

The Environmental Documentary: Cinema Activism in the 21st Century

John A. Duvall

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The Environmental Documentary provides the first extensive coverage of the most important environmental films of the decade, including their approach to their topics and their impacts on public opinion and political debate. While documentaries with themes of environmental activism date back at least to Pare Lorenz's films of the 1930's, no previous decade has produced the number and quality of films that engage environmental issues from an activist viewpoint. The convergence of high profile issues like climate change, fossil fuel depletion, animal abuse, and corporate malfeasance has combined with the miniaturization of high quality recording equipment and the expansion of documentary programming, to produce an unprecedented number of important and influential documentary productions.

The text examines the processes of production and distribution that have produced this explosion in documentaries. The films range from a high-profile Hollywood production with theatrical distribution like *An Inconvenient Truth*, to shorter independently produced films like *The End of Suburbia* that have reached a small audience of activists through video distribution, interviews with many of the filmmakers, and word of mouth.



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