

A list of books recommended or suggested by members on undertaking documentary photography projects.

***Recorded Reality - Early Documentary Photography***; Gail Buckland (David & Charles, 1974)

Presents documentary photographs taken with calotype and wetplate cameras up to the advent of the dry plate, around 1884: covers the barricades in Paris in 1848 and 1871; corpses on the fields of Lucknow after the Indian Mutiny of 1858; the opening of London's first underground railway, 1862; a slave pen in Alexandria, Virginia, 1865; a British mental hospital patient, 1852; the bound feet of Chinese ladies, 1870. Pictures by the great photographers of England, France, and America are included - Fenton and Talbot, Bayard and Marville, Gardner, Brady and O'Sullivan and others.

***Grierson on Documentary***; John Grierson & Forsyth Hardy (Faber, 1979)

Presents writing of John Grierson, who first used 'documentary' as a term in 1926. This collection of essays present the man and the movement he helped form.

***The Photo Essay – Photographs by Mary Ellen Mark*** (Smithsonian Inst Press 1990)

Although a monograph of her work, the book contains an extensive interview where Mark describes her working practice and approach, and thus provides useful insights for the documentary photographer.

***Doing Documentary Work***; Robert Coles (OUP, 1997)

A seminal work on undertaking documentary projects, but not just aimed at the photographer. For Coles, documentary work raises methodological, psychological or personal, and moral issues—primarily because he defines documentary work as research into the lives of people who are different from oneself—different in terms of class position, race, or origin. Coles sets out to explore a number of questions about documentary work—about telling stories, in a variety of media, about the lives of other people.

***Storytelling for Photojournalists***; Enzo Dal Verme (Amherst Media, 2016)

A book designed to help professional photographers and inspire photography novices who want to learn how to get the most out of a trip. It covers what it takes to shoot reportage—photojournalistic images—from developing an idea, to making travel plans, to gathering the requisite information about the subject/scene and locale, to packing the appropriate gear and nailing the technical aspects of the shoot.

***The Documentary Impulse***; Stuart Franklin (Phaidon, 2016)

Franklin explores why we are driven to visually document our experiences and the world around us. He focuses on photography but traces this universal need through art, literature and science. Looking at photojournalism, war photography and work recording our culture, Franklin identifies some of its driving impulses: curiosity, outrage, reform and ritual; the search for evidence, for beauty, for therapy; and the immortalisation of memory. As our understanding of 'documentary' continues to expand, Franklin considers photographic staging - where, perhaps, the future of the genre may lie: in search of truth over fact.



***Documentary Photography Reconsidered*; Michelle Bogre (Bloomsbury, 2019)**

Documentary Photography Reconsidered is structured around key concepts, such as the photograph as witness, as evidence, as memory, as narrative and as a vehicle for activism and social change. Chapters include in-depth interviews with some of the world's leading contemporary practitioners, demonstrating the wide variety of different working styles, techniques and topics available to new photographers entering the field. There is an accompanying website with in-depth video interviews.

***Photo work: Forty photographers on process and practice*; Ed. Sasha Wolf (Aperture, 2019)**

Sasha Wolf ask a group of forty young and established photographers questions about: How does a photographic project or series evolve? How important are "style" and "genre"? What comes first—the photographs or a concept? The book is structured through a Proust-like questionnaire, in which individuals are each asked the same set of questions, creating a typology of responses that allows for an intriguing compare and contrast.

***Context and Narrative in Photography*; Maria Short et al. (Bloomsbury, 2020)**

Reference book and exercises that introduce practical methods to help plan, develop and present meaningful, communicative images. With many of examples from a range of thought-provoking photographers. Begins with an exploration of different narrative techniques, through selecting and developing a concept for your project and how it might be conveyed. Also covers how to incorporate text into your work and to present the finished work to your audience.

***Bending the Frame- Photojournalism, Documentary, and the Citizen*; Fred Ritchin, (Aperture 2013)**

Addresses the new and emerging potentials for visual media to impact society. Also addresses online efforts, uses of video, and a diverse range of books and exhibitions. The book provides challenges and aims for a wide-ranging and far-reaching a discussion, asking the critical question: how can images promote new thinking and make a difference in the world?

***New Ways of Seeing*; Grant Scott (Bloomsbury, 2020)**

New Ways of Seeing explains how to both learn and teach photography as a visual language, appropriate for both professionals and students working today. Scott challenges us to think of photography as a visual language. The approach taken here develops the metaphor of 'learning a language' when attempting to explain what photography can be and what it can give a student in transferable creative and life skills. This begins with challenging the student pre-conception that successful photography is defined by the successful single image or 'the good photograph'. The book emphasises instead the central role of narrative and visual storytelling through a technique of 'photosketching' which can be used to develop the building blocks of visual creativity and ultimately to craft successful bodies of photographic work.

Feel free to let us know of other quality books on the practice of documentary photography, so we can add to this guide.