

Human Rights Issues in Documentary Cinema

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- Human Rights films reflect the actual state of human rights violations, or the visions and aspirations as to the ways to redress those violations

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- Should human rights films have a certain 'effect' on the audience? Should they prompt solidarity, educate on human dignity, make people engage in political and ethical debates? Should human rights films, in other words, serve as a tool for something more than just the presentation of a good story or a reality well told?

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- Human rights film festivals originated from a variety of sources: international and domestic human rights organizations, other non-governmental organizations, universities, cultural foundations, governmental and intergovernmental institutions. The two major international human rights organizations, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, each host festivals in various places in the world.

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- Human Rights Film Network:
<http://www.humanrightsfilmnetwork.org>

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- **Milosevic on Trial** (2006) - Michael Christoffersen
one of the biggest trials on war crimes in recent history
- **Blind Justice** (2004) – Refik Hodzic & Aldin Arnautovic
critics on work of International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia – ICTY
- **Scorpions** (2007) – Lazar Stojanovic
home video on brutally killing of Bosnian civilians

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- **Checkpoint** (2003) – Yoav Shamir
interaction between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians at several checkpoints
- **City of Borders** (2009) – Yun Suh
set against the construction of the separation wall between Israel and Palestinian territories and the struggle for a gay pride parade in Jerusalem
- **Pray the Devil Back to Hell** (2008) – Gini Reticker, Abigail Disney, Kirsten Johnson
Liberian women came together to end a bloody civil war

About Baghdad (2003) - Sinan Antoon

- several months after the American invasion
- those interviewed bear witness to the humiliation of living under another's rule, be it Saddam Hussein's or that of a foreign occupier

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- **The Greatest Silence: Rape in Congo** (2007) - Lisa Jackson shot in the war zones of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), shatters the silence that surrounds the use of sexual violence as a weapon of conflict
- **Abortion Democracy** (2008) – Sarah Diehl documentary explores and contrasts changes in Poland and South Africa regarding abortion laws and their impact on the lives of women
- **ESHQ** (2004) – Jana Počtová research on life of Afghan women

Shadow of the Holy Book (2008) - Arto Halonen

- investigates the morality of international companies and the dictatorship of oil-and-gas-rich Turkmenistan
- personality cult of the Turkmen president Niyazov, was singularly extreme
- Saparmurat Niyazov ruled the country since the day Turkmenistan proclaimed its independence on October 27th 1991

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- **Which Way Home** (2009) – Rebecca Cammisa shows the personal side of immigration through the eyes of children from Mexico who face harrowing dangers with enormous courage and resourcefulness as they endeavor to make it to the United States
- **Border** (2002) - Laura Waddington trace the months that director spent in Sangatte, Red Cross camp hidden in the fields, each night, with Afghan and Iraqi refugees who were trying to cross the channel tunnel to England

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- Stella, Bruzzi. *Contemporary Documentary: A Critical Introduction*, London: Routledge, 2000
- Summerfield, Ellen. *Crossing Cultures through Film*, Boston: Intercultural Press, 1993

Web sources:

- Abortion Democracy – Sarah Diehl’s web: <http://www.abortion-democracy.de>
- Amnesty International: <http://www.amnesty.org>
- Humanitarian Law Center: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org>
- Human Rights Watch: <http://www.hrw.org>
- United Nations: <http://www.un.org/>
- Women in Black: <http://www.womeninblack.org>

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Thank you for your attention!