

DOCUMENTARY FILMS FOR PRESERVATION: REPRESENTATION TECHNIQUES FOR THE FIELD

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Abstract

This thesis examines and analyzes engaging representation techniques used in documentary filmmaking both within and outside of the preservation field. It traces the fundamental theoretical disputes that are central to non-fiction, historical documentary filmmaking, and provides a context to how preservationists have utilized the medium for documentation, advocacy, and education. Referring to seminal documentary theorists' texts such as John Grierson's *First Principles of Documentary Filmmaking* and Bill Nichols' *Documentary Modes of Representation*, I extrapolate crucial categories of engaging representation strategies and put these into dialogue with presently executed audio visual narratives in films. In my analysis, I investigate three films, each of which have a particular narrative agenda. Documentary filmmaking is utilized to convey historical facts while providing a compelling and persuasive storytelling narrative. All the techniques used within documentary filmmaking thus should then collectively inform, support, and augment the overarching narrative. As I analyze, this is not always the case in the three films. In some moments of the films, audio and visual content is executed in a manner that detracts from the narrative by adding conflicting or distracting imagery and dialogue. This thesis takes a close examination of both engaging and disengaging moments in documentary films. I will propose how filmmaking techniques can be utilized to create more effective representations when actively engaged with narratives in preservation documentary practice.

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I have always been interested in creating engaging representations within the field of historic preservation. This thesis explores a method of engaging people with historical narrative through film. It would have been impossible to navigate and hunt down preservation documentary films if it were not for the help and guidance I received through professionals in the field and academia. I would first like to thank the organizations and filmmakers that helped me in my search for material: Matthew Coody from New York Preservation Archive Project, who generously provided me a list of archived films related to preservation; Clare Hughes, who guided me through her previous filmmaking work at Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, and whose conversations has inspired me to pursue creating my own representations in the field; Matthew Silva, who provided me insight into his own experiences as a filmmaker capturing the modern ruin of the NY State Pavilion; and my reader Andrew Dolkart, who has always provided our Historic Preservation class food for thought within preservation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION	6
LITERATURE ANALYSIS	7-19
Introduction	
The “Real in Documentary”	
PBS and Ken Burns	
The Documentary and Preservation Parallel	
Advocacy	
ANALYSIS	20-22
Introduction	
<i>Techniques: Narration</i>	
<i>Techniques: Original Users</i>	
<i>Techniques: Professional Interviews</i>	
<i>Techniques: Animations for Visualizations</i>	
<i>Techniques: B-roll</i>	
<i>Context/ Audience and Reflections</i>	
LGBTQ HISTORIC PLACES IN L.A.	23-37
<i>Context</i>	
<i>Narration and Original Users</i>	
<i>Quasi-Professional Interviews</i>	
<i>Animations for Visualizations</i>	
<i>B-roll</i>	
<i>Audience and Reflections</i>	
JAMES MARSTON FITCH: PIONEER IN PRESERVATION	38-49
<i>Context</i>	
<i>Narration</i>	
<i>Original Users</i>	
<i>Original Users and Professional Interviews</i>	
<i>Professional Interviews</i>	
<i>Animations for Visualizations</i>	
<i>B-roll</i>	
<i>Audience and Reflections</i>	
PBS 10 BUILDINGS IN AMERICA	50-67
<i>Context</i>	
<i>Narration</i>	
<i>Original Users</i>	
<i>Professional Interviews</i>	
<i>Professional Interviews and Original Users</i>	
<i>Animations for Visualizations</i>	
<i>Animated Visualizations and Original Users</i>	
<i>Animated Visualizations and B-roll</i>	
<i>B-roll</i>	
<i>Audience and Reflections</i>	
Conclusion	68
PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS	69-73
REFERENCES	74-75

INTRODUCTION

Primary documentation methods within the field of preservation have been researched written texts, architectural style guides, and photography. Although preservationists have also used documentary film as a medium for both historical record and storytelling, I will propose how the field can use the medium of documentary films to a fuller potential. Both preservationists and history documentary filmmakers are tasked to accurately represent history through narratives. Perhaps then, preservationists are especially equipped to understand and utilize the documentary film medium as a platform to convey history to those within and beyond the field. There is room in each documentary storytelling narrative to emphasize particular facts, through audio and visual filmmaking techniques. Such accents serve a greater motive in documentaries to *persuade* and form engaging narratives. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze documentary films that have been utilized to represent the preservation field, and provide recommendations on engaging techniques that work.

For each preservation project, it is imperative to have a convincing and justifiable reason to restore, adapt, or preserve a building. Preservationists use advocacy to campaign for a building's importance, hoping that if enough—or the right—people believe in its architectural or cultural worth, the building will continue significance. In this thesis, I propose that filmmaking techniques can play a significant role in establishing such convincing messages, if used consistently in a reinforcing manner to enhance the overall narrative.

To select relevant films to later analyze, I sought out recommendations through the New York Preservation Archive Project (NYPAP), architecture and preservation firms, and preservation professionals. To supplement my knowledge of each, I turned to literature on both preservation as well as filmmaking. In the primary and secondary material that follows, I will first discuss fundamental documentary theories and later put these into dialogue with documentary films within the field of preservation. This section establishes the relationship and similarities between the roles of preservationists and filmmakers. The later analysis section follows with an in-depth and close examination of how preservation related documentaries utilize filmmaking techniques to construct a narrative, and ultimately how engaging representations can be achieved.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS

Introduction

To inform my analysis of documentaries, this literature analysis will discuss the ongoing debate around documentary filmmaking fundamentals, familiarize the reader with technical terms in filmmaking, and highlight areas in which preservationists can utilize documentary filmmaking for advocacy. It will tackle subjects of reality in documentaries, filmmaker responsibilities, and an underlying purpose of advocacy. Throughout, I assert that the purpose of a documentary filmmaking is not only to *document* the truth, but also to provide a platform for technical tools to advance a persuasive narrative.

To understand the fundamentals of what constitutes a “documentary,” in filmmaking, I will first turn to John Grierson’s *First Principles of Documentary* written in 1934. Grierson is often attributed, by other filmmakers and writers, for inventing the term “documentary,” when he reviewed Robert Flaherty’s *Moana* (1926).¹ He defined the documentary as “the creative treatment of actuality.” Documentary films were propelled when later camera and sound equipment became much lighter, which increased mobility for filmmakers and potential to capture life beyond a studio set-up. Grierson’s writing was at the start of this revolution. Thus, he emphasizes the use of natural material, as the cameraman is not limited or bound by staging. The first principles are as follows: 1) cinema’s ability to move around and explore the real world; rather than artificial stage sets 2) the belief that original actors—people—or users native to the narrative are “better,” because they provide a believable and real story 3) raw material (dialogue) is regarded as more valuable than scripted footage.²

There are debates on these principles in documentary filmmaking. Dirk Eitzen asserts that Grierson’s definition does not satisfy what it means to create a non-fiction documentary.³ Instead of coming up with a new definition, Eitzen refutes that any documentary can capture “reality,” and he states that “every representation of reality is

¹ John Grierson, “The First Principles (1932-1934),” in *NonFiction Film: Theory and Criticism*, ed. Richard Meran Barsam, New York, Dutton: 1976, 19-30.

² Ibid.

³ Dirk Eitzen, “When is a Documentary?: Documentary as a Mode of Reception,” *Cinema Journal* 35 (1) Fall 1995, 81-102.

no more than a fiction in the sense that it is an artificial construct, a highly contrived and selective view of the world, produced for some purpose and therefore unavoidably reflecting a given subjectivity or point of view.”⁴ This is similar, if not exactly the same philosophy behind a significant style in documentary filmmaking history: *cinéma vérité*. Historically, there was a debate around the idea of capturing reality in cinema. This debate was presented through different movements, and is an ongoing debate today.

The “Real” in Documentary

The French style *cinéma vérité*, which literally translates as “truthful cinema,” was spearheaded by Jean Rouch in his 1961 film collaboration with Edgar Morin called *Chronicle of a Summer*, in which they explore how filmmakers take an active position in framing cinema narrative and overall creation.⁵ The film sequence begins with both Rouch and Morin asking an interview subject if she could interview others objectively. Later, she becomes the subject of an interview, revealing intimate details of her life as a Holocaust survivor and further reflections on the Algerian War. The film goes through a series of subjects, who later watch a screening of the documentary film sequence Rouch has just made. In the screening theatre, everyone including the subjects and filmmakers discuss whether it was successful in capturing natural, raw human behavior despite the tendency for humans to act differently once faced by a camera. The film ends with Rouch and Morin reflecting on the screening and the overall film process. There is no explicit conclusion of the film’s success. Instead the film itself serves as meta proof that the filmmakers deliberately selected, edited, and screened particular “candid” and “natural” moments. In the end, the “truth” in cinema is not a passive, observational, documentation of real life. This concept was challenged by American documentary filmmakers who believed that the fly-on-the-wall approach could be done, through *direct cinema*.

Although stemming from the French *cinéma vérité* movement, the American name change to “direct cinema” signifies what filmmaker and writer James Blue

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Jean Rouch & Edgar Morin (1961) “Chronicle of a Summer”

considers a breakthrough.⁶ He believes that direct cinema addressed the very problem cinéma vérité locks itself into when questioning the objective truth.⁷ In a sense, Americans attempted to create something more straightforward—*direct*, if you will—making a statement that rather than question the essence of truth in cinema, the “real” can still be documented. Blue believed that even if the filmmaker edited a documentary, the truth could still be captured and recorded through the filmmaker’s lens. The names “cinéma vérité” and “direct cinema” are often mistakenly interchanged, creating confusion between film commentaries and critiques. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that the distinction came with the United States transformation of the concept, where these filmmakers believed in the “real” observations made possible through direct filmmaking.

At the time, Hollywood was experiencing a public disinterest in cinema, and the cinéma vérité style offered a way to capture “real” and vivid life experiences that the everyday American could relate to.⁸ William Rothman acknowledges that Rouch understood how filming is a “real act performed in the real world with real consequences,” and expands on how other cinéma vérité style documentary filmmakers were true to this style. Rothman mentions filmmaker John Grierson’s relevance from the 1930s to the 1960s in documentary filmmaking, stating that most documentaries from the time period advanced social thesis explicitly stated by a narrator’s voice.⁹ But Rothman explains that American documentary filmmakers were the ones to transform this theory into a tool for network television through direct cinema documentary filmmaking.¹⁰ With a larger audience platform, non-fiction documentaries became sources of what gave the appearance of uncontested news or information.

American direct cinema filmmakers Richard Leacock and Albert Maysles shot the 1960 documentary film *Primary*, which was not intended for cinema entertainment in movie theatres, but for network television.¹¹ This documentary captured the 1960

⁶ James Blue, “Direct Cinema,” *Film Comment* 4(3), 1967, 80-81.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ William Rothman, “Eternal Verites” in *Beyond the Document*, ed. Charles Warren, Wesleyan University Press, 1996.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

Wisconsin primary election between John F. Kennedy and Humphrey Hubert, taking an intimate look into and closely following their campaigns; it had an enormous influence on the election's results.¹² Direct filmmaking seemed to create a trust between the viewers and filmmakers, where audiences believed a transparency had been achieved and therefore trust the election candidates. They could take an inside look into these candidates lives, virtually following them as Leacock and Maysles held camera equipment to capture candid moments. Rothman knew the potential direct cinema could provide non-fiction filmmaking and the influence it could have in the public realm; he states that "as documentaries, they were public-affairs shows, news."¹³

Of course, it is almost impossible *not* to acknowledge the interaction where a newscaster or documentary television program host stares directly into the camera. It is this breaking of the fourth wall, to use a theatrical term, where the actor (in this case the host) addresses the audience (viewers at home) "face-to-face." In this moment, the host easily relays non-fictional information as viewers forget about all the staging and acting involved. In these moments, the viewer is at the media host's disposal, listening to a series of crafted narrative, which he or she will have to later accept or decline as the truth. Cinéma vérité, at its root, was intended to undermine studio filming sets such as television's packaged presentation through actors, but Americans utilized it as a tool to fabricate seemingly candid interactions, through interviews and documentaries.¹⁴ Additionally, direct cinema created opportunities for filmmakers to avoid questioning the truth in cinema, and create what they deemed as raw, observational footage.

This exploitation of the "real" in filmmaking, as concerning as it is, gives weight to a higher "truth" about the nature of documentary film in general: that non-fictional, historically accurate documentaries, remain subjective in nature and often have an agenda. This agenda has to do with audience, influence, education, and most importantly *persuasion*. Instead of this idea posing a threat to non-fiction observational documentary, embracing this conclusion gives all the more weight to the filmmaker's decisions and their subjective point of view. Later, I will demonstrate how the films

¹² Robert Drew, Richard Leacock, and Albert Maysles (1960) "The Primary"

¹³ William Rothman, "Eternal Verites," Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

analyzed in this thesis do not attempt to hide their own constructed nature or artifice, and are in fact crafted to persuade.

PBS and Ken Burns

With the establishment of nation-wide networks, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) arose as a program distributing organization in 1970 and later was acclaimed as the United States' most trusted resource for educational programming.¹⁵ PBS aired numerous documentaries about American history, and many were made by filmmaker Ken Burns. An important documentary technique that Ken Burns fathered was the concept of utilizing camera functions to create motion over still photographs. Today the camera or video editing technique is commonly called the **Ken Burns effect**, where the camera can zoom and pan over still images. **Voiceover** sound of the interviewees or narrator often accompanies this. Although Burns was neither the first nor only filmmaker to utilize this technique, his name was so inseparable from this video technique that even contemporary software such as iMovie by Apple carries a "Ken Burns" function, where guerilla filmmakers can select where and how a scene can move over a motionless image. Burns claims this function is reductive and undermines the "very honorable attempt on [his] part to will old photographs alive."¹⁶ Burns had two ruling ideologies in making historical documentaries. One, was a dedication to making history "accessible and dramatically stimulating to the general public," and the other was to "get the record straight," by correcting previous historical imagery distortions.¹⁷ Burns saw himself as a revisionary historian, and his documentaries were widely accepted through documentary films aired on network television.

