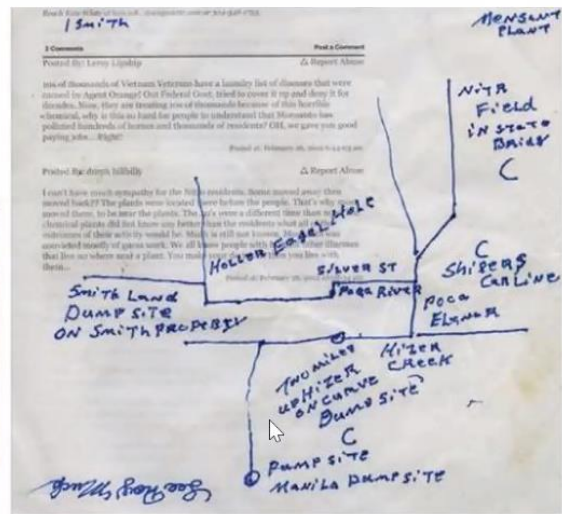
Address

City & state Zip

Monsanto

Without chemicals,
life itself would be impossible.

Lee Roy Mark at his home in the Peace Basin, close to one of the Monsanto "dump" along river. Like an alarming number of residents in the area, he with suffered a cancer-related death.



Map by Lee Roy Mark, pointing to the illegal dumps.

The again-old Mr. Parr is a local farmer. He is proud to farm the separate fields from the seeds to be sown. Monsanto used him during the war-swing and abetting farmers, helping them to realize the gains. The company subsequently Parr's death records without his knowledge, and forced his existence, after receiving calls from Monsanto, some of the farmers stopped selling to him. Monsanto used the legal road against Parr.



2012 MONSANTO TECHNOLOGY STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENT

Version 1.0 (2012)

Total Records: 120572441

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Chemicals help you to live longer.

EXCERPT FROM A 1977'S MONSANTO AD.



Monsanto

FROM: CHAIRMAN & CEO

TO: N.T. Johnson St. Louis

DATE: February 16, 1979

SUBJECT: POLLUTION LETTER

REFERENCE: P. Cracks - Wilmington
C. Clay - St. Louis
J.H. Davidson - Los Angeles
R.A. Demiani - Chicago
O.F. Fague - Detroit
R.A. Garcia - Akron
R. Garnsworthy - Melbourne
J.A. Heilala - Akron
R. Irwin - Houston
J.S. Pullman - New York
J.J. Reider - Chicago
R. Giles - Melbourne

P.J.A. Marsh - Brussels
R. Enhardt - New York
T.W. Omeon - Montreal
J.N. Haggart - Brussels
V. Morris - St. Louis
J. Brydson - Montreal
R. Graham - New York
P.G. Benignus
J.G. Bryant
D.E. Roush
D.A. Hall
D.R. Pogue
D.F. Smith
D.A. Olson

Attached is a list of questions and answers which may be asked of you by customers receiving our Aroclor-PCB letter. You can give verbal answers; no answers should be given in writing. If the customer asks a question you can't answer or if he wants an answer in writing, then send his questions to me and we will answer from here.

We want to avoid any situation where a customer wants to return fluid. The new reformulated products will be available within a month. We would prefer that the customer use up his current inventory and purchase Pydraul 625A, Pydraul ACA, Pydraul ACA Winter Grade and Pydraul 540A when available. He will then top off with the new fluid and eventually all Aroclor 1254 and Aroclor 1260 will be out of his system. We don't want to take fluid back. Sell him the replacement.

We must be very positive in our approach with each customer relative to our decision to eliminate the use of Aroclor 1254 and Aroclor 1260 in our Pydraul products. We (your customer and Monsanto) are not interested in using a product which may present a problem to our environment. We certainly have no reason to be defensive or apologetic about making this change. The decision to change makes good sense and our customers should commend us, not criticize our actions. No one has forced us to make this

PLAINTIFFS
EXHIBIT

Internal documents from 1978 show Monsanto's attempts to keep the public in the dark about PCBs. These documents further demonstrate Monsanto's efforts to manipulate scientific studies to its advantage. Monsanto's conduct throughout the period during which the company produced PCBs was more than commendable.

These attempts today to backpedal on what they represented as sincere and forthright responses to the public's concerns about PCBs is equally disconcerting, as are their repeated attempts to ignore other major health and safety exposures to PCBs.

change. We have done it to keep our customers out of possible trouble. They should appreciate our effort, and stay with us as a customer on the reformulated Pydrauls. To make this change has cost us research monies and time. Fortunately, we possess the technical skills to make a change in our formulations without affecting the performance of products. Be positive. Take the offense. Don't let a customer or competitor intimidate you. I doubt if our competitors know whether their product could present a problem to our environment. You might ask your customer, if he has ever asked Houghness or Stauffer, Carbide, etc. about the effects of their products.

