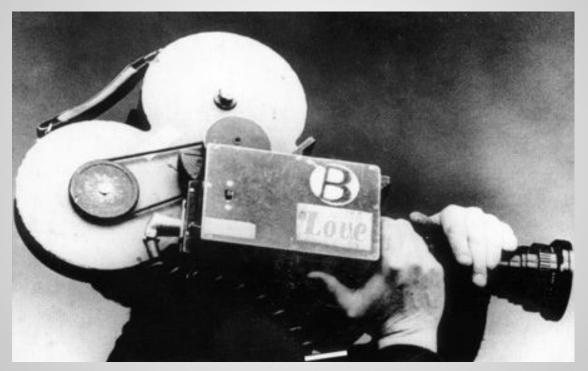
# DOCUMENTARY MAKING



BRAFFTV 2012 Workshop
Dr. Hudson Moura
Hart House UofT/Ryerson University
October 3-13, 2012

## AGENDA

- Introductions
  - My background
  - Films I have made
  - What brought me to documentary
- What is a documentary
  - History and Theory
  - Styles, Techniques, and Ethics
- Documentary Project
  - Preproduction
  - Production
  - Postproduction
- Exhibition at BRAFFTV 2012



## Expectations

- To learn the basics of what goes into documentary making;
- To learn the key concepts of filming a documentary;
- To learn how to produce, to make, and to understand how documentaries are made;
- Documentary filming techniques in different environments;
- How to come up with an important and interesting topic and convey that visually to an audience;
- How to approach a subject in a documentary;
- How to narrate a real story/documentary using film medium.

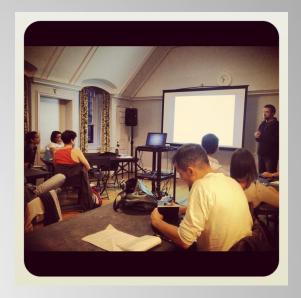
# **DocProjects**

- Group 1: Javier Nunez (leader), Pedro Patricio and Melissa Gutierrez
- Group 2:
   Bahar Toussi (leader) and Negar Vafeei



• Group 4:

Amy Mackryll (leader), Kiel Longboat, Isabela Vieira, David Emanuel, and Renata Arantes Lourenço.



## Themes

- => "Painting Brazil's Pictures" what image do Brazilians want to convey about Brazil today?
- => "Faces of Brazil" to explore the identity of Brazil, establishing the symmetries and asymmetries between Canada and Brazil.
- ⇒"Impressions of Brazil" the impressions that Brazil carries to the new multicultural Canadian young generation.

# Why to do a documentary

- Documentary function
  - Social Representation
  - Personal Point of View
- What inspires a documentary
  - What you have seen/done/experimented/lived
- The importance to choose a subject that you feel interested
  - Personal Commitment and Passion

# Documentary Project – Phase I

#### **Doc Preproduction**

- Research
- Choosing your subject
- Writing a Doc Statement (screenwriting)
- Choosing your style
- Choosing your technique
- Writing a Doc Proposal
- Booking Equipment and Location



# Doc Screenwriting

#### DOC STATEMENT – ANSWER THOSE QUESTIONS:

- a) Who, What, When, Why, Where and how?
- b) What opinions about the world are you going to show in your film by following your protagonist?
- c) What is the main "statement" that you want to emerge out of the film's dialectics?

#### WORKING HYPOTHESIS AND INTERPRETATION

- a) Write a hypothesis statement incorporating this wording...
- b) In life I believe that...
- c) My film will show this in action by exploring (situation)...
- d) The main conflict is between...
- e) Ultimately, I want the audience to feel: and to understand that...

#### WRITE A CONCISE PARAGRAPH ABOUT:

- a) Your film's subject (person, group, environment, social issue, etc.)
- b) The necessary background information the audience must have to understand and to be interested in the enclosed world you intend to present. Be sure to show how this information will emerge.