The Documentary and Preservation Parallel

On a theoretical level, Ken Burns, like all history documentary filmmakers, has two roles: storyteller and historian. Documentary filmmakers engage both in the method

¹⁵ Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)" from Britannica.com. Added July 20, 1998. Last edited April 9, 2012.

¹⁶ Tom Roston. "Ken Burns on 'The Ken Burns Effect' (and the 8 Effects He Actually Uses)" *POV's Documentary Blog* by PBS.org on September 12, 2014

¹⁷ John C. Tibbetts. "The Incredible Stillness of Being: Motionless Pictures in the Films of Ken Burns," *American Studies* 37(1), Spring 1996, 117-133.

of collecting facts, and the art of narration through imagery. According to John C. Tibbets, this dual role can be considered as “participating in the tension between imitation and authenticity.”¹⁸ On the one hand, the filmmaker has a responsibility to be true to collected material. On the other hand, he or she must then create a situation in which contemporary audiences can virtually experience past realities. With this in mind, I would like to compare the aforementioned dual role with that of a historic preservationist.

Historic preservationist Jorge Otero-Pailos claims the concept of *monumentaries*, defining them as physical buildings that both document the past as well as stand for a contemporary expression.¹⁹ He writes, “as in film documentaries, architectural monumentaries must strike a careful balance between staging historical evidence objectively and presenting the filmmaker’s or the architect’s subjective editorial point of view.”²⁰ By using the role of filmmaker and architect interchangeably, Otero-Pailos is making a claim that there are responsibilities within the professions that align. Whether it is a documentary or historic building, it should be crafted with the same approach. He mentions two classically polar opposite realms here: the *objective* and the *subjective*. Yet, he does not juxtapose them against one another. Instead he calls for “a careful balance” between the two responsibilities. This is comparable to Tibbet’s aforementioned idea of a filmmaker’s dual role tension. Then, is it a *balance* or a *tension*? In any case, the filmmaker or preservationist role carry both the historic responsibility and narrative agenda.

Advocacy

I will now expand on one of the larger purposes both fields pursue: advocacy. Preservationist Michael Tomlan believes that “because historic preservation is fundamentally a social campaign, advocacy is absolutely essential.”²¹ Later I will echo advocacy as one of the many intents the preservation field can have in creating a

¹⁸ John C. Tibbets, *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Jorge Otero-Pailos. “Monumentaries: Toward a Theory of the Apergon” *e-flux Journal* #66, October 2015.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Michael A. Tomlan. “Historic Preservation: Caring for Our Expanding Legacy.” *Cham: Springer International Publishing*, Chapter 7: Advocacy and Ethics, 2015, 271-273.

documentary. The approach to advocacy has varied according to social context. Historically, preservationists used documentation as a means to advocate. In 1933, the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) made the general public aware of the preservation field, through its effort to document existing buildings.²² HABS had two purposes in their photographs and drawings: to document and advocate. In this case, the advocacy relied on surveyed building drawings, and was therefore achieved *through* documentation.

By creating pamphlets, HABS could direct the public's photographic reproduction requests towards their own office. However, in 1968 when S. K. Stevens wrote "Preservation through Documentation," he was concerned that the volume of documentation needed for HABS was too large for future generations to tackle, even with the aid of computers.²³ Stevens was foreshadowing a call to a different method of advocacy through documentation. In a way, he was saying that relying on HABS documentation for advocacy would not be a sustainable option for the future, as the task of documenting building plans increases. HABS was one of the first attempts to raise awareness and educate, but perhaps it is not the best method to rely on for contemporary advocacy.

Today preservation advocacy also takes a political platform. While HABS advocated to educate, coalition networks advocate for policy reform. By 2014, advocacy coalitions for heritage sites created networks to push for preservation policies.²⁴ Some believe that true preservation advocacy should focus more on its political platform created through these networks, rather than rely on media as an approach.²⁵ Yet, advocacy campaigns launched by these organizations are seen as having very minimal impact for endangered heritage sites, especially by professionals who are engaged in new forms of media.²⁶ Perhaps if the preservation field utilizes media in conjunction with pushing for policy reform, the overall advocacy effort could be more impactful. Has the

²² S. K. Stevens. "Preservation through Documentation." *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* 25(4), 1968, p 272-289.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Hyojung Cho. "Advocacy Coalition for Historic Preservation in the U.S.: Changes in Motivations" *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 44(4), 2014, p 234-245.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Michael A. Tomlan, Ibid, 273.

preservation field fully tapped into its media potential and audience awareness as it did in the 1930s with HABS?

Preservation advocacy has had few notable appearances in the public's eye since HABS, although the platforms for such exposure were already in formation. In the 1970s, radio and public television broadcasting provided a platform in which the idea of rehabilitating a home was introduced; before this, the field was restricted to magazines of "do-it-yourself" articles.²⁷ A decade later, the television network expanded introducing the History Channel and National Geographic Society, both of which instilled the conceptual thinking for Americans to appreciate history and natural landscapes. In 1988, the National Trust for Historic Preservation launched "the eleven most endangered" list, which proved to be the field's most successful online media campaigns.²⁸ But since then, preservation advocacy efforts proved to stick to a smaller scale audience.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation currently has a "Film Stories" page on its website, where visitors can learn virtually more about cultural sites through documentaries or articles that list pop-culture references to iconic buildings or landscapes. One of the most recent articles, published in 2017, includes two documentary films on preservation projects related to Los Angeles' LGBTQ History produced by Los Angeles Conservancy.²⁹ Both documentaries use a variety of common techniques in video editing, including the technical skills discussed before on the subject of Ken Burns' documentary. Additionally, these two documentaries in particular have **animation** drawn by a graphic artist and put together through editing software, played with upbeat, contemporary music. This kind of filmmaking is highly stylized, and could easily strike someone as violating the very fundamental principles of retaining pure historic imagery in documentaries.

Thinkers like Walter Benjamin would have considered this act of manipulation through technology a force of cultural heritage deterioration.³⁰ In his early 20th century

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Lauren Walser. "On Film: Los Angeles' LGBTQ History," *National Trust for Historic Preservation*. Web. Accessed December 2017. Published August 31, 2017.

³⁰ Walter Benjamin. "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility." Originally published 1939.

writing, he asserts that through the age of technological advancement, mainly through film, cultural heritage will be liquidated.³¹ Adding graphic manipulations to technological reproduced imagery is one step further than Benjamin's main point of doing historical narratives injustice through derivative imagery. However, Benjamin also acknowledges that as humans collectively change over time, their modes of perception on history will too.³² Therefore maybe these graphic visualizations do have a place in making histories more relatable to the current climate of how people engage with documentaries, as will be discussed in the later analysis section of this thesis.

Preservationists and architects have advocated individual projects through documentary filmmaking. Individual, project-based documentaries seem to range between 5 to 10 minutes long, and are produced by project stakeholders. Many of these short, almost promotion-like films, are created to document or advocate a specific historic preservation project, and the filmmakers are often hired by the projects' firm to provide a compelling visual creation about their work. Whereas, the traditional history documentary lasts around 1 hour. Perhaps with the invention of the internet, there is no need to utilize network broadcasting programs to place preservation documentary films at its forefront for advocacy. Still, many contemporary preservation documentaries are snippet-like depictions or reductive summaries of ongoing restoration, rehabilitation, and preservation on individual projects.

There is also currently no documentary that focuses on the evolution of preservation theory. Otero-Pailos comments that in the late 1960s, "total restoration had become a problem rather than solution," and asserts that the preservation field experienced a theory shift when one of its spearheading professionals, James Marston Fitch, recognized the maturation of the preservation field through the Benjamin Franklin House project in Philadelphia.³³ The Benjamin Franklin project proposed that preservationists cannot possibly create an authentic representation of the historic site; therefore the task was not to recreate, but propel a discussion of what its history meant and explore what place it has in today's ever-shifting context. A James M. Fitch

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Jorge Otero-Pailos. "Preservation's Anonymous Lament," *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 4(2), University of Minnesota Press: 2007, p ii-vii

documentary is covered later in my analysis, but focuses more on the formalized education he established for preservationists. It does not explain the driving theories behind what preservationists do.

There are no right answers to creating a preservation documentary. However, there is a method of utilizing documentary films to create material that engages preservationists, people in related disciplines and interests, and ultimately the public. The method would vary greatly depending upon each audience scale. Representing the preservation field is not limited to one building falling apart in need of funding, it applies to our field in every scale, from individual projects to our collective identity of representing histories throughout shifting contexts. As discussed in this literature analysis, the documentary film medium is a narrative platform where technical video footage tools can advance representations in the field. With the roles of history documentary filmmakers and preservationists facing parallel responsibilities of managing both factual information and engaging narratives, compelling representations will be in demand. Real documentation is edited, crafted, and funneled through a subjective lens. This does not undermine the validity of historical truth or facts collected. Further, it is more about *how* this information is delivered that defines the art. The following thesis analysis will dive deeply into how documentaries, both within and beyond the preservation field, manage to leverage technical tools towards engaging historical narrative craft.

ANALYSIS

Introduction

Within the preservation field, documentary films or videos have primarily been used to advocate for communities, ask for restoration project funding, or stimulate historic site tourism. The following is neither a comprehensive list nor analysis of documentary films made both within and outside of the preservation field for the aforementioned purposes. Rather, this thesis critically examines three documentary films on how effectively each one uses filmmaking techniques. Later, I will propose recommendations on how future preservation documentary films can advance towards more engaging representation techniques.

The following analysis is organized by three documentary films. Each chosen from a preliminary list that was archived after research on what documentaries have been made both internal and external to the preservation field. Two of the three examined are preservation documentaries; one focused on advocacy and the other on education. The third documentary is preservation-related, but ultimately a look into how architectural history is conveyed through publicly broadcasted television. The first film of my analysis is a short video documentary that focuses on three buildings significant towards an overarching LGBTQ advocacy case in Los Angeles, made by the nonprofit Los Angeles Conservancy, called *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.* The second film was created by two Columbia University GSAPP Alumni, *James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education*, and provides a historical account of preservation education in New York City. Thirdly, I have included a PBS nationwide broadcasted educational documentary, *10 Buildings that Changed America*, that illustrates many historic buildings. I chose these three because of their greatly differing intents and scope of audience, to demonstrate when particular film techniques prove particularly useful. Additionally, other relevant preservation documentary films are integrated in this analysis for comparison on filmmaking techniques where relevant.

I will use filmmaking techniques as points of discourse that set up a dialogue on engaging representation techniques in filmmaking. This will highlight overlapping trends between seemingly dissimilar documentaries. These techniques are broken down into five key technique discussion topics for comparison between the films: **narration**, **original users**, **professional interviews**, **graphic visualizations**, and **the b-roll**. The

narration category will have three subcategories, as it expands to accommodate three primary ideas relevant to the documentary films in this thesis. I will first briefly explain each of these techniques and then proceed to utilize them as principle points of discourse within the aforementioned three documentary films.

Techniques: Narration

In any storytelling, a narrator has a responsibility of guiding an audience through a sequence of events. Documentary narrative can at times take the form of narrator voiceover, where the narrator's voice is heard over relevant imagery. Beginning with the narrator's position, both visual and audio techniques frame this character as actively part of the discussion with an underlying motive to influence. The narrator, whether visible or invisible, is the one who persuades. Such a role can take on different forms, from an omniscient voice to someone on screen directly addressing viewers. I will illustrate the most common narrative types in documentary filmmaking, to analyze what larger intentions each position has.

To do this, I will be using documentary theorist Bill Nichols' documentary modes of representation, to engage in a discourse that will continue to be relevant throughout each film. Nichols identifies four prominent modes of documentary narration, each determined by narrative structure and position: expository, observational, interactive, and reflexive.³⁴ The first three of these modes are most relevant. I will first define each, then proceed to use them as a method of narrative analysis for the films within this thesis. I will also discuss how this is communicated through the following camera techniques: point of view (POV), camera angle, and movement.

The **expository mode** creates a seemingly objective narrator's point of view, or even a "voice of God," detached from a physical manifestation within the documentary itself, prepared with a well-reasoned argument for facts.³⁵ The narrator addresses the audience directly, from an authoritative position on the historical facts and logic

³⁴ Bill Nichols. "Axis of Orientation: Documentary modes of representation," Chapter II in *Representing Reality: issues and concepts in documentary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p 32-75.

³⁵ Ibid.

presented. Nichols explains that this mode of narration often includes text on screen to highlight key statistics or relevant information in a documentary.³⁶

The **observational mode** is what American filmmakers call “direct cinema,” stressing a fly-on-the wall and nonintervention of the filmmaker.³⁷ According to Nichols, observational filmmaking tends to lean towards “a particular inflection to ethical considerations,” which often attempts to create what a filmmaker deems as the most *authentic* representations. Earlier in this thesis, I discussed the *cinéma vérité* movement, and how it posited the impossibility of ever achieving this status.

In the **interactive mode**, the narrator is actively intervening in the documentary through imagery, testimony, or verbal exchange. These kinds of documentaries are primarily composed of b-roll imagery sequences, where audio narration aligns with shots in the film.³⁸ This also can be seen in documentaries where a host talks directly to the camera, also known as participatory mode. The PBS aired documentary, *10 Buildings that Changed America*, utilizes this almost tour-like mode of representation.

Although each documentary itself can fall into one or more of these mode categories, I will discuss moments where the narrative shifts between different modes of representation, depending upon their respective technical execution through momentary changes in both visual and audio language. While Bill Nichols offers a method of organizing these different narrative techniques, John Grierson offers a qualitative criterion to distinguish between original users versus professional experts.

