

DOX#91: THE MORE WE ARE

SATIRE: A listing of documentary filmmaker archetypes By Boris Mitić

Finally, some good news for documentary filmmakers: There are not thousands of you out there, but just a few archetypal ones. Regardless of age, sex, continent, experience, life drama, pedigree or status, all filmmakers fit in a small number of categories. Learn to recognize them, demystify them, then position yourself. At least you won't feel intimidated by the fierce competition anymore. Here's a list of archetypes, not necessarily good or bad, that you will probably find recognizable, if not introspective.



DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER ARCHETYPES

1. Calculating Careerist
2. Allegorical Commentator
3. Half-Breed Apparatchik
4. Hyperlocal Talent
5. Misunderstood Genius
6. Carte-Blanche Veteran
7. Agoraphobic Outsider
8. Old-School Cynic
9. Blue-Chip Do-It-All
10. Late-Coming Prosecutor
11. Lone Multi-Tasker
12. Passive Sceptic
13. Co-Producers Protégé
14. Personal Exorcist

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1. **the Calculating Careerist:** will do anything to get as far out in the system as possible, often at the cost of manipulating ethical standards and abusing the trust that we docmakers still enjoy in the eyes of the audience
2. **the Allegorical Commentator:** counts on (often unfounded) allegorical witticisms to attain a comparative advantage over us, mere mortals
3. **the Half-Breed Apparatchik:** wannabe filmmakers who work in big institutions, usually televisions or advertising agencies, but who are not ready yet to go out of the system and do real films on their own, so they always stay one foot inside and one foot outside.
4. **the Hyperlocal Talent:** cannot think of a bigger audience, and therefore remains local
5. **the Misunderstood Genius:** believes to be so great, that no one understands him
6. **the Carte-Blanche Veteran:** over 120 years old and still getting funds for films about his/her grandmother
7. **the Agoraphobic Outsider:** afraid to network or take the stage, hence always an outsider
8. **the Old-School Cynic:** thinks filmmaking stopped a few decades ago and all thereafter is garbage
9. **the Blue Chip Do-It-All:** accepts all commissioned work, for any minuscule profit
10. **the Late Coming Prosecutor:** uncovers controversial issues with an (intentionally?) safe time delay
11. **the Lone Multitasker:** does all by himself, and the more he does so, the more difficult it becomes to delegate tasks, so he remains ever more alone
12. **the Passive Skeptic:** nothing works and never will, let's not even try it
13. **the Co-Producers' Protégé:** never complains much about the compromises immanent to every co-production, therefore co-producers praise him and want to work with him/her again
14. **the Personal Exorcist:** has inner demons or family issues s/he must share with the world

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IN THE NEXT EDITION: Commissioning editor archetypes.