#### ACTION SEQUENCES

Write a brief paragraph for each intended sequence that shows an activity. (A sequence is usually delineated by being in one location, one chunk of time, or an assembly of materials to show one topic). Incorporate the following:

- a) What the activity is and what conflict it evidences
- b) A metaphor to explain its subtextual meaning
- c) The expected structure of events
- d) What the sequence should contribute to the whole film and to the hypothesis
- e) What facts the audience must gather from watching it
- f) What key, emblematic imagery you hope to capture

#### MAIN CHARACTERS

Write a brief paragraph about each of your main characters. For each include:

- a) Who (name, relationship to others in film and so on)
- b) Where (where does this person fit in the scheme of things?)
- c) What (what is this character's role, what makes the character(s) interesting, worthy of special attention and significant? What is this character trying to do or to get at?)

#### CONFLICT

What is at issue in this film? Consider:

- a) Who wants what of whom?
- b) What conflicting principles do the characters stand for?
- c) Does your film put different principles in opposition (of opinion, of view, of vision and so forth)?
- d) How will we see one force finally meet with the other? (the "confrontation" -- very important)
- e) What range of possible developments do you see emerging from this confrontation?

#### AUDIENCE BIASES

To make a documentary means not only using conflicting "evidence" to put forward your subject's dialectics, it also means knowing what stereotypes or expectations carried by your audience your film must deliberately set out to alter.

- a) Biases (may be positive or negative)
- b) What alternative views, facts or ideas does the audience need to understand
- c) What evidence will you show to get the audience to see those different truths

#### STRUCTURE

Write a brief paragraph on how you hope to structure your film. When you are doing this, consider:

- How will you will handle the progression of time in the film
- b) How and at what point information important to story development will appear
- What you intend as the climactic sequence and where this should go
- d) How this relates to other sequences in terms of the action rising toward the film's projected "crisis" or emotional apex and the falling action after it
- e) Sequences or interviews you intend to use as parallel storytelling

#### FORM AND STYLE

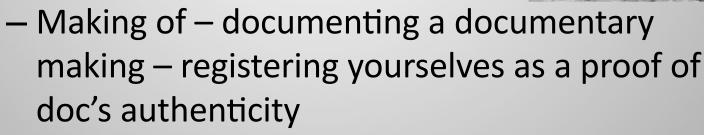
Any special considerations in shooting or editing style that might further your film's content. Here you might comment on narrative lighting, camera handling, type and amount of intercutting, juxtaposition of scenes, parallel storytelling and the like.

#### RESOLUTION

Write a brief paragraph about how you imagine your film will end and what you would like the ending to accomplish for the audience. Comparing any intended ending with the film's beginning also exposes what must accomplish as a story to get there. The ending is your last word to the audience and has a disproportionate influence on what the film will mean. BRAFFTV 2012 Workshop Dr. Hudson Moura 11

# Documentary Project – Phase II

- Doc Production
  - Working title
  - Functions: Director, Camera, Sound, Editor
  - Filming Scheduling
  - Filming and sound recording
  - Production Board
  - Signing the Release Forms





### **On-Camera Interviews**

For each interview, list:

Name, role in life, metaphoric role in film's

dramatic structure;

Main elements your interview will seek to establish.



Albert and David Maysles

## Documentary Project – Phase III

- Doc Postproduction Editing
  - Selecting Shots
  - Editing the Interviews
  - Creating the Final Script
  - =>Visual = storyboard
  - =>Text



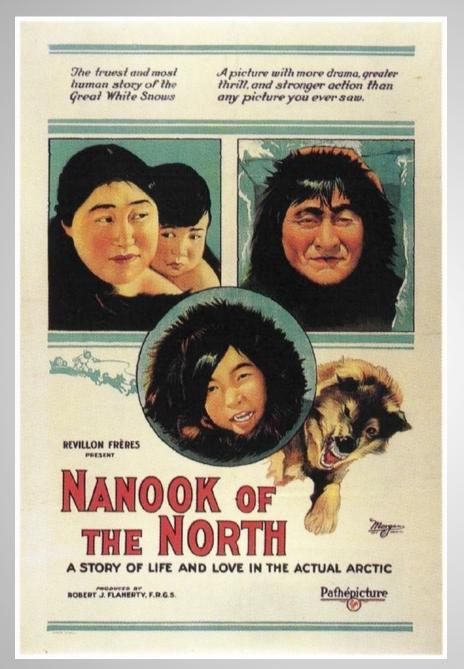
### Respecting, Informing, and Consenting

