



# **RACE IS THE PLACE**

Discussion Guide  
for Youth Audiences

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## INTRODUCTION

### The Film

*Race is the Place* offers a different way to look at one of the most pressing social issues in America today: racism. The film offers its analysis through the prism of performance, music, poetry, and art. Dramatic scenes, musical performances, monologues, poetry slams, and visual art are intercut with documentary sequences and archival materials from popular culture, including Hollywood films, old newsreels, photographs, early sound recordings, posters, and product packaging. The result is an elegantly blunt commentary on the endless permutations and continued survival of racism in the U.S.

Established artists, as well as up and coming young talent from minority communities, use words, performance, music, and image to share their insights. Some have crossed into the mainstream while others speak primarily to their own communities as they look for ways to make sense of their place in a society that often does not see past the color of their skin. For a list of featured artists, see the Resource section at the end of this Guide.

For outreach purposes, *Race is the Place* will be available in two forms. The first is a ninety-minute festival version. The second is a sixty-minute broadcast version that has been edited to conform to language and content standards. This Guide is written for the longer version and indicates pieces not included for broadcast with an asterisk (\*).

RACE IS THE PLACE is a co-production of Paradigm Productions and KERA TV, the public television station in Dallas, TX. The film is produced and directed by Rick Tejada-Flores and Ray Telles.

### Why Use *Race is the Place*?

This guide is especially designed to help you use *Race is the Place* to engage youth in examining issues of race through artistic expression. Viewing race through the lens of creativity and performance can draw audiences into the discussion of race in ways that traditional programming cannot. It can help viewers open their hearts, as well as their minds. In addition to engaging people in personal reflection, *Race is the Place* is a wonderful catalyst to spark discussions on:

- Art / Music as political expression
- Civil Rights
- Discrimination
- Gender issues / Women's rights
- Hate speech / Speech codes
- Human rights
- Identity
- Media literacy
- Prejudice / Bias
- Race
- Race relations
- Racism
- Social justice

- Stereotyping
- U.S. History

You can use *Race is the Place* to examine race and racism in systemic ways or to focus on the ways that it has played out for a specific group. The artists in the film present material on these groups:

- African American
- American Indian
- Arab American
- Asian American
- Chicano
- Chinese
- Haitian
- Hawaiian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latino
- Native American
- Pacific Islander
- Philippino
- Puerto Rican

You can also use *Race is the Place* to inspire participants to make their own art and/or more deeply examine a variety of art forms, including:

- Acting / Theater
- Hip Hop
- Music
- Performance Art
- Poetry
- Prose
- Rap
- Stand-Up Comedy
- Street Performance
- Visual Art

### **Audiences / Partners**

*Race is the Place* offers an excellent model for reflection, inquiry, and using the power of artistic expression to delve deeply into difficult and complex subject matter. It is well suited for use in a variety of settings and is especially recommended for use with:

- High schools
- Community-based youth programs
- Counselors and counseling training programs
- Youth groups at churches, synagogues, and mosques.
- Colleges, universities, and community colleges, especially in conjunction with departments of African American, Latino, Asian Pacific, Native American, or Women's Studies; English / Creative Writing; Sociology, History
- Organizations and coalitions doing anti-bias, anti-defamation, or anti-racism work
- Arts organizations

## USING *RACE IS THE PLACE*

### Things to Consider as You Plan

*Who Should Facilitate?* – Because the film raises tough issues, and because young people can find themselves in uniquely vulnerable positions, it is important to have a facilitator who is experienced and who has (or who can easily develop) a trusting relationship with and among group members.

Because race and racism are especially complex and “loaded” topics in the U.S., it is also very important to have a facilitator who is skilled in anti-racism or anti-bias training.

*Goals* – Be realistic about what you hope to accomplish. If you are looking for major change, you may want to convene a series of meetings rather than a single event.

*Involving Stakeholders* – If groups of people are the topic of conversation, it is important to let members of those groups speak for themselves. So, for example, if you plan to discuss how to combat negative stereotypes of Native Americans, it would be important to ask members of tribes or nations in your area for their input before taking action.

*Effective Sharing* – Choose a method of sharing that will meet the needs of your group and help you reach your goal(s). Discussion? Writing? A media art project? Community Action? Some combination of those things? As you choose, take into account the language levels and abilities of group members. For example, discussion can be difficult if group members are not all comfortable conversing in the same language. Writing might be an intimidating choice for people who have low-level literacy skills.

Consider, too, the comfort level of the group. Do you already have a close relationship with group members or are you meeting them for the first time. The less pre-existing trust, the less appropriate it is to use particularly intimate or intense methods of sharing.

*Support* - The artists in *Race is the Place* deal with intense subjects and emotions. Hearing and seeing their work will raise deep emotions in many viewers. Know who your local support agencies and/or professionals are and how to contact them in case referrals are appropriate.

Also, pay close attention to how prepared participants are to tackle certain kinds of issues. Take special care not to push individuals too far. If a question or activity seems too personal or too painful, skip it. If you are dealing with young people who are not ready to talk about their own situations, try altering questions so that participants can consider them as if they were talking about someone else. For example, rather than asking people to talk about racist comments they have made, you might start by asking if they have ever heard or witnessed the kinds of things that are mentioned in the film.

Note: The festival version of *Race is the Place* includes words and content that do not conform to broadcast rules on indecency or profanity and may not meet the acceptable use policy of many institutions that serve youth (e.g., high schools). Plan to pre-screen the version you choose to use to ensure that it is acceptable for use in your situation.

### **Tips for Facilitators on Preparing the Group**

Because of the disquieting content of *Race is the Place*, we strongly recommend that discussions or activities be led by facilitators who are experienced in helping groups examine race and racism. The tips below assume that facilitators have such expertise. A few of the points are specific to leading discussions or events based on a film screening. Others are simple reminders that for people to share openly and honestly, they need to feel comfortable and safe. A facilitator can help set that kind of atmosphere by doing the following:

*Prepare yourself.* Check the background information and resources so you have enough factual knowledge to keep people on track. Most importantly, review the film and other materials prior to your event and deal with your own emotions before you walk through the door. You will be much more effective if you are not trying to sort through your own emotions at the same time that you are trying to guide others in dealing with theirs.

*Do introductions.* If group members do not already know one another, take some time for everyone to introduce himself or herself.

*Set ground rules for discussion.* Involve the group in setting some basic rules that will help them feel safe. Those ground rules will generally cover three areas:

1. Language – To ensure respect, everyone should agree that certain kinds of language, e.g., put downs or yelling, are off limits. Because the discussion will likely include references to various ethnic and racial groups, and because there isn't agreement on which labels for those groups are acceptable, you might also want to take a few minutes to create and post lists of which terms will be okay for this event and which should not be used. Also, to ensure clarity, ask people to speak in the first person (“I think...”) rather than generalizing for others (“Everyone knows that...”).
2. Confidentiality – Do people want to ask others not to repeat what they have said outside the group?
3. Taking Turns – Use techniques to make sure that everyone who wishes to speak can do so, that one person does not dominate, that no one is attacked, and that no one is forced to reveal things they do not want to talk about. Be sure to be clear about what your role is.

*Remind people of the value of listening.* You might want to ask people to practice formal “active listening,” in which participants listen without interrupting the speaker, then re-phrase to see if they have heard correctly. Or you may just want to remind them that engaging in dialogue is different from participating in a debate. In a debate, participants try to convince others that they are right. In a dialogue, participants try to understand each other and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and listening actively to each other.

*Remind participants that everyone sees through the lens of their own experience.* Because who we are influences how we interpret what we see, everyone in the group may have a different

view about the content and meaning of the film, and all of them may be accurate. If there are disagreements, ask people to be clear about the evidence they are using to reach their conclusions.

*Establish a time-out mechanism.* Have a pre-planned strategy for what to do if the intensity level rises. A key word or a non-verbal cue (like putting a hand over your heart to signal that you really empathize with what was just said) can help a lot. Agree on signals that anyone can use to pause the discussion or indicate that they have been hurt or offended by another's comment. Let everyone take a deep breath before moving on to deal with the situation.

## **Using This Guide**

*Race is the Place* is a wonderfully rich film. It includes material that could spark discussions and activities for several weeks, and perhaps several months. This guide cannot ask every question or dissect every line, so its prompts focus on the following three areas:

- Stereotypes about specific groups
- Racism & Discrimination
- Race & Heritage

These issues are organized into four different sections:

- General Opening Questions
- General Questions on Racism
- General Questions on Art
- Questions – By Artist

The prompts in each of these sections provide three different follow-up strategies:

### **1. Discussion Prompts**

Dialogue – Engaging in conversation is an easy way for many people to share with one another. It is especially useful as a starting point for deeper reflection or action.

