

AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY THE EVOLUTION OF GRACE LEE BOGGS

Directed by Grace Lee
Produced by Grace Lee, Caroline Libresco, Austin Wilkin
Unrated. Running Time: 82 minutes



*For anyone who has never had a clear understanding of just what a revolutionary is...
seeing and listening to Boggs will open your eyes and feed your mind."*
–Film Pulse

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“97-year-old Detroit fixture Grace Lee Boggs doesn’t just explode the docile-Asian-female stereotypes Lee set out to question with her earlier pic; she makes an inspiring case for self-determination and intellectual fortitude regardless of background.” –Variety

“Boggs is still living the kind of life that makes you wonder what you’ve been doing with your own.” --Washingtonian



“Director Lee delivers an indelible portrait of a woman whose ideas, writings, and critical thinking continue at the ripe age of ninety-seven and are connecting with new generations today.” --Next Projection

“This documentary is eye opening on many levels... For anyone who has never had a clear understanding of just what a revolutionary is beyond the typical violent protestor, seeing and listening to Boggs will open your eyes and feed your mind.”
--Film Pulse

AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY: **THE EVOLUTION OF GRACE LEE BOGGS** **PRODUCTION NOTES**



Grace Lee Boggs is a 98-year-old Chinese American woman whose vision of revolution may surprise you. A writer, activist, and philosopher rooted for more than 70 years in the African American movement, she has devoted her life to an evolving revolution that encompasses the contradictions of America's past and its potentially radical future.

SYNOPSIS

AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY: THE EVOLUTION OF GRACE LEE BOGGS plunges us into Boggs's lifetime of vital thinking and action, traversing the major U.S. social movements of the last century: from labor to civil rights, to Black Power, feminism, the Asian American and environmental justice movements and beyond. Boggs's constantly evolving strategy – her willingness to re-evaluate and change tactics in relation to the world shifting around her – drives the story forward. Angela Davis, Bill Moyers, Bill Ayers, Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis, Danny Glover, Boggs's late husband James and a host of Detroit comrades across three generations help shape this uniquely American story. As she wrestles with a Detroit in ongoing transition, contradictions of violence and non-violence, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, the 1967 rebellions, and non-linear notions of time and history, Boggs emerges with an approach that is radical in its simplicity and clarity: revolution is not an act of aggression or merely a protest. Revolution, Boggs says, is about something deeper within the human experience – the ability to transform oneself to transform the world.

As it kinetically unfurls an evolving life, city, and philosophy, AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY takes the viewer on a journey into the power of ideas and the necessity of expansive, imaginative thinking, as well as ongoing dialectical conversation, to propel societal change.

Produced and directed by Grace Lee (JANEANE FROM DES MOINES, THE GRACE LEE PROJECT), produced by Caroline Libresco (SUNSET STORY) and Austin Wilkin (BOB AND THE MONSTER), edited by Kim Roberts (FOOD INC, WAITING FOR SUPERMAN, INEQUALITY FOR ALL), and with a lush score by Vivek Maddala (KABOOM, HIGHWAY), AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY: THE EVOLUTION OF GRACE LEE BOGGS, has been 12 years in the making. It incorporates a rich archival trove from the 1920s to the present and visual effects to reinforce Boggs's statement that history "is the story of the past as well as the future." Animated graphics by Syd Garon and Casey Ryder from Studio Number One bring Boggs's whirring mind to life, illustrating her view that ideas are not fixed, but that once they become fixed, they are dead.

In an age when seemingly insurmountable injustices and contradictions face us, AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY inspires concerned citizens and dreamers of all ages with new thinking to sustain their struggle and engagement.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I first met Grace Lee Boggs in 2000 while filming *The Grace Lee Project*, a documentary about the many women who share our common name and the model minority stereotype of Asian Americans. From the moment I met Grace, I knew I would have to make a longer film just about her. Over the years, I would return to Detroit, hang out in her kitchen and living room and watch her hold everyone from journalists to renowned activists to high school students in her thrall. I recognized myself in all of them -- eager to connect with someone who seemed to embody history itself.



