



A PEOPLE'S OBSERVANCE FOR A JUST FUTURE

Symposium Report

“A People’s Observance for a Just Future”

On March 15 the 400 Years of Inequality organizing committee convened A People’s Observance for a Just Future. This was the third annual 400 Years of Inequality symposium hosted at The New School. The symposium featured a film, dance performance, music, workshop and discussion.

The symposium was attended by over 120 people. This year, the organizing committee incorporated much of what was learned together over the last three years, and produced programming inspired by the many forms a “Remember Jamestown” observance could take. We hope it inspires you to find your own local stories and use them when hosting your observance in October.



Meditation and Acknowledgment

Margaux Simmons, Doug Farrand and Angel Acosta led us in reading The Call to Observance and the Seven Generations Meditation, preparing participants for the day's work. The meditation asked participants to travel seven generations backwards and forwards through time, honoring our ancestors' journey and our commitment to those yet to be born.

The Statement of Observance - which connects all 400 Years of Inequality observances - honored native land and amplified our commitment to a just future.



Harvest of Loneliness

We screened a film on the Bracero program, Harvest of Loneliness, directed by Vivian Price and Gilbert G. Gonzalez.

Afterward, Michael Roberson facilitated a conversation about the parallels and distinctions between the experiences of Mexican farmworkers in the United States, the legacy of chattel slavery, and the trauma surrounding land and labor in the ecology of inequality. William Morrish created a timeline of notes and sketches about the film, inviting others to co-create by recording their impressions.



“Lift Every Voice and Sing”

Jared Fontaine (violin), Margaux Simmons (flute) and Doug Farrand (trumpet) led the audience in singing “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”



Colony in Crisis

Historian Khemani Gibson introduced Dr. Jay-Rayon Ibrahim Aibo and Daphney Vastey who presented their work, the Colony in Crisis in Haitian Creole. We all learned more about the power of oral and written language to both enforce colonial and racial hierarchies or to deconstruct them.



Telling Your Story of Inequality

Ashley Bernal led a workshop titled Telling Your Story of Inequality. Participants used a template to write and share personal poems about the places they are from to unearth their stories, the first step in planning for Remember Jamestown observances. This workshop previewed tools that will be available in our second 400 Years of Inequality Observance Guide.



If We Ain't Laughing With You

In finale, Choreographer and Dancer Havana Fisher, along with dancers Mariama Noguera-Devers, Na'ilah Harris, Emani T. Hears, Diana Uribe, and photographer Maria J. Hackett presented If We Ain't Laughing With You, a multimedia dance performance that explores the commodification, misinterpretation, and erasure of Black women, from The Cotton Series, a body of work exploring Black womanhood in America.

By the end of the piece, even our organizing committee had to try out our footwork doing "the electric slide"!





We thank all those who made this poignant and powerful day a reality, and look forward to our upcoming workshops and events.

If you would like to support our work further, or host a workshop, please contact us at 400yearsofinequality@gmail.com.

In solidarity,

The 400 Years of Inequality National Organizers





Stay in touch!

Visit our website at www.400yearsofinequality.org to download free resources, like our Starter Kit, Timeline, and a poster of The Call.

Starter Kit

Our starter kit has resources for planning and holding your observance, including the Timeline, reading guides, and posters. "Volume 2: How To Plan an Observance" will be out soon! Sign up for our newsletter/follow us on social media to be notified.

Timeline

The 400 Years of Inequality Timeline was created by students at The New School and edited by our designers and follows four storylines: African Americans, women, Native American and working people. You can download it for free in two parts; each one prints at 34"x 96" (34" x 16' total).

Newsletter

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