Analysis – Selected pieces have been included in this guide to facilitate line-by-line analysis. This kind of careful and detailed review is especially useful for advanced groups that are ready to delve deeply into the ideas expressed in the film.

### **2. Art Prompts**

Writing – Writing provides more time to reflect than does discussion. Because it is done individually and allows for editing, it can also provide a safe way to explore emotional topics. In this context, writing is not an exercise in grammar. Participants should be free to write what and how they want. Be clear about whether writers will be asked to share what they wrote and with whom. Also be clear about what kinds of feedback writers can expect.

**Making Media** – Making music, videos, or computer generated art can provide an excellent alternative or enhancement to the written word, especially for people who may communicate better visually than with written or spoken language.

**Fine Art** – Traditional art forms, such as painting or sculpture, have been effective forms of expression for centuries.

**Performance** – Revealing oneself in front of an audience carries a lot of power, but also places performers in a vulnerable position and can become intense.

### **3. Activity Prompts**

Action can provide a productive release for the emotions generated by the film and follow-up, especially if those emotions include anger or frustration.

If the Guide doesn't raise the issues most pertinent to your group, don't limit exploration. Let the group's needs and interests guide the choice of topic. In addition, the "Exploring the Film" prompts are designed for use in a variety of settings, so not every suggestion will apply to your situation. Rather than attempt to address everything, choose one or two questions or activities that best meet the needs, abilities, comfort level, and interests of your group.

*Race is the Place* covers a lot of ground. It may be helpful to plan activities or discussion around short sections, perhaps focusing on a single artist (e.g., Danny Hoch) or a single topic (e.g., Hawaii). However, the segments will make more sense if you provide some context, so we recommend screening as much of the film as time allows.

<p>This Guide is written for the festival version of the film. Items marked with an asterisk (*) do not appear in the shorter broadcast version.</p>
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*Before finalizing this, we will need to go through it very carefully to make sure that the asterisks (or whatever icon you want to use) are accurately placed. I don't have a final broadcast cut, so I am guessing in this draft.*



## EXPLORING THE ISSUES

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

#### **General Opening Questions**

Sometimes events will focus on using *Race is the Place* to explore very specific issues (e.g., stereotyping of Asian Americans or the political responsibilities of artists). In other events it will be best to let the group's interests guide the direction of the discussion. To facilitate that process, you might want to begin a follow-up discussion with one of these questions:

- Name one thing from the film that spoke truth to you. Name one thing said in the film with which you really disagreed.
- If you were to tell a friend what this film was about, what would you tell them?
- If you could make sure that one person who wasn't here today could see this film, who would you want to see *Race is the Place* and why?
- How did viewing the film make you feel? How might you turn those feelings into action?

#### **General Questions on Racism**

Discussion Prompts:

- Shabaka quotes historian W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963) who wrote, "In the beginning of the twentieth century, the number one defining problem of America in the twentieth century will be race. If you're a member of the dominant race you may not feel that way." Do you think DuBois' assertion still holds true for the United States today? Is race the number one defining problem of America? Why or why not? Do you think people of color are more likely to agree with DuBois than Caucasians? Why or why not?
- Author James Baldwin (1924-1987) says that in the racist America he grew up in, "The entire weight of the Republic teaches you to despise yourself." Find three things in American pop culture today that make you feel good about yourself. Find three things in pop culture that make you feel bad about yourself. Which seem to have more power and why?
- Author James Baldwin says, "White Americans seem to assume that I live in a segregated society and they don't realize that they live in a segregated society...And that the white child is really just as victimized from this peculiar medieval system as any Negro child. And what is worse for the white child is the white child doesn't know it." How are white children harmed by racism? Why do media often label segregation or racism as a "black" problem rather than a problem for everyone in society?

- Author James Baldwin says about the power of his writing, that black people have been described by others for hundreds of years, but “now I can describe you and that’s part of the panic.” What do you think Baldwin meant? Who might be frightened by Baldwin’s writings and why?

Activity Prompt:

- Collect both positive and negative historical images of your racial, ethnic, or religious group. In a public place, create a bulletin board on which you post the images along with your own historical notes and commentary. Attach an envelope containing blank index cards and a pen and invite passersby to add their own comments. Create an event at which you share the comments.

### **General Questions on Art**

Discussion Prompts:

- Describe what you think an artist’s responsibilities are. Read the observations below shared by artists in *Race is the Place*. Make sure you understand what each artist means. Then talk about whether you agree or disagree with what they said.

Writing / Poetry / Language

- “...*they should be grateful I am a writer. I would rather make art than commit murder.*” – Haunani-Kay Trask
- “*Poetry is power. Poetry is the ability to use a word and have it directly hit someone’s heart.*” – Kate Rigg
- “...*I’ve made a choice to use words like “chink” and “gook”...because if I use them so much that they become ridiculous, they lose their meaning and they lose their power.*” – Kate Rigg
- “*Words can be bullets or butterflies.*” – Piri Thomas

Comedy / Performance

- “*We’re out there to kind of shock the audience. We do it to provoke, and to also provoke thought.*” – Culture Clash
- “*Do comics create stereotypes? I don’t think so. Comics are mirrors that reflect...If there’s no truth in what you’re saying, it’s not funny because it doesn’t ring true.*” – Andy Bumatai
- “...*what good is comedy if it doesn’t offend somebody?...[Like the court jester was the only person who could get away with teasing the king], I think that’s the job of the comic today, to hold up that mirror and go guess what the emperor has no clothes!*” – Andy Bumatai
- “*The Asian car gang guy gives himself license to use the “N” word as a term of affection for his best friend who is also Asian – and it’s so wrong and it’s so*

*incorrect, but it's not my job [as a performer or comedy writer] to put a filter on that.*" – Richard Montoya (from Culture Clash)

- *"Performance is the perfect medium because there are no rules, and I can bring in my tradition, I can bring in storytelling, and I can bring in my fantasies."* – James Luna
- What kinds of art are routinely available to members of your community? Who makes that art? What do you think the impact of that art is?  
(Note: This Guide defines "art" broadly to include many forms of expression, including music, poetry, performance, paintings, and dance).

Art Prompt:

- In the film, Artist Bettye Saar asks, "So many of these images were hurtful, really painful. How can I, as an artist, change that to make it a thing of beauty, a thing of interest?" Pick any one of the historical images from the film that you found particularly disturbing or interesting. Create a piece of art that would counter the message of the image you chose.

Activity Prompt:

- Assume that you are curator for a local community center or library exhibit of images of [fill in an ethnic or racial group featured in the film]. Pick any one of the historical images from the film that you found particularly disturbing or interesting. Debate whether or not this image should be banned from or included in your exhibit. Explain your position.
- In order to meet broadcast standards, several pieces had to be cut from the festival version of *Race is the Place*, including Danny Hoch's "PSA" and Shabaka's "MLK."

Assume you are an FCC Commissioner. Use the texts below to assess any or all of the performances in *Race is the Place*. Which category would you assign them to (obscene, indecent, profane, none of the above)? Which would you approve for broadcast and which would you fine? Explain your decisions.

Then consider whether or not the ideas expressed in any excluded pieces could be effectively expressed in ways that would meet broadcast standards. In your view, do broadcast standards serve to censor certain ideas, or only to exclude offensive language or subject matter.

Write an e-mail to the FCC commissioners (addresses are available online at [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov)) summarizing your views about how they should apply the standards for obscenity, indecency, and profanity.

**FCC Broadcast Programming Standards**

It is a violation of federal law to broadcast obscene, profane, or indecent programming. Congress has given the Federal Communications Commission the responsibility for administratively enforcing the law. The Commission may issue a warning, impose a monetary forfeiture, or revoke a station license for the broadcast of obscene, profane, or indecent material.

**Obscene Broadcasts Prohibited at All Times**

Obscene speech is not protected by the First Amendment and cannot be broadcast at any time. To be obscene, material must meet a three-prong test: (1) an average person, applying contemporary community standards, must find that the material, as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest; (2) the material must depict or describe, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by applicable law; and (3) the material, taken as a whole, must lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

**Indecent Broadcasts Restricted to 10 p.m. – 6 a.m.**

The Commission has defined broadcast indecency as language or material that, in context, depicts or describes sexual or excretory organs or activities in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium.

Indecent programming contains sexual or excretory references that do not rise to the level of obscenity. As such, the courts have held that indecent material is protected by the First Amendment and cannot be banned entirely. It may, however, be restricted in order to avoid its broadcast during times of day when there is a reasonable risk that children may be in the audience (6:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.).