As someone who came of age in the era of identity politics, it's hard to ignore the fascinating details of how this Chinese American woman became a Black Power activist in Detroit. But Grace would constantly use our interview sessions to turn the questions back on me. What do you think about that? How do you feel about what's happening in Korea? Tell me more about your own story, she would say as soon as the cameras turned off.

My own identity is more wrapped up in Grace's story than she knows. And it's not because we share the same name. Grace's presence – in Detroit, in the world, and in my imagination – has helped transform my own thinking about how to tell a story about someone like her. The journey to bring this film to life has been an evolution. It's not an issue film, nor is it about a celebrity or urgent injustice that rallies you to take action or call your Representative. It's about an elderly woman who spends most of her days sitting in her living room thinking and hatching ideas about the next American revolution. But if you catch wind of some of those ideas they just might change the world.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

GRACE LEE, Director/Producer

Grace Lee's most recent feature film, set during the 2012 presidential campaign, *JANEANE FROM DES MOINES*, premiered at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival. Prior to that, she wrote and directed *AMERICAN ZOMBIE*, which premiered at Slamdance and SXSW before being released by Cinema Libre. She also produced and directed *THE GRACE LEE PROJECT*, a feature documentary that was broadcast on Sundance Channel and is distributed by Women Make Movies. Grace received her MFA in Directing from UCLA Film School, where her thesis film *BARRIER DEVICE*, won a Student Academy Award and Directors Guild of America award. She is the recipient of the Henry Hampton Award for Excellence in Digital Media, a Rockefeller Media Arts grant as well as funding from the Center for Asian American Media, Chicken and Egg Pictures and the Ford Foundation. She is currently producing and directing a documentary for PBS about Asian American food culture and is developing other fiction and non-fiction projects.

CAROLINE LIBRESCO, Producer

Since 2001, Caroline Libresco has been Senior Programmer for the Sundance Film Festival, where she selects features and acts as a conduit between artists and industry. She serves on the leadership teams of Sundance's Creative Producing, Women's Initiative and Film Forward programs. Prior to Sundance she served as an executive at ITVS, San Francisco Film Festival and the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival. Among multiple credits, along with *AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY*, she produced the award-winning documentary *SUNSET STORY* and co-wrote/produced the indie feature *FANCI'S PERSUASION*. Caroline serves as consultant to Hot Docs, Harvard's Kennedy School, Zurich Film Festival, and on the boards of Women Make Movies and IDA (International Documentary Association). She holds graduate degrees from Harvard University and UCLA Film School and has appeared widely on panels and juries internationally.

AUSTIN WILKIN, Producer

Austin Wilkin is a Los Angeles based independent producer and writer. Producing credits include the feature-length documentaries AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY and BOB AND THE MONSTER, about punk rock musician and recovery specialist Bob Forrest, which premiered at SXSW and screened at Hot Docs, Silver Docs, Sheffield and IDFA. He also served as associate producer on the feature-length documentaries BURN (2012 Tribeca Audience Award winner), about Detroit firefighters, and WE LIVE IN PUBLIC (Sundance 2009 Grand Jury Prize winner) and has worked on productions for networks and companies ranging from CNN, NBC, HBO and THX. Raised in Boston, Massachusetts, Austin is a graduate of Boston University and currently works as the official archivist for the Marlon Brando estate.

