FIVE OAKS MUSEUM

SOCIAL MEDIA TAKEOVER: LINDEN HOW

JANUARY 17, 2022

DAY 1

Hi everyone! My name is Linden (she/they) and this week I'll be sharing some of my work and thinking around libraries and museums, creative and artistic research, and death. Over the past couple of years, I have been working on the Five Oaks Museum Library: getting a picture of what we already have, organizing it, and thinking about how we will continue to collect books that will help our community know more about the past, present, and future of our area. Just a couple weeks ago, our brand new library catalog went live!

When I'm not here, I am doing a few different other things. I teach at @p_n_c_a, I work with @artandfem, and I volunteer with hospice. For the past couple of years, I have been training to become a death doula, and while it seems like a bit of an outlier to my other work, I find many connections between death care, pedagogy, and critical librarianship. At the heart of it, my deepest motivation is liberation.

I'm so excited to hang out with you this week! Please let me know if you have any questions. My personal IG is @dollarparton. (PS: I love Dolly Parton) #library #librariesofinstagram #critlib #critped #oregonhistory #deathcare

JANUARY 18, 2022

DAY 2

First things first...books! You would think a librarian would read library books, but I need to keep the books I read about 50% of the time, so my shelves look like this. I read a lot of fiction, I always have, but I also love poetry and nonfiction. I just saw a James Baldwin quote today about reading: "You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive." For me, reading has always been about connection.

I believe there are so many ways to read too! We are listening, scrolling, translating, unfolding text all the time. And we all have so much to say inside of us. Some of my favorite things I have found while cataloging the museum's library are self-published, stories of growing up in a place, of ancestors, of good times and hard times. One of the things I really want to foster in the library's future is providing resources and workshops for people to keep telling and sharing their stories in print. What stories do you think need to be written?

PS: I get all my own books from the amazing anti-profit @bookshopmassive!

JANUARY 19, 2022

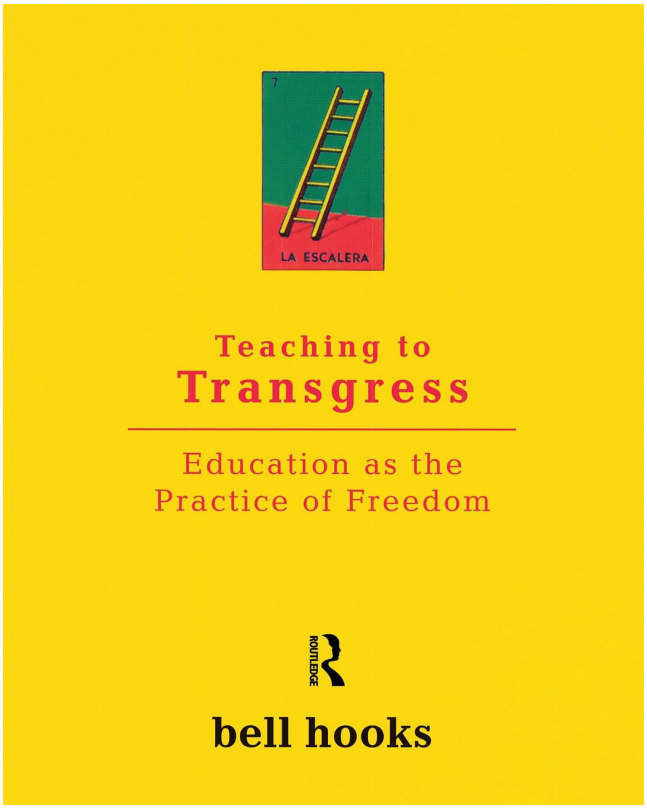
DAY 3

Today, I taught at PNCA. I feel very lucky to be teaching Graduate Thesis Critique for the Visual Studies program for the first time! I took the same class when I was in the program; it's a space where we gather weekly to look at each other's art, talk about ideas and ask questions. As a student, this class taught me about one of the cornerstones of my teaching philosophy: generosity. The task of looking and thinking deeply at one another's work takes a lot of generosity. Teaching and learning take a lot of generosity too. They are both forms of care. I'm so grateful to my teachers who modeled this.

I have been re-reading one of my favorite books about teaching and learning. In Teaching to Transgress by bell hooks, she recounts her own education and how its failings taught her to teach as a practice of liberation rather than subjugation. She writes about making room for emotion, for the varied experiences that make people who they are; that you cannot separate someone's life from their learning.

I hope her wisdom translates into even just a fraction of what I do as a teacher! The best part of teaching for me is getting to learn and know and care and build together. I am regularly floored by things I learn from students. It really is magic!

Did you have a great teacher? Who was it and what made them great?



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