

Film

# Observational Documentary

## Explorations Project

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# Rules for Observational Documentaries

Generally, no music, no interviews, no narration and no scene arrangements of any kind.

# 6 Modes of Documentaries

01

## Poetic Mode

Focuses on mood, tone, or juxtaposition

02

## Expository Mode

Omnipresent narration and b-roll

03

## Participatory Mode

Interaction between the filmmaker and subject

04

## Observational Mode :)

Real life, 'fly on the wall'

05

## Reflexive Mode

Relationship between audience and filmmaker

06

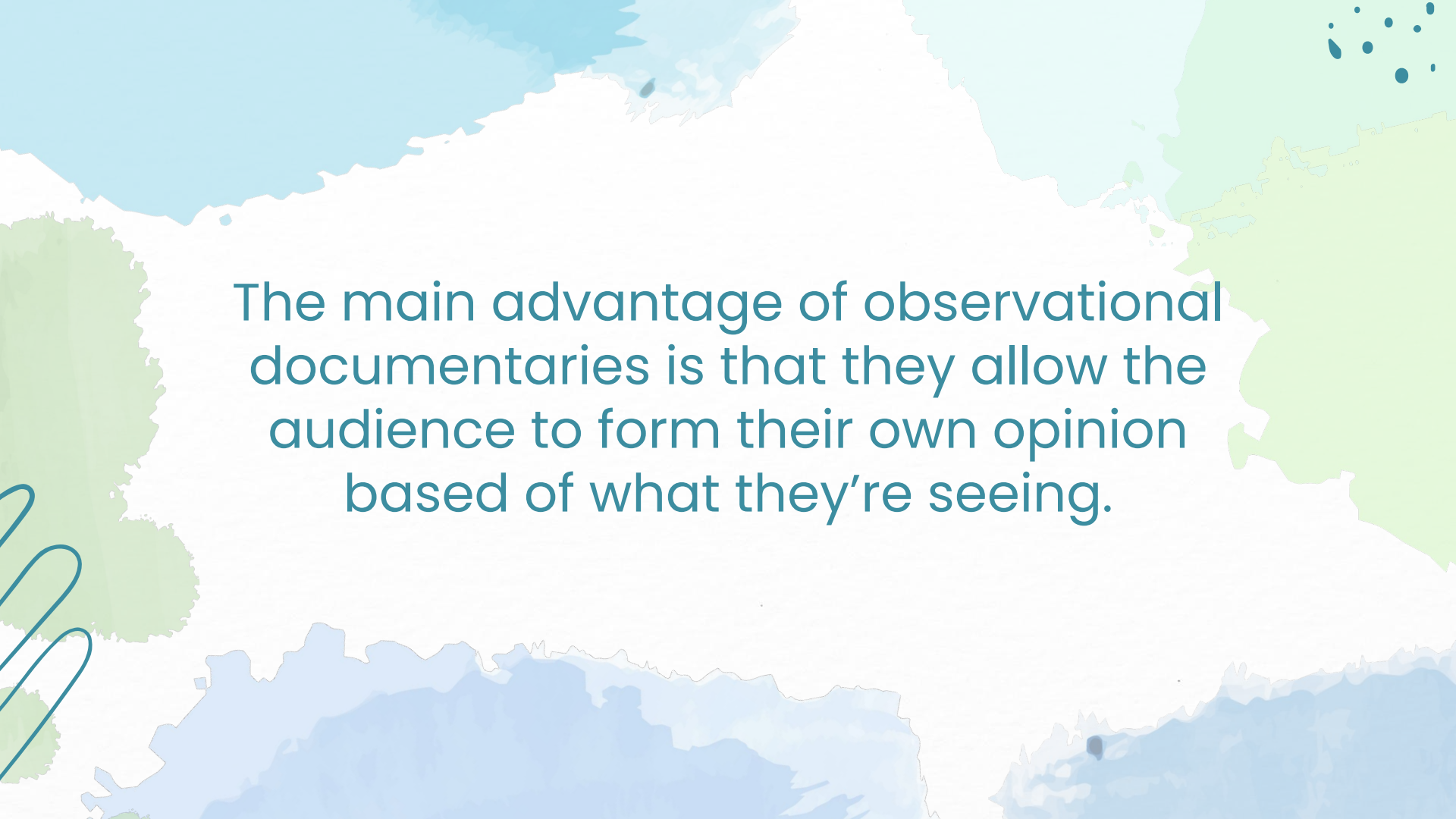
## Performative Mode

Focus on the filmmakers involvement in the subject



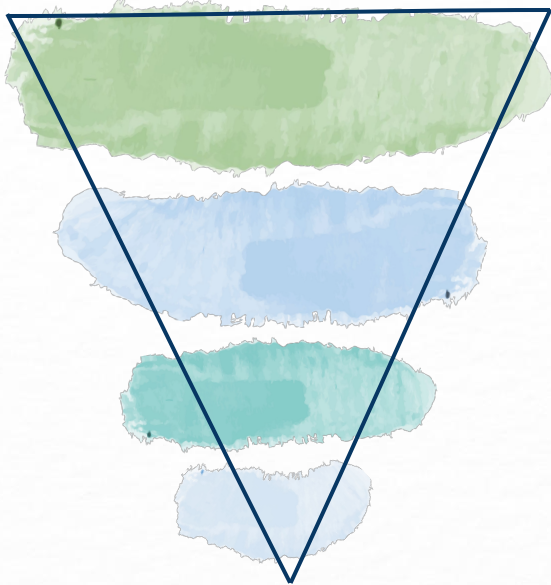
# “Truthful Cinema” or *Cinéma vérité*

a type of documentary focused on  
non-interrupted observation of  
real-life people and events.



The main advantage of observational documentaries is that they allow the audience to form their own opinion based on what they're seeing.

# Characteristics and Features



01

## **Objectivity**

This mode just observes, without providing any narrative

02

## **Minimalistic Equipment**

Filmmakers don't need to use tripods or massive cameras so they could follow events more naturally.

03

## **No Disruption**

No interviews or voiceovers, as if the filmmaker is "not" there.

04

## **No Reenactments**

No second takes. It would artificially impact the truthfulness the observational mode wants to show.

# My Muse:



**Undercity: New York City Urban Exploration**

When we were first exploring new documentaries, we watched a lot of examples in class but this one really stood out to me. I loved the adventures Steve went on under the grounds of New York and it amazed me how the cameraman was able to go through graffiti tunnels and up bridges holding the audio recorder and camera.

