

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM MAGAZINE  
**Sight&Sound**  **Film  
Forever**

*Outside in: creative cinematic documentary comes to the UK*

*Taking inspiration from founts of nonfiction heterodoxy like Copenhagen's CPH:DOX and Columbus, Missouri's True/False, the ICA's Frames of Representation festival found a ready audience for its inaugural eight-film showcase of documentary 'new visions' from less beaten corners of the world.*

The nature of documentary cinema has been up for debate ever since the term 'documentary' was itself first coined by John Grierson in a review of Robert Flaherty's *Moana* in 1926. In the intervening years, definitions have varied – some prioritising artistic merit, and others journalistic integrity, with clarity on the issue ultimately proving impossible to come by. Even in Flaherty's early film, the reality presented is not quite as it seems; the Inuit and Samoans in *Moana* were in fact re-enacting earlier events from memory for the benefit of the filmmaker.

[...] With its inaugural programme recently playing at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London at the end of April, *Frames of Representation* aims to explore the continuing evolution of the documentary form.

[...] An arresting piece of work, *Fragment 53* explores notions of warrior-hood through the lens of the Liberian civil wars via interviews with a number of former generals from various factions of the conflict. [...] Federico Lodoli and Carlo Gabriele Tribbioli made the conscious decision not to contextualise the candid and gripping accounts they captured. They opted for evocation over education, and audiences are challenged to make their own connections between the interviewees (it is telling that one of the most commonly repeated words, by spiritualist and soldier alike, was 'brave') and contemplate the universality of these war-time perspectives.

It's a decision that inspired a fascinating and wide-ranging discussion between the two directors, the moderator – writer and academic Jean-Paul Martinon – and the audience. The debate that followed took in the filmmakers' ethical accountability to the victims of war, their duty to inform audiences and the thorny subject of European voices framing a Liberian story. [...]