

BACK AND BETTER THAN EVER: DOCUMENTARIES

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The summer of 2019 sparked the slow resurgence of documentary series. "When I started, documentaries were like the spinach of filmmaking. Nobody cared about them. Nobody wanted to pay for them. They weren't sexy. Now, we're in this amazing golden era of documentary and nonfiction storytelling, that just keeps getting more interesting," Morgan Neville, director and producer, said. His words put into perspective the direction that documentary series are taking. Many factors can be attributed to its rise, including streaming services like Netflix. Indiewire calls it the "Netflix Effect."

"While marketers funding documentary films and series is not a new phenomenon, the trend appears to have accelerated in recent years as marketers continue to see audiences turn away from ad-supported programming like traditional TV in favor of ad-free platforms like Netflix, and filmmakers see traditional documentary buyers, such as Netflix, spend less to acquire this type of programming," writer Tim Peterson of Digiday said. The convenience of streaming platforms can explain why documentaries have made a comeback.

Viewers and new content serve as the most obvious reasons for this rising popularity. The creation of new streaming

Entertainment

(Graphics/Bella Ramirez)
(Photo submitted by Daniela Dominguez)

services (such as Disney Plus) forced Netflix to remove copyrighted shows, gave the platform no choice but to step up its game with new additions, including documentaries. From exciting TV series such as "Cheer," with a 96% rating on Rotten Tomatoes, to chilling docuseries like "Don't F*** With Cats," these types of shows have regained popularity in entertainment. According to CCN, "Netflix's users continue to grow despite competitors as it penetrates international markets. Analysts see the stock popping to over \$400." Netflix's broad audience and well-made content feeds into the docuseries hype.

ESQUIRE'S MUST-WATCH DOCUMENTARIES



DIVERSITY PAST THE MIRROR

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Diversity comes in all shapes and forms, including race and gender but also extending into socio-economic background, age, physical abilities and political and religious beliefs.

As important as the push for diversity in race and gender is, in order for movies and T.V. shows to truly claim complete diversity, they must include characters from all different backgrounds. Name one movie that has all three: racial diversity, characters with different sexual orientations and proper representation of disabilities. Notice how difficult it is to procure one?

It's no secret the media has a powerful impact on viewers' perceptions of them-

selves and others, especially among teenagers. However, not everyone has representation in the movies so widely watched.

"When 97 percent of our media is 0.05 percent of the population, we start believ-

"Media representation has helped me learn to love myself despite of the negativities I might face in my daily lives."

-Daniela Dominguez, junior

ing and getting a skewed idea of what society really looks like," nationally acclaimed psychotherapist Merrill Littleberry said. "What we need is a picture of this [diverse] audience because this is what society looks like."

The idea of the majority of movies and T.V. shows representing a select physical type doesn't benefit anyone. "Minorities realize—supported by research—that the media influence not only how others view them, but even how they view themselves,"

Carlos Cortes, author of "The Children Are Watching: How the Media Teach About Diversity," said.

REFLECTION: Daniela Dominguez is impacted by bisexual and hispanic representation in media. These characters help her embrace her background and feel seen. "Seeing representation in people I look up to, like friends or celebrities, gives me a sense of validation and comfort," Dominguez said.

