

## **The Films of Su Friedrich, Vol. 1: The Ties That Bind**



**Directed by Su Friedrich**  
**Outcast Films**

When I read what *The Ties That Bind* was about, I knew I had to see it. Su Friedrich interviews her mother, Lore, about what it was like living in Germany during World War II. It is a brilliantly woven film tapestry - a mixture of story-telling, historical film footage, current newspaper articles/titles, current war protests and dozens of modern “political mailings.” I recommend it to everyone. It is a story of a mother and daughter trying to connect; it is also a horror story that today’s shock-loving generation *should* see... because *it really happened*.

Lore was not a Nazi sympathizer, nor a freedom fighter. She resisted, but did not overtly fight against the evil that had taken over her country. She, like many other Germans from that time, were vilified, for not fighting against it. It is heart rendering to hear the agony in this woman’s voice as she talks about what her family had to endure, just to survive.

Su Friedrich shot this film in black and white, enhancing the emotional intent of this film. One of the photographic threads in this film storytelling is the construction of a miniature plastic German house. We see this house first removed from its package, then carefully laid out on the floor, piece by piece, and assembled. Finally, the person who built the house puts on Army Gestapo boots and stomps on the home, destroying it. Then the house is burned (this happens while Lore talks about the bombing of Stuttgart, and how she ended up wandering outside the city, hands out, in shock, not able to speak when the Red Cross picked her up). Finally, what remains of the small plastic house is picked up from the floor.

Since the late 1970s, New York-based Su Friedrich has articulated the slogan “the personal is political.” I think she makes this obvious in *The Ties That Bind*. She was the films’ director, editor, writer and cinematographer. She currently teaches film and video production at Princeton University. There was a Bonus film on this DVD – *The Lesbian Avengers Eat Fire Too*. It is inspiring, a documentary on a courageous modern political movement that is effecting change. Check it out, as well.

**Review by Patricia Ethelwyn Lang**