#### Filmmakers ethics:

- When they don't know the people (but a certain issue of problem)
   run the risk of exploit them
- When they prefer to observe without intervene run the risk of altering behavior or events
- When are familiar with the people face the challenge of losing their own perspective and 'critique' distance

Informed consent – they must inform the people about the "dangerous side-effects":

- "Of what consequences or risks filmmakers should inform their subjects?"
- "To what extent can the filmmaker honestly reveal his or her intentions or foretell the actual effects of a film?"
- Filmmaker's position (to those represented in the film and those to whom the film is addressed) requires a negotiation and consent.



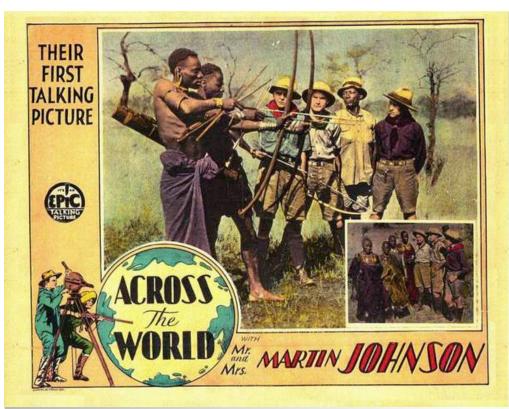
Robert Flaherty's NANOOK OF THE NORTH (1922), considered by most film historians to be the medium's first ever feature-length documentary.



In popular myth, the word, documentary was coined by Scottish documentarian John Grierson in his review of Robert Flaherty's film Moana (1926). Grierson's principles of documentary were that cinema's potential for observing life could be exploited in a new art form; that the "original" actor and "original" scene are better guides than their fiction counterparts to interpreting the modern world; and that materials "thus taken from the raw" can be more real than the acted article. In this regard, Grierson's views align with Vertov's contempt for dramatic fiction as "bourgeois excess", though with considerably more subtlety.

"Documentary is a creative treatment of actuality"

- John Grierson



Ethnography through films in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century: travelers, adventurers, and researchers.

Binary oppositions of us and them, self and other, along with the tension between the profilmic and the textual operations of aesthetic form.



Robert
Flaherty in
Africa and
Pierre Perrault
filming in Ile
aux Coudres in
Quebec





Ethnography Evidence by Catherine Russell

Louisiana Story (1948) Robert Flaherty

- Being linked to social science imply a commitment to objectivity, and the role of film is principally to provide empirical evidence.
- Ideal ethnographic film = social observation = culture knowledge (race, ethnicity, colonial culture)
- Ethnographic film is a production of otherness
- As a scientific instrument of representation,
   ethnographic film assumes that the camera records a
   truthful reality, "out there" a reality distinct from
   that of the viewer and the filmmaker.

## Bill Nichols' Introduction to Documentary

"Every film is a documentary."

- Can we invert the sentence saying that "every film is a fiction"?
- Documentaries social representation "give tangible representation to aspects of the world we already inhabit and share." Film can gives "evidence of the culture that produced it and reproduces the likenesses of the people who perform within it."
- "What we do with people when we make a documentary?"
- "People are treated as *social actors*: they continue to conduct their lives more or less as they would have done without the presence of a camera. They remain cultural players rather than theatrical performers."
- "Self-consciousness and modifications in behavior can become a form of misrepresentation, or distortion, in one sense, but they also document the ways in which the act of filmmaking alters the reality it sets out to represent."
- "What responsibility do filmmakers have for the effect of their acts on the lives of those filmed? [...] Ethics becomes a measure of the ways in which negotiations about the nature of the relationship between filmmaker and subject have consequences for subjects and viewers alike."

