

Animal Advocacy Nonfiction Film and Moving-Image Media

Nonfiction film and media have played a crucial role in advocating for animal welfare, rights and liberation. Although short videos and a number of documentaries were produced and distributed with activist purposes during the 1980s, it is during the so-called “documentary renaissance” of the early twenty-first century, together with the communicative advances of digital media, that nonfiction moving images emerged as a medium capable of reaching more mainstream audiences, becoming a central cultural tool for instigating transformative change in humans’ speciesist practices and attitudes toward nonhuman animals. The turn of the century brought impactful productions such as Jenny Stein’s *The Witness* (2000), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals’ (PETA) 12-minute “Meet Your Meat” (2002) and, perhaps most influentially, Shaun Monson’s encyclopedic *Earthlings* (2005), refueling the public debate on the global structures of the animal-industrial complex and the concern for nonhuman animals. The growing production of documentaries and nonfiction media that followed contributed to awakening the animal rights movement from a period of stagnation and disagreement about ethical and theoretical direction that, according to Finsen and Finsen in their celebrated history of the movement in the United States, marked the spirit of animal activism toward the end of the twentieth century. Over the last 25 years, the increasing circulation of documentaries, short videos, body-camera recordings, drone footage, television and news reports, live streams, video journalism, vlogs, animal storytelling videos, essay films, etc., has reflected rapid changes in the ways that audiovisual information about animal ethics issues is distributed and consumed. These contributions not only arrange patterns into recognizable and representative forms of advocacy but also supply material for the creation of an archive that can properly reassess nonhuman animals’ place in a historiography that distances itself from traditional humanism, and that opens a space for them in memory studies.

This conference seeks to address the ethics and aesthetics that have shaped the animal advocacy documentary film subgenre, as well as other types of nonfiction digital formats of the moving image that are being distributed through digital platforms, reflecting the public’s changing practices of media consumption. It aims to contribute to the discussion set forth by Critical Animal Studies scholars in the fields of Film and Media Studies. Suggested topics for the submission of proposals related to animal advocacy include (but are not limited to):

- History and/or historiography of animal advocacy documentary film and/or nonfiction media.
- Animal advocacy documentaries and digital media in archiveology and memory studies.
- Typologies of animal advocacy nonfiction film and moving-image media: conventions, strategies, focalizations and gazes, forms of intertextuality,

narratologies, modes, framings, formal and cinematographic choices, soundtracks and sound design, etc.

- Hyper- and/or in-visibility in animal advocacy nonfiction film and moving-image media.
- Case studies and analyses of specific films, media contents, filmmakers and/or content creators.
- Case studies of productions created in different territories and countries, or by different communities or cultures.
- Distribution and circulation of animal advocacy documentaries and moving-image media.
- Intersectional approaches to nonfiction films and moving-image media (Critical Race Theory, Gender Studies, Posthumanism, Postcolonialism, Disability Studies, Celebrity Studies, etc.).
- Animal advocacy documentaries as a (sub)genre: issues pertaining to canon formation, corpus, typologies, and relationships to other (sub)genres (wildlife films, natural history films, eco- and green documentaries, food-system documentaries, biographies, mockumentaries, etc.).
- Nonfiction film and moving-image media in educational and/or activist contexts.
- Assessment of the impact of nonfiction film and moving-image media on viewers and audiences.
- The influence of digital moving images and screen culture in the conception of nonhuman otherness and the development of animal ethics theories.
- Representations of sanctuaries and rescue centers in animal advocacy documentaries and moving-image media.
- Representations of spaces within the animal-industrial complex in animal advocacy documentaries and moving-image media.
- Representations of nonhuman animals in “nature” and/or the “wilderness” in animal advocacy documentaries and moving-image media.
- Representations of advocates and/or activists in animal advocacy documentaries and moving-image media.
- Ethical considerations: nonhuman animals’ consent, right to privacy, interventionism, and related issues.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS (in alphabetical order):

- **Pablo de la Chica** (Filmmaker, director of *Infiltrada en el búnker*)
<https://www.instagram.com/pablodelachica/?hl=es>
- **Carrie P. Freeman** (Georgia State University)
<https://cas.gsu.edu/profile/carrie-p-freeman>
- **Anat Pick** (Queen Mary University)
<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/arts/people/academic-and-research-staff/film/pick.html>
- **Alexa Weik von Mossner** (University of Klagenfurt)
<https://www.alexaweikvonmossner.com>

The conference is organized by the CULIVIAN Research Group in Valencia (“Animals in Literary and Visual Cultures”), as part of the research project “The Ethics and Aesthetics of Animal Advocacy Documentary Film in Twenty-first-century Western Cultures” (CIAICO/2023/046), funded by the Conselleria d'Educació, Cultura i Universitats (Generalitat Valenciana). The conference will be held face-to-face at the **Facultat de Filologia, Traducció i Comunicació at the University of Valencia, Spain, on April 28-30, 2027.**

SUBMISSIONS:

- **Individual paper:** 250-300-word abstract.
- **Full panels:** 3 papers per session. Include a short description of the panel objectives and the abstract (250-300 words) for each paper.
- **Round table:** include name and affiliation of participants and a description of topic of discussion (approximately 400 words).
- **Workshop:** include objectives, structure and activities (approximately 400 words) and material requirements (equipment, type of room, software, etc.).

Please include a short bio of the author(s) of about 100 words along with the proposal. Please specify affiliation.

Conference languages: the official language will be English, but we are also open to proposals in Spanish or Valencian.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS: All proposals should be sent to correo@culivian.es no later than **November 1, 2026**. Acceptance of proposals will be notified by December 10, 2026. Details on the conference fee and payment will be indicated upon acceptance of the proposal.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (in alphabetical order):

Claudia Alonso Recarte (UV)
Margarita Carretero González (UGR)
Manuel de la Fuente Soler (UV)
María Teresa Lajoinie Domínguez (UV)
Nuria Máximo Bocanegra (URJC)
Brett Mills (UEA)
Ignacio Ramos Gay (UV)
Carlos Tabernero Holgado (UAB)

For more on the CULIVIAN research group, please visit: <https://culivian.es>