KIM ROBERTS, Editor

Kim Roberts is an Emmy winning editor of feature documentaries. Her recent work includes WAITING FOR SUPERMAN (Paramount), FOOD, INC. (nominated for a 2010 Oscar), AUTISM THE MUSICAL (HBO), and the upcoming INEQUALITY FOR ALL (The Weinstein Company). Kim won an Emmy for AUTISM THE MUSICAL, her third nomination. Other credits include: Oscar Nominees and Sundance Grand Jury Prize Winners DAUGHTER FROM DANANG and LONG NIGHT'S JOURNEY INTO DAY; LAST CALL AT THE OASIS (Participant); TWO DAYS IN OCTOBER (Peabody and Emmy winner '06); MADE IN L.A. (Emmy winner '09); THE FALL OF FUJIMORI (Sundance '05); LOST BOYS OF SUDAN (Independent Spirit Award '04); DADDY & PAPA (Sundance) and A HARD STRAIGHT (Grand Prize, SXSW). Kim received her Masters Degree in Documentary Film Production from Stanford University, where she won a Student Academy Award. She is an active member of the Academy of Cinema Editors (ACE).

JERRY HENRY, Cinematographer

Jerry A. Henry is a Los Angeles based cinematographer who received his MFA degree from UCLA Film School with an emphasis on documentary, cinematography and digital media. His credits include producer/ cinematographer for MTV News & Docs as well as programs for National Geographic, A&E, Bravo, VH-1, NBC, OWN and the Discovery Channel. He served as cinematographer for THE GRACE LEE PROJECT, David Zeiger's SIR NO SIR! and WINTER SOLIDER, as well as the Oscar nominated Banksy directed documentary EXIT THROUGH THE GIFT SHOP, and JANEANE FROM DES MOINES which premiered at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival.

QUYEN TRAN, Cinematographer & Stills

Quyen Tran started as a stills photographer, where her work has been published in numerous magazines and newspapers including the New York Times, USA Today, and Scientific American. She graduated from UCLA's Graduate Film School, and has photographed films internationally – from South Africa, Thailand, Japan, China and Vietnam – as well as all over the United States. Her films have screened in festivals worldwide including Telluride, Tribeca, Sundance, Festroia and Toronto. Most recently, she wrapped a narrative feature shot entirely on location in Florida starring Anna Paquin, Cam Gigandet and Drea di Matteo.

PETE HORNER, Sound Design & Re-Recording Mixer

Pete Horner is an Emmy-winning sound designer and re-recording mixer based in Northern California, often working at Skywalker Sound. He began his career in film at Francis Coppola's American Zoetrope where he worked on many films including APOCALYPSE NOW REDUX, THE OUTSIDERS: THE COMPLETE NOVEL, and a 5.1 remix of THE CONVERSATION. After leaving Zoetrope, Pete has worked on such diverse projects as the children's film HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON, and Errol Morris's documentary STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE. In 2007, Walter Murch asked him to work as sound designer and mixer on Francis Coppola's YOUTH WITHOUT YOUTH, and in 2009 as a mixer on TETRO. In 2012 he was the sound designer and mixer for Philip Kaufman's HEMINGWAY AND GELLHORN, for which he won an Emmy.

VIVEK MADDALA, Composer

Vivek Maddala is an international award-winning composer and multi-instrumental performer. He has scored over 30 feature films, theater & dance productions, and TV episodes over the past decade. Although best known for his film scores, Vivek also writes, produces, and performs with various rock/jazz/world recording artists. He is a Sundance Institute Fellow for film composition, and recently had work premiere at the Cannes, Toronto, Berlin, and Sundance film festivals.

SYD GARON, Animation & Title Design

Syd Garon graduated from the University of Miami with Film and Psychology degrees in 1991. Syd's first film, WAVE TWISTERS, premiered at Sundance 2001 and garnered the coveted "Best Midnight Movie" prize at South by Southwest Film Festival. N.A.S.A. THE SPIRIT OF APOLLO, co-directed with Sam Spiegel, is his second feature.

CASEY RYDER / STUDIO NUMBER ONE, Animation & Title Design

A Southern California native with deep roots in surf, skate, punk, and art culture, in recent years Casey Ryder has emerged as a leading figure in youth culture-focused brand design. Following an education at Otis College of Art & Design, Ryder joined Studio Number One, a leading-edge design and marketing agency founded by the street artist and cultural icon Shepard Fairey.