- Three ways of documentaries to make us engage with the world by represent it:
- 1 Likeness we see what was there before the camera; it must be true. Even we know that image cannot tell everything about what happened and also image (analogical, electronic or digital) can be altered both during and after the fact. The ability of photographic image to reproduce likeness of the world compel us to believe that it is reality itself re-presented before us.
- 2 Documentaries stand for or represent the interests of others. They represent the views of individuals, groups, and institutions." Example: Nanook (Robert Flaherty, 1922) A reality that the filmmaker and the sponsor (Revillon Freres) "wished to find in the world."
- 3 Documentaries may represent the world by a particular view or interpretation of evidence before us. In this case, filmmakers "more actively make a case or argument". They present and sustain one idea or point of view about the subject or the fact. They "make representations, mount arguments or formulate persuasive strategies of their own."



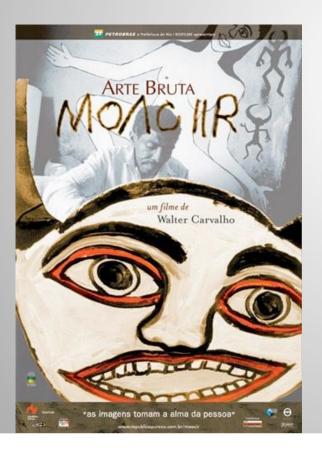
Mad Masters (1953) Jean Rouch



Michael Moore



Pedro de Alexina in Rodrigo Siqueira's The Earth Giveth, the Earth Taketh





Mockumentary: Cold Tropics (2010)

Reconstructing reality: Why are ethical issues central to documentary filmmaking?

- Bill Nichols



Director Rodrigo Siqueira and Pedro de Alexina (incorporating the dead's spirit)



I collected many stories and some treasures. But Pedro was keen to bury them under an ambiguity that passes between truth, memory and fantasy, says Siqueira BRAFFTV 2012 Workshop Dr. Hudson Moura





Mad Masters (Les maîtres fous, 1953) Jean Rouch

# Jean Rouch: This will not be a cinema of truth but the truth of cinema. (Gilles Deleuze)

The self of the observer filmmaker/ethnographer – observer's presence can never be neutral

Direct recording – complex equipment operation is increasingly simple (synchronous record of image and sound)

In the field the observer modified himself: ethno-looks, ethno-observes and ethno-thinks. And the observed are similarly modified (ethno-show, ethno-speak, ethno-think). Finally, ethno-dialogue – "shared anthropology".







- It was the revolution of the 1950s and 60s in documentary filmmaking, driven by directors who wanted to show life as it really was – raw, gritty and dramatic.
- Cinéma Vérité is a style of documentary filmmaking, combining naturalistic techniques with stylized cinematic devices of editing and camerawork, staged set-ups, and the use of the camera to provoke subjects. It is also known for taking a provocative stance toward its topics.
- Direct Cinema is largely concerned with the recording of events in which the subject and audience become unaware of the camera's presence. Operating within what Nichols calls the "observational mode," direct cinema is essentially what is now called a fly on the wall documentary—it means the completely absence of the filmmaker.

## Cinéma Verité: Defining the Moment (NFB, 1999) Peter Wintonick

Such documentary filmmaker legends as Jean Rouch, Frederick Wiseman, and Barbara Kopple appear in this loving tribute to cinema verite and its profound influence on film. Director Peter Wintonick, whose previous efforts include the acclaimed Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media (1993), makes a compelling case that Canada's National Film Board was at the vanguard of the cinema verite movement. The movie also features vintage footage of teen heart-throb Paul Anka and a behind the scenes look at John F. Kennedy's primary run for president. Both interviews and clips attest to the absorbing vitality that cinema verite brought to film.