Techniques: Original Users

In John Grierson’s *First Principles of Documentary Filmmaking*, original actors or users of the subject narrative or site are highly regarded as primary sources in storytelling.³⁹ In this thesis, I will be using the category of original users defined as people who are the original people within a historical narrative. Original users are also often used in Nichols’ interactive mode of representation, when people relay first-hand experiences shared through interview scenes.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid. 38

³⁸ Ibid. 42.

³⁹ John Grierson, “The First Principles (1932-1934),” p 21.

Original users of subject historic sites often appear as interview style scenes in documentaries. Their personal anecdotes often have a personable, or emotionally compelling, effect on the film's overarching narrative. Each of the three films utilize original users of the historic sites, whether it was the architect who built it, preservationists that saved it, or community members that used it. Documentaries utilize these experiences as primary sources for creating an argument of why a building is important. In most of the documentaries, filmmakers generally try to incorporate people who experienced the historic stories first-hand. Later I will briefly touch on Matthew Silva's film *Modern Ruin: A World's Fair Pavilion*, as an exemplary and particularly effective example of utilizing real life original users of historic sites.

Techniques: Professional Interviews

Another method of building a convincing narrative in documentaries is incorporating professionals who have specialized knowledge or accredited opinions. This provides a disciplinary framework. In these interviews, professionals are asked questions pertinent to the documentary, that provide insight into its historical account, confirming or disproving factual information. Such professional interviews are integrated into many non-fiction documentaries. At times, these professionals have also had first-hand encounters with the documentary's subject, and therefore can provide both an objective as well as subjective experience—much like an original user in the previous category.

Some preservation documentaries such as *Treasures of New York: The Landmarks Preservation Movement* contain interview material that support the overarching narrative, by integrating professionals of varying disciplines related to the field of preservation. The film was produced by the New York City Landmarks Commission and publicly aired by WNET in 2015 and 2018, and it includes interviews with architects, preservationists, critics, government commissioners, chairs of organizations, directors and deans of universities, and professors.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ PBS Thirteen.org. "Treasures of New York: The Landmarks Preservation Movement," WNET. Web. Accessed: March 2018.

Techniques: Animations for Visualizations

Contemporary video-making software has enabled both guerilla and professional filmmakers to incorporate animations that create alternative visual possibilities to the frequently used Ken-Burns style camera zoom and pan on historic photographs. Two later examined documentaries in particular utilize this: PBS' *10 Buildings that Changed America* and Los Angeles Conservancy's *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.* I will compare their use of the technique and analyze its effectiveness in each. Later, I will ask the following questions: whether graphic animations have a place in contemporary preservation films as a means of authentic representations? Does this technique do historical storytelling justice? Or does it merely distract from narratives? The answer to these questions will be different with each film, dependent upon their narrative engagement.

Techniques: The B-roll

The b-roll editing technique should always inform documentary narrative. Essentially, this is an ultimate measure of how visual representations reinforce audio narrative. In the early days of news television, the terms *A-roll* and *B-roll* were invented in succession of scene material hierarchy; A-roll was considered the main visual and interview, and B-roll was considered additional footage to support the visuals of the story by capturing imagery relevant to the narrator's voiceover.⁴¹ Today the term A-roll is no longer used, and filmmakers often use the term B-roll to address visual, cutaway video footage that is used in conjunction with voice-over narration.⁴² In documentaries, it is common practice to first establish an interview scene with a person facing the camera, then cut to B-roll footage that supports the subject dialogue of the previous interview. All three documentaries use this filmmaking technique, but not all execute it to the same level or consistency. The b-roll should be supplementary and reinforcing footage that consistently engages with the documentary's narrative.

⁴¹ Ronald Compesi & Jaime Gomez. "Introduction to Video Production: Studio, Field, and Beyond" Chapter 11: Video Editing Techniques, CRC Press: 2015, p 268

⁴² Ibid.

Context/ Audience and Reflections

Throughout each analysis chapter, I will first introduce the context in which each documentary was made, later ending each chapter with the film's audience and general reflections. I will do this to provide the reader enriching background information on each film, as well as to highlight a reoccurring theme: preservation documentaries are no longer limited to an audience consisting of only those within the field. The change in documentary accessibility not only reflects the overarching technological integration of information online, but also reflects the field of preservation's willingness to participate in the public realm. If anyone with access to internet can access these documentaries, then these documentaries are no longer limited to the preservation field. Rather, documentaries today—both professionally and amateur-made—are in a context open to the public. In other words, they exist in a realm that is open to anyone interested, not exclusive to professionals, students, critics, preservationists, or architects.

There are many differing intents preservation documentaries can take, non-exclusive to promoting the field as a whole in the public realm or advocating for additional funding for a historic preservation project. Although not a production technique, the range of potential audience establishes a context to a film's reach. One of the key reasons I chose to include PBS' *10 Buildings that Changed America* is to highlight a platform on which one of the largest audiences is attainable. Each of the three documentaries in this analysis had different initial platforms for publicity, but all are accessible through an online search today. The important thread between any intent is the context in which these documentaries are now found online and researchable, which I will discuss further after my subsequent analysis. Thus, it is important to see how the role of documentary films could augment the way the preservation field is represented through any scope of work today. I will now explore how the aforementioned techniques inform the following three documentaries.

LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY'S LGBTQ HISTORIC PLACES IN L.A.

Context

The Los Angeles Conservancy is a nonprofit organization that relies on both professional and community members to educate and advocate for historic preservation throughout Los Angeles County.⁴³ Within their “Curating the City” series, the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and/or queer) advocacy campaign sought to bring attention to overlooked Los Angeles-based sites that were part of the overarching community movement; recognized in cities such as New York City for its Stonewall riots or San Francisco as America’s “Gay City.”⁴⁴ Although focused on separate sites, the video’s main mission was to make a statement that Los Angeles as a city fostered the LGBTQ community. The film was launched in 2015 in partnership with KCET, which is an LA-based independent educational television station, and was sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This short documentary video provides insight into three sites in LA that were integral to the LGBTQ community’s history: The Black Cat in Silver Lake, The Woman’s Building in Chinatown, and Plummer Park’s Great Hall/Long Hall in West Hollywood. Each of the three segments integrates community members who support each building’s historical importance.

Although two of the three sites are already recognized by historic preservation jurisdictions, all historic buildings are compiled together in this film to advocate for continued protection against new city development plans. The first of the sites, The Black Cat, was historically designated as a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument in 2008, with the help of community activist Wes Joe, who narrates its history onsite (Figure 1). This particular site was fully recognized as part of the LGBTQ community and civil rights movement in its designation. In contrast, The Woman’s Building has no historic preservation designation that protects it today, and relies on the stories of the women who joined its historic Feminist Studio Workshop to tell of the building’s importance (Figure 1). Lastly, the Great Hall/Long Hall was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2013, but not for association with LGBTQ culture; two

⁴³ Los Angeles Conservancy. “About.” 2016. Web. Accessed February 27th, 2018.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

ACT-UP LA organization members narrate the building's history as one that facilitated this movement, as this site faces threat of demolition as the City of Hollywood plans to redesign the park it resides in (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Left: Wes Joe, Los Angeles community activist stands in front of The Black Cat entrance with the HCM Plaque he helped make possible. Middle: LGBTQ couple that met at the Woman's Building stand in front with an enlarged photo of themselves. Right: ACT-UP movement members reminisce at Great Hall/Long Hall

Narration and Original Users

LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A is conveyed through a mixture of community member interviews and b-roll footage of both documents and photographs that inform the audio dialogue. This chapter combines a section of the Original Users technique with Narration, because the documentary is primarily narrated through community members. For each of the three buildings, a person is interviewed onsite at the front entrance. This is an example of the interactive mode of documentary, where the narrator participates in the film's narrative; he or she is often seen on camera, interacting with the subject object or environment. Instead of utilizing an outside host to narrate, this documentary utilizes original users of historic sites to recall each story. This decision then propels the documentary audience to rely on the interviews as its main source of information. To supplement this main source of narrative, there is explanatory text at the end of each section, that allows the audience to understand key facts about the buildings such as: its historical significance, important alterations to the building, and its preservation or designation status today. Documentaries often use the text on screen technique for more dramatic reveals of statistical data. In this case, the text acts as supplementary and amplifying information to the main first-hand narratives shared by its original users.

Original Users

To inform my argument of how original users, when integrated properly, augment a documentary narrative, I will first utilize a different preservation documentary for comparison. *Modern Ruin: A World's Fair Pavilion* by Matthew Silva and filmed by Jake Gorst, utilizes real-life users of the New York State Pavilion as one of its predominant narrative tactics.⁴⁵ This documentary offers is a blend between first hand user interview scenes and historic footage, creating a sensory illusion for audiences to experience the site as it once was. According to Silva, this documentary took three years to make, involving a large number of work as well as funding through Kickstarter and Gofundme campaigns.⁴⁶ The documentary propelled the National Trust for Historic Preservation to team up with nonprofit organization People for the Pavilion, to launch the international “New York State Pavilion Ideas Competition,” which allowed anyone to innovate ideas to engage the site.⁴⁷ With advocacy results that propelled both local and national jurisdictions to act, this documentary was successful with its use of story-telling from original users of the site.

The same impact from original user engagement is possible in *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.* LA Conservancy’s LGBTQ film has a narrative structure of five people who have had deeply personal ties to the buildings, and can speak to its cultural significance. The filmmaker’s choice in using these people to narrate—instead of preservation professionals removed from personal anecdotes—adds a convincing element that is based on emotion. Towards the end of Wes Joe’s narration at the Black Cat, he pauses mid-sentence when explaining that people need to know that his building is where LGBTQ people “were brave enough to stand up-,” as he begins to fight back his own tears and say, “I get emotional about this”.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ “Modern Ruin: A World’s Fair Pavilion” (2015) by Matthew Silva

⁴⁶ Matthew Silva. In email exchange over documentary, January 19th, 2018.

⁴⁷ National Trust for Historic Preservation. 2016. “New York State Ideas Competition”

⁴⁸ “LGBTQ Historic Places” (2015) by Los Angeles Conservancy

Therefore, Joe must have a strong connection to the movement itself to push for the Black Cat's designation and later elicit such an emotional response (Figure 2). The integration of this scene, proves a deliberate display of emotion that LA Conservancy's filmmaker chose to retain during the editorial process. The filmmaker could have just as easily paused the camera, and retaken the shot when Wes Joe was in a less emotional state to narrate history. Instead, this moment as well as others in the film demonstrate a tactical utilization of emotions, in hopes that viewers would be compelled to empathize.



Figure 2. Wes Joe pauses mid-sentence as a few tears form.

However, Wes Joe's narrative is not one of a personal story. It is not clear why Wes Joe cares so much about the Black Cat. There is in fact little evidence of why Joe breaks out into tears, a reason which is inferred to be beyond words. All the audience knows is that Joe acted as a community organizer to establish its historical designation. If Wes Joe had explained his own anecdote or personal experiences on site, the audience could have better understood his relationship to it, and therefore understood him more as an original user. For now, Wes Joe's segment is somewhat of a *quasi*-professional interview scene, which is a phenomenon I will discuss later.

One difference between Wes Joe's dialogue and the subsequent speakers is that Wes Joe never provides a true first-hand experience he had on site, other than being a member of Friends of the Black Cat. In the following narration by two women in front of the Woman's Building, their stories are made of first-hand material. Cheri Gaulke and Sue Maberry are two women who came to the Woman's Building around the same time in the late 1970s, and have been a couple ever since. Their stories account for historical women who began the Feminist Studio Workshop to the naming of "The Woman's Building" taken from an 1893 Chicago World's Fair photograph, while also integrating their own experiences within it.

Cheri and Sue recall that their first task in the workshop was to renovate the building itself, claiming that initially they knew nothing of how to do the task, but took the



Figure 3. Archival photo of Sue Maberry carrying ladder during 1970s restoration of the Woman's Building

opportunity to empower themselves.⁴⁹

The next photographs in the video included Sue carrying a ladder during the renovation (Figure 3). Throughout this segment of the video, archival photographs of Cheri, Sue, and other women are shown.

Comparing the Woman's Building segment narration by Cheri and Sue with Wes Joe's previous

segment, each serves a different purpose. While the Woman's Building portion provides a more compelling experience of the site, by first-hand accounts supported by older photographs, the Black Cat portion sets up Los Angeles as a city that has strong local associations with the LGBTQ community. The Woman's Building also claims a different contribution towards progressing the art world in general, cultivating lesbian and feminist culture from the 1970s until 1991. This message is integrated in the two women's stories. The last segment of the documentary that covers Great Hall/Long Hall, is also narrated by two people who have personal stories to share on site.

From the very start of the Great Hall/Long Hall narration, viewers see two people walking towards the building, seemingly unaware of the cameraman following them, reminiscing about their favorite spot to eat and smoke near the front entrance.⁵⁰ In the next scene, we discover their identities as two ACT UP (AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power) Los Angeles members, Kevin Farrell and Helene Schpak. The Great Hall/Long Hall was home to the ACT UP L.A. organization. Kevin and Helene speak of the political process of getting treatment for their friends who were passing away from HIV and AIDS. At times in the narration, the two of them face one another and talk amongst themselves recalling what the building used to look like. These stories are narrated

⁴⁹ "LGBTQ Historic Places" (2015) by Los Angeles Conservancy at 10:19 min.

⁵⁰ "LGBTQ Historic Places" (2015) by Los Angeles Conservancy at 13:30 min.

outside of the building, as the Great Hall/Long Hall seems to have closed and is “For West Hollywood Preschool Use Only” (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Kevin Farrell and Helene Schpak reminisce at Great Hall/Long Hall courtyard on the number smokers that used to be on site.

This segment of the documentary utilizes original users of the site to recall first-hand experiences, but also explain the building’s reach into national relevance for the LGBTQ community. Kevin Farrell explains why ACT UP organized in the first place, by saying it was a “personal experience, either ourselves be sick, or our friends be sick and dying, and nobody at any level appearing to care one wit about it.”⁵¹ Helene follows after his expression in conveying that the first national conference for ACT UP was organized by ACT UP Los Angeles, at this very site. According to her, ACT UP Los Angeles was the first organization to create a nation-wide effort. This follows Wes Joe’s previous point of how local entities had a significant role in influencing the nationwide social movement. Towards the end of their dialogue, Kevin says that history was made here for them, “but that’s for other people to decide,” and Helene disagrees saying, “no, history was made here, period.”⁵²

⁵¹ “LGBTQ Historic Places” (2015) by Los Angeles Conservancy at 15:20 min.

