

# **Animated Documentary: A New Form of Representing Reality**

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## **Abstract**

Documentary has never been a closed field as its boundaries are constantly expanding. Looking back on the centuries of development of documentary: from the “City Symphony Films” in 1920s to the Grierson-style documentaries in 1930s — 1940s, to “Direct Cinema” and “Cinéma Vérité” in 1960s, to the "New Documentary" in 1970s as Thomas Waugh put it, and then to the "New Documentary" in 1990s, every innovation in form and style presents a new possibility of documentary expression and refreshes the boundary of documentary over and over again. The continuous "cross-border" act from the producers has challenged our original understanding and cognition towards documentary as well as prompted us to rethink the nature of it, furthermore, the documentary theories has also developed accordingly. From this point of view, new exploration in creation is often an important opportunity for theoretical renewal as well.

As far as recent documentary productions, the rise of animated documentary is quite remarkable. In this paper, I will first give a brief description of the history of animated documentary, and then compare animated documentary with general moving images to outline its unique attributes and functions in representation. In addition, I will clarify some doubts about animated documentary in theory, and make some explanations about the legitimacy of animated documentary as a new form of documentary practice. In this part, although the focus of my research is animated documentaries and the purpose is to solve some theoretical dilemma encountered by animated documentary, what is more important is to think about the general attributes of documentary, that is, what is documentary? Animated documentary provides us with a new perspective to re-examine our understanding toward documentary and a new way to approach the essence of the concept. Thus, the study of animated documentaries is quite meaningful.