EURIE CHUNG, Associate Producer

While pursuing a graduate degree at UCLA in Asian American Studies, Eurie Chung fell into community filmmaking, directing & editing METRO ES PARA TODOS, a documentary short, for her master's thesis. Since then, she has worked in post-production, editing commercials, promos and EPK work for Disney/ABC and Scripps Networks, while also working on independent documentary films. Currently she is producing Grace Lee's documentary about Asian American food and culture to air on PBS in 2014.

CREDITS

Directed and Produced by

Grace Lee

Producers

Caroline Libresco

Austin Wilkin

Executive Producer

Joan Huang

Editor

Kim Roberts, A.C.E.

Cinematography

Jerry A. Henry & Quyen Tran

Associate Producer

Eurie Chung

Music by

Vivek Maddala

Animation and Title Design

Syd Garon

Casey Ryder

Studio Number One

Sound Designer and Re-Recording Mixer

Pete Horner

Additional Editing

Yana Gorskaya

Assistant Editor

Louis Lee

Additional Cinematography

Maine, 1987 and Detroit, 1990

Frances Reid

Additional Camera

Michael Chin

Justin Schein

Rich Wieske

Sound Recordists

Michael Amman

Andrew Amondson

Sara Chin

Brian Kaurich

Post Production Supervisor

Austin Wilkin

Online Editor

Eurie Chung

Colorist

Suny Behar

Motion Graphics

Vincent Tsu

Additional Motion Graphics

Taku Hazeyama

Benjamin Lindemuth-McRobie

Laura Shapiro

Post Production Services

Flash Cuts

Score Produced by

Vivek Maddala

Post Production Sound Services

Skywalker Sound

Featuring:

Bill Ayers

Angela Davis

Rich Feldman
Danny Glover
Shea Howell
Invincible
Scott Kurashige
Julia Putnam
Ron Scott
Stephen Ward

Archival Research

Kate Coe
Sarah Feinbloom
Jose Guzman
Helen Kwong
Lindy Leong
Nicholas Maccabees
Jennifer Mann
Mara Landa Powell

Legal

Michael Donaldson
Donaldson & Callif, LLP

Music Clearance

The Rights Workshop

Fiscal Sponsor

Women Make Movies

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

ABC News
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Archives of Michigan
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Barnard College Archives
Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership
CBS News
Critical Past
DV Archive
Efootage
Emmalyn II Productions
Getty Images
Prelinger Archives
John Hamilton
Historic Films
iStockPhoto
Carol Liu
National Archives and Records Administration
NBC Universal Archives
Public Affairs Television
Frances Reid
Streamline Films
SVT
T3 Media

Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University
WPA Film Library

Democracy Now! Courtesy Democracy Now Productions, Inc.
OKTYABR (aka OCTOBER TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD), A Film by Sergei Eisenstein
FINALLY GOT THE NEWS, A Film by Stewart Bird, Rene Lichtman and Peter Gessner produced in Association with the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. Footage courtesy Icarus Films.
FACEOFF AT 55 WALL ST. © Middle East Crisis Committee 2011. Stanley Heller videographer.

ARCHIVAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Dept. of Special Collections, University of California, Santa Barbara
Tina Lee Cronkhite
Peter Glaberman
Shea Howell
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division
Rosa Naparstek
National Automotive History Collection, Detroit Public Library
Southern California Library
University of Michigan - Labadie Collection

SONGS

“Elegy (Plain Black Boy)”
Written by Gwendolyn Brooks, Oscar Brown Jr.
Performed by Oscar Brown Jr.
Courtesy of Sony Music

“Run, Charlie, Run”
Written by Clarence King, Jan Foreman
Performed by The Temptations
Courtesy of Motown Records under license from Universal Music Enterprises

“Hello Detroit!”
Written by Berry Gordy, Willie Hutchison
Performed by Sammy Davis Jr.
Courtesy of Polydor Records under license from Universal Music Enterprises

“Detroit Summer”
Invincible+Waajeed
(i.weaver, r.obryant)
courtesy of EmergenceMedia.org

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