The determination as to whether certain programming is patently offensive is not a local one and does not encompass any particular geographic area. Rather, the standard is that of an average broadcast viewer or listener and not the sensibilities of any individual complainant.

**Profane Broadcasts Restricted to 10 p.m. - 6 a.m.**

The FCC has defined profanity as “including language that denotes certain of those personally reviling epithets naturally tending to provoke violent resentment or denoting language so grossly offensive to members of the public who actually hear it as to amount to a nuisance.”

The FCC has ruled that the single use of the “F-word” in the context of a live awards program was profane. The FCC further stated that it, “depending on the context, will also consider under the definition of profanity the “F-Word” and those words (or variants thereof) that are as highly offensive as the “F-Word,” to the extent such language is broadcast between 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Source: Federal Communications Commission: <http://www.fcc.gov/eb/broadcast/obscind.html>

For an explanation of the rules around obscene broadcasts, see <http://ftp.fcc.gov/cgb/archives/2001/eb102601.html>.

## QUESTIONS – BY ARTIST

### **KATE RIGG – “RICE, RICE BABY”; “WHAT ARE YOU?”\***

*(The artist’s texts are on pages 24 and 26 of this Guide.)*

Discussion Prompts:

- Rigg says that she developed “Rice, Rice Baby” as a commentary on media (mis)representations of Asians. Which of the stereotypes that she includes have you heard before? What do you think the impact of those stereotypes is? Where do your ideas about Asian peoples come from? What images do you most often see of Asians or Asian Americans? Who controls those images? What images do people see of you? Who controls those images? Are they accurate?

Art Prompt:

- “Rice, Rice Baby” is a take off on white rapper, Vanilla Ice’s “Ice, Ice Baby.” Take a popular song and re-write the words to confront a stereotype.
- \* Create a piece of art that answers Rigg’s question: “Hey, what are you?”



### **JAMES LUNA – “TAKE A PICTURE WITH A REAL INDIAN” STREET PERFORMANCE**

Discussion Prompts:

- James Luna asks people to consider, “Who is the ‘real’ Indian?” Where do your ideas about what a ‘real’ Indian is come from? What images do you most often see of Native Americans? Who controls those images? What images do people see of you? Who controls those images? Are they accurate?
- Luna says, “America doesn’t like the truth.” What do you think he means? Do you agree or disagree? Can you think of instances in which American culture seems to value truth? What differentiates between those instances and the things that James Luna describes?

Art Prompt:

- James Luna begins his phrases with “America likes” and “America doesn’t like” to describe how Native American cultures have been stereotyped and co-opted. Write your own commentary poem, alternating each line between “America likes” and “America doesn’t like” to describe your own ethnic, religious, and/or racial heritage. Research historical views if you are not familiar with your group’s experience in the United States.

Activity Prompt:

- Listen for and list examples of how Luna describes co-optation of native cultures (e.g., “Take names of our people and name cars and trucks after them.”). Identify places in your community that have co-opted native names or images. Think about what you want people to know about their use of Native American words and symbols. Then write that on a set of post-it notes and place a post-it note on everything you encounter that co-opts native culture.

If you want to publicize your efforts, you might want to let media outlets know what you are doing and provide them with a more detailed explanation than you can fit on a post-it note. Or, you may want to create a Web site that includes an explanation and include the url on your post-it notes.



### **PIRI THOMAS – “IN MY BARRIO”; “DIALOGUE WITH SOCIETY”**

*(The artist’s texts are on pages 28 and 30 of this Guide.)*

#### Discussion Prompts:

- What do you think Thomas meant when he wrote about dreaming of a “world where ghetto children / like me could be / what they wished to be / instead of being what the mean ones / want us to be.” What do you wish to be? For you, who are the “mean ones” and what do they want you to be? How might you make sure that you are not what the “mean ones” want you to be?
- Listen carefully to “Dialogue with Society.” Based on what you hear, do you think Thomas would see violence as an effective response to the hatred and hypocrisy he describes? How does Thomas deal with the anger he experiences when he sees injustices in his community? Do you think Thomas’ strategies could work for you? Why or why not?

#### Art Prompts:

- In “In My Barrio,” Piri Thomas describes where he grew up. Create a piece of art that describes where you live. Include what it feels like to live there, what it looks like, what kind of people live there, what its history is, and how it has helped shaped who you are. (See Boots Riley for another example of a piece written about where one lives.)
- Listen carefully to the form of Thomas’ poem. He uses the phrase “Once upon my Barrio time”. Write a poem that describes your own experience based on the phrase “Once upon my \_\_\_\_\_ time.”
- Thomas writes, “I loved being inside my mind / where I could dream dreams / as high as the sky / and no one could ever, ever take them away from me. / A world where I was what I wanted to be and that of course, like any other / child, was to be free. Create a piece of art that expresses your dreams.



**DANNY HOCH – “BRONX”\*; “PSA”\***

*(The artist’s text for “PSA”\* is on page 32 of this Guide.)*

Discussion Prompts:

- \* In “Bronx,” Hoch compares the guy selling t-shirts to “that little girl that they show on that commercial selling lemonade in front of her house” and asks, “You think the cop gonna arrest her?” Are the two activities – setting up a lemonade stand and selling t-shirts on the street – comparable? Would the girl be arrested for selling lemonade if she were on the same street corner as the t-shirt guy? Would the guy be arrested if he were in the suburbs? What difference does place make? Why?
- \* In “Bronx,” Hoch describes a confused cop who is uncomfortable not knowing the race or ethnicity of the person he is arresting. Compare this portrayal with Kate Rigg’s “What are You?”\* In your view, why is it so important to some people to be clearly able to label others?
- \* Who is Hoch challenging when he says, “...there is no culture in the world that you can buy off a shelf at Coconuts.” Or “You are not ‘hip-hop’ if the clothes on your back cost more than the monthly salaries of the people that made your clothes.”? What do the things you purchase or wear say about your identity?
- \* Compare the way Danny Hoch, Boots Riley, and Piri Thomas introduce economic class issues into their commentaries on race and social justice. What is the relationship between class and race in the U.S.?
- \* Who does Hoch identify as the genuine hip-hop MCs, and why? Who does he identify as counterfeit MCs, and why? Which category describes your favorite artists? Do you agree with Hoch’s views on what hip-hop is really all about? Why or why not?

Art Prompts:

- \* Using Hoch’s “Bronx” as an example, work in small groups to turn a story from your local newspaper into a performance piece. Each person in your group should tell the story from the perspective of a different person involved in the story.
- \* Using Hoch’s “PSA” as an example, write your own PSA to share your perspective on an issue important to you.



### **BOOTS RILEY – “UNDERDOG”**

*(The artist’s text is on page 34 of this Guide.)*

Discussion Prompt:

- “Underdog” describes the experience of people stuck in poverty. Can you tell what race or ethnicity Riley’s “folkers” are? How do you know? Are there links between race and class? Where do those links come from? (For a different take on race and class, see Danny Hoch’s “Bronx”).
- Riley says, “All I got to do is talk about what’s real, and I’ll be talking about race.” Is it possible to talk “real” about the United States and leave race out? Why or why not?

Art Prompt:

- In “Underdog,” Boots Riley describes the experience of people in his community. Write a piece describing the daily experiences of people where you live. After you finish, talk about which experiences you want to celebrate and which you would like to change. (Also see Piri Thomas for an example of a piece written about where one lives).



### **HAUNANI-KAY TRASK – “COLONIZATION”; “SETTLERS NOT IMMIGRANTS”**

*(The artist’s texts are on pages 36 and 37 of this Guide.)*

Discussion Prompt:

- Listen carefully to Trask’s reading. Why do you think she objects to the phrase “Hawaiian at heart”?
- Trask challenges the notion that America is a “nation of immigrants” because, she argues, the phrase obscures the reality that many of those who came used violence and actively erased indigenous culture. As you look at the U.S., do you think “nation of immigrants” is a valid description or not? Explain your position.

Art Prompt:

- Imagine if white settlers had come to Hawaii without violence, the intent to conquer and exploit the land for economic gain, or to convert natives to Christianity. Create a piece of art describing the resulting community of Caucasians and indigenous peoples living together, sharing their cultures equally, and working to build a sustainable community.

Activity Prompt:

- Trask says, “Americans like to think they’re a nation of immigrants. The implication is that there were no natives there or they came for religious freedom or to do better when, in fact, they came to settle someone else’s country and to kill them off slowly from New England to California and then out to Hawaii then on to the Philippines. I want them to understand that settlers came, they conquered, they killed, they took other people’s land, they banned their language and I think settler riles people.” Check textbook accounts of the history of the U.S. How do the authors describe the motives and tactics of settlers from Europe? Are the accounts accurate? If not, write revisions and share them with faculty, administrators, and publishers.





