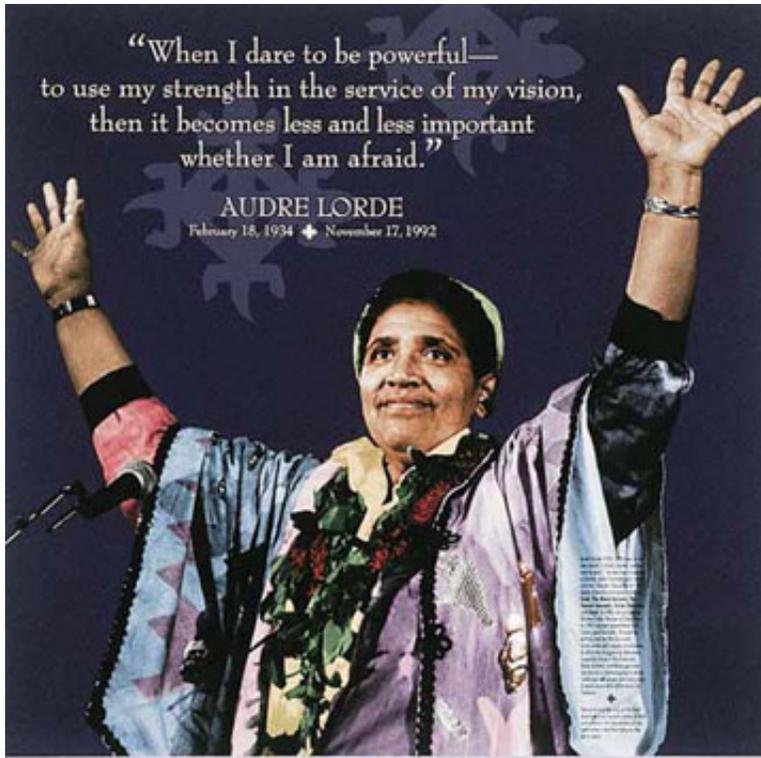


August 8, 2012

"Audre Lorde: The Berlin Years 1984 to 1992" (2012) – Frameline36

By VictorsMovieReviews



(<http://youtu.be/9mPEkqykAik>)

Click on image to view trailer

Writer/Director: Dagmar Schultz

With: Audre Lorde

Audre Lorde was an American Black Lesbian Poet who spent her summers in Berlin from 1984 to 1992. This documentary tells the story of her life and impact in Berlin as it relates to women and Afro-Germans in particular. During her time in Berlin she helped give voice to a small community of Black Germans who discovered themselves and each other. She also correctly predicted with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of the two Germany's, that a time of extreme nationalism with a concurrent rise in racism would soon develop.

Lorde was first invited to Germany as a visiting professor at the Free University of Berlin. "During her time there she coined the term Afro-German. She encouraged Afro-Germans to make themselves

known in a culture that had made them silent; encouraged them to write and share their stories; and encouraged all woman to have a dialogue with each other in a constructive ways. To understand the life White German Woman know and experienced was profoundly different from their Black Sisters," (quote from documentary website). Throughout her time in Berlin she lead groups of women in their journeys of discover and search for knowledge; always asking them questions to make them think and defend their answers; always trying to make people understand the other side of an argument.

The documentary is shown through archival footage and current day interviews. Lorde, herself, is not present due to succumbing to cancer in 1992. What is shown is a larger than life woman who had a larger than life effect and those around her—a positive affect. But there is a bit of a cult-of-personality surrounding her persona. The women are very reverential in their interviews—with Lorde on a pedestal. The archival footage always shows a person challenging those around her to think, but no one challenges her. It is only in the intimate moments between her and her partner that we see the fallible human. Luckily for the director Dagmar Shultz we have those moments. It brings a humane perspective into an otherwise idealized person.

Though the documentary informs about a person and community not widely known, there is a distance or wall felt between the audience and the subject matter. You are allowed to look but not touch, admire but not enjoy. In other word know the deeds but not the person.

Grade = B-

About VictorsMovieReviews



I love movies. I watch them, read them, and am currently writting one.

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