⁵² “LGBTQ Historic Places” (2015) by Los Angeles Conservancy at 17:00 min.

This final audio dialogue raises an interesting point. Are viewers to take everything these community members say as factual and unbiased, historical information? Surely merit is due in their own first-hand experiences and abilities to narrate their stories. However, this documentary's oral storytelling does not include professionals of the field on site, who had power to designate or write professional reviews on the building's history. Other than Wes Joe, who nominated the Black Cat as a Historic Cultural Monument, the other four narrators supplement the story by their personal anecdotes and photographs.

The Quasi-Professional Interview

This film contains what I refer to as quasi-professional interviews. The term "quasi" refers to a seemingly or only partly true notation. I define the quasi-professional interview, as material that informs a current narrative from a seemingly professional position. It relies on community members to relay history not only of their past, but other general ongoing histories. In doing so, it allows each of the community members to step into the momentary role of *historians*. Throughout each segment, community members speak to history at the time that was not only relevant on a local scale, but was a national manner. This creates a quasi-professional interview effect, where an interviewee disseminates knowledge as professionals classically do, but he or she is not a professional in the matter itself. If this documentary would have included professional interview scenes from the parties involved with its historic designation or even a preservationist, the narrative could have been further augmented by more certified perspectives.

Wes Joe, although a significant contribution to writing the historical significance of the Black Cat per its designation, is not a professional historian. This does not deter him from speaking on behalf of the history at the time. He states that "you can read about buildings in books or videos, but something about touching a building, or seeing how it really looked, it can spur your imagination, it can deepen your understanding about the significance."⁵³ He is suggesting that by experiencing the building in person,

⁵³ Wes Joe. Interview in "LGBTQ: Historic Places in L.A." at 6:37 min.

one could grasp understanding of its history. Such a claim has its merits in grasping a physical understanding of the building. However, to claim that purely onsite interaction could spur the imagination into a greater depth of *historical* understanding might only create an illusionary experience. Wes Joe's narration differs from that of the other two documentary segments because he acts a historian on site, rather than community member who was there at the time.

Yet for a quasi-professional interview, his stories support the overall narrative of the documentary. He states how the gay men harassed by policemen on site was a reflection of a larger issue with the LAPD, whose notoriety was well known not only locally but nationally.⁵⁴ This aligns with the one of the core motives of the film: for Los Angeles as a whole to gain a prominence as part of the LGBTQ social movement, where it both facilitated historical events and provided refuge to those marginalized in society at the time. Wes Joe compares the LAPD harassment on New Year's Eve at the Black Cat with that of the riots at Stonewall Inn in New York City, that led to succeeding riots that are more known in the LGBTQ community. He concludes the Black Cat segment by saying that local sites like these are often overshadowed by the "star-studded sites" such as Stonewall Inn.⁵⁵ He continues to say that the social movement started as "humble beginnings, such as this working-class bar."⁵⁶ This idea is parallel to the overall theme of the documentary: that national or larger social movement comes from local sites. The two women in front of the Woman's Building stake a claim to contributing towards progressive feminist art. Similarly, Kevin and Helene from the Great Hall/Long Hall narrative speak on behalf of all ACT UP Los Angeles members and claim that their local meetings had ramifications nationwide.

Animations for Visualizations

As the most contemporary example of the examined films in this thesis, *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.*, is a shorter documentary film that incorporates highly stylized animations within its narrative. Whether these animations are effect in enhancing its

⁵⁴ Wes Joe. Interview in "LGBTQ: Historic Places in L.A." at 5:10 min.

⁵⁵ Wes Joe. Interview in "LGBTQ: Historic Places in L.A." at 6:42 min.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

existing narrative is debatable. From the moment the documentary begins, animations flood the screen. The introduction shows an animated paper crumbling and introduces “Jewel’s Catch One” which is a site that is not even covered in this documentary. Apparently, Jewel’s Catch One was a gay dance club, hence the animations depicts two yellow-outlined men dancing to the rhythm of audio music in the background. Upon further research, Jewel’s is part of the LA Conservancy series, but not covered here in the documentary. This scene then crossfade transitions into a series of outlined figures and animations that includes: protestors marching for ACT UP as well as a person lying in a bed with a skull mask pulled over his face, suffering from AIDS. None of these scenes are central parts to either Jewel’s Catch One dance club. Rather the animations serve a more atmospheric depiction of some of the themes relevant to the LGBTQ community narratives, neither enhancing or supporting the narrative. It could be seen as a preview of more in-depth narratives to come later in the documentary. Yet if this were the case, the introduction has set up the viewers to expect narratives not covered in the documentary. The next site shown is “L.A. County + USC Medical Center,” which also is not covered in this documentary. The viewers have seen two sites that will not be touched on at all in the documentary. Los Angeles Conservancy plans on expanding the documentary series, so there is a chance that the two previous buildings will be covered in the future. However, to put these animations and two buildings in the introduction, is merely for atmospheric purposes and provides no insight into where the sites we cover will be located.

Between each interview segment there is a Google map animation that zooms into each site, I am assuming to provide a visual context as to where in Los Angeles each building is. However, these graphics are extremely limited only stating addresses and including major streets, rather than other areas of Los Angeles (Figure 5).

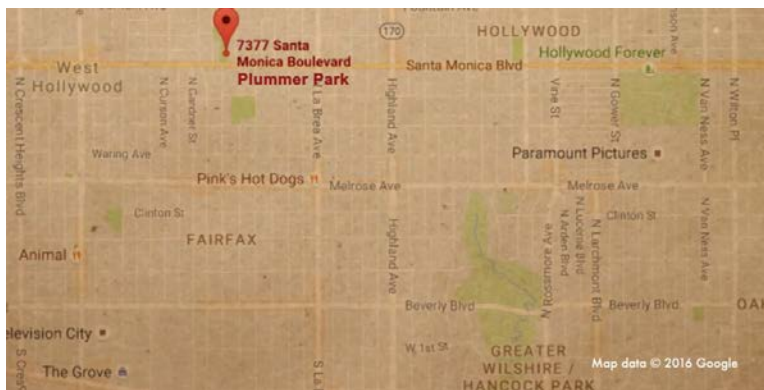


Figure 5. Screenshots of *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.* between segments

This graphic information not only zooms in to a questionably minimal degree, but gives no spatial context of these sites in relationship to greater Los Angeles. In reality, they are quite far from one another and in different districts and neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

The documentary does not need to posit a relationship between the three areas, but it should at the very least orient the audience within the context of Los Angeles,

since the documentary's title focuses on places within the city. Presently, these map animations give viewers no orientation. A visual orientation can come from a comparison or reference to something recognizable. To those unfamiliar with Los Angeles streets and highways, the documentary's map does not provide any spatial context. Thus, if the Google map scenes could start from a zoomed-out perspective that included "Los Angeles" on it, audience members could perhaps be more oriented by an animated map. If LA Conservancy truly wanted to utilize Google Maps as a measure of animation for spatial orientation, the above scale could have oriented viewers much more effectively than the ambiguously cropped maps shown in the documentary. After that moment in the documentary, if the filmmaker still wanted to use the zoom effect, he or she could do so starting from this scale and ending at a much closer look at the buildings' more immediate context.

The use of animations in this documentary have the potential to be more convincing if the right images were shown at the right time. In other words, the text and image would be put into direct relation, that would enhance the narrative. From the beginning, introducing the "Jewel's Catch One" and "L.A. County + USC Medical Center," sets up an expectation for viewers that these two buildings will be discussed. Yet, the documentary only follows the stories of the succeeding three buildings in the introduction: the Black Cat, Woman's Building, and Great Hall/Long Hall, derailing the narrative organization. Instead, showing the three buildings in context and previewing the issues that would be discussed, would have proved more convincing than the graphic animations that were busy fading in, out, and blending into one another. Graphics such as animated infographics for visualizations could have also been useful, especially in replacement of the statistical data that shows up on screen between the three segments. Animations have other potential to narrate historic stories and enhance them. Rather than distract viewers and confuse narrative continuity, these animations have potential to augment the documentary, which we will return to in other documentaries.

The B-roll

Besides the graphic visualizations, *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.* has b-roll footage scene of documents and photographs that for the most part continue to inform the narrative. In the Black Cat segment, Wes Joe's narrative is enhanced by historic photographs of the Black Cat's original signs and windows, as he points to the contemporary sign as being original. Similarly, in the Great Hall/Long Hall segment, old protest photographs were provided by Kevin and Helene, to augment their oral storytelling with visuals. However, between all three parts, the b-roll footage over archival photos and film is most engagingly executed in the Woman's Building section narrative.

Each photograph shown is integral to the audio dialogue these two narrate. When the two claim they met each other in the 1970s, a camera pans and zooms over a photograph from the appropriate time (Figure 7).⁵⁷ As Sue mentions the narrative on "Judy Chicago," a b-roll photograph of Judy Chicago appears with captioned text confirming the archival photograph is indeed her (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Top: Photograph of Sue Maberry and Cheri Gaulke at a meeting at the Woman's Building. Bottom: Photograph of Judy Chicago with text. Photographers unknown.



⁵⁷ Sue Maberry. Interview in "LGBTQ: Historic Places in L.A." at 8:30 min.

B-roll footage does not need to occur the very second a narrator mentions the subject. However, if shown it should then inform the narrative discussed. In this case, it was also helpful to have “Judy Chicago” captioned at the bottom of the scene. There are moments in this documentary where the historic photographs do not have an explicit relationship to the narrative. Most of the b-roll footage over historic photographs is done in the Ken-Burns style of panning and zooming for a moment over still pictures. This is a technique that was originally used to create a static image more dynamic, perhaps to even support a visual technique claiming that this is in fact a moving picture, rather than a still one. There is plenty of photographic documentation of these two women in this portion of the documentary which provides imagery to their stories. Additionally, the documentary also utilizes historic films.

In a jump cut from the interview of the couple, a scene plays from an older footage where a woman asks an elderly couple, “hi, can you tell me where the Woman’s Building is?” much like an actor in an advertisement for the center (Figure 8). This is followed by another short clip of someone introducing Sheila De Bretteville as a founding mother of the Woman’s Building (Figure 8).



Figure 8. *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.* at 10:50 Min. Top: Woman asks for directions to the Woman’s Building. Bottom: Sheila De Bretteville introduction

Although only lasting a couple seconds, this use of footage provides the documentary viewer a break from both the interviews and previous Ken Burns style scenes. The audio between these videos however was not remastered or leveled for a smooth transition. In fact, throughout this segment, there were other moments where audio editing would have been more helpful to the audience, so that the narrators would not have to compete with sounds of cars driving on the street. This is a constant struggle when working onsite or with older archival footage, which is utilized to greater degree in the following documentary.

To preface the next documentary analysis, I would like to highlight one moment of *Historic Places in L.A.*, where the two narrators enter into an observational mode of narrative. There is one moment of the Great Hall/Long Hall narrative where the b-roll footage is not historic photographs, but is of Kevin and Helene walking around the building with a voiceover from their previous interview commentary. The camera follows closely behind observing them (Figure 9). A similar phenomenon reoccurs throughout the next James Marston Fitch documentary. This kind of b-roll is not informative of narrative but aligns more with filling the interview portions of documentaries with visualizations of the narrators that are not relevant to the narrative point. It would be another matter if these scenes depicted narrators engaging or interacting with their own dialogue. But presently, these scenes disengage with the narrative.



Figure 9. Kevin Farrell and Helene Schpak walking around Great Hall/Long Hall. *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.* at 14:32 Min.

Audience and Reflections

LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A. was made as a short video for the Los Angeles Conservancy's series called "Curating the City," which embodies a level of micro to macro scale. At the closest level, the narrators of the story are the original people to encounter personal experiences at local sites themselves. When brought together, they represent Los Angeles as a whole, *curated*. Further, the main mission of the Curating the City is not to remain within itself, presenting to only Angelinos. The end goal is the largest possible recognition and reach it could receive. Although seemingly *local*, the preservation documentary is advocating to be part of the nation's larger LGBTQ movement. This is explicitly narrated throughout the documentary.

As a film production, the documentary was made by local media studio Form Follows Function, in partnership with educational Los Angeles based television station KCET. It was professionally made, although its interviewees and narrators are not professionals in the preservation field. Although a seemingly passive camera and filmmaker, it is obvious that the intent was to get anyone who watched the documentary to empathize with the concerns of community members, and also to realize that Los Angeles as a city had a hand in growing the LGBTQ community within the United States.

The audience was less targeted to convince preservationists or policymakers, and more targeted to be a public call for attention towards an important advocacy case—for everyone to know about. This idea is even more evidenced by the "explanation of LGBTQ terms," on the website where this documentary is found.⁵⁸ Given this audience, utilizing original users here was an appropriate tactic for narrating in the expository mode. Showing the people reminiscing about their own experiences on site, provides compelling narrative that can reach the documentary's public audience. The running time of the documentary is considerably shorter in length, which is another important and appropriate clue to how this documentary was meant to concisely but thoroughly introduce someone to LGBTQ advocacy.