We should also recognize (point this out to your customer) we must clean-up. The Chemical Week article gives him an idea of laws in effect in his state. Read this yourself. Be familiar with the data on each state in which your customers are located. Use this in your discussions.

We have no replacement products for Aroclor 1254 and Aroclor 1260. We will continue to make these products; however, customers will have to use their own judgement on continued use.

We can't afford to lose one dollar of business. Our attitude in discussing this subject with our customer will be the deciding factor in our success or failure in retaining all our present business. Good luck.

(We have also attached a copy of the letter sent to transformer customers.)

N. T. Johnson

2. The Poetic Mode -subjective, artistic, expression-

- Stresses the lyrical, rhythmic and emotional aspect of the historical world.
- Sacrifices filmic conventions for example, continuity editing and a situated time and space, to explore associations between images, objects and patterns.

In photography, personal experience, stream of consciousness, loose visual associations, are apparent (too apparent?)





Chris Killip: Skinningrove



Steve Maggs, Peter Gwynne, George, Megan, and a lot of other people



Steve Maggs, George, and Steve







Ignacio Navas: Yolanda

- Snapshot words as small paper inserts tell the story
- The two go together

Relay v Anchor

- Tells the story of Yolanda and Navas's uncle.
- This is Yolanda





3. The Observational Mode -window on the world-

- Attempt to observe aspects of the historical world as they happen.
- Typically have no voice-over commentary, no supplementary music or sound, no intertitles, no historical reenactments, no behaviour repeated for the camera and no interviews.
- Social actors behave as if no filmmakers were there.

Corresponds to the ideas of candid photography (sorry), street photography, the slice of life (Chris Killip again)

Ignores the effect the the photographer has on the scene

Garry Winogrand



“I’m not interested in documenting. Documenting is extremely dull and journalism...I’m a very bad reporter and a photojournalist.”

4. The Participatory Mode

- Involves an interview between filmmaker and the subject. – this allows the filmmaker to address people who appear in the film, formally – this is opposed to addressing the audience through voice-over commentary.
- Also involves some participation from the filmmaker as well as social actors – this gives the audience a sense of what it is like for the filmmaker to be in a given situation and how that situation alters as a result.

Larry Sultan



Tony Fouhse: The User

Colin Pantall's blog STEPHANIE + STEPHEN | Ottawa photog... tonyfoto.com/drool/2010/09/05/stephanie-stephen/ stephanie video

Most Visited youtube http://news.bbc.co.uk... Facebook BBC iPlayer - iPlayer T... BollyWHAT?: The Guid... Bath weather forecas... LOVEFILM | Watch Mo...

tonyfoto/drool a Division of Tony Fouhse photography

a = miki's gprphotoblog

YOU'RE INVITED
STEPHANIE + STEPHEN
STEPHANIE

Like I say in the video below, Stephanie is one of my favorite models as the camera. Model, because when I shoot her I can see that that's what she's doing: modeling, working the camera. But not in a bogus way. No. There just seems to be something so honest about what she is willing and able to give me.



SUPPORT -

Post Info

STEPHANIE + STEPHEN was written on September 5, 2010.