NFB: http://onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/collection/film/?id=33882

**Excerpt: D.A. Pennebaker** 

http://www.youtube.com/watch\_popup?v=4syGkipfAjQ

Entire film in Spanish version: http://www.mefeedia.com/watch/29319512

**Excerpt: Richard Leacock** 

http://www.youtube.com/watch\_popup?v=8TsAnUmIzYY



"There are two ways to conceive of the cinema of the Real: the first is to pretend that you can present reality to be seen; the second is to pose the problem of reality. In the same way, there were two ways to conceive cinéma vérité. The first was to pretend that you brought truth. The second was to pose the problem of truth." Edgar Morin

- Chronicle of a summer (1961) dir Jean Rouch and Edgard Morin
- In Cinéma vérité, filmmakers do "shared anthropology" and "participatory ethnography."

Jean Rouch interview

http://www.youtube.com/watch\_popup?v=Pxk-fg771r8

Cronicle of a summer (1961)

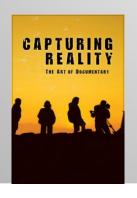
http://www.youtube.com/watch\_popup?v=VpxVtFQgS4o

# Capturing Reality: The Art of Documentary (NFB, 2008) Pepita Ferrari

- Made by National Film Board of Canada, captures the reality of documentary directors, including Werner Herzog, Errol Morris, Albert Maysles, and Manfred Becker, talking about their craft.
- Among the most interesting filmmaker moments were Malcolm Clarke's
  discussion of getting close to "compelling" evildoers, Patricio Guzman's
  recollection of his joy upon receiving his first canisters of new film, and
  Michel Brault's anecdote about his misconceptions about wrestling, and how
  a conversation changed his angle on a documentary he was doing.

#### Film's official website including 163 interview clips with 38 documentarians:

http://films.nfb.ca/capturing-reality/





"I don't know what truth is. Truth is something unattainable. We can't think we're creating truth with a camera. But what we can do, is reveal something to viewers that allows them to discover their own truth."— Michel Brault

"The only truth is the moment of shooting." – Eduardo Coutinho





Eduardo Coutinho (Jogo de Cena, 2008) and Vladimir Carvalho (Rock Brasilia, 2011)



"I do not intent to speak about, but nearby," Trinh T. Minh-Ha – Reassemblage (1982)

- Trinh T. Minh-Ha films "use both poetic and aggressive strategies to compel the viewer to consider the destructive effects of believing that one can know another culture or another time through visual information alone. [...] Do not believe what you see, but think of the image as a box whose contents you must infer." Laura Marks, 2000, p. 134
- http://www.youtube.com/watch\_popup?v=e\_kxhMi3gAk

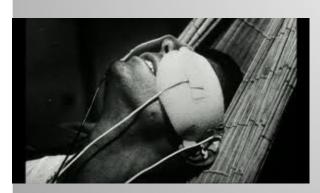




## La Jetée (FRA, 1966) Chris Marker







Black and white science fiction constructed almost entirely from still photos, it tells the story of a post-nuclear war experiment in time travel. La Jetée has no dialogue aside from small sections of muttering in German. The story is told by a voice-over narrator. It is constructed almost entirely from optically printed photographs playing out as a photomontage of varying pace. It contains only one brief shot originating on a motion-picture camera.

One of the most influential, radical science-fiction film ever made and a mind-bending free-form travelogue. Chris Marker, filmmaker, poet, novelist, photographer, editor, and now videographer and digital multimedia artist, has been challenging moviegoers, philosophers, and himself for years with his complex queries about time, memory, and the rapid advancement of life on this planet. La Jetée—a tale of time travel told in still images—remains his best-loved and most widely seen.

# Understanding others' point of view



 "In the four African languages I speak there is no word for culture because culture consists of succession of situations... Words are loaded with potential for violence but also with potential for poetic gentleness. It depends on how we use them" Osmane Sembene – Senegalese filmmaker (Osmane Sembene: Dialogues with critics and writers, 1993, p. 75)

## Understanding Ourselves First-Person Documentary

• The Gleaners & I (2000)

Agnès Varda

http://www.youtube.com/watch\_popup?v=aKgjjEJvMbM

- An Hungarian Passport (2001)
   Sandra Kogut
- Stone Time Touch (2007)
   Gariné Torossian