**LOIS-ANN YAMANAKA – TITA: JAPS**

Discussion Prompt:

- In your view, does Yamanaka’s use of “Pigeon” English and choice of subject empower the people she describes by giving them voice, or reinforce stereotypes (or both or neither)? Explain the reasoning behind your opinion.
- Yamanaka describes Japanese girls trying to change their eyes to look more Caucasian? In your view, what was their motive? Who was setting the standards for what beautiful people were supposed to look like (i.e., where did the girls get the idea that it was better to look white than look like themselves)?

What kinds of physical changes have you seen people make to their bodies? Is there any difference between the changes you have seen and Yamanaka’s Japanese girls trying to make their eyes look round? If so, what are the differences? Who sets the standards in your community for what beautiful people are supposed to look like? How far would you go to meet those standards? Would you have surgery? Spend lots of money on make-up? Endure pain?



**ANDY BUMATAI – ETHNIC HUMOR & DISCOVERING HAWAII**

Discussion Prompt:

- Bumatai is amused when he is asked: “Could you do some of that *ethnic* humor?” because “in Hawaii it’s just called humor.” How do labels like “*ethnic* humor” or “*female* athlete” reinforce the centrality of some groups and marginalize others? What phrases have you heard or used that reinforce the centrality of Caucasians and/or cast one group as central and another as “other”? In your view, what is the impact of using group labels for people of color, but not for whites?

Activity Prompt:

- Compare what Bumatai says about white people “discovering places that people already are” and Captain Cook “discovering” the Hawaiian Islands with Haunani- Kay Trask’s comments on immigrants and settlers. Why is a term like “discover” important? If “discover” isn’t accurate, brainstorm a list of more precise alternatives. Use your list of alternatives and search through history textbooks. Which words do the authors use? What do their word choices tell you about their perspectives? Which “first contacts” are included? Which are not included? Develop a list of suggested revisions and share your list with faculty, administrators, and publishers.



**AHMED AHMED – “BAD TIME TO BE FROM THE MIDDLE EAST”; “AFTER 9/11”**

Discussion Prompt:

- Ahmed’s airport comedy routine is about being profiled. Do you see profiling taking place in your community? If so, in what kinds of situations? Do you think profiling should be against the law? Why or why not?
- Ahmed jokes that after September 11, black friends called and said, “at least it wasn’t us.” What do you think he meant? Have you ever been in a situation where your actions were judged as representing an entire group? How did it feel?

Art Prompt:

- Re-write Ahmed’s comedy routine as an editorial on profiling. What do you notice about how Ahmed turns current events into jokes? How does he use stereotypes?



**BEAU SIA – “ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY”; “ASIAN INVASION”\***

Discussion Prompt:

- Sia uses African American cultural references, like “the house that step-‘n-fetch-it built” and the TV series “Different Strokes” to describe himself as an Asian American man. How do these African American references apply to an Asian American? What kinds of experiences do Asian Americans and African Americans share? What is unique about each of their experiences? What kinds of common ground do you see between yourself and people of other races or ethnicities?
- Beau Sia mentions a variety of Asian cultures – Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese – and Sia claims to be able to play them all. How is it that these cultures are interchangeable in the entertainment industry? Why might it be important to recognize the differences among these cultures?
- Sia ends “Entertainment Industry” with the line, “Give me a chance and I’ll change the world.” If you had the chance, how would you change the world?

Art Prompt:

- Using Sia’s work as a model, write and/or perform your own “letter to the entertainment industry.”

Activity Prompt:

- In “Asian Invasion,” Sia writes his reaction to the portrayal of Asians during the Academy Awards® ceremony. Imagine that you had won an industry award (Emmy, Oscar, Tony, Grammy – take your pick). Write an acceptance speech that includes how you feel about the industry’s portrayal of people like you.

- Sia uses a lot of very specific cultural references. Did you know what all of them meant? Pick a reference you and your friends would all know (e.g., to a piece of music, an artist, a TV program). Do a survey in a mall to find out how many people outside your community understand the reference. What do you learn from the results about communication across cultures, ages, geography, time?



### **LALO GUERRERO – “NO CHICANOS ON TV”**

#### Discussion Prompt:

- Why does it matter whether or not we see people like ourselves on TV or in movies? Is it enough to simply see people from the same culture or race as ourselves, or do the portrayals have to be positive? Is a portrayal that is accurate, but negative okay? Why or why not?

#### Activity Prompt:

- Survey the group (or your school, class, team) to generate a list of the top 10 most viewed TV programs. Then look at who the main characters are and categorize them by race, ethnicity, gender, body type, and age. Who is represented in the programs watched most often? Who is left out?

Write letters to studio executives and media outlets letting them know the results of your survey and how diverse representation might benefit your community. As a starting place, you can find contact information for films at: <http://www.mpaa.org/about/index/.htm> and cable channels at:

<http://www.ciconline.org/Resources/MoreResources/AboutCICMemberCompanies/Programmers/default.htm>



### **WILLIE PERDOMO – “DREAMING I WAS ONLY DREAMING”**

#### Discussion Prompts:

- Perdomo starts by saying, “My history professor has a bad habit of looking at me when discussing slavery.” Have you ever witnessed something similar to what he describes? What did you do? Has something like that ever happened to you? What did it feel like? Did you say anything? If so, what did you say? If not, what did you want to say?
- In Perdomo’s “dream,” Perdomo juxtaposes “I was free” with some of the realities of life for blacks in the U.S. What is he saying about freedom and the legacy of slavery? He uses “I” and skips from one time period to the next and from place to place. How can it all be the same person? Who is he really talking about when he uses “I”? Did the things he described really happen to him? How does discrimination against people from our group affect us, even when we weren’t there?

Art Prompt:

- Remind the group that the title of Perdomo's piece is "Dreaming I was Only Dreaming." Talk about what the title means and what techniques Perdomo uses to create a sense of being in a dream (or a nightmare). Then create art that tells about a dream you had.



**MAYDA DEL VALLE – "DESCENDANCY"\***

Discussion Prompt:

- What does Mayda del Valle mean when she writes, "The color of my skin still marks me as an alien in the country of my birth."? Think about your community and your nation. What kinds of things make you feel like you belong? What kinds of things make you feel "alien"?
- Del Valle writes, "I can't just check myself into a box." When you have to fill out forms, which boxes do you check for race or ethnicity? What should people do with forms that allow only one box to be checked, but who fit into more than one box?

Art Prompt:

- Mayda del Valle describes how she tries to bring together various facets of her identity in her poem. Create an identity collage for yourself, using either words or images. Start by listing all the different things that contribute to who you are. Include the kinds of roots that del Valle talks about as she describes her multifaceted heritage, as well as things that you like to do. Then represent all these things in your "identity collage."



**AMIRI BARAKA – "IN THE TRADITION"**

*(The artist's text is on page 38 of this Guide.)*

Discussion Prompts:

- Amiri Baraka quotes black historian W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963) who claimed that the job of poetry is "truth and beauty." Baraka extends DuBois' comment, saying, "You cannot really love beauty unless you finally come to love the truth. You see, but it is dangerous...". What do you think Baraka was identifying as dangerous and to whom? Can a poem be dangerous? How?
- Baraka makes a distinction between being discriminated against and being dehumanized. Can you think of examples where racism has resulted in dehumanizing people? What is the difference between those situations and other kinds of prejudice or discrimination?

Art Prompt:

- In Baraka's poem "In the Tradition," he writes, "Say something American if you dare, if you can..." In other words, what could you find that isn't based in Europe, or that didn't come from slaves or indigenous peoples? Take Baraka's challenge. Can you identify

music that is “purely” American? Then listen to Baraka’s poem again and think about the traditions you come from. Write a poem describing those traditions.



### **KAMAU DAAOOD – “ANGEL OF SCISSORS”**

Discussion Prompt:

- Kamau Daaood writes, “What good are the eyes that fail one in a garden? / What good are the ears that only heard songs of static?” What do you think he means? What “songs” do you hear besides the static? What does your “garden” look like?

Activity Prompt:

- Daaood says, “Compassion is the common language.” Brainstorm ways that you could demonstrate compassion for members of your family and/or members of your community. Choose one item from your list and try it out for a week. If the group reconvenes, share your results.
- Daaood suggests that to have compassion we must fully see the suffering around us. Look at your local newspaper for the past week. Whose stories (if any) were missing? Write a letter to the editor that fills in the gaps you notice.