About Tony

About Drool

DROOL'S Feed

A link to my web site

Tony Fouhse photography

Other blogs

A Photo Mirror

Adam Sengul

Amelia Tishak

Colin Pantall

Conversations

Heather Horton Art Buyer

Stephen Horton

Josh Teller

Steven August Singh

Micro Photography

Paul Kim

Slight/Loud

Thomas Brunning

Timothy Ashfield

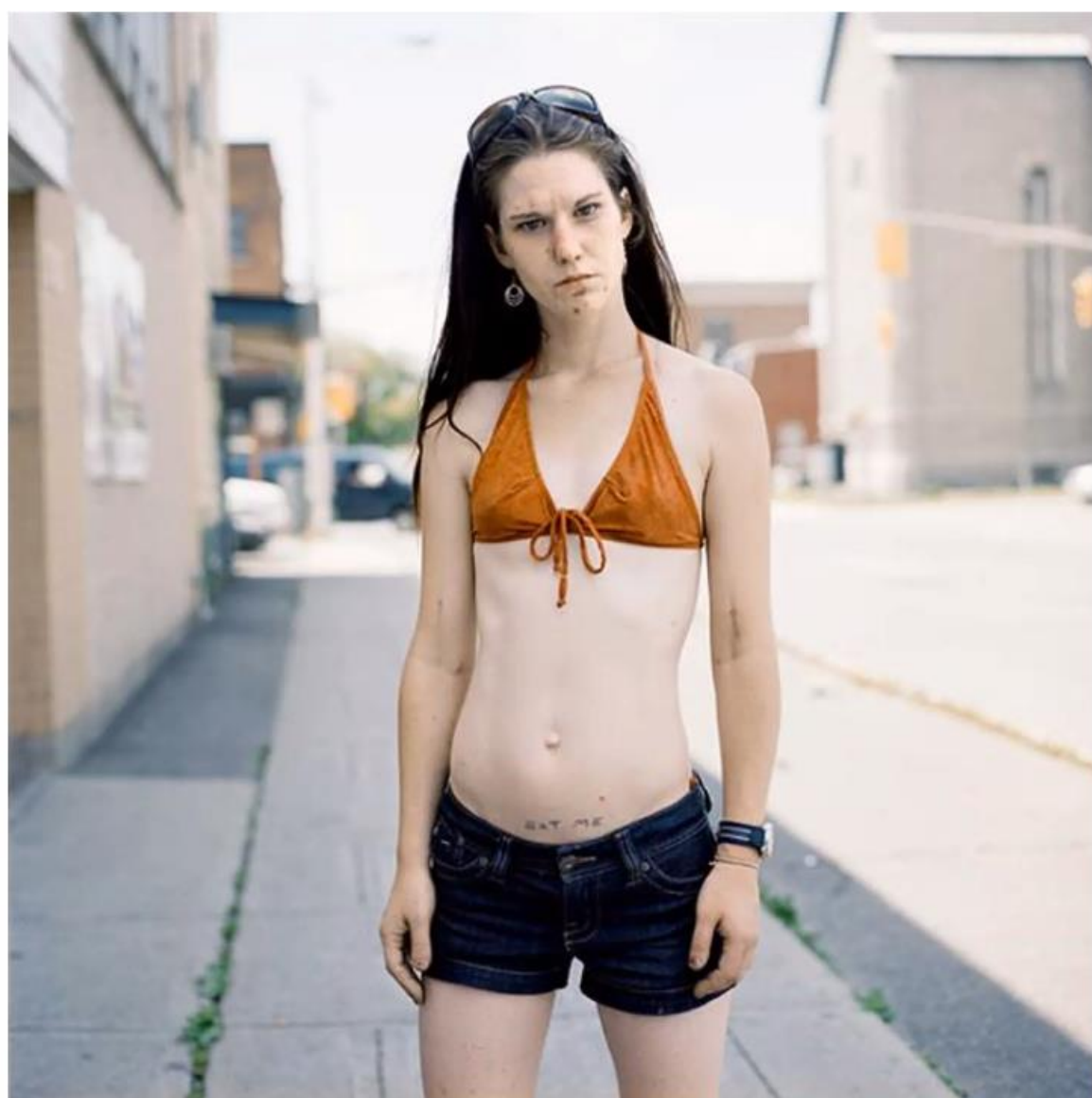
What's the Industry

WED FASHION

PERMISSION

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All rights reserved.



Tony Fouhse: Live Through This



“Why are you doing this?”

Key Elements

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration as exchange• Photographer directed everything• Stephanie was unpredictable• Flexibility in shooting• Focus on relationship | <p>Criticisms?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staged photography• Not authentic/documentary• Exploitative• Fouhse retains visual power |
|--|--|

5. The Performative Mode -photographer as participant-

- Performative mode of documentary raises questions about what knowledge is.
- It sets out to demonstrate how the specificities of personal experience provide entry into an understanding of the more general processes at work in society - this is done by stressing the emotional complexity of experience from the perspective of the maker.
- Stresses the tone and mood, more so than arguments and evidence.
- Calls for an emotional responsiveness from us that acknowledges an understanding of the event, more so than asking us to gain knowledge from it.

Ivars Gravlejs: Early Works

Captions and personal narrative

Chapter Headings

- Using the History of Modern Art to Tell the Story
- 'I often felt nauseous before going to school because of the humiliation that I faced with my teachers. The only way to survive school was to do something creative...'

My Teachers



Latvian Language Teacher



Career and technical education teacher

Fight





Surprise
 Black and white photographs, 1995
 In the gymnasium my friend and I had an idea. After gymnastics, when the girls were getting dressed, my classmate unexpectedly opened the door of the girl's changing room and I took photographs.



Multiple Modes

- Start looking at photography and see what mode is used.
- Often multiple modes will be used, sometimes consciously, often unconsciously
- Also think about the tone that is used, the timbre. Is it a lecture, a monologue, a reproach, a punishment. Or is it something more pleasurable.
- Nichols talks about the discourse of documentary (film) being a discourse of sobriety. Does it have to be this way?
- He talks of the discourse of entertainment for other film genres. Is this the way we should sometimes talk about documentary.
- Do we also make photography with a sober voice? Should we make it with a different voice sometimes.