⁵⁸ Los Angeles Conservancy. "Explanation of LGBTQ Terms." Web. Accessed May 2, 2018. <https://www.laconservancy.org/lgbtq>

JAMES MARSTON FITCH: PIONEER IN PRESERVATION EDUCATION

Context

In 1996, two Historic Preservation graduates from the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (GSAPP), Jon Calame and Christine Ferinde, created *James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education*.⁵⁹ Made before Fitch's death in 2000, the documentary traces his contributions and work within the preservation field in New York City. This preservation documentary uses the story of one man and his contributions to the field, to discuss the rise of the preservation field in New York City. It was created a few decades after Fitch's establishment of the preservation program at Columbia University, which began as a reaction to his "dismay at the disaster that was occurring in American cities as a result of the so called Urban Renewal Program."⁶⁰ Throughout the film, Fitch positions himself between the "disastrous" Urban Renewal ideals and the work of preservationists, who labored to preserve buildings that were in danger of being demolished. In the early days of the preservation movement, Fitch recalls that preservationists were "site specific," and would "fight to the death," over a building's importance.⁶¹ His arguments are supplemented by interview scenes of former students, now professionals, that describe their individual and unique attitudes towards preservation, that ultimately align with and enhance Fitch's narrative.

Narration

This documentary begins with an interactive mode of narration, where the audience is prefaced with Jon and Christine's off-screen dialogue on their lack of relationship with James Marston Fitch. With a black screen, Jon asks Christine if she is particularly knowledgeable about Fitch. Christine responds by saying "no," and the two are propelled into what is understood as a documentary-long journey to find Fitch in New York City; this is followed up by scenes of Jon and Christine exiting Avery Hall at

⁵⁹ James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) by Jon Calame and Christine Ferinde

⁶⁰ James Marston Fitch. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 6:40 min.

⁶¹ James Marston Fitch. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 14:40 min.

Columbia University and walking to the train station .⁶² The two narrators are seen walking around New York City, and never engaging with either people on site or one another anymore; a reoccurring technique that I previously stated in *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.* as filler material rather than engaging filmmaking. It is important to note that this start of the narrative places both Jon and Christine not as experts on the documentary's subject, but rather as *participants* of an investigation. This interactive mode is often called participatory mode, in which documentary hosts act as though along with the audience for narrative journey, not leading audience members, but engaging and discovering with them.⁶³ Jon and Christine have stated three missions in this documentary: 1) find out what drove the early preservation movement in New York 2) where Fitch fits into that picture and 3) where that left them as new graduates today.⁶⁴

However, Jon and Christine's narrative tone shifts almost instantaneously from investigative to authoritative. In the following interview scenes with Fitch, Jon and Christine are neither seen nor heard asking questions, as the audience would have expected—with the two previously in a participatory mode of documentary. Instead, their voiceover narration already contains answers to their initial questions, with no procedural evidence on *how* this information was acquired. One would have to assume that beyond the camera set, the two sought out answers by asking Fitch himself. But none of these interactions are shown in the documentary. This break in narrative consistency is perhaps one of the most jarring aspects of this documentary.

Jon and Christine's abandonment of the investigation-type narration is solidified as the documentary periodically depicts scenes of them walking around the Columbia campus and New York City, never addressing the audience or expanding on their previous questions. They have lost their interactive mode of narration, and are instead passive sources of information who occasionally appear on screen. This disengagement with the narrative agenda of *investigation*, in turn creates distance from the audience, at which point viewers of the documentary become disconnected with the two hosts that

⁶² Jon and Christine. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 0:10 min.

⁶³ Bill Nichols. "Axis of Orientation: Documentary modes of representation," Chapter II in *Representing Reality: issues and concepts in documentary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p 32-75.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* at 0:30 min.

were once seen as narrators on an explorative agenda; they now seem like actors instead. After this shift, the documentary's narrative takes on a different form relying on interview scenes mixed with b-roll footage and other film material. The audience relies more on an expository mode of documentary. The film most notably integrates footage from an expository documentary made in the 1960s by CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) called *Eye on New York*.

Midway in the Fitch documentary, Christine introduces the *Eye on New York* documentary through voice over, and the audience begins to experience a documentary within a documentary. According to her, the CBS film depicts two approaches to education that shaped the professionals who redeveloped New York City.⁶⁵ However these two approaches are not actually defined or understood in the segments shown. One culprit for this may have been its sound quality. As the CBS film continues to play, with its narrator introducing Frank Lloyd Wright's influence on architecture that shaped a new vision for buildings, Jon begins to talk over the CBS narrator, resulting in a cacophony of voices over the CBS documentary black and white film visuals.⁶⁶ There are moments where Jon's voice and the CBS narrator's statements echo in narrative argument—if one were to listen intensely. However, in regards to basic perceptible sound, the audience will pay attention to whichever voice is *loudest*, and cannot hear the CBS narrator at this time. During these black and white scenes of CBS 1960s documentary, Jon and Christine take turns interjecting and manipulating their own audio narration to be slightly louder than the CBS narrator's voice, achieved by lowering the sound on the CBS documentary.

Yet this voiceover is not successful, as the CBS narrator is still constantly heard in the background, making it ultimately difficult to understand or clearly hear either narration. As filmmakers and video editors, Jon and Christine could have simply provided commentary only when the CBS narrator was silent, or better yet simply cut out the CBS's narrative voice all together. Presently, these interjections and partially muted audio in this part of the documentary only undermine the narrative. Later, once *Eye on New York* plays freely without interruption, its integration becomes more obvious

⁶⁵ Christine Ferinde. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 18:30 min.

⁶⁶ Jon Calame. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 18:43 min.

as a measure of documentation of Fitch's ideas in the 1960s; it eventually supports this narrative, once played without narrative clashing voices.

Occasionally, both Jon and Christine revisit the interactive mode of documentation. Such as when they visit Dorothy Miner, from the Landmarks Preservation Commission, in a historic neighborhood and are seen on site asking her questions; or when Christine demonstrates what a "rich Italianate detail" door looked like during the sequence of examining architectural details in notable historic districts.⁶⁷ But for the majority of the documentary, the two narrators take on a more expository voiceover narrative; a narrative transition that could have been believable if it were executed where the two gradually gained more knowledge throughout the film, considering their declared situation of being unacquainted with Fitch at the beginning. In the end, the audience relies on a mixture of commentary by Fitch, original users of historic places, and professional interviews.

Original Users

This documentary can afford to have Fitch himself as both a subject, professional interviewee, and original user of the narrative. Within interview scenes, Fitch is able to explain both his personal accounts as well as parallel political and social circumstances that led to the creation of the preservation program at Columbia University; recounting his experience abroad in what at the time was Czechoslovakia.⁶⁸ This documentary was timely in a sense that it was fortunate enough to have its main historical subject still alive and well enough to participate in its making. Often times, historical documentaries may rely on people who can speak on behalf of a historical figure, where original users would involve those with the greatest insights and relations with the historical subject. In this documentary, Jon and Christine integrate both, the main subject and those that had a relationship with it.

At a later point in the documentary, Fitch is seen on site at Grace Church Houses with Joan Davidson, of the J.M. Kaplan Fund, reminiscing about their time when they saved this building from demolition. These two original users, are seen on site under a

⁶⁷ Christine Ferinde. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 26:30 min.

⁶⁸ James Marston Fitch. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 08:40 min.

single umbrella, narrating their partnership and enjoying the product of their past labors. The camera then follows two adolescents into the church which is now a gymnasium, and integrates b-roll footage of local children playing basketball inside the gym.⁶⁹

Original Users and Professional Interviews

This documentary is unique in that its original users have become professionals in the field, creating a unique circumstance where one documentary category can integrate within another. Fitch has essentially turned original users (students) of the preservation education story into professionals in New York, through the program at Columbia. This is different than the concept of quasi-professional interviews, because in this case the two categories of original users and professionals are in dialogue, rather than one idea posing as the other. The documentary integrates students who were taught under Fitch: Adele Chatfield-Taylor, Frank Sanchis, and Jack Waite, to detail their learning experiences and attribute their own individual successes in the field as outcomes from their education at Columbia. Each former student speaks on what they call Fitch's "stirring" approach that facilitated their own empowerment as preservationists in New York City.⁷⁰ This segment of the documentary also highlights how Fitch had an international network of individuals, who both fought and were equally as passionate about preserving buildings; this tapped resource was essential towards his mission of creating a presence in New York. The integration of original users who had first-hand experiences with Fitch, provides invaluable historical context and enrichment to the documentary.

An interesting shift occurs later in the documentary beginning when a contemporary of Fitch, Margot Gayle, becomes a subject of professional discourse. In the documentary's mix between original user and professional interview scenes, Fitch's former students are introduced as enhancing accounts of Fitch's narration on the preservation education program. However, the story momentarily shifts from Fitch's influence, to Margot Gayle's contribution towards endangered cast-iron façade buildings. Margot Gayle opens up about her own professional endeavor specializing in

⁶⁹ James Marston Fitch. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 33:21 min.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

cast iron, and Fitch calls her an “autodidact,” for coming in with no prior experience and developing an intellectual passion to pursue and teach both herself and others.⁷¹ One could see this shift in focus as distracting from the narrative on Fitch’s influence. However, Margot Gayle’s professional success was fundamentally embraced and supported by Fitch’s contributions to the preservation field, that provided her both the space and time to embark on such an endeavor. Therefore, her professional account is more of a ripple effect in the pool of Fitch’s educational influence, in turn augmenting the narrative on Fitch itself.

Later when Jon and Christine interview Jack Waite about his involvement with projects in SoHo, he is revealed as one of the first members of “Fitch’s Mafia,” which was a nickname given to the preservationists who were first educated by Fitch; thought to practice the very ideals he instilled within his students during their time at Columbia. Jack Waite’s segment, from a student in the 1960s CBS documentary to the 1995 SoHo interview, serves to support the narrative of how impactful and far-reaching Fitch’s influence was since his creation of the program. Therefore, even if the professional interviews trace the work of people other than Fitch, all of them support the narrative of his influence towards the preservation field.

This section of the documentary rotates commentary between both the alumni interviewees and Fitch. None of these segments counter one another in narrative, but serve to provide different experiences culminating into a holistic understanding of Fitch’s outlook on preservation education at the program’s start. One consistent aspect of Fitch throughout his former students’ interviews is the idea of his irreplaceable passionate or fierce presence. It also paints a colorful portrait of Fitch, even ending with his commentary saying, “don’t listen to the Department of Architecture, because they don’t know what the hell they’re talking about,” later looking next to the camera at the filmmakers to say “you can delete the ‘hell’.”⁷² This interview segment is less about the accuracy of what Fitch is saying, and more about illustrating Fitch’s own character: his

⁷¹ James Marston Fitch. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 15:45 min.

⁷² Jon and Christine. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 18:00 min.

heroically-portrayed defiance in the fight against development in New York City at the time.

Professional Interviews

Perhaps one of the most unanticipated professional interviews in this documentary is the first one where James Marston Fitch himself is heard first speaking over scenery at South Street Seaport. This occurs right after Jon and Christine have set themselves up as investigative hosts attempting to find Fitch, and suddenly he appears on screen in an interview. Their mission of finding Fitch was quite short-lived. The audience has no knowledge of how Jon and Christine found him to create this interview. Not only is neither Jon and Christine absent from the screen, but the documentary's narrative organization shifts to touring historic sites with James Marston Fitch himself, when he is seen on site at South Street Seaport.

Graphic Visualizations

This film does not use animations, yet it utilizes visualizations such as scene transitions to segue from historic documentary footage to contemporary scenes. This includes the dissolve fade transition. These were especially utilized in the professional interviews, when integrating the 1960s CBS *Eye on New York* documentary with the 1995 Fitch documentary footage. For example, when Jack Waite is seen in the 1960s black and white CBS film as a young student at the site of an academic project, the scene transitions to color, by overlapping this scene with 1995 footage for the Fitch documentary; Jack Waite walks across the street to almost recreate the previous scene (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Left: Jack Waite walks with peer in Soho (CBS *Eye on New York* documentary.) Middle: Dissolve fade transition between scenes. Right: Jack Waite, Jon Calame, and Christine Ferinde walk in SoHo in Fitch documentary

It is by no means exact, in fact there are a number of things differing between the two scenes. However, this transition was crucial in understanding the CBS documentary's relevance to the Fitch narrative; Jon narrates over the dissolve fade that Jack Waite returned to the site of his student project. There was neither text nor direct narration that explains that the student in the CBS documentary was Jack Waite. This fade transition is what stitches the two documentaries together, from the time periods of the 1960s and 1995. Of the filming transition techniques in this film, this was one that helped audiences understand the relationship between the black and white film and the Fitch narrative.

The B-roll

After the film's introductory dialogue exchange between Jon and Christine, there is a scene where the two narrators attempt to provide premise for the locations the documentary will cover. In the scene, Jon and Christine look down together at an object in Jon's hands. This is later inferred to be a map, as the following scenes are quick shots of four places in New York City: Soho, South Street Seaport, Ellis Island, and Grand Central Terminal. Without any explanation of why these scenes are shown, Jon and Christine nod in agreement and continue walking. As an audience member, seeing the four sights gives no context or correlation to why Fitch was such a pioneering figure for preservation. Setting up the audience to expect material at the four locations is valid. However, in doing so the narration audio should have explained that these are the four sites to be covered in the documentary. As of now, the dialogue itself distracts viewers

from understanding the four scenes as previewed locations, and therefore the misused b-roll footage here detracts from the narrative. It is later revealed that there are many more locations the two narrators include in the documentary, beyond the original four seen. Prefacing the audience with each of these would provide an introduction more consistent and supportive to the documentary narrative.

Another moment when b-roll footage neither enhances nor supports the documentary dialogue is when Fitch has his first interview, during which footage of unidentifiable buildings are shown while he remarks on the seaport's history. B-roll footage in this scene is used more as filler imagery, rather than utilized to its full potential as narrative-augmenting imagery. One solution could have been to not show any b-roll footage at all, and continue Fitch's interview as it is without visual interruption. Such scenes could potentially be used elsewhere, such as in an *establishing shot*, a film technique to provide the audience background or environmental imagery before the narrative begins. The way it presently stands, there is no room for showing scenes of buildings irrelevant to the site, when Fitch's audio dialogue recalls a group of preservationists, also known then as "the crack pots," who staged a battle to save the South Street Seaport.⁷³ This narration could have shown a historic image of this group of preservationists, or again, even omitted any b-roll footage.

