

## [Call for Papers: Southern Cultures Special Issue on “The Documentary Moment”](#)

Discussion published by Katharine Henry on Wednesday, April 17, 2019

**Guest Editor: Tom Rankin**

**Submission deadline: June 9, 2019**

*Southern Cultures*, the award-winning, peer-reviewed quarterly from UNC's Center for the Study of the American South, encourages submissions from scholars, writers, documentarians, and visual and sound artists for our second special Documentary Issue, to be published Spring 2020. We will be accepting submissions for this special issue through June 9, 2019, at <https://southerncultures.submittable.com/Submit>.

We are looking for work that examines and understands the “documentary moment,” using the idea of “moment” to refer to both the decisive instant of documentary image making and the sense of urgency we often feel to document a very present experience of political and social friction in the American South. Important stories need to be documented and shared, and yet it is equally important that we explore new ways of telling these stories, if only to break the cycle of documentary work that can be curiously neutralized by its own conventions.

*The Documentary Moment* will explore fresh approaches to documentary storytelling that are informed by experimental practices and new ways of interpreting/telling the social and cultural landscape. It will not only speak to the urgency of the present social and political moment, but will also interrogate assumptions about experimental art, documentary storytelling, community engagement, and archive. To that end, we are less interested in revisiting past debates and stereotypes than we are in the interaction of peoples and cultures within the broader forces of political, social, historical, and economic change at work in the South.

Submissions can explore any topic or theme related to the contemporary moment, and we welcome explorations of the region in the forms *Southern Cultures* publishes: scholarly articles, memoir, interviews, surveys, photo essays, and shorter feature essays. We hope that submitters will interpret the idea of the documentary moment from their own time and place.

Possible topics and questions to explore might include (but are certainly not limited to):

- reflective essays by documentary artists on “moments” and their work
- the moment as “between time”—that time just before or after action—or life along the edges

- finding the present moment in historical documents or archives
- contested time, memory, or moments
- how documentary from a past moment may survive and resonate in the present
- the quotidian as a central element of the documentary moment
- how discrete moments may coalesce to create something new, personal, and cultural
- how political documentary may catalyze intervention or activism, or otherwise alter the current moment

As we also publish a digital edition, we are able to supplement print materials with video, audio, and interactive visual content. We encourage creativity in coordinating print and digital materials in submissions and ask that authors submit any potential digital materials with their essay or introduction/artist's statement.

We encourage authors to gain familiarity with the tone, scope, and style of our journal before submitting. Those whose institutions subscribe to Project Muse can read past issues for free via [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/southern\\_cultures/](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/southern_cultures/). To read our current issue, access our submission guidelines, or browse our content, please visit us online at [SouthernCultures.org/](http://SouthernCultures.org/).