4. The Reflexive mode – awareness of the process

- Speaks not only about the I world, but about the problems and issues of representing it.
- Documentaries set out to re-adjust the assumptions and expectation of its audience, not add new knowing to existing categories.
- Both of these rely on techniques that attempt to jar us, and sever our engagement with the film/images so that we are forced to think about filmmaking/photography as a construct.
- Involves multiple modes (Did you see what I did there?)

Discourse Analysis

Analysis of how we communicate in written, spoken and visual forms

Berger, P. and Luckmann, T. (1966): The Social Construction of Knowledge

Knowledge is socially constructed. It is built by social institutions and the roles we play in them.

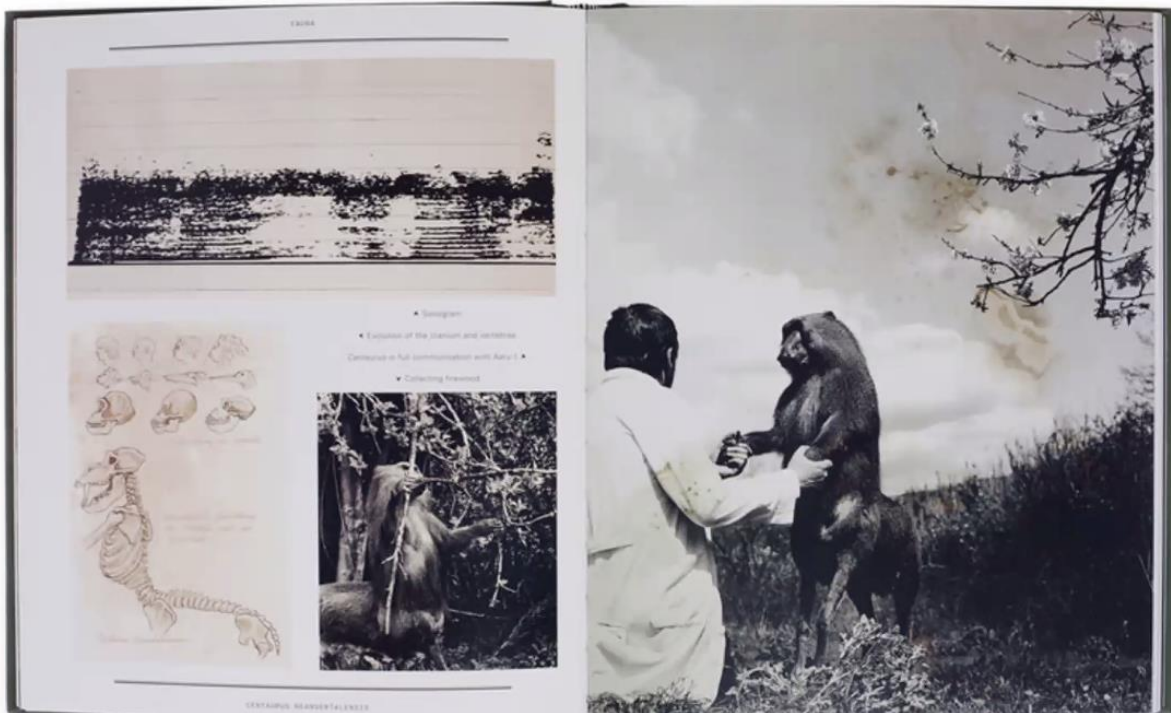
We are socialised to believe in the same 'objective universe'. Shared behaviours uphold this universe as do universally held myths.

Norman Fairclough (Language and Power) examined how language is used to uphold power structures.

Does the Same apply to Images?

- Yes
- Joan Fontcuberta makes work that demonstrates how language and presentational strategies are used to evoke power
- Background in Advertising
- Brought up in Franco's Spain
- Has direct experience of manipulating 'truth'
- Uses the language of the archive and museum to subvert the archive and museum

Reflexive Photography: Joan Fontcuberta



Herbarium

- Used typological language of photography
 - Referenced Karl Blossfeldt
 - Invented absurd examples
 - But did it with a straight face
-
- Using a taxonomic approach is the photographic equivalent of talking in a very earnest voice (so we're back to Grierson's higher levels)

Herbarium



“In my work there is always a reference to art history and Blossfeldt is an impressive reference because he was the aesthetic model for new objectivity. This was the movement that generated the language of photography as truth. It has the documentary approach with the clear background and the strong graphic elements.”

"Dr. Ameisenhaufen's Fauna"

- Vitrines
- Staged photographs
- Letters and documents
- A variety of photographic genres
- The character of Dr Ameisenhaufen provided a narrative
- Sense of place used



- “I’m interested in the authority of museums in general. When they deal with science they impose filters on how we see the world. It’s an authoritarian way of imposing a particular kind of knowledge on people and photography is used to add pressure to that knowledge.”
- “My work has a pedagogic sense. It’s a prophylactic approach that creates doubt in people’s minds. It questions people’s credibility in photographic culture.”