Although the documentary has its disorienting, and therefore narrative detracting moments within b-roll sequences, there are some b-roll scenes of the film that are used effectively. Some contain historic material, such as the black and white film segment of demolition during the Urban Renewal program. As soon as Fitch recounts these moments, b-roll footage is shown with violin music playing in the background.⁷⁴ In any other narrative context, this music could have been an overdone additive to the already vivid footage of building being demolished. However, here the music serves to accentuate Fitch's argued story of how destructive and dismaying the program was. In Margot Gayle's interview, b-roll scenes of cast-iron fronts are depicted as she recalls her first encounter with them under Fitch's teaching. Jon is quick to follow up with her interview scene, by explaining her nation-wide contribution towards cast iron material, in

⁷³ James M. Fitch. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 2:40 min.

⁷⁴ James Marston Fitch. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 6:40 min.

a voiceover of cast-iron façade scenes. This integration of older relevant films as b-roll footage provides a convincing illustration of the 1960s events, which document the context in which the early preservation movement took its footing.

Besides the several scenes that lacked both audio editing and narrative timing over the CBS documentary, using this footage as b-roll material worked quite effectively to show documentation of Fitch's program at the time as well as illustrate Jack Waite's student experience. At one point, the CBS documentary shows a graduate student seminar scene at Columbia University, and a student explains a planning project that conserves most of the building material on site, integrating other interventions to activate the site.⁷⁵ Christine explains that Fitch and his students were "swimming against the current, showing favor to restraint and reuse, rather than demolition to buildings." In the transition following, it is revealed that Jack Waite was the student who presented his project in the documentary. The CBS documentary also provides historic imagery of SoHo during people's commentary on its past.

A more emotive chapter transition occurs between Ellis Island and Radio City Music Hall. In Fitch's narrative of Ellis Island, he remarks on his "heartbreak" at its ruination and neglect over the years, as b-roll footage of Ellis Island interiors, objects, and historic photographs play on screen with downhearted music in the background.⁷⁶ Suddenly, in an uplifting keyboard or organ-like tune, a postcard of "Greetings from New York," appears and Christine narrates that Fitch did not "give up on Public Hearings, and the good faith of people," which was confirmed a successful effort to preserve in Radio City Music Hall.⁷⁷ This upbeat music continues to ring throughout the next scenes of the interior and exterior of Radio City Music Hall, as Fitch remarks on his great satisfaction with the result of its historic designation, approved by a multitude of organizations. This transition was not only abrupt, but could give the audience an impression that Radio City Music Hall's preservation success makes up for the loss in Ellis Island's preservation. This may not be the intended narrative this documentary is attempting to claim, yet there is a potential for one to extrapolate this attitude because

⁷⁵ James Marston Fitch. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 19:50 min.

⁷⁶ James Marston Fitch. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 30:30 min.

⁷⁷ James Marston Fitch. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 30:46 min.

of the film's execution of audio and imagery. This creates an unclear message and potential for derailing the narrative.

In the last couple scenes of the Fitch documentary, several b-roll scenes serve to summarize this documentary. Jon and Christine are seen socializing as they enter Grand Central Terminal, while their own voices narrate Fitch's impact on preserving the busy terminal.⁷⁸ Throughout this entire film they are seen walking around, but never directly address or speak to the camera. Instead they have played two roles in the documentary: passive physical actors and authoritative unseen narrators. The succeeding scene is Fitch himself in the station walking with a cane, and the camera zooms onto him in the crowd; he narrates the historical significance at Grand Central Terminal, meanwhile it is implied to the audience that the significant landmark in this narrative is Fitch himself. In later interview segments, Frank Sanchis states over CBS documentary footage of Fitch in a classroom that one of the greatest contributions Fitch made was "us," referring to the professionals who came out of Columbia University's preservation program.⁷⁹ Here, supporting narratives and professional interviews enhance the credentials of Columbia University GSAPP as a preservation program. Around this time, music begins to play over scenes of people walking down the street and through Grand Central Terminal, while Adele Chatfield-Taylor speaks of the empowering and emotional effect Fitch had on people and their attitudes toward the built environment. She iterates on a reoccurring point that was made throughout the documentary: that Fitch's students had an internal drive and passion for preservation. In the end, chosen interview scenes and b-roll footage served to augment the narrative about Fitch.

⁷⁸ James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 35:22 min.

⁷⁹ Frank Sanchis. James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education (1996) at 38:45 min.

Audience and Reflections

This preservation documentary traces preservation education in New York City, which stemmed from one man's ambition to organize an institution to produce professionals in the field. Its original audience consisted of mainly those already within preservation or a related field, as it was made by two students and screened principally at the New York Preservation Archive Project's film festival in 2017. Yet anyone now can access this documentary through Vimeo.com. Thus, its audience has expanded from within the discipline to beyond it. As guerilla and amateur filmmakers, Jon and Christine cover an enormous scope of interviews, and managed to utilize professionals as their main resource, rather than budget towards higher production techniques. This documentary effort was of an amateur filmmakers' effort, which is an important consideration when comparing it to the other two professionally made films. Yet as the audience and context in which they find themselves is the same, public and online.

For the scope of work and network of people involved, Jon Calame and Christine Ferinde integrate appropriate people to speak on Fitch's importance. The interviewees and players in the film are mainly GSAPP preservation alumni who could speak on James Fitch's educational influence. With more refined narrator roles, sequence of chapters, and video editing techniques, the presently consistent narrative content could have been more engaging for its audience at the time, many of which already knew Fitch themselves. Thus the introduction of acting as though no one knew who Fitch was, does not prove effective and is more gimmicks than narrative that would engage with those already familiar with the documentary's subject.

PBS: 10 BUILDINGS THAT CHANGED AMERICA

Context

Prior to the explosion of documentaries available via the internet, Public Broadcasting System (PBS) was the most prominent source for educational documentaries since the 1970s. The PBS documentary *10 Buildings that Changed America*, premiered on May 2013, and covers 10 formative and revolutionary works of architecture that shaped the United States' built environment.⁸⁰ Although not a preservation documentary, the film has subject material that involves already historically landmarked buildings and their continued histories, representing the work of architectural historians and preservationists. It was released as part of a "10 That Changed America" series, that covers other influential nation-wide icons, intended for audiences with no prior knowledge in the field of architecture or historic preservation.

One of the most engaging parts of this documentary is its narrator. The documentary is hosted and narrated by Geoffrey Baer, an Emmy Award winning producer for the Window To The World (WTTW) Chicago PBS station; his narrated shows were very popular and are noted as creating a "connection between the station and audiences."⁸¹ Utilizing this narrator as a mediator between those with professional knowledge and those without, the documentary fully took on an interactive approach.

Narration

This documentary is a classic example of the interactive mode of documentary, where the narrator or host is seen on camera, and interacts with the audience. From the moment the documentary starts, Geoffrey Baer utilizes language that brings the audience onto a journey, stating what stories this documentary will offer, and where "we" will go.⁸² It is essentially a *tour* and Baer is the guide. Within the first minute and half of the documentary, the narrative organization is effective in clearly communicating what this documentary covers, how it is going to cover it, and ultimately what the

⁸⁰ PBS. "10 Buildings that Changed America re-aired March 2017". www.pbs.org.

⁸¹ WTTW. "About: History," 2018. interactive.wttw.com.

⁸² Geoffrey Baer. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 0:30 min.

audience will learn from it. This is comparable to any persuasive or compelling argument, and is often found on advertising commercials. By virtually touring these ten buildings across the United States, the documentary offers insight each of its history as well as wide-reaching design influence. Baer essentially delivers an elevator pitch that captures the audiences' immediate attention, and ends the introduction saying, "by the time this show is finished, you'll look at buildings all around you in a totally different way."⁸³ The audience is given a clear statement of what to expect from the documentary.

True to the interactive mode of documentary narrative, Baer is a narrator involved not only with the audience, but also with professionals in many of the interview scenes. At times the interviews take place on site, where the audience sees professionals and Baer within the camera shot, looking and examining a building (Figure 11).⁸⁴ Other times, Baer is exploring the details or interiors of buildings and narrating over these scenes. (Figure 11).



Fig 11. Left: Geoffrey Baer interviews Richard Guy Wilson in front of the Virginia State Capitol. Right: Geoffrey Baer and cultural historian Tim Samuelson explore the interior of the Robie House.

In these scenes, Baer actively listens to professionals' narrative on the buildings, learning new information himself. Between the interviews, Baer also takes on an expository mode of documentary voice that also narrates historical information.

⁸³ Geoffrey Baer. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 1:07 min.

⁸⁴ PBS. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 2:24 min.

However, this particular mix in narrative modes does not detract from the narrative itself, such as it did in the previous Fitch documentary.

I will point out two reasons for this: 1) Baer is a tour guide, not an unknowing spectator, and 2) this mix in narrative is consistent throughout the documentary. Unlike Jon and Christine in *James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education*, Baer is not positioned in the beginning as someone who knows nothing about the documentary's subject material. Instead Baer acts as a figure who is well aware of the documentary narrative, determined to guide us through a narrative that is then augmented through other professional commentary. Therefore, it is fitting for a narrator in Baer's position to switch between the interactive and expository modes. This mix of modes then becomes integral to the documentary's storytelling and engagement of the audience; it is consistent throughout and provides an opportunity for the audience to have an intermediary narrator between the interviews and b-roll scenes. This type of narration also offers the documentary enormous flexibility in representational variety. On one hand, Baer can narrate over b-roll historic or contemporary footage, and on the other, he can interact with objects in the documentary such as a visitor would (Figure 12).



Fig 12. Left: Baer examines and narrates details on Virginia State Capitol model. Right: Baer demonstrates airport security procedures at the Dulles International Airport.

Professional Interviews

From speaking on each building's history to professing its influence by listing examples of the other important buildings that followed each seminal structure, the professionals interviewed in this documentary have commentary that supplement and enhance Baer's narrative of the ten buildings. In many scenes, Baer's narrative over b-roll footage is in dialogue with the professional's commentary. In the first professional interview with architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson in the Virginia State Capitol chapter, Wilson picks up on previous b-roll reference to the Maison Carée and elaborates on the reason Thomas Jefferson picked it as architectural reference.⁸⁵ Although swift, and a small example, this dialogue exchange continues between scenes throughout the documentary. Each spoken line in the documentary then becomes consequential to advance the story-telling narrative.

The documentary begins its series of professional interview scenes with a text caption that includes his or her name, followed by the educational institute where the speakers completed their formal training. Yet later these professional interview scene captions change to incorporate professionals' names along with discipline titles.⁸⁶ It would have been helpful to the audience to provide career field titles for all interview scenes. This would have provided a more holistic understanding of which fields are involved with historic buildings. Presently, most of the interview text captions are merely a source to represent each person's authority on the historical knowledge at hand.

Professional Interviews and Original Users

For some of the ten buildings in this documentary, the architects are still alive. For this purpose, I am integrating a portion of the Original Users technique within this section. For example, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown are interviewed in the Vanna Venturi House (Figure 13).

⁸⁵ Richard Guy Wilson. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 4:10 min.

⁸⁶ PBS. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 13:30 min.

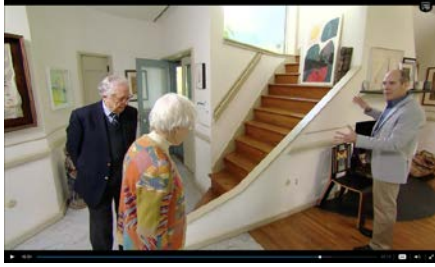


Fig 13. Left: Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Geoffrey Baer tour the Vanna Venturi House
Right: Baer on the stairs that lead to nowhere.

In this scene, Baer interviews the two architects and asks them questions of the architectural thought processes they had at the time of its construction. Still true to the interactive mode of narration, Geoffrey Baer interacts within the postmodern home, by climbing up and demonstrating its stairs that “lead to nowhere.”⁸⁷ In these moments, professional interviewees and original users of the site’s historical narrative are the same people. In the previous Fitch documentary, this mixture is also present. In both documentaries, this provides a convincing narrative told by both professional knowledge as well as original first-hand users.

In one of the last chapters of the documentary, Frank Gehry’s Walt Disney Concert Hall, Gehry is interviewed onsite to speak about making the building.⁸⁸ This narrative is also supplemented by b-roll footage of the software his firm used to create the building’s curving exterior walls (Figure 14). In this case, historic footage was not necessary to document the building’s process. Instead a staff architect at Frank Gehry’s firm provided the audience with a presentation of the development of the building’s plans. In this sequence, the audience can witness the professional in the original building as well as the place in which its production process occurred.

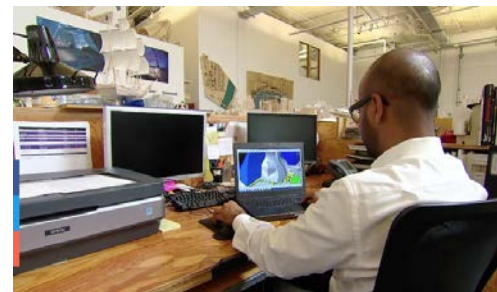


Fig 14. Architect at Frank Gehry’s firm shows renderings of the Walt Disney Concert Hall.

⁸⁷ Geoffrey Baer. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 46:35 min.

⁸⁸ Geoffrey Baer. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 50:15 min.

The documentary also interviews Phyllis Lambert, founder of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, who was responsible for choosing architect Mies van der Rohe for the Seagram building's design.⁸⁹ She recounts her experiences meeting the architect himself, and although she herself was not the direct designer for the project, her insight was invaluable in understanding the stakeholders involved in the building process. The documentary utilizes historic photographs she provides, and animates these to illustrate the different choices of architects she had at the time; when she ultimately chose Mies. Her account of Mies is a personal and first-hand story of her experience, as she remarks on his interpersonal qualities such as his generosity.⁹⁰ Thus in this interview, Phyllis Lambert is a professional, while her narrative acts as one of an original user of the narrative story.

