Hello! My name is Pace Taylor (@pacetaylor.jpg), and I am a white, non-binary (they/them pronouns), neurodivergent queer who is emotionally preoccupied with contextualizing intimacy, in all of its many forms. I live in Portland, OR, on Cowlitz land, and I grew up just outside of the city in Tigard (although I spent much of that time learning about being a person in the liminal space of the Internet!).

In my work, I render images of assumed queers in soft pastel and graphite, working from found old photographs, constructing worlds from disparate parts. These scenes and these people become living shadows, vibrating color, and I look to them as a map of profound connection in times of uncertainty. None of the subjects in my work are gendered, although I welcome viewers to project their own experiences with gender/sexuality onto these figures, or perhaps use the illustrated 2d space to imagine, if briefly, a new way of being.

I’m hoping to use this week to touch on my relationship with color and composition and identity in art, as well as some general insights into the techniques I use with graphite and soft pastel. I look forward to connecting through this space this week! Thank you for following along :-) 💫
September 8, 2020
Hello, it’s @pacetaylor.jpg again! Today I’d like to introduce the conceptual side of my work through a recent drawing titled ‘We'll be holding hands when...’

Trying to parse out Intimacy throughout my life has been a consistent but troubled fascination. I spent most of my free time growing up consuming media steeped in romance (albeit heteronormative and problematic) and built my interpersonal lexicon around the language - verbal and otherwise - wrapped up in the big and small screen, and I've spent my few adult years unpacking and replacing those problematic ideologies with new ones. And I've realized, now knowing that I am autistic and queer, that romance and intimacy are not binary. They are not set. I've realized that in queering these concepts you leave a lot more room for personal evolution and capacity for care. I don't know if all of this comes across in my drawings or not, but I draw for myself and in doing so I hope that that leaves room for others to join me.

In sharing this drawing today, I wanted to include the process behind it as I want to make it clear that coming to a piece’s conclusion can be challenging, and often pretty emotional!

Image 1 - Finished piece ‘We'll be holding hands when...’.
Image 2 - Photograph of two people holding hands, found online, could not track down photographer information. I like to work off of old images of “assumed” queer people, as it helps me believe in a future for all kinds of queer imaginings.

Image 3 - First step! You can see my little sketch to the left of the paper. Super sloppy as I really just want to get an idea of blocking and try out some color combos.

Image 4 - Me, covered in pastel, and the piece a few hours in. I start with blocks of color and then I’ll start laying down pencil. These legs took a long time to fill in!
Image 5 - This is where things got pretty difficult for me. I had an idea for a color palette, but after trying it out I couldn't make it work, so I went back in and erased the first color, tried another, ran out of that pastel, erased again, and so on. I think I ended up erasing layers of color maybe three or four times.

Unfortunately, erasing like this wears down the tooth of the paper a bit, but I've also found that a really interesting application of color occurs in this process. Because pastel doesn't apply totally opaque, you get older colors coming through, but because most of the pigment is lifted, the colors don't mix.

Image 6 - I finally made it to the art supply store and got a color of pastel that I knew would cover up all of my previous color mistakes well.

Image 7 - Detail photo of graphite markings on legs.
Hello! I missed yesterday’s prompt because I couldn’t quite figure out how to explain how I do what I do, so I simplified it a bit and am going to show you some very basic soft pastel and pencil techniques!

Slide 1 - Let’s talk about types of pastel! In my practice I use soft and hard chalk pastels, but there are a handful of pastel types that all have their own interesting traits! The big difference between pastel types comes down to how the pigment is held together. Soft pastels have a very high pigment concentration (so vibrant!) held together with a small amount of gum binder, unlike hard pastels which have less pigment (not as vibrant, but still pretty!) and more binder. Pastel prices range quite a bit, but typically, the more concentrated pigment, the more expensive. My other main tools are pencils (I like the Staedtler brand), erasers, and a pencil sharpeners.

Slide 2 - This is a major simplification of how to draw lol, but these are the two big techniques I use! To cover a lot of ground with a pencil I like to use the side of the lead and rub it against the paper, varying in pressure. This creates a really nice grainy texture that I find really compelling! And then there are the little lines made with the tip of the pencil. I use this to go in on top of the grainy texture and create some more detail. I mainly use 2b-6b pencils. It started out as an arbitrary rule I set for myself so I could get used to those weights and then I just stuck with it! Play around and see what you like to use!
Slide 3 - So! This is an exercise that you could try! I drew my nose, first with a light outline which I then filled in with pastel (you could use paint like acrylic or gouache and then use pencil on top of that if you don’t have pastel). In the top nose I just used the side of the pencil and in the bottom nose I used both and you can see some more control with detail and shadow. Also, some advice I have about shading is that it’s totally okay to exaggerate shadows! It makes it interesting! You also don’t need to concern yourself with highlights immediately. Just focus on shadows and medium tones.

Slide 4 - I went back in on top of the pastel and pencil with another pastel and used it to smudge and highlight the nose. Once again, I recommend just playing around with the pastels and seeing what cool applications you can make.
Slide 5 - This is another breakdown of some pastel applications. A technique I accidentally came across was with erasing pastel pigment, which lifts most of the pigment from the paper while leaving some behind, and then when you go back on top of it with a new color you still get a bit of the old color showing through. Try out blending two colors together without erasing, and then try it again with that technique!

Slide 6 - Here’s an application that combines erasing pastel and pencil and then adding more pastel on top of it. You can also just cover your pencil marks with more pastel which shows some of the line details you made while also creating an interesting kind of smudged texture.

I can try to answer any questions y’all might have, or if you want me to do a live video showing some techniques let me know!
September 11, 2020

In my work, I am moved by the presence of touch, of color, of bitter sweetness, of elastic memory, and the possibility of connection. I am motivated to make images so that I can process the world I walk through as a non-binary trans person, and as an autistic person. I look to the queer people walking through history as giants; long and large steps through difficult landscapes. I take comfort in knowing that even though they might not have lived as visibly as they wanted to at the time, I can see them clearly now. I like to think that time is not linear and that my witnessing of the people in the photographs I work from brings them into the present, or at least a space outside of time where they get to live freely and deliberately.
As an autistic person, social interactions throughout my life have been fraught and my language has consistently failed me, often because of differences in communication processing. My brain is quick to process visual input, but lags with linear verbal communication. And so I've turned to image making. My sensitivity to sensory inputs makes for deeply textured and vibrant drawings. I crave colors that make my eyes hurt, and I self-soothe with the repetitive motions of mark-making. It's a way to connect on my terms and in my own language.

Slide 1 - details of series ‘I AM A WITNESS’
Slide 2 - ‘Where it's safe to close your eyes’
Slide 3 - detail of ‘Cody’
Slide 4 - detail of ‘How many times have we been here before...’
September 12, 2020
Today is my final takeover day @fiveoaksmuseum, and I was supposed to do an interactive post (live video, an activity, etc), but if I'm being honest, I just don't have enough spoons for it. Between the threat of fire and toxic air (I'm asthmatic and breathing is tough right now!), I'm feeling pretty low.

Thank you so much for following along this week, and I hope y'all are staying safe and checking in on your loved ones and neighbors. You can see more of my work @pacetaylor.jpg 😊 thank you!

Pictured - on the left, an unfinished ‘The Mirror World is a dangerous place’, and on the right, “Forget me.” “Never.” 