# Defining Intercultural Strategies

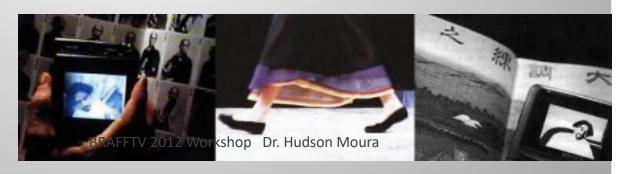


More and more artists and theorists are turning to film and video as a means of addressing social questions, from gay and lesbian identities, to diasporic politics, cultural and family memory, and histories of oppression, resistance, and criminal justice systems. We need to understand how filmmakers have experimented with the "otherness" of reality, and how From Flaherty to Minh-ha, filmmakers have struggled to find a means of representing "culture" that is in some way appropriate to the intercultural experience.

According to Elizabeth Cowie (*The spectacle of actuality*) there is a desire for reality as knowledge and as spectacle:

- 1 there is a desire for reality a world of evidence [and knowledge] confirmed through observation and logical interpretation
- 2 there is a desire for the real not as knowledge but as image, as spectacle

Documentaries invoke and require identification – we must identify their facts and their meanings, and we must come into position as addressees of these meanings. [...] Demonstrate the relation of the real and the symbolic whereby the 'before' of the 'real' is the effect and not the cause...



## Release Forms

- Obtaining proper written permissions is the responsibility of the producer and can prevent complicated problems down the line in the event you license the broadcast or distribution rights of your film.
- The four most common release forms used in documentary productions are:
  - Appearance Release (for non-actors)
  - Minor Appearance Release (for working with children, it must be signed by a parent or legal guardian)
  - Materials Release (for obtaining permission from the owner or license holder to use photographs, audio, video, film or other media which may be copyrighted or owned by others)
  - Location Release (for use when you are filming on property you do not own)
- If you're working with professional actors you'll probably need a special actor/model release form which is beyond the scope of this class.
- According to David Tames, you must read and rewrite them as necessary for your particular production and requirements. Releases are important because some film festivals, most funding bodies, and all broadcasters and distributors will require them as part of the chain of title, a series of documents that establish the producer's right to put the components in their film. For locations, it's important to know who actually owns the building or land you want to film on and also to find out who the current occupier is. For example, if you are filming in a rented house you should get permission from the landlord as well as the tenant who is renting the property.

#### APPEARANCE RELEASE

Film (Working Title):		(the "Film")
Person Appearing:		
Production Date(s):		
Production Location(s):		
I authorize	nd designees to red nd performance of as Producer may of the Film and all and advertising red nal editorial, artist Producer may use, Recording in all mer developed, throuse accessors and assign and to the Film, sposed of, withou	cord my name, likeness, on film, tape, or otherwise desire, and incorporate such related materials thereof, materials. It is understood tic, and technical control of and authorize others to use narkets, manner, formats ar ughout the world, in gas, shall own all right, title, including the Recording
Signature:		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Telephone:		
E-Mail:		

#### LOCATION RELEASE

Film (Working Title):	(the "Film")		
Location:			
Location Owner or Authorized [NAME AND ADDRES	ss]:		
	("Owner")		
Date(s) of Recording:			
Ι	("Producer") and Owner agree as follows:		
Owner agrees that Producer and persons desig above location on the date(s) indicated above, photographs, and/or video and sound recording connection with the Film. Producer shall hold against any damage to the above location cause on the location or against any injuries occurring the location.	for the purposes of preparing or making ags or otherwise (the "Recordings") in Owner harmless from and indemnify Owner ed by any persons designated by Producer to be		
Owner authorizes Producer to edit the Record part, in connection with the Film, in all mann Producer's sole discretion. Producer, and Prodright, title and interest, including the copyrigh Recordings, to be used and disposed of throug limitation as Producer shall determine in Prod	ucer's successors and assigns, shall own all t, in and to the Film, including the hout the world in perpetuity without		
Owner represents and warrants that Owner has the right to enter into this agreement and that the rights Owner has granted hereunder will not conflict with or violate any commitment, agreement, or understanding Owner has or will have to or with, nor infringe upon any rights of, any person or entity. Owner expressly releases Producer and Producer's employees, directors, officers, agents, assignees, and licensees from all claims, losses, costs, expenses, settlements, demands and liabilities of every kind, including reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses, arising out of or incurred by reason of the use of the Recordings in connection with the Film or the inaccuracy, alleged breach or actual breach of any representation, warranty, covenant, agreement or undertaking made by Owner herein.			
Agreed and Accepted By:			
PRODUCER	OWNER		

