

ALICE STREET



1852 MEDIA PRESENTS "ALICE STREET" AN ENDANGERED IDEAS FILM
CINEMATOGRAPHY SPENCER WILKINSON, DEMONDRE WARD, AND AYŞE GÜRSÖZ ORIGINAL MUSIC MICAH BEREK
CONSULTING PRODUCERS ERIC ARNOLD, ELI JACOBS - FANTAUZZI, AND KATHY LEICHTER
FINISHING EDITOR JON AYONS - ALONSO SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR JAMES BEREK DIRECTED BY SPENCER WILKINSON



Elizabeth Louise
Smith Fund





In a rapidly gentrifying city, the construction of a luxury condominium threatens a local mural forcing the artists and a neighborhood to rally to protect its history, voice, and land.

1852 Media Presents
An Endangered Ideas Film

“ALICE STREET”

Directed by Spencer Wilkinson
Documentary based in
Oakland, CA 2020
USA - 67 Minutes

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SYNOPSIS

Two Oakland artists, Pancho Peskador, a Chilean studio painter, and Desi Mundo, a Chicago-born aerosol artist, form an unlikely partnership to tackle their most ambitious project to date, a four-story mural in the heart of downtown Oakland. Their site is situated at a unique intersection where Chinese and Afro-Diasporic communities face the imminent threat of displacement and gentrification. Prior to painting, the mural faces numerous obstacles: complex negotiations with profit-minded property owners, satisfying a community of diverse residents, and resolving the artists' own aesthetic conflicts.

As the mural takes shape on the wall, Oakland's unique cultural legacies come to life through historical flashbacks. Past exclusionary policies replay themselves in the present as gentrification threatens to uproot long-term residents. The mural is fraught with its own challenges. A disgruntled neighborhood resident launches a vendetta against the artists, unleashing a blizzard of letters to city officials and newspapers. Simultaneously, the property owner of the mural site schemes to demolish it and construct the city's largest luxury condo. Nonetheless, Desi and Pancho conclude the mural with great fanfare and a vibrant celebration.

Three months later, news comes that another forthcoming condominium development will obscure the mural, which has become a source of neighborhood pride. Despite last-ditch opposition to the condominium, it receives city approval, effectively dooming the mural. Meanwhile, the city unveils its urban planning process for the downtown district. Ultimately displaced, the mural becomes a spark for the community to rally to protect cultural arts, and coalescing the community resistance to gentrification.



FILM PRESS QUOTES

“ Alice Street shows how the Universal Language mural’s creation and erasure alike catalyzed a multiracial anti-gentrification coalition with significant, ongoing effects on real estate development and city planning in downtown Oakland. Set in just a few city blocks, it’s a story about intractable loss as well as collective refusal, depicting artists’ role in grassroots activism that builds power by bridging communities. ”

“ “Resilience” is too often a buzzword that serves to normalize communities’ capacity to withstand abuse, especially from the mouths of powerful people in media and politics. It’s also too flat for the dynamic artist-activists shown in Alice Street, who dance in the streets and navigate city bureaucracy with equal verve. ”

In ‘Alice Street,’ Oakland Artist-Activists Build Power By Bridging Communities
Sam Lefebvre, KQED Arts

“ The film follows the community polemic launched in response to the development and the wider dialogue surrounding housing inequity in the region. The Alice Street mural has become a chief symbol of cultural resilience in a neighborhood that is being threatened by Oakland’s displacement crisis. ”

Forthcoming Documentary Fights Cultural Erasure in Oakland
Arielle Swedback, East Bay Express

“ ALICE STREET... was a powerful lens through which to examine the real-life implications of gentrification and heartbreaking realities of wealth and income disparity. ...Very emotional with a strong storyline and characters. ”

April M. Short, Independent Media

“ As much as the ‘Universal Language’ mural shows what Oakland stands to lose by reducing its investment in the arts, it also illustrates the power of cultural groups united by a common grievance. ”

‘It’s Criminal’: Cultural Funding Cuts Frustrate Oakland Artists
Sam Lefebvre, KQED Arts

“ this film is about the past, present and future of Oakland. A neighborhood that refuses to die. This film is in the fine tradition of Jane Jacobs’ *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. ”

Mitch Jeserich, Letters and Politics KPFA



ABOUT THE MURAL

Founded in 2005, CRP is a mural arts organization based in Oakland. Two of CRP muralists, Desi Mundo and Pancho Peskador, engage the community to design and paint their largest mural to date in downtown Oakland. Over the course of three years, CRP conducted an intensive outreach and engagement process with neighborhood residents, in particular the Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts and Hotel Oakland, a senior home for Chinese low-income seniors. The study included interviews with culture keepers, in-depth research of historical archives, and numerous mural design presentations to the local community. Upon completion, the resulting mural, 'The Universal Language', instantly became one of Oakland's most iconic examples of public art.

