

Alice Street

A Discussion Guide

Movie Summary: A portrait of modern activism, *Alice Street* lovingly captures the city of Oakland in the age of gentrification. Following a downtown mural overtaken by plans for a new high-rise, Bay Area filmmaker Spencer Wilkinson documents a diverse community of artists and activists coming together to prevent its identity from being erased.

Film Notes: Documentary - Director Spencer Wilkinson | US 2020 | 66 min | Grades 6–12



Guiding Questions (before you watch):

- As you watch this movie, think about all of the different forms of art that you see as expression. What does “art as activism” mean?
- Think about how you would decide who would be represented in this mural. Who would you talk to get information about who should be represented?
- This movie shows a story of people coming together. What brings people in this movie together? Is there anything that keeps them apart?
- Listen for the music in this movie. Where is music used to create a feeling and relationship to the story?
- Oakland has a history of Artists as Activists and famous Activists. What do you think it is about Oakland as a city and community that makes this the case? Watch for things in the movie that give you an idea about why activism is important in Oakland.
- How does the filmmaker use color to emphasize the story line? Music? Interviews?
- Can you identify the beginning, middle and end of this movie? What techniques does the documentarian use to inform the audience of the facts related to the movie?

Reflection Questions (after you watch):

- This movie is dedicated to the “culture-keepers” - why are culture-keepers important? Who are the culture-keepers in your community?
- If your job was to build a building in Oakland that blocked a neighborhood mural, how would you approach the issue? What solutions would you offer? What solution was offered to the muralists featured in this film?
- Where did you see joy in this movie? Why is that important in a community?
- How does art move people “not just emotionally, but to action”?
- Can you think of projects that bring communities with different backgrounds together? What ultimately brings the Black community and the Chinese community together? What positive things came or might come out of their coalition?
- Is painting a new mural enough of a remedy for the blocking of the mural? What other options might be available to the community?
- What does “Once something is created, it takes on a life” mean?