

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## The best documentary filmmakers in the world

James Still · Tuesday, February 2nd, 2021

In terms of making movies, one of the biggest splits has always been between fiction and real-life, in terms of the stories that people want to tell. Documentaries have always been an extremely popular medium with both audiences and filmmakers alike, and we are seeing more and more people get drawn into making documentaries today, with a range of subjects being tackled. The narrative of non-fiction events is somewhat more difficult to shape, since there is already a series of events that has taken place, but that does not detract from the appeal of making those movies. In fact, we have seen all sorts of documentaries in recent years, whether they be big-budget or independent, historical or more relevant to the present day, and packed with stars or with relative newcomers, many of whom have then gone on to make a name for themselves.

Here are some of the best documentary filmmakers in the world, many of whom have also worked in regular non-fiction movies, and have found success in both worlds.

### Kevin Macdonald

Macdonald actually has a lot of family history and prestige in terms of being in the filmmaking business. His grandfather was Emeric Pressburger, who made classics such as 'Black Narcissus', 'The Red Shoes' and 'A Matter of Life and Death', while his older brother Andrew has been Danny Boyle's long-time producer on movies such as 'Trainspotting' and 'Sunshine'. [Kevin Macdonald](#) himself reached wider fame with 'The Last King of Scotland', a fictionalized tale about Idi Amin. However, he has still continued to make documentaries, with 'Marley' being his latest one which was released last year.

### Christopher Cannucciari

Cannucciari is another of those who has had a foot in both worlds of filmmaking for years, and in fact has fulfilled a number of roles on set, not just as a director. He has served as a cinematographer on 31 movies and TV shows, for example; he has seven editor credits, nine writing credits, 13 productions where he was involved in the camera and electrical departments, and even a couple of music credits to name. This shows just how talented and versatile he has been, but his major claim to fame has been his work as a director, on both documentaries and feature films. He has made documentaries such as 'Staten Island Comedy Festival', 'An Afternoon With Clara', 'Bush Cooking' and 'Mr. Crack', among many other short films as well. His latest documentary, 'Banking on Bitcoin', has been quite well-received, and it is a great film for those who have heard of Bitcoin but have no idea what it is to get up to speed with this new form of money. It also delves into some of the important figures in the cryptocurrency market, and features interviews and experiences with many of them. Such informational documentaries are immensely useful, as they help the public to understand more about topics which are of interest, but on which it is difficult to find sources of information in a coherent manner. They can be great introductions to such topics, in this case bitcoin and cryptocurrencies, with the viewer then having the option to

go ahead and [find out unusual facts about the crypto](#). This further research is encouraged if you are interested in the topic, since even though it may seem that we know everything about the topic by just watching a documentary, that is rarely the case, and there are plenty of facts and facets which can end up surprising us.

### **James Marsh**

[James Marsh](#) may not be a big name commercially or in households around the world, but he has quietly become one of the most stellar documentary filmmakers out there. His first documentary was 'Wisconsin Death Trip' in 1999, while his feature film debut as director came six years later with 'The King'. His 2008 documentary 'Man On Wire' was thrilling, and fully deserving of the Oscar it picked up in 2009, while he is of course now best known for the 2014 biological drama 'The Theory of Everything', starring Eddie Redmayne and Felicity Jones, based on the life of Stephen Hawking, for which Redmayne won the Best Actor gong at the Oscars, while the movie won Outstanding British Film at that year's BAFTAs.

### **Spike Lee**

[Spike Lee](#) is perhaps the biggest documentary filmmaker who is also a household name due to his work in fiction as well. He is well-known for his work with Nike, with the iconic advertisements featuring Michael Jordan helping the brand to go stratospheric in the early 1990s, while his documentaries such as '4 Little Girls' and 'When The Levees Broke: A Requiem In Four Acts', have been some of the finest work ever seen in the documentary space. Lee, of course, also has some stunning feature-length work, including 'Malcolm X', '25th Hour' and 'Do The Right Thing', all of which have helped shape a lot of contemporary filmmakers, especially Black artists, and their view towards filmmaking.

*Photo by [Jovaughn Stephens](#) on [Unsplash](#)*

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