



Taking America Beyond The Legacy of Enslavement

ICA Collaboration Event

On October 22, 2019



“History, as nearly no one seems to know, is not merely something to be read. And it does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do.” --James Baldwin, “The White Man’s Guilt,” *Ebony Magazine*, 1965

A collaboration between CTTT-RVA and VCU’s Institute for Contemporary Art brought together 49 people on Tuesday, October 22, 2019. Faculty and students from VCU and Virginia Union University,

Richmond artists, and members of CTTT-RVA began the evening with a guided tour of *Great Force*, ICA’s new exhibition that uses painting, sculpture, photography, video, and performance to examine the reality of race in the United States. *Great Force* explores how contemporary artists contend with persistent black-white racial bias and inequality in the U.S.

Following dinner provided by Nutty Buttery, CTTT-RVA facilitators led the conversation focusing on Artistic Activism (or Artivism), a dynamic practice combining the creative power of the arts to move us emotionally with the strategic planning of activism necessary to bring about social change. Participants discussed pieces in the *Great Force* exhibit that affected them and moved them to action, and they contemplated the dynamics in Richmond of Confederate statues balanced with new murals, festivals, and music of the city’s cultural renaissance. Participants left with a homework question: How can artforms and artists combine their efforts to affect racism and racial healing in RVA?

Participants were fully engaged in the conversation and hesitant to leave when the time was up. Students appreciated learning art and history from older experienced artists, and several asked for facilitator training so they can continue conversations on campus.