Animations for Visualizations

This documentary incorporates several different types of visualizations. Many are animations of still photographs. One is the use of a United States map that then zooms into each different building location. The moment this documentary begins, a graphic animation previews images of the ten buildings that will be covered in the documentary, by their locations within the United States.⁹¹ After the introduction, a grey map of the United States is shown and then zooms into the first building's location (Figure 15).⁹² This appears between each chapter of the film, proving particularly effective in communicating approximately where each location is within the country. The animation is clear in depicting each building's name, location, date of construction, and order it belongs to within the ten building series (Figure 15).

⁸⁹ Phyllis Lambert. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 33: 50 min.

⁹⁰ Phyllis Lambert. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 34:16 min.

⁹¹ PBS. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 0:05 min.

⁹² PBS. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 1:27 min.



Fig 15. Left: United States Map before zoom effect. Right: Zoomed chapter introduction for Virginia State Capitol.

In a previous documentary *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.*, the audience experiences a similar graphic animation that utilizes a map to orient viewers. However, this PBS documentary utilizes a larger scale and greater zoom effect where the audience can understand these building locations in relation the entire country. This is aligned to the documentary narrative on buildings that changed *America*—the whole country. This segue animation is a constant reminder of the overarching story that effects buildings nation-wide, always reminding the audience of a larger impression.

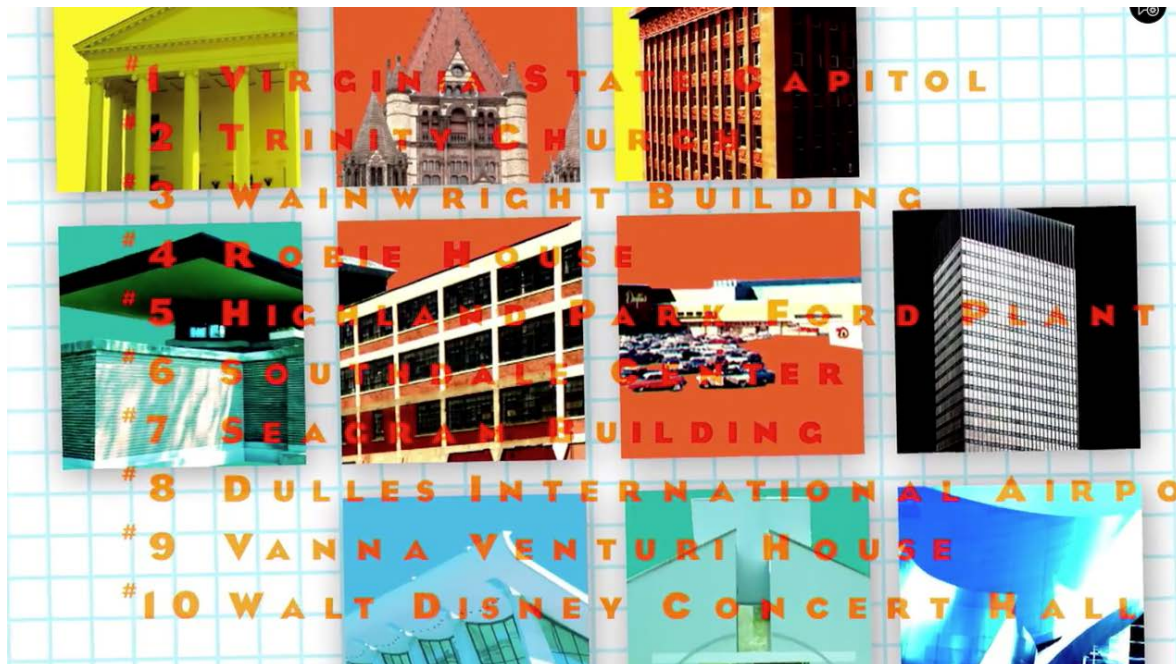


Fig 16. List of covered buildings; Introduction animation at 1:15 min.

There is one animation moment in the introduction sequence that is unhelpful to the narrative. At the end of the documentary's introduction sequence the ten building names are listed for a moment that is so brief, it makes it difficult to read each building's name (Figure 16).⁹³ Given that it is an introductory sequence, and the graphic animations during the aforementioned map animation sequence provide these details in greater engagement, this moment in the introduction could perhaps be overlooked, seen as more of a colorful illustration of what is to come. Yet, if this were the case, there does not seem to be a logic in providing the text names of the building on top of the ten images. This simply creates an inharmonious visual and struggle to understand which of these thumbnail images correspond to which building name. If this portion of the documentary wanted to preview the audience with each of the names, this sequence should have played out differently, taking a longer pause between each text, and only showing the name for corresponding building image. Most importantly, the text itself should have been clearer and of a contrasting color. In its current state, this animation neither enhances nor provides more narrative clarity, and it may be compared to the introduction in the *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.*, where busy animations are mere stylized graphics rather than narrative engaging representations.

One particularly effective animation that is used frequently in this documentary is the replacement of architectural elements on the building. The documentary uses Frank Lloyd Wright's Frederick C. Robie House to show its similar features to that of a more common suburban "prairie-style" home (Figure 17).⁹⁴



Fig 17. Animated Robie House in introduction at 0:30 min

⁹³ PBS. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 1:15 min.

⁹⁴ PBS. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 0:30 min.

This animation is as highly effective in its engaging representation as it is educational. By using this animation, the documentary visually teaches the audience exactly which elements they can look for in buildings closer to home. This aligns with the film's public audience. Another example of visual augmentation is used later in the Wainwright Building chapter, where a building is highlighted in colors to depict the components of its tripartite design (Figure 18).⁹⁵ These animations are voiced over by Baer and other professionals, and each serve to directly highlight audio narrative.



Fig 18. Animated Wainwright building for tripartite design

In all its mix of contemporary footage and archival drawings, there are moments in the documentary where animation offers a visual relationship between the two materials. Below is Trinity Church, in its plan drawing, that is then animated to turn onto its side, and illustrate a relationship between the plan and the built church (Figure 19).⁹⁶



Fig 19. Left: Plan of Trinity Church Middle: Plan continues from previous scene to contemporary scene Right: Plan overlay contemporary Trinity Church.

⁹⁵PBS. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 15:00 min.

⁹⁶ Geoffrey Baer. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 8:38 min.

This engaging representation's logic stems from its contextual audience. For those who do not know how to read architectural plans, this moment in the documentary illustrates the plan drawing's relationship into a real-life application; this creates an engaging representation suited towards its targeted audience. A similar approach is also used in describing the structural foundation of the building. Baer narrates that the church was built on a foundation of deep underground granite footing over wood piles, to secure the structure from the unstable ground (Figure 20).⁹⁷ This animation depicts how the footing was constructed, each element of its construction revealed in time with the audio narration, providing a clear visualization to a general audience.



Fig 20. Trinity Church exterior animation of granite footing and wood piles driven into ground.

Animated Visualizations and Original Users

A question arises in this documentary that utilizes animated reenactments of original users for its narrative. Therefore, for this chapter of the thesis, I am combining a portion of both the Original Users and Animations techniques. Some of these reenactments are done as animated graphics that involve historic photographs of drawings of the players involved in creating the building. This is most prominent in the Louis Sullivan's Wainwright Building chapter, where a historic photograph is animated onto a drawn body for Louis Sullivan, who throws a sketch of a building onto Frank Lloyd Wright's desk (Figure 21).⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Geoffrey Baer. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 9:50 min.

⁹⁸ Geoffrey Baer. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 14:17 min.

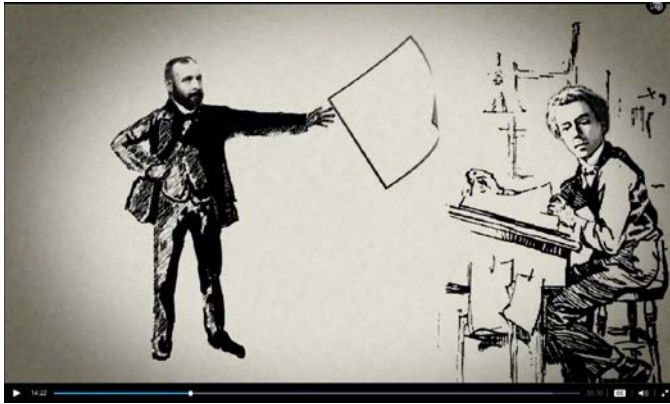


Fig 21. Graphic animation drawing utilizing head photographs of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright.

Historic photographs are animated to reenact interactions that never occurred. This representation attempts to offer an alternative interaction with older photographs, that are conventionally depicted through the “Ken-Burns effect” of zooming and panning over still pictures. However, by attempting this alternative animation method, it completely invents an interaction simply for the purpose of visual engagement. It stylizes two different historic photographs in a way that makes original users seemingly reenact a previous happening.

In comparison, the *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.* documentary also integrates moments where animations and original users are combined for stylized graphics, rather than narrative augmentation (Figure 22). These are graphic depictions of outlined original users, which move according to real movement which are made in interview scenes within the documentary.



Fig 22. *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.* Graphic animations outlining original users. Left: Women’s Building chapter Right: The Black Cat chapter.

The movements between Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright in the PBS documentary are invented, and in the LGBTQ documentary the movements are true to the original users. Yet regardless of how each is animated, both animations of the original users do nothing to enhance documentary narrative.

These animated graphics serve no purpose when the audio narrative is clearer without distracting visualizations. In the Sullivan and Wright animation, the animations are true to the scripted narrative, yet this animation provides no true footage or information to augment the existing narrative of Sullivan handing Wright the building plans. One way the scene could have augmented the same narrative, is if the footage depicted the exact plans Sullivan handed Wright, this way the audience could visually engage with the narrative, rather than observe a fictitious interaction between two animated characters. The LGBTQ animation scenes exist in the film's introduction, prior to the audience's engagement with these original users. They have been reduced to cartoon-like drawings, and remain part of the atmospheric-conditions of the documentary's introduction.

Animated Visualizations and B-roll

One visualization technique in this documentary that at times does not and at other times does enhance the narrative, is a side-by-side split screen effect that appears sporadically throughout each chapter. In the Virginia Capitol chapter, on the left side of the screen a letter is depicted, while on the right the building's front is shown;⁹⁹ meanwhile the narrative talks of how Jefferson most likely enlisted slaves to work under an expert stone-cutter for the building's masonry (Figure 23). The scrolling images do nothing to inform this narrative. The letter on the left scrolls swiftly, making it illegible and without correlation to Jefferson's statement. Did Jefferson write that slaves should be enlisted? The decision here was unclear, and is merely more imagery to fill audio narrative on the building.

⁹⁹ Geoffrey Baer. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 5:53 min.

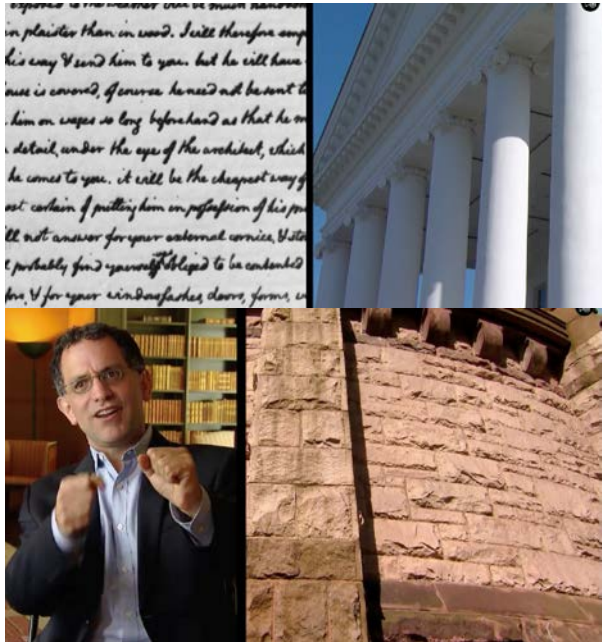


Fig 23. Split animation comparisons
 Top: Virginia Capitol chapter.
 Bottom: Trinity Church chapter.

In comparison, the same animation effect can and is used to inform interview narrative with b-roll footage. On the left, architectural magazine editor Reed Kroloff describes Trinity Church’s masonry, while on the right the masonry he describes is shown (Figure 23).¹⁰⁰ As I mentioned a-roll and b-roll footage earlier in this thesis, this execution of footage creates a situation in which both a-roll and b-roll footage is simultaneously shown. This visualization technique can provide opportunities for engaging representation of documentary narrative.

The B-roll

This documentary has incredibly quickly timed b-roll footage comprised of contemporary footage, photographs, drawings, and older film clips. This particular film’s b-roll footage is highly integrated with its animations. In one transition in the Virginia State Capitol chapter, the audience witnesses the front façade entrance transition fade into the historic Maison Carée front façade (Figure 24).¹⁰¹ This fade is a scene transition discussed earlier in the previous James Marston Fitch documentary, when the old CBS documentary transitions to the contemporary narrators crossing the street. It is simple and does not require heavy animations, yet this transition serves as an effective b-roll reveal of how this contemporary building derived architectural and aesthetic influence from ancient times.

¹⁰⁰ Reed Kroloff *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 10:30 min.

¹⁰¹ Geoffrey Baer. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 3:50 min.



Fig 24. Fade Transition. Left: Virginia State Capitol in Richmond, Virginia. Right: Maison Carée in Southern France.

This type of b-roll footage provides a comparable effect to the Frank Lloyd Wright prairie-style house did in the documentary's introduction, with a visual support towards an educational agenda.



Fig 25. Frank Lloyd Wright comments on Louis Sullivan and the Wainwright Building; later commenting on his own philosophies.

