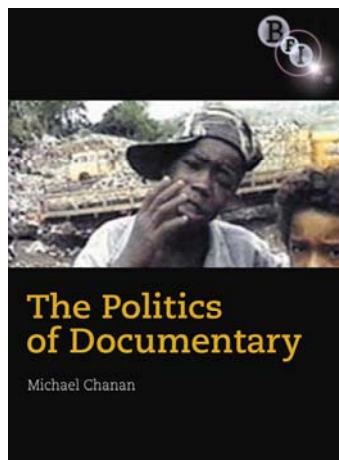


## BFI book press release



# The Politics of Documentary

## Michael Chanan

**Published 23 November 2007**  
**£16.99 (paperback, 304pp)**  
**ISBN: 978-1-84457-226-7**

Michael Chanan's wide-ranging study of international documentary film-making re-reads its complex history and examines its current flourishing state.

Chanan traces the history of the documentary from the first Lumière films to John Grierson and his contemporaries, through to Free Cinema, Cinéma vérité and Direct Cinema, up to the resurgence of documentary with high profile contemporary films such as those of Michael Moore.

Chanan's thematic approach takes in topics such as the documentary before documentary, how documentary film language works, the veracity of the image, the construction of the soundtrack, the migration of documentary to television, political documentary, censorship, first-person film-making, and the relation of the archives to history and memory.

Drawing on examples of documentary cinema in Japan, Iran and Latin America as well as Europe and the USA, Chanan argues that documentary provides a crucial public space in which ideas are debated, opinion is formed and those in authority are held to account.

### **The Politics of Documentary: Michael Chanan in Conversation at BFI Southbank**

*The Politics of Documentary* is published during BFI Southbank's ongoing Focus on Documentary strand. On Friday 23 November at 6.20pm, Michael Chanan will discuss a range of documentary-related issues with Elizabeth Cowie, Reader in Film Studies at the University of Kent, and will illustrate his arguments with a number of specially selected, rarely seen short documentaries, including films by Joris Ivens, Kamran Shirdel, Osama Qashoo, Artavazd Peleshian and Anthony Simmons. Tickets are £5, concessions £4 (members pay £1 less).

### **About the author**

Michael Chanan is a documentary film-maker and Professor of Film and Video at Roehampton University. His films include *Detroit - Ruin of a City* (2005). His books include *Cuban Cinema* (2003) and *Repeated Takes: A Short History of Recording and its Effects on Music* (1995). **Michael Chanan is available for interview.**

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