The Voices of Documentary

Nichols calls the 6 modes of representation “something like a subgenre of documentary film.”

1. Poetic
2. Expository
3. Participatory
4. Observational
5. Reflexive
6. Performative
Poetic
Reassembles fragments of the world poetically
Think of films like Berlin: Symphony of a Great City
1920s

Expository
Directly addresses issues in the historical world, typically with heavy reliance on voice-over narration.
1920s

Observational
Eschews commentary and reenactment: observes things as they happen
1960s
Participatory

Interview or interact with the subjects; use archival footage to retrieve history

1960s

Reflexive

Questions documentary form, possibly even attacking the other modes or voices of documentary form

1980s

Performative

Stresses the subjective aspects of a classically objective discourse

1980s