### **SHABAKA – “KLANSMAN”\*; “MLK”\***

Discussion Prompts:

- \* Do you agree with Shabaka when he says, “There is a racist impulse in all of us”? Explain your position.
- \* Shabaka talks about the word “Nigger.” What does he say? Compare what Shabaka says to what Richard Montoya (of Culture Clash) says about using the word “Nigger” in his “Asian car gang guy” routine. Is it okay for some people and not others to use the “N” word? Do you use the term? Why or why not? If you use the “N” word, when do you use it? Why do some people hear the term “Nigger” as hurtful?

Art Prompts:

- \* Shabaka creates a Klansman character, whom he describes as his antithesis. Role play your opposite or your enemy. What would they say to a group that has just viewed *Race is the Place*?
- \* Shabaka takes on the persona of an historical figure – Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. - and then writes a script as if King were alive and commenting on today’s events. Create a soliloquy in which you take on the voice of an historical figure and comment on the headlines of the day’s newspaper.



**CULTURE CLASH – “HAITIAN MAN”; “SALSA”; “ASIAN CAR GUY”**

Discussion Prompts:

- Herbert of Culture Clash says, “I think that the browning of America is causing a reaction. And I think change is very scary for people. I see it as a positive evolution. I think America will be more harmonious, hopefully, once we get over the race issue.” Do you think the “browning” of America will help America “get over the race issue?” Why or why not?
  
- Compare how Beau Sia deals with all Asians being seen as if they were one, unified group, and how Culture Clash challenges similar clumping of Hispanics in “Salsa.”

## ARTISTS' TEXTS

For use with the Discussion Guide for Youth Audiences

### Rice, Rice Baby – Kate Rigg

Once upon a time there was a delicate Oriental lotus petal of the East who moved to New York City to find fame and fortune at a nail salon at the corner of a hundred and twenty fifth and Malcolm Shabaz Boulevard.

Should she be Suzy Wong, submissive Asian love slave?

Or a Slanty-Eyed-Mama-fierce-Asian-gangsta-poet? Guess which one we picked y'all!

Confucius say.. "Wise guy round eye  
no should be afraid to trade in his home fries  
for a nice bowl of steamed...Rice, rice baby. Rice, rice baby.  
OK you wanna steam my dumpling?  
Slanty Mamas gonna make your roll spring  
Hi! Mr. Round Eye white guy  
How you like my straight hair and slanty eye  
Straight hair, even straight hair down there  
If you look in my Hello Kitty underwear

Confucius say, "Wise guy round eye  
no should be afraid to trade in his home fries  
for a nice bowl of steamed...Rice, rice baby. Rice rice baby.  
OK you wanna steam my dumpling?  
Slanty Mamas gonna make your roll spring.  
Mr. Round Eye white guy.  
How you like my straight hair and slanty eye?  
Straight hair, even straight hair down there.  
If you look in my hello kitty underwear.

Call me - I'll set you straight  
When you take me on a racially mixed date.  
RICE - what the honky brothers call me  
SPICE - Garlic ginger but no MSG.  
And if a playa wanna kick on some Asian game,  
I say "what you think" all Asian hoochie look the same  
PERHAPS  
your chinks a nip or a Hawaiian.  
Those Japs might be gooks made in Taiwan.  
Order by number till you get it straight  
'Til you're ready for this dish on your hot plate.  
Rice, rice baby.  
Rice is nice.

Hey you! Mrs. single white female.  
Hold still while I manicure your nail.  
Just right, with a delicate French tip.  
I gotch yer french tip wanna see where I shoved it?  
DOWN! Like a sumo on the tarmac.  
DOWN! Mt. Fuji's on your back.  
Hot Asian mamas in every direction.  
Gonna give the boys a big –connection.  
1-900- ching chong.

Live action with live Suzy Wong.  
Oriental babes, oriental tricks.  
I know how to chop your stick.  
Jump in my wok. I'll get the oil.  
Bring your noodle to an east west boil.  
Order by number, sour or sweet.  
You don't have to be Asian to eat...what?

Yeah Daddy, I'll take in your laundry.  
Be a matahari to your James Bond.  
Relax--fifteen minute massage?  
Or maybe nice origami corsage  
For your dream date, with an Asian prom queen.  
Trade your milk for a cuppa of rice dream.  
Whatchu think chinks? I'll tell them what it's about. Who round eye see when he goes out?  
Who do you see when you pay for your laundry?  
Who do you see when you pay for your sushi.  
Roll in Asians into one concept.  
Things you buy and eat and most electronics.  
Opium. Olympic level ping pong.  
There's more than ping-pong in the life of a ching chong.  
Boy Yyyyy! There's a whole 'nother world in the heart of these oriental girls.  
Rice, rice baby.  
It's a metaphor. It's a symbol that represents us and dehumanizes us at the same time baby.  
But we like to eat it with some hot sauce, maybe a little curry on the side.  
I like mine spicy deconstruct it and take it home in a nice white box with flaps.  
NuyorAsian style. I said Word to yo mamas.  
I said word to your dalai lamas. Haii!



## What are You?\* – Kate Rigg

Hey what are you? Hey where you from  
How come I can't seem to pick it out right away  
Are you Chinese Japanese you from somewhere near there  
Black hair black eyes skin the color of sunrise  
Why you gotta look like that  
jump back  
Maybe you just too tired to be admired  
Vital stats strike a match difference can start a fire  
I had to inquire cuz I noticed you see 06:08:28 Not quite white could pick it on sight.

Golden opportunity, Caucasians own immunity  
Nobody bothers to ask me what I am, Anglo Saxon  
Franco German Scandinavian  
I still look white even when I get a tan  
But damn  
I noticed the way you hold your hands  
Like a Balinese dancer like a Geisha serving tea  
Maybe you could answer make it easier for me  
To  
Order and classify delineate and sanctify  
Define and name, identify and claim  
Lock down take down determine your domain  
Main frame organize regularize alphabetize  
Group together sort process a report  
What are you? Where are you from?  
I feel you marching how you beat your  
drum?  
Where that beat from?  
Where that beat from?

Well I'm a mixed breed multi culti cross-referenced  
Twinkie  
Yellow on the outside I wear my white inside  
Maybe they get confused by the slant in my eyes, Exercise in pollination some say miscegenation  
Product of the erotic east meets west equation  
Hapa half caste Dean Cain's my super brother  
We fill out the form tick the box that says other  
Eurocentric pride one half of my hide  
Take sides pick a lie  
No I'll stay in between  
Nobody's ching chong  
Or jap or gook or Suzy Wong  
At Abercrombie and Fitch two whites made a Wong  
Long gone are the days when what you get it what you see  
Better think twice before you go to label me  
Or any one of my APA posse come to think  
Time to reconsider what makes a chink  
Don't blink your slow boat to hegemony is about to  
Sink  
You order and classify delineate and sanctify  
Define and name, identify and claim  
Lock down take down determine your domain  
Main frame organize regularize alphabetize  
Group together sort process a report

What are you? Where are you from?  
I feel you marching how you beat your drum?  
Where that beat from?  
Where that beat from?  
Now I'm not just talking about the ones come straight from diaspora  
I'm talking bout Tiger Woods and Jessica Hagedorns  
Future rainbow babies of Russell and Kimora  
We're what's in store. We're changing inner space  
United Colors of Benetton united in one face  
One race one grace it can happen from within  
The whole freaking planet will share the same skin  
Everybody wins when we open our eyes  
Realize not theorize end the rain of racist lies  
Raining down all around like poison from the sky  
From the sky she will come with new dreams on her wings  
The Phoenix has returned The Phoenix has come  
And the beating of her wings is the beating of my drum  
The beating of her wings is the beating of my drum  
Hey what are you  
Hey, Where you come from  
The beating of her wings is the beating of my  
What are you?  
Where are you from?

## **In My Barrio – Piri Thomas**

Hey, mundo grande!  
Once upon a Barrio time  
I made my way  
through the streets of East Harlem  
With fancy dance steps  
guiding my feet  
through dark ghetto streets.

Oh, I was deep inside my mind  
visiting all the time  
a world of wonder  
through the power of enjoying  
wonderful daydreaming.  
Of a world where ghetto children  
like me could be  
what they wished to be  
instead of being what the mean ones  
want us to be.

As a child in the 40s  
growing up into the 50s  
I loved being inside my mind  
where I could dream dreams  
as high as the sky  
and no one could ever, ever  
take them away from me.  
A world where I was what I wanted to be  
and that of course, like any other children,  
was to be free.

But the ghettos were ordained-  
to be full of racism and disdain.  
Oh, yeah, the ghettos were ordained  
to be a perpetual oyster.

