

RENAISSANCE IN THE BELLY OF A KILLER WHALE

FEBRUARY 26-
MARCH 7
DIRECTED BY
JAYLENE CLARK OWENS



WHAT IS GENTRIFICATION?

Depends who you ask...



DEFINITION 1:

Gentrification: [jen-truh-fi-key-shuhn]

Gentrification is not just a Black-White thing. It's a class thing. It's a mon-ay thang! That's what it is...

-Renaissance in the Belly of a Killer Whale

RENAISSANCE IN THE BELLY OF A KILLER WHALE tells the story of three young women's love affair with Harlem from youth to young adulthood. Weaving spoken word poetry, theatre, and song this piece written a decade ago still resonates today. And it all started with a Facebook post by the director who was experiencing a renaissance of her own:



Jaylene Clark

October 28, 2010 at 9:49am · *

It's time to stop dipping a toe in here, wading in a little bit there. I need to jump back into this sea world of poetry like I'm Shamu...heavy. Too much gentrification going on in Harlem to get light. Time to spit killer lines with killer rhymes of killer tales. Cuz Harlem is looking more and more like the belly of a killer whale. — with Hollis and 2 others in Philadelphia, PA.

Unlike · Comment · Unfollow Post · Tag Friends

In Jaylene Clark Owens' words,

***Harlem began to look like the belly of a Killer Whale,
a large white presence pushing the black to the sides.***



CHECK OUT: harlemkwproject.com

DEFINITION 2:

Gen*tri*fi*ca*tion: [jen-trə-fə-'kā-shən] *noun*
the process of repairing and rebuilding homes and businesses in a deteriorating area (such as an urban neighborhood) accompanied by an influx of middle-class or affluent people and that often results in the displacement of earlier, usually poorer residents.

-*Encyclopedia Britannica*

HARLEM RENAISSANCE: FROM THEN TILL NOW

1920s and 30s: “The Harlem Renaissance is the most important event in twentieth-century African American intellectual and cultural life. While best known for its literature, it touched every aspect of African American literary and artistic creativity from the end of World War I through the Great Depression...” - *The Harlem Renaissance: What Was It, and Why Does It Matter?*, C. D. Wintz

1960s and 70s: “Due to bureaucracy, **red tape**, and **redlining** Harlem was being abandoned - with black families losing homes that had been in their families for years. Lack of support from the local government and the high costs to rehabilitate Harlem forced Blacks to leave Harlem for the Bronx and Brooklyn...”

The illegal practice of refusing to offer credit or insurance in a particular community on a discriminatory basis. - Merriam Webster

1980s ...the government began to put money back into the neighborhood. Corporate real estate companies purchased housing in Harlem and began to knock down old buildings to build new ones. They ignored the heritage of the neighborhood to build new apartment buildings and condos, cookie cutter houses that middle-class whites purchased, raising property values, but also raising rents and property taxes.”

-*Encyclopedia Britannica*

DEFINITION 3:

Gen-tri-fi-ca-tion: [dʒɛn trə fɪ 'keɪ jən]
takes place when current residents aren't part of the process.

-*De'Wayne Drummond,*
head of the Mantua Civic Association

A STORY THAT MAY HIT CLOSE TO HOME



New York and Philadelphia are in the top gentrifying cities in the country, ranked second and third on the list of cities in Black displacement and population change.

“As I grew up, I saw a lot of changes happening close to my house and even farther down Broad Street. There was a big school on Broad Street that Temple bought, tore down, and turned into a new track. What did they do with the old track on 15th? They built a new state of the art athletic facility there, where residents of the general area aren't allowed to enter.”

-*Lon dyn, 11th grade,*
Science Leadership Academy & Wilma Theater Intern