#### MATERIAL RELEASE

Film (Working Title):		(the "Film")		
Description of Material:				
	(the	e "Licensed Material")		
Licensor:		("Licensor")		
Licensor hereby grants to				
Licensor represents and warrants that Licensor possesses or has obtained all rights to the Licensed Material necessary for the grant of this license and that the rights granted hereunder will not conflict with or violate any commitment, agreement, or understanding Licensor has or will have to or with, nor infringe upon any rights of, any person or entity. Licensor shall pay and indemnify and hold Producer and its grantors, officers, directors, assignees, agents, licensees, and employees harmless from and against all claims, losses, costs, expenses, settlements, demands, and liabilities of every kind, including reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses, arising out of or incurred by reason of the use of the Licensed Material set forth herein or the inaccuracy, alleged breach, or actual breach of any representation, warranty, covenant, agreement, or undertaking Licensor has made herein.				
Signature:				
Address:				
City:	_ State:	Zip:		
Telephone:				
Date				

#### MINOR APPEARANCE RELEASE

Working Title:		(the "Film")
Person Appearing:		
Parent or Guardian:		
Production Date(s):		
Production Location(s):		
As parent or guardian of		
effects, interview and performance on film, such Recording as Producer may desire, and any versions of the Film and all related materials or and advertising materials. It is the retain final editorial, artist, and technical corroducer may use, and authorize others to recording in all markets, manner, formats a developed, throughout the world, in perpetusings, shall own all right, title and interest including the Recording and related material imitation, as Producer shall in Producer's such represent, as parent or guardian of	tape, or otherwise (the discrepancy of the Film and use, the Film, any post and media, whether a fully. Producer, and the time is to be used and discretion determined to the film and the copy als, to be used and discretion determined the copy als, to be used and discretion determined the copy als, to be used and discretion determined to the copy als, to be used and discretion determined to the copy als, to be used and discretion determined to the copy als, to be used and discretion determined to the copy also the c	ss, image, voice, sound he "Recording"), edit ecording into the Film, ing but not limited to ed that Producer shall d the content of the Film rtions thereof and the now known or hereafter Producer's successors an right, in and to the Film isposed of, without tine.
Signature of Minor:		
Signature of Parent or Guardian:		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Telephone:		

E-Mail:

#### **MORE SOURCES**

#### Books

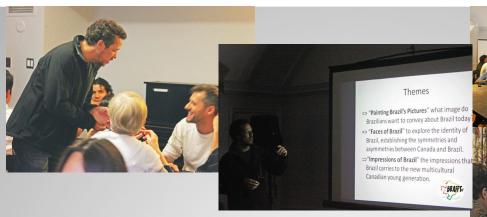
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- http://www.brafftv.com
- http://www.mediaknowall.com/Documentary/definitions.html
- http://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/series/visible-evidence (Book series Visible Evidence)
- http://documentaryfilms.suite101.com/article.cfm/the\_history\_of\_documentary\_films
- http://www.movie-rentals-online.net/filmhistory/index2.html
- http://www.filmsite.org/docfilms3.html
- http://cw.routledge.com/ref/documentary/index.html
- http://kino-eye.com/dvb

#### **Article on Ethics:**

http://centerforsocialmedia.org/making-your-media-matter/documents/best-practices/honest-truths-documentary-filmmakers-ethical-chall
 BRAFFTV 2012 Workshop Dr. Hudson Moura



### DOCUMENTARY MAKING

**BRAFFTV 2012 Workshop** 

Facilitator: Dr. Hudson Moura

Hart House UofT/Ryerson University

Coordinator: Maria Eugenia Jardim

October 3-13, 2012

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