Introduction

This project explores the lives and works of a number of exceptional Latina documentary filmmakers working in the United States whose bodies of work have been recognized by a knowledgeable small group of filmmakers, but have been overlooked in the academic classroom. The focus of the project was as follows: 1) introducing these women’s lives and experiences, using one filmmaker as a case study, 2) examining their body of work in the field of documentary film, 3) choosing one film as a case study, and 4) analyzing their works and their contribution to documentary filmmaking and videography in the United States. Their contributions are extremely important, and relevant, in academia, yet they are grossly underrepresented. Our aim was to shed light on their achievements in this ever-growing field and by doing so, provide a more well-rounded perspective of contemporary documentary cinema.

Case Study: Lourdes Portillo

“That is my greatest impetus for making films- for people to understand who I am and who the people I come from are.”

-Born in Mexico in 1944
-Moved to Los Angeles California at the age of 13
-Got her first filmmaking experience at the age of 21
-Popular themes: Women, Immigrants, Injustice, Latin America/Latin-Americans, Identity
-After the Earthquake (1979)
-La Ofrenda (The Offering) (1983)

Conclusion

The field of documentary film has long been an important facet of filmmaking and videography. It is a field that often strives to enlighten, as well as tell a story. Many times this very story tells the audience a great deal about our time, views, morals, and culture. For that reason, and many more, we feel that it is of utmost importance to provide university students with into these women working in an industry that is overwhelmingly dominated by majority males.

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