Hey, this was during the 30s  
and the great depression.  
Mucho oppression  
Poverty line  
Bread line  
Soup line  
Clothing line  
Plain and simple on the welfare line  
Home relief, home relief, home relief.

And if ever there was work to be found  
blacks and browns, last down,  
last to be hired,  
first to be fired.  
Once upon a Barrio time.

As a child I walked up the streets of Harlem  
with fancy dance steps  
guiding my feet

through dark ghetto streets.  
Deep inside my mind,  
enjoying the worlds of time  
through the power,  
a world where ghetto children  
like me  
could be  
whatever they wish to be,  
that is, free from the mind  
for all time.  
Once upon a Barrio time...  
When I was a child, just like thee...

Punto, adios, punto, adios...

## **Dialogue with Society – Piri Thomas**

No longer can men, women and  
children bend their backs and make  
a cop-out to the freedom of dignity.

Heed us well, racists, segregationists, bigots  
multi-billion dollar murderers.  
'Cause we're on our way.

Do you want to hate?  
We'll put you all together  
so you can hate yourselves.

Do you want to make war?  
We'll put you all together  
so you can waste yourselves.

Heed well world, my America.  
Live by the precepts that this country  
was supposedly founded on.

Do not build your golden gardens on the suffering  
of your fellow human beings.  
Do not buy toys for your children  
bought at the price of other children, you have  
sacrificed.

Set not a table spread with good food and comfort,  
such as never been seen by the children of your  
fellow human beings.

Sit not in churches and bend your knees in prayers.  
Mouth not the words of Christ, of peace on earth,  
and good to all, while you know in your hearts  
that you are truly lying.

For while you are smiling and living well,  
black children, brown children, red children,  
yellow children, white children, multi-colored children,  
children, children,  
because of your hypocrisy and greed  
are dying,  
physically,  
mentally,  
spiritually,  
and secretly  
in broad daylight.

I speak for myself as my mind rushes  
back into time when I held in my hands  
a beauty that was truly mine.

I was a child  
running through dark ghetto streets  
I let the seas of hatred wash over me.

I was too young to know.  
Momma had filled my eyes with the wondrous  
city and its pearly gates.

If I could have the power, I'd wipe out all bad  
memories.  
But, since I don't, I'll give you a piece of advice,  
cool-breeze, cut like a piece of ice.

Share! Let our children share.

Stop teaching the petty stinking hates.  
Children know love from the git-go.  
And you who are without love have taught  
them hate to the very ending.

We are tired of demigods and tyrants  
Bred by a mother and father  
Who leave their marks on earth  
A death chant, a mountain of suffering, a dirge.  
It's time for new bells to toll.

It's time for new trumpets to blare.  
It is time for a new language to be heard.  
For from the very beginning of time to  
this time, we should have learned by now,  
we should have learned how,  
We should have learned  
to love, care to share.

In the name of all children--- AMEN!!

Punto!!

## PSA\* – Danny Hoch

This is a public service announcement. Okay. Hip-hop is not rap. Mother fucker. Hip-hop is not rap. Hip-hop is not rap. Hip-hop is not rap. Hip-hop is not what you see on tv., buy in a store, or hear on the radio. You think rap is hip-hop because you can buy it and take it home with you, but there is no culture in the world that you can buy off a shelf at Coconuts.

This is a Public Service Announcement. Hip-hop does not wear diamond earrings. Diamond earrings that were mined by African children of war. Hip-hop does not wear clothes sewn by Haitian, Honduran or Dominican children of war either. You are not 'hip-hop' if the clothes on your back costs more than the monthly salaries of the people that made your clothes, mother-fucker.

This is a public service announcement. Hip-hop does not jump up and down on the fucking stage at a concert, bouncing and yelling and barking about drinking the cheapest French cognac that they don't even drink in fucking France cause it's so *fucking cheap!*

This is a public service announcement. Hip-hop is the truth as told by kidnapped Africans with Japanese technology on stolen land sent out to poor and rich youth all over the world disguised as American products. And another thing, you ain't 'Underground' if your friends and your family know where you live.

This is a public service announcement. Hip-hop does not send \$25,000 checks to the republican or democratic parties so you can act like the conscious Big-Willies that you think you are. In Africa there's young people with no money, no clean water, no food and their parents are dying from AIDS. But they're trying their best to dress up in fake FUBU, fake Phat Farm, and fake Ecko so they can look nice to go to McDonald's and watch other people eat fake hamburgers. While you sendin' \$25,000 checks to motherfuckers that don't give a fuck about you. So don't tell me you a fucking MC cause you rap mother fucker.

This is a public service announcement. If hip-hop is American, cultural-imperialism all over the world, then we are fucked. Because hip-hop is resistance. Hip-hop is revolution. Hip-hop does not involve buying or owning anything. Hip-hop is not rap. There are more than seven elements of hip-hop and you cannot purchase them in the Source Fashion Catalog...I mean magazine. Hip-hop does not wear sailing, skiing, or camping apparel.

Okay, let me start all over. This is a public service announcement. This is Whitey and I'm telling you—YES it's a conspiracy mother fucker! You ain't going sailing with me, you ain't going camping with me and you ain't going skiing with me. But you gonna buy my shit and I'm smilin' all the way to the bank, mother fucker. Excu—excuse me.

This is a public service announcement. Hip-hop is not rap. Hip-hop does not make 'Kill Osama' records. Hip-hop does not wave American flags when we get bombed. Hip-hop does not own the American flag because the American flag use to own Africans and still does. The American flag is responsible for mother fuckers bombing us here in New York and everywhere all over the fucking world! Hip-hop does not join the Army, the Navy, the Airforce, or the Marines. And hip-hop does not shoot poor people in other countries on behalf of some rich crackers at an oil company. You brainwashed mother fuckers!

Okay this is Whitey again! Are you a person of color? Are you broke? How much can I pay you to shoot some other people of color in another country? I'll pay you and you can buy all the diamond earrings, sailing apparel and cheap French cognac you want. But you still ain't coming sailing with me and my family, mother fucker!

Excuse me. This is a public service announcement. Hip-hop is locked up in prison and hip-hop is free. Hip-hop is poor and hip-hop is also rich. Hip-hop is art. Rap costs money, but hip-hop does not. Hip-hop is education. Hip-hop is law. Hip-hop is healthcare. Hip-hop is protest, not just when some rappers show up at the protest to promote their new album. Hip-hop is protest even when rappers don't show up and it's just heads from the block standing together in the rain and the cold. That's hip-hop.

This is a public service announcement. There is a whole generation of hip-hop teachers, lawyers, doctors, social workers and people in jail and they're all MC's because the passing down of stories, love, healing and justice to the people is a ceremony. And they are masters, masters of ceremony, MC's. The rest of us are just a bunch of rappers. This is a public service announcement.



## Underdog – Boots Riley

This is for my folkers, um, check one two  
This if for my folkers never lived like a hog  
Me and you, toe to toe, I got love for the underdog

This if for my folkers who got bills overdue  
This is for my folkers, um, check one two  
This if for my folkers who never lived like a hog  
Me and you, toe to toe, I got love for the underdog

I raise the glass for the ones who die meaninglessly  
And the newborns who get fed intravenously  
Somebody's mom caught a job and a welfare fraud case  
When she breathe she swear it feels like plastic wrap around her  
face

Lights turned off and it's the third month the rent is late  
Thoughts of being homeless, crying till you hyperventilate  
Despair permeates the air, sets in her hair  
The kids play with that one toy they learned to share  
Coming home don't never seem to be a celebration  
Bills they piled up on the coffee table like they're decorations

Heapin' spoons of peanut butter, big glass of water  
Makes the hunger subside, save the real food for your daughter  
You feel like swingin haymakers at a moving truck  
You feel like laughing so it seems like you don't give a fuck  
You feel like getting so high you smoked a whole damn crop  
You feel like crying but you think that you might never stop

Homes with no heat stiffen your joints like arthritis  
If this was fiction, it'd be easier to write this  
Some folks try to front like they so above you  
They'd tear this motherfucker up if they really loved you

This if for my folkers who got bills overdue  
This is for my folkers, um, check one two  
This if for my folkers who never lived like a hog  
Me and you, toe to toe, I got love for the underdog

This if for my folkers who got bills overdue  
This is for my folkers, um, check one two  
This if for my folkers who never lived like a hog  
Me and you, toe to toe, I got love for the underdog

There's certain tricks of the trade to try and halt your defeat  
Like taking Tupperware to an "all you can eat"  
Returning used shit for new saying you lost your receipt  
And writing four figure checks when your accounts deplete  
Then all you your problems pile up about a mile up  
Thinkin' about a partner you can dial up to help you out this foul stuff

Whole family sleepin on a futon while you're clippin coupons  
Eatin salad tryin to get full off the croutons

Crosstown, the situation is identical  
Somebody's getting strangled by the system and its tentacles

Misconceptions raise questions to be solved  
A lot of d-boys is broke, a lot of homeless got jobs  
You can make 8 bones an hour till you pass out and still be assed out  
Most pyramid schemes don't let you cash out  
They say this generation made the harmony break  
But crime rises consistent with the poverty rate  
You take the workers and jobs, you're gonna have murders and mobs  
A gang of preachers screamin sermons over murmurs and sobs  
Saying pray for a change from the Lord about you  
They'd tear this motherfucker up if they really loved you

This if for my folkers who got bills overdue  
This is for my folkers, um, check one two  
This if for my folkers who never lived like a hog  
Me and you, toe to toe, I got love for the underdog

This if for my folkers who got bills overdue  
This is for my folkers, um, check one two  
This if for my folkers who never lived like a hog  
Me and you, toe to toe, I got love for the underdog

You like this song cause it relatable, it's you in this rhyme  
We live in places... We go to stores that only let us in two at a time  
We live in places where it costs to get your check cashed

Arguments about money usually drown out the tec blasts  
Work six days a week, can't sleep Saturdays though  
Muscles trembling like a pager when the battery's low

And you still don't know where the years went  
Although every grave yard shift feels like a year spent  
And you can write your resume but it would even mention  
All the life lessons learned doing six years of detention  
Or how you learned the police was just some handicappers  
On the ground next to broken glass and candy wrappers  
But don't accept my collects on the phone  
Just hit me at the house so I know I ain't alone  
And we can chop it up about this fucked up system  
Homies that's been killed, how we always gonna miss them  
It's almost impossible survivin' on this fraction  
Sip a 40 to the brain for the chemical reaction  
You gotta hustle cause they're tryin' to push and shove you  
I'll tear this mother fucker up since I really love you  
This if for my folkers who got bills overdue  
This is for my folkers, um, check one two

## Colonization – Haunani-Kay Trask

Our own people say, "Hawaiian at heart." Makes me sick to hear  
how easily genealogy flows away. Two thousand years of wise  
creation bestowed  
for a smile  
on resident non  
natives.

"Form of survival,"  
this thoughtless inclusion.  
Taking in  
foreigners and friends.  
Dismissing history with a servant's grin.  
Hawaiian at heart:  
nothing said  
about loss  
violence, death  
by hundreds of thousands.

Hawaiian at heart:  
a whole people accustomed to prostitution  
selling identity  
for nickels and dimes  
in the warehouses of tourism.

Hawaiian at heart-why no "Japanese at heart?"  
How about "*haole* at heart?"  
Ruling classes living off natives  
first land  
then women  
now hearts cutout by our own familiar hand

## **Settlers Not Immigrants – Haunani-Kay Trask**

Settlers, not immigrants  
from America, from Asia.  
Come to settle, to take.  
To take from the Native  
that which is Native:  
Land, water, women, sovereignty.  
Settlers, not immigrants,  
bringing syphilis and leprosy  
Jehovah and democracy. Settlers, settling  
our Native Hawai'i,  
inscribing their  
lies of discovery,  
of penury, of victory.  
Settlers, not immigrants. Killing us off  
disease by disease, lie by lie,  
one by one.

## In the Tradition – Amiri Baraka

In their tradition, not a white shadow  
But black people will be victorious  
Blues walk weeks ragtime  
Painting slavery  
Women laid around working feverishly for slave master Romeos  
As if in ragtime they spill their origins like chillers  
Lost chillin in the streets to be telephoned to by huggie bear on channel seven.  
For the white shadow gives advise on how to hold our homes together  
Tambien tu chicano hermano  
Genius Benny Goodman head master  
Philanthropist romeos, but must coach  
Cannot you  
Hey coach, hey coach  
Trembling faith wrapped in flags  
Hey coach  
You can hug this while you're at it coach  
Women become goils, gals  
Grinning in the face of his no light

Men become boys and slimy roosters  
Crowing negros and loved with dressed up pimp stupidity death  
Hey coach do you want to outlaw the dunk?  
Cannot deal with Skyman Darrel or double dipping hip doctors  
deadly in flight  
Cannot deal with Magic or Kareem  
Hey coach, coach  
Bench yourself on the garbage can  
On history you imperial dog  
Denying with lying images our strength on African funky beauty  
No matter the three networks idiot cheddar

Off the blithe says it in the tradition  
De dee dee de dee  
Tradition of Douglass  
Of David Walker, Garnet, Tubman, Turner  
Of rages, yeah rages of Kings and Counts and Dukes of  
Sach mouths and Sunrise  
Of Bessies, and Billies and Sassys and Moms  
Musical screaming niggers, yeah  
Tradition of brown wells  
And brown sterling and brown Clifford  
Of H wrath and H box  
Black Baltimore, Sister Blues, Anti-slavery singers  
Countless fucking blind folks and  
One leg country bee boppers  
Bowl necked guitar \_\_\_\_\_  
Whispering, thrashing, kick walking, raging  
Ladies and Gents  
Get down folks, \_\_\_\_\_ is sky riding  
Tradition of Du Bois, Baby Dods and Love the Austins  
Sojourner,  
I thought I heard Buddy Bolden say you terrible, you awful  
Lester, why do you want to be the president of all this?  
Of the blues and slow sideways horn

Tradition of blue presidents, locked up in the brig for wearing Zoot Suit army pants  
Tradition of monks and outside dudes  
Of Mary Lous and notes hung  
Vibrating blue just beyond, just after, just before  
Just faster, just slowly twilight crazier than Europe  
Or its racist children  
Bee doo dee dee dee dee dee dee  
Tradition of shooters  
Of silver fast dribblers  
Of real fancy mother fuckers, fancy as birds flight  
Sun would high, high, high sun, would arcs, swoops,  
spirals in a tradition  
Quarter notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, thirty seconds, sixty fourths a hundred and twenty eighths  
Silver blue presidents  
Of Langston and Langston manifestos  
Tell us again about the Negro artists and the racial mountain  
So we will not be Negro artists  
McKay banjos and homes in Harlem  
Blue black boys and little ritchie brights  
Tradition of for my people

Margaret Walker and David Walker and Jeannie Walker  
And Walker Smith, sweet Ray Leonard rocking in rhythm with musical Dukes  
Who is this tradition based on  
We blue black wards struggling against the big white fog  
Africa People  
Our fingerprints are everywhere on you America  
Our fingerprints are everywhere Ceasar told you that  
Our family stewed around the world has made more parts of that world blue  
And funky, cooler, flashier, holler,  
Afro-Cuban James Brownier  
A wide pan African world  
But we are Afro-Americans  
African-Americans let their geographic history of our flaming hatchet motion  
Hot ax motion  
Hammering hatchet  
Our cotton history  
Our Roman Indigo sugar cane history

Yet, in the casual gesture, lets talk you want we could say Ceasar  
Demas, Depesta, Romaine, Gian  
You want Shaka, Askia, Rollin Stellings, Two Man Dingo,  
Inzinga  
You want us to drop Cleopatra on you or Hanhold  
What are you a massochist  
Paper, iron, chemistry, and smelting  
I even mentioned Tuscon or Desaline or Robeson or Ingubi, huh  
You bloody and daze scream at me to stop you know, huh  
You think it's over tradition song  
Tradition poem  
Poem for us together  
Poem for Arthur Blythe who told us again

In the tradition

In the tradition of life and dying  
In the tradition of those clanned and chained and lynched and shock leaded  
In the N.A.A.C.P. and Ralph Bunche  
Hah, you rise a little  
I mentioned we also the tradition of Amos and Andy  
Hypnotized  
Selling s out  
Burnings and hooks and other nigger crooks  
Of Gibsons and Crouches and other assorted losses of niggas that turned from gold to shit  
Proving dialectics Muhammed Ali style  
But just as you rise up to gloat I scream

Coltrane, Stevie Wonder, Malcolm X, Alvin Ayley, the black ark  
Shit and whispering out of my \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ fell on sweet \_\_\_\_\_  
Seargent Henderson, Kaine, what did I do to be so black and \_\_\_\_\_ blue?  
The most perfect couple in the language scream  
Nude indigo, black bolshevic, cocoa now is the time  
Mark a bones lonely woman goes to loves to bring walk in say no chaser  
In the tradition of life and dying  
Centuries of beautiful women crying  
In the tradition of screamed  
Ape music, cool hollers, shouts  
Even more profound than its gorgeous sound  
In the tradition of all of us  
In an unending everywhere at the same time  
Mind and motion forever

Like the hip Chicago poet Amos Moore  
Like the Art Ensemble  
Like Miles, Venus, de Milo, and Horace Silver  
Reminding us and Art Blakey sending us messages  
Black, brown, and beige people  
In fear of old and new  
Blood brotherhoods all over the planet  
Land songs, land poems, land sculptures and paintings  
Land niggas want still want will get land in the tradition of all of us  
In the positive aspect  
All of our positive selves  
Cut Zora Neale and me and a bunch of other folks in half  
My brothers and sisters in the tradition  
Vincent Smith and \_\_\_\_\_  
Color mad dos  
Catlip  
White Charles and William  
B.T. Overstreet  
And the sixty's muralist  
Jake Lawrance and Aaron Douglas and Ivy Molar  
Barbara Toonby building more estately masions

We are the composers  
Racists and gun bearers  
We are the artists  
Don't tell me shit about a tradition of deadness and capitulation of slave master sippin' tea in the  
Parlor while we bleed to death in the fields  
Tradition of  
C, C rider

See what you done, done  
Don't tell me shit about the tradition of slave masters and Henry James  
I know about it up to my asshole and it  
Don't tell me shit about Bach or Mozart or even half nigga Bethoven

Get out of Europe  
Come out of Europe if you can  
Cancel on the English department  
This is America  
North, this is America  
Where is your American music  
George Washington won the war  
Where is your American Culture southern argrarians  
Academic-aryans, pin warrants and Wilbur  
Say something American if you dare if you can  
Where's your American music  
Nigger music  
Like Englishmen talking about Great Britain stopped with tongues lapped in they \_\_\_\_\_  
You put the Irish on and say shit man you mean Irish

Irish lizard  
What they say about  
When they say nay, nay, nay  
You mean Irish, Irish  
And you mean for the last century  
You mean when you scream and say nay  
You mean Yates, Sage, Shaw, While, Joyce, or Casey  
\_\_\_\_\_Is nay, them is Irish  
They is Irish  
Irish is the IRA  
You mean nigger music  
Don't hire Europe  
Oh, that's classical  
Come to this country

Nigger music  
You better go up an Appalcian and get some mountain  
Some coal mining songs  
You better go down south and our land  
And talk to the Anglo-American national minority  
They could fetch up a song or two  
Country and Western can save you from looking like saps before the world  
Otherwise, Palante, Latino, Native American, Bomba, Plana, Salsa  
Raindance, war dance, magical invective  
The Latin Tinge, Cherokee, sunny \_\_\_\_\_ with Clifford Brown

Diz and Machito  
Mongo San Maria  
Coming, coming, world saxophone quartet you can stand to forget  
Hell no I ain't going Afganistan  
Leon Thomas  
Me and the old Pigmys you cannot stand up against  
No black author telling you like blue terror unveiled  
Yes sir, romance can bloom even here in white racist land  
It could bloom as beautiful the floor by oppression  
It could bloom, bloom in the tradition of renaissance



Revolution, negritude, blackness  
Negrisimo In the \_\_\_\_\_ may sound  
Niggas Swahili speaking  
Niggas, niggas in turbans  
R and A and APP and APRP in cap black blacks

An assembly line  
Turpentine, mighty fine female blacks and cooks  
Truck divers, coal miners, small farmers,  
Iron steel, and hospital workers  
In the tradition of us  
In the tradition of us the reality not us the narrow fantasy  
In the tradition of African-American black people  
America,

Nigger music is all you got and you find it much too hot.  
In the tradition thank you Arthur  
For playing and saying  
Reminding us how deep, how old, how black, how sweet, how we is and bees  
When we remember  
When we are our memory as a rejection of what is evolving  
In struggle, in passion and pain  
We become our sweet black selves once again  
In the tradition  
In the African-American tradition  
Open us, yet bind us  
Little all that is positive  
Find us

We go into the future carrying a world of blackness  
Yet, we have been in the world  
And we have gained all of what there is and was since the highest expression of the world  
Is it's total  
And the universal is the entire collection of particulars  
Ours is one particular  
One tradition of love and suffering, truth over lies and now we find ourselves in chains

The tradition says plainly to us fight  
Plainly to us fight that's in the clear  
We are not meant to be slaves  
It's is a detour we have gone through and about the come out  
In the tradition of gorgeous African blackness fight  
Its all right  
You beautiful as night  
The tradition thank you  
Langston, Arthur says sing, says fight  
In a tradition always clarifying  
Always new and centuries old says sing fight, sing, fight, sing fight, sing, fight  
Dee-do dee dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee dee  
Death to the clan

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Complete List of Artists Featured in *Race is the Place*

**Ahmed Ahmed** – comedian (Bad Time to Be From the Middle East), [www.ahmed-ahmed.com](http://www.ahmed-ahmed.com)  
**Amiri Baraka** – poet (In the Tradition), [www.amiribaraka.com](http://www.amiribaraka.com)  
**\*Boots Riley** – musician (Underdogs - This is For My Folkers)  
**Andy Bumatai** – comedian (“discovering”), [www.andybumatai.com](http://www.andybumatai.com)  
**Culture Clash** – theater group (Haitian Man, Salsa,\* Asian Car Guy), <http://www.cultureclash.com/posada.html>  
**Kamau Daaood** – poet (Papa, The Lean Griot), <http://aalbc.com/authors/kamau.htm> (anyone have a more direct site than this?)  
**Michael Franti** - musician (Can’t Stop), <http://www.spearheadvibrations.com>  
**Lalo Guerrero** – musician (No Chicanos on TV), <http://markguerrero.net/8.html>  
**Danny Hoch** – actor, writer (PSA\*), [www.dannyhoch.com](http://www.dannyhoch.com)  
**James Luna** – performance artist (Take A Picture with a Real Indian), [www.jamesluna.com](http://www.jamesluna.com)  
**Willie Perdomo** – performance artist (Dreaming I Was Only Dreaming),  
<http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/741>  
**Kate Rigg** - satirist (Rice, Rice Baby), [www.katerigg.com](http://www.katerigg.com)  
**Shabaka** – actor (Klanman, Martin Luther King\*)  
**Beau Sia** – actor (An Open Letter to the Entertainment Industry), [www.beasia.com](http://www.beasia.com)  
**Piri Thomas** - poet (In My Barrio), <http://www.cheverote.com/>  
**Haunani-Kay Trask** – writer, (Settlers not Immigrants),  
<http://www.speakoutnow.org/People/HaunaniKayTrask.html>  
Mayda del Valle -  
**\*Lois-Ann Yamanaka** – novelist (*Tita: Japs*), <http://faculty.washington.edu/kendo/yamanaka.html>

The film also features the art of a group of fine artists whose paintings, graphics and sculpture explore the same issue; including **Michael Ray Charles**, **Paula de Joie\***, **Ben Sakoguchi**, **Bettye Saar**, **Enrique Chagoya** (<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/art/people/bios/chagoya.html> or <http://www.kqed.org/spark/artists-orgs/enriquecha.jsp>) and **Faith Ringgold\*** ([www.faihringgold.com](http://www.faihringgold.com)). The soundtrack is being created by renowned jazz artist **Jon Jang** (<http://www.otherminds.org/shtml/Jang.shtml>) in collaboration with a group of multicultural musicians.

\* In festival version only.

## Resources

### Books & Articles

Beverly Daniel Tatum. Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? (Basic Books, 1997)  
– An excellent description of how young people develop racial identity.

James Loewen. Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong (Touchstone, 1996) – A good resource (along with Howard Zinn’s A People’s History of the United States and Ronald Takaki’s A Different Mirror) for background on misperceptions common in U.S. history texts.

Peggy McIntosh, “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” – available at:  
<http://www.utoronto.ca/acc/events/peggy1.htm> - A classic article describing white privilege.

### Web sites

[www.nccj.org](http://www.nccj.org) - National Conference for Community and Justice  
Has links to anti-bias education resources and organizations, including listings of many local initiatives.

[www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org) - Facing History and Ourselves

A national educational and teacher-training organization that encourages students to examine racism and prejudice in order to promote a more informed and humane citizenry.

[www.ameasite.org/](http://www.ameasite.org/) - Association of Multiethnic Americans

A nonprofit group that promotes a positive awareness of interracial and multiethnic identity. The site contains a great list of links to related organizations as well as recommended resources.

*Race is the Place* is part of the Making Connections Media Outreach Initiative (MCMOI), an outreach project supported by The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF). Launched in February 2001, MCMOI links media broadcasters to local stakeholders as a means to promote the Foundation's mission to help build strong and connected neighborhoods for children and families.



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**The Annie E. Casey Foundation**