At times, historic b-roll footage in this documentary replaces professional interviews. In the Wainright Building chapter, Frank Lloyd Wright is shown through historic film footage, recounting Sullivan's words to him during its building design process (Figure 25).¹⁰² Instead of competing for narration, such as the narrative voiceover black and white historic footage in *James Marston Fitch: Pioneer in Preservation Education*, Baer stops his dialogue

and allows this film to play. Wright's story is audible, and provides the 10 Buildings documentary insightful commentary. In a sense, this b-roll provides evidence to support Baer's narration on the Wainwright Building. Yet the footage itself was not shot contemporaneously with the rest of the PBS documentary footage, therefore it is not an in-person professional interview originally intended for this documentary. The same historic footage is shown later in the Robie House chapter, where Wright comments on

¹⁰² Frank Lloyd Wright. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 14:28 min.

his ideas for the prairie house style.¹⁰³ Baer comments that Wright was no modest man, which is followed by the same historic footage with Wright saying he would rather choose “honest arrogance” over “hypocritical humility.”¹⁰⁴ Thus this b-roll informs and enhances the current narrative even if it is older footage.

Historic b-roll footage is also used in comparison to contemporary footage. This is most evident in the Southdale Center and Highland Park chapters; both of which incorporate a car segue between the older b-roll footage and contemporary video. In the Southdale Center chapter, colorful old film of when the mall was completed shows cars and shoppers alike utilizing the space in the 1950s and 60s. Next, Baer drives into the scene in an old-fashioned car, reminiscent of the b-roll footage the audience has just seen (Figure 26). This kind of transition from b-roll footage is in line with the interactive *touring* narrative.



Fig 26. Southdale Center car segue between historic and contemporary scene.

The cut from the older mall parking lot scene to the contemporary PBS documentary, creates the illusion of fluidity between the two, with the style of the car as its constant. In the previous scene, the camera moves from left to right, and this motion continues into the next scene for transition.

¹⁰³ Frank Lloyd Wright. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 18:03 min.

¹⁰⁴ Geoffrey Baer and Frank Lloyd Wright. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 17:05 min.



Fig 27. Car segue between exterior of Highland Park and interior Ford assembly line scene.

For the Highland Park Ford Plant chapter, Baer is taken around in a historic Ford vehicle by historian and author Charles K. Hyde, but no such visual transition like the aforementioned one exists here (Figure 27). Instead, while touring the contemporary building, old black and white footage explains Ford's assembly line production, to enhance the narrative on the building's design.¹⁰⁵

Yet the car in both of these chapters could be considered as a kitsch element rather than narrative enhancement. It is true that the car attempts to create a visual dialogue between contemporary and historic footage, yet it serves as no measure of transition or comparison to older times. Perhaps this visual dialogue is better represented through direct comparison of the contemporary building and its historic footage. Other chapters like the Seagram building chapter execute this comparison well, comparing historic scenes with contemporary footage, shot in the exact same locations (Figure 28).



Fig 28. Women eating at Seagram Building Plaza. Left: 1960s. Right: 2000s

¹⁰⁵ Geoffrey Baer. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 22:40 min.

There is a larger narrative purpose in integrating historic b-roll footage: to provide visual imagery for historic context audio. Within chapters, it is used to underscore the historical context in which these revolutionary buildings were erected. For example, in the Southdale Center chapter, the documentary follows architect Victor Gruen's education at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts and his vision prior to his work on the Minnesota mall; it incorporates footage of Adolf Hitler, whose regime was a catalyst for Gruen's move from Vienna, Austria to the United States, and who also was a rejected applicant from the same school (Figure 29).¹⁰⁶

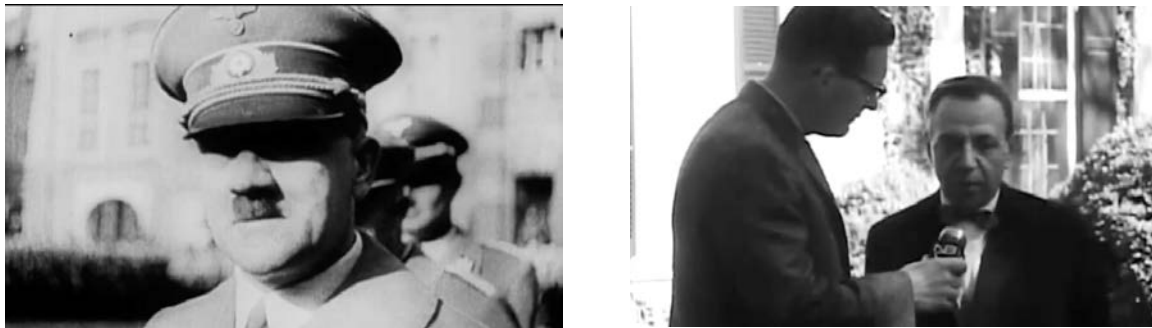


Fig 29. Left: Adolf Hitler footage Right: Victor Gruen interview.

Although initially alarming for the audience, showing sequences related to WWII provides context to the historical narrative; many of the chapters touch on larger social and political pressures that shaped opportunities and consequentially architects' work. Thus, scenes such as this can be justified as narrative enhancing factors. Much of the historic footage b-roll sequences that capture these macro-histories visually inform the PBS audio narrative. The older b-roll film utilized in this documentary augments the narrative whether used as evidence of a historical figure's commentary, juxtaposed for contemporary comparison, or shown for greater historical context.

¹⁰⁶ Geoffrey Baer. *10 Buildings that Changed America* (2013). At 27:37 min.

Audience and Reflections

On a platform such as PBS, any documentary is subject to an incredibly large audience. As I mentioned, people with no prior knowledge of these historical buildings would need to be able to understand their historical importance in influencing the country's architecture. The documentary's animated imagery played an important role to highlight Geoffry Baer's narration on the buildings, between professional interview segments. This documentary is by no means exemplary what every preservation documentary should strive after. Rather it is an appropriately crafted documentary for the audience it seeks to address. I analyzed this also to demonstrate the level of integrative techniques that larger audience documentaries must adhere to. Each documentary filmmaker will have to navigate his or her audience when making decisions, and preservation documentary filmmakers will have different scopes and methods of achieving this.

Conclusion

I have examined a number of filming techniques utilized in documentaries, to explore their effect on filmmaking narrative. When used to their fullest potential, these techniques employ audio and visual strategies prove impactful on the narrative, both alone and through interacting with one another. Although these techniques have been applied as separate points of discourse within each film for majority of this thesis, there are incidences where they dialogue towards creating engaging narrative representation; this is the ideal—not only when techniques support and augment narrative, but also when they interact with one another to achieve this ambition. If an objection were raised that if these films get an overarching message across, what difference would it make, my response would be that it only takes a momentary break or discord in narrative to undermine the message or lose an audience. These techniques are strategies for the preservation field to be equipped to represent its case, convey issues, raise awareness, and influence people's decisions. This is applicable at any scale of audience or contextual scope, from a local advocacy project all the way to a national preservation campaign. In the end, a documentary film is as much a source for information as it is a medium for storytelling. Without a coherent, actively engaged, tight narrative, a documentary is robbed of its fuller potential in disseminating valuable historical initiative in the field of preservation.

PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

I will now proceed to provide technique recommendations specific to common preservation intents or scenarios, where documentary filmmaking can prove an effective platform and narrative tool. These recommendations have been organized by two main sections: advocacy and education. Both have their own subcategories that discuss different situations in which certain techniques will prove especially helpful.

Advocacy

Advocacy was a primary intent I describe frequently throughout this thesis. Documentaries can partake in an advocacy agenda before, during, or after an established preservation project or social cause. Even if the documentary captures an advocacy case after its height is reached or established, such a documentary further advocates for the original cause. John Grierson mentions that documentaries should have an intent to advance a certain “social thesis.”¹⁰⁷ This aligns with some advocacy cases such as the LGBTQ movement in *LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.*—a film that was made after the historic site’s contributions to the overarching social movement. Advocacy is primarily used in the preservation field as a means to rally interest in a either a preservation project’s designation or funding for continued existence. I will first address some specific technique recommendations for both situations.

Preservation status

A historic building without preservation protection needs the approval of either local or national preservation jurisdictions. To provide narrative of a building’s historic significance, a concerned community member or hired firm can advocate through film. This type of preservation documentary would greatly benefit from the original users of its historic narrative. Besides filling out a nomination form for a building’s historic designation, a person interested in pursuing preservation protection could create a documentary disseminating the building’s importance, gathering support from local

¹⁰⁷ John Grierson, “The First Principles (1932-1934),” in *NonFiction Film: Theory and Criticism*, ed. Richard Meran Barsam, New York, Dutton: 1976, 19-30.

community members to push and advocate for it. The documentary would not only need to be compelling to community members, but city officials, who are on the board committee to decide on the building's preservation fate. Thus, interviews that incorporate known and respected professionals within and relevant to the preservation field will prove advantageous. This would be more of an endorsement and mainly a political move to advocate for a building's preservation. Animations should be minimal here, retaining film imagery related to the building's significance. Additionally, b-roll footage could include historic films or photographs of the building, with voiceover commentary from community members or professionals.

Funding

The same logic of incorporating key professionals in the field applies to creating a documentary to gain additional funding for a preservation project. When asking for more funding for a project, knowing the audience is key. If the documentary is mainly released to the public for donations, the information within documentary's content should relay surface level and general information—perhaps incorporating one or two commentaries on what a donation would do for advancing social good. The key in a larger audience, would be to keep the video content general and concise to gain interest from those with no prior knowledge in the field. If the documentary's audience is targeted towards preservationists, the documentary could dive deeper into the historical narrative around the building, with archival photographs or film if available. This material would prove compelling to preservationists, who have a greater understanding and inherent appreciation than the layman for the building's history. The b-roll footage could also incorporate more technical and specific topics related to the building's material integrity or conservation work, such as a preservationist narrating the further work to be done on the preservation project. Narrators of this documentary can be interactive, engaging with the building's material properties. The narration here has an opportunity to be straight forward as well as very specific as to what additional funding would repair or make possible. Animations or visualizations would prove less compelling if it was shown to those within the field, unless they served to create a rendering of the building's preservation potential.

Project-based Success

Preservation and architecture firms also use documentary film to document their own processes and advocate for their own continued success. Feilden Clegg and Bradley Studios (FCBS) was fortunate enough to have a filmmaker on staff, rather than hire a separate organization to create their short project documentaries. Clare Hughes, filmmaker and former conservationist at FCBS generously shared her insights with me into the filmmaking process when the firm documented their work at Middleport Pottery—which was a restoration project in England funded by the Prince's Regeneration Trust.¹⁰⁸ The filming took place after the project's successful completion, and was able to walk the audience through its project's process, mentioning challenges and ultimately discussing its success at presently meeting the needs of the building's clients and community. The firm's principal architects in charge of the project narrated their own struggles and intrigue with the project. In this scenario, the original users of the narrative were the architects themselves. The documentary also incorporates interview segments of workers in the Victorian pottery, from ceramic workers to textile weavers, who experience the building's restoration elements on a daily basis—an effective way to capture the project's functional success.

In a project-based scenario, documentary film depends less on the specifics of the historic narrative, and more about promoting the firm's work. It would benefit from interview scenes that incorporate the project's clients, users of the site, and the preservation firm's staff that was involved with the project. B-roll scenes would serve to highlight successful moments of the project. Older historic film would be less advantageous as b-roll in this scenario, unless used for contrasting purposes—such as a before and after scene. Narration could be in the expository or interactive mode, to let interviewees discuss the project themselves.

¹⁰⁸ Mending the Factory (2015) by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios
<https://fcbstudios.com/work/view/middleport-pottery>

Education

Creating an educational preservation documentary depends on the audience. This category would be strikingly different between target audiences, and I have therefore created two subcategories: preservationists and outside the field.

Preservationists

A documentary created to educate a preservationist would by no means replace conventional, institutionalized learning environments or mentors. Rather educating preservationists through documentary film could conceivably take form as informing preservationists of contemporary phenomena or issues within the field. As I mentioned before in this thesis, documentary films at one point was a source of non-fiction news, disseminated nationally. There is no reason it cannot still serve this purpose. The field currently shares news articles or published writings. Short or long documentaries can also be created that captures developments in the field itself. I mentioned in my literature analysis that there was a shift in preservation theory in the 20th century. There is currently no preservation documentary that captures such a fundamental change to the way in which preservationists handle their roles and view heritage. Such knowledge is surely researchable online. However documentary filmmaking could be a medium that captures this shift in an evocative manner, and could question where we are headed towards in regards to preservation theory today. The documentary could incorporate professionals both in the U.S. as well as internationally, to bring professionals in dialogue over important issues.

Outside the Field

Educating those outside of the preservation field about preservation can take many forms. A preservation documentary to outsiders would provide a basic introduction to the field, therefore the interactive mode of narration would be especially effective in engaging and educating the audience, like Baer in the PBS documentary. This allows the narrator to interact with the setting. Although professional interviews are a great way to provide commentary, an “outside the field” audience may be more receptive to community member or original user interviews. Outsiders will not have

previous knowledge of who the interviewed professionals are, or be able to gauge their level of influence. Therefore, outsiders will rely more on what they can relate or empathize with, which is the original user interviews.

Conclusion

Original user interviews are especially effective in any documentary that engages with a community or conveys a building's local and cultural significance. If the intent is to educate, the interactive mode of narration is most effective when paired with a narrator demonstrating concepts onsite. Professional interviews are often an effective way to certify significance in a particular preservation project or cause—choosing certain professionals can also be a political move within the preservation field. Advocacy and education are by no means the absolute and only intents preservationists have, but these two are primary areas in which documentary films can prove a helpful medium and platform for compelling narrative.

It is my hope that preservationists will think critically not only about what is being representing, but *how* it is being represented—and channel this into the medium of documentary filmmaking. Further interpretations of these documentaries will be up to audiences, but the preservation documentary filmmaker's duty is to convey a narrative in a way that can invoke interest for either or both the public and preservationists alike. Video-editing technique execution can make all the difference between profoundly compelling and mediocre. Equipping the preservation field with this knowledge in documentary filmmaking can enhance its ability to create compelling material—which will only work in favor of the field.

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