“ With all the diversity and history surrounding the wall, two institutions literally overlooking the site jumped out at CRP: the Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts and Hotel Oakland. ...Within these two unique centers CRP found their subjects for the wall, or what Mundo calls “Culture Keepers.” Culture Keepers are the immigrant elders who have maintained and nourished their native cultures even after moving far away and often over long periods of time. They are the folks who pass on traditions and have thus played a key role in shaping the culture of the neighborhood. ”

“ the mural has become a part of these residents' stories and the culture they've maintained. ”

Group Behind Oakland's Newest Mural Uses Walls to Depict Communities
Ben Valentine, KQED Arts

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Forthcoming Documentary Fights Cultural Erasure in Oakland
Arielle Swedback, East Bay Express

CREDITS

DIRECTOR	Spencer Wilkinson
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	1852 Media
SPECIAL CINEMATOGRAPHY	Demondre Ward
CINEMATOGRAPHY	Ayse Gursoz & Spencer Wilkinson
ORIGINAL MUSIC	Micah Berek
SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR	James Berek (Hearfilm)
2ND COMPOSERS	Axel Herrera and Joseph Chen
SOUND DESIGNER	James Berek (Hearfilm)
“CORNER 14” POEM	Destiny Muhammad
CONSULTING PRODUCERS	Eric Arnold, Eli Jacobs-Fantauzzi & Kathy Leichter
CO-PRODUCER	Desi Mundo
EDITOR	Spencer Wilkinson
FINISHING EDITOR	Jon Ayon Alonso
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS	Ayse Gursoz, Jesse Andrew Clark, Tiffany Mascarenhas, Demondre Ward & Chris Fiorentini
TRANSLATION	Victor Luo
LEAD GRAPHICS	Jesse Andrew Clark
DIGITAL INTERMEDIATE	Chromacolor
COLORIST	Darren Hartman
COMPOSITOR & ANIMATOR	Stefan Gustafsson
STILLS COMPOSITOR	Tiffany Mascarenhas
SOCIAL MEDIA	Sandra Lawson





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In 2014, I was living on Alice Street in downtown Oakland, California when I learned two artists were interested in painting a mural just down the street. At most, it was intended to be a short film incorporating community voices and the painting of the mural. This project unlocked a treasure trove of living history that I never knew existed in my neighborhood. The story of Oakland lay inside the intersection where the mural would be painted, and my interviews would shape the content of the piece that I was documenting.

Not only was I immersed in the mural design process, but I became the de-facto videographer for Hotel Oakland, as well as Diamano Coura, one of the oldest Senegalese cultural organizations housed in the cultural center across the street from the mural. (I even made the connection to film a second feature documentary, “One Voice,” through Anne Huang, whom I interviewed for “Alice Street.”)

When the story turned and became a fight to save the mural, I recognized there was a larger story to impart. I had to broaden the focus beyond the two muralists and their artwork to share the community’s struggle to exist within a city that they had helped build but which had no motivation to retain them. A movement was forming amidst the residents I had been documenting and the central battleground between development and displacement was my neighborhood.

Ultimately the response from Oakland’s artist community became a model for engaging cultural artists in the fight against displacement. Gentrification and displacement are taking place throughout the country. The lessons from this story changed my outlook on the power of the arts in community development. I want to share what I’ve witnessed with other communities, hear their stories and continue to collaboratively create models for development that centers the voice of local artists.

HIGHLIGHTED CAST



DESTINY MUHAMMAD - ‘CORNER 14’ POET & HARPIST

Destiny Muhammad is a performing recording artist following in the footsteps of Jazz Harp Legends Alice Coltrane & Dorothea Ashby. She calls her genre “Celtic to Coltrane” ~ cool and eclectic with a feel of Jazz & storytelling to round out the sonic experience. Destiny is also a Teaching Artist for SF Jazz Education Department with her curriculum around ‘Jazz and Social Justice’.



DESI MUNDO - MURALIST

Desi Mundo is an Oakland-based spray paint educator, hip-hop cultural diplomat and the founder of the Community Rejuvenation Project, a pavement to policy mural organization that has produced more than 250 murals, throughout the Bay Area as well as nationally and internationally. His largest mural, the “Universal Language” galvanized the Oakland community in the struggle against gentrification, resulting in \$20 million in community benefits, as chronicled in the feature documentary film “Alice Street,” that he co-produced. Desi’s legacy as an educator and youth worker in K-12 schools spans two decades.



PANCHO PESCADOR - MURALIST

Pancho Pescador was born in Santiago de Chile in 1972. Pancho is a self-taught visual artist, muralist, music lover and a visual activist. He combines these disciplines to stir things up and to activate critical and imaginative thinking. Life brought him to Oakland, CA where he lives, creates and shows his visual guerrillas. Pancho Pescador belongs to a collective of muralists and street art called Community Rejuvenation Project (CRP) based in Oakland.



LAILAN SANDRA HUEN

Lailan Sandra Huen was the Community Development and Organizing Manager for the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development, and authored “Our Neighborhoods: Asian American and Pacific Islander Anti-Displacement Strategies.” An organizer working to build people power through leadership development, civic engagement, and grassroots coalition-building, she is a member of the Oakland Chinatown Coalition, leading campaigns to secure Community Benefits Agreements with developers and advocating for city-wide policies to ensure that long-time residents are included in new development and that cultural districts are protected.



ERIC ARNOLD

Eric Arnold is a nationally-recognized as a pioneer of hip-hop journalism and an expert on Bay Area hip-hop and urban youth culture. He began his journalistic career in the 1990s and recently co-curated the Oakland Museum of California’s first-ever hip-hop exhibit, “Respect: Style and Wisdom of Hip-Hop.” In addition to contributing to numerous local and national publications over the years he has worked extensively in the non-profit sector, served as a social equity consultant for the city of Oakland, and impacted public policy in his role as a community organizer.

HIGHLIGHTED CREW



SPENCER WILKINSON - DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER

Spencer Wilkinson is the founder of Endangered Ideas, a production company based in Oakland, California. Spencer directed the feature-length ONE VOICE: The Story of the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir (2018), which premiered at the Mill Valley Film Festival, was featured on the PBS NewsHour's 'Brief But Spectacular' series, one of East Bay Express' Top Movies of 2018 and selected by the 2020 Truly CA series on KQED. Spencer directed Alice Street (2020) which premieres at Newport Beach Film Festival. After ten years working in disenfranchised communities focused on supporting gang-involved youth, Spencer began a career in community media and documentary filmmaking.



JON AYON ALONSO - FINISHING EDITOR

Jon Ayon Alonso is an Editor from Los Angeles. In Oakland, Ayon worked as a Camera Operator and Editor for KDOL-TV and graduated from film school at San Francisco State University with honors. His work in the Bay Area was prolific, earning him awards and recognition from organizations like The Annenberg Foundation, The SF Emmys, and American Zoetrope. As a writer/director, Ayon's films investigate issues of race, class, sex, immigration, Indigeneity, and generational trauma. He is currently in the MFA Documentary Film and Video program at Stanford.



DEMONDRE' WARD - SPECIAL CINEMATOGRAPHY

Demondre' is an Oakland born-and-raised Cinematographer and Photographer. He is a staff videographer for 510 Media in Oakland. Demondre' has established a very solid foundation in traditional photographic: principles, tactics, aesthetics, and credences. With Social-Documentary photography more of his strong suit, his purist approach allows him to create a timeless body of work that will be a quintessential depiction of his views on life. He has a strong belief in there's always beauty in the most dire circumstances.



AYSE GURSOZ - CINEMATOGRAPHY & ASSISTANT EDITOR

Ayşe Gürsöz is a multimedia producer dedicated to social justice. Currently she works at the intersection of climate change, human rights, and corporate accountability as a Communications Manager at Rainforest Action Network. She is also a photographer and producer with Indigenous Rising Media, a media project of the Indigenous Environmental Network. In the past, Ayşe has worked with Al Jazeera's AJ+ as a Real Time News Producer and with Public Advocates as a Digital Strategist.



MICAH BEREK - COMPOSER

Micah Berek is an American musician and composer who began his professional career in London, England but is now based in Washington DC and Los Angeles. Micah is a co-director of the audio-post boutique, Hearfilm that provides dedicated audio services for film, television, video games and web content. Besides his commercial work, he is committed to supporting the community by composing music for documentaries on socially significant topics.



ALICE STREET

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TRAILER

ALICE STREET TRAILER

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LJRPZLuY9c>

