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Digital Media Foundations / COMD 1112

What We Learned in Class 4/27/20

This week, we started discussing our video project, which is to create a three minute documentary centered around someone we are living with currently. But before we start creating our own video projects, everyone has to be comfortable with the basics. We learned about what goes into making documentaries. We took a closer look at what makes a great documentary. We also watched clips from some documentaries that did a great job at accomplishing what they set out to do. We were instructed to start filming for our own documentaries as well.

One aspect of film that we learned about was Cinema Verite. This movement forced the film industry to make more authentic and natural films. The films also focused on the day to day lives of people. Started in the 1960s, this film movement could be considered the stepping stone for the modern day documentary. While not France's most exciting contribution to the film industry, it's still pretty groundbreaking.

The first documentary we saw parts of was The Queen of Versailles. I've seen this documentary before and I personally found it boring and cringy overall. We watched the Easter clip, and it definitely set up the family it was following well. Between wasting money with easter eggs and a frightening easter bunny, we got the sense right away

that this was a white trash family who's name I can't be bothered to remember. The shots, interviews, and B-Roll helped establish the tone this was going for.

One Child Nation was the only other documentary I saw before that was discussed. I personally find One Child Nation to be one of the better documentaries to come out in recent times. We also got to watch an interview with the director where she went into depth with why and how she chose what she showed. The tone was definitely darker compared to The Queen Of Versailles, but I found some of the shots to be satirical in nature (such as showing the propaganda for the one child policy). One Child Nation does a fantastic job in terms of showing it's subject and mood right on it's sleeve.

Other documentaries we got to explore were The Mask You Live In and Honeyland. The Mask You Live In looked a lot more interesting than Honeyland because of it's darker nature. Something I loved about what we saw from The Mask You Live In is how I was partially disagreeing with the message of the material before even seeing the full documentary. Other documentaries I really wished we talked about were Bowling for Columbine and Montage of Heck, which are both documentaries that I think fully capture the mood and subjects as well. Maybe even docuseries like Netflix's Don't Fuck With Cats can even be included as well.