

# BLACK SPACES

## RECLAIM & REMAIN

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### STUDENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

## HOMEPLACE

Connection to place is an important part of life that brings together community, family, history, and shapes who you are.




-  What reminds you of home or makes a place feel like home to you?
-  Based on what you see, what factors caused Black Americans to move their families?
-  How have you seen people's lives change when they are settled in a place?



IMAGE: Joanne Leonard, *Untitled*, from the *West Oakland Interiors* series, detail, circa 1970. Gelatin silver print. Gift of the artist in honor of Therese Thau Heyman. 2003.139.64.5

## SOCIAL FABRIC

Social networks, like churches, Black-owned businesses, and advocacy groups, contributed to the social fabric of Black communities within Russell City and West Oakland.



-  What social networks bring and keep your community together?
-  How might being pushed out of your home and neighborhood impact your sense of belonging in the world?




IMAGE: Marion Coleman, *Reunion: We Shall Always Remember*, 2015. Textile and mixed media. Courtesy of the Hayward Area Historical Society, gift of Marion Coleman.

Marion Coleman created this quilt for the 35th anniversary of the Russell City Reunion.

# 3 PERSPECTIVES

Three collaborators share their perspectives and reflections on Black history in Oakland. They offer words, ideas, and tools that honor the past and lived experiences of Black communities.


**ARTIST |** Adrian Burrell draws on his family history to explore Black life, ancestral knowledge, resistance, and freedom.


 **What feelings or memories does Adrian Burrell's installation, *Electric Slide*, bring up for you? How do the images of family, movement, and celebration connect to your own life or community?**




**IMAGE:** Adrian Burrell, still from the film *Electric Slide*, detail, 2025. Multimedia installation. Courtesy of the artist.

**ARCHITECT |** June Grant leads an Oakland-based architecture company called blink!LAB, which creatively reimagines urban community spaces for the future we want.


 **Reimagine your neighborhood, with Black communities at the heart of your vision. What things would you include in your imagined city? Use the space below to sketch your ideas.**

 **What would a healthy, thriving city look like for you, your family, and your neighbors? How might we design a city that supports Black joy, safety, health, and culture?**

**ARCHIVE |** The Archive of Urban Futures (AUF) is an Oakland-based collaboration between a group of scholars and the housing advocacy organization, Moms 4 Housing. The archive explores themes like history, value, the right to live in a place, memory, and the loss of important parts of Oakland's story.


 **What are some ways you save memories in your own life, and how can you protect them for the future?**

While official records show big projects like BART and Urban Renewal, The Archive of Urban Futures tells West Oakland's history by focusing on Black residents who are often left out of history books.

 **What stories do you want to highlight?**

 **How do you think present-day Oakland has been shaped by Black communities?**

The Archive of Urban Futures also looks to the future and asks: "What could have been?" and "What do we want now and later?"

 **What changes do you want to see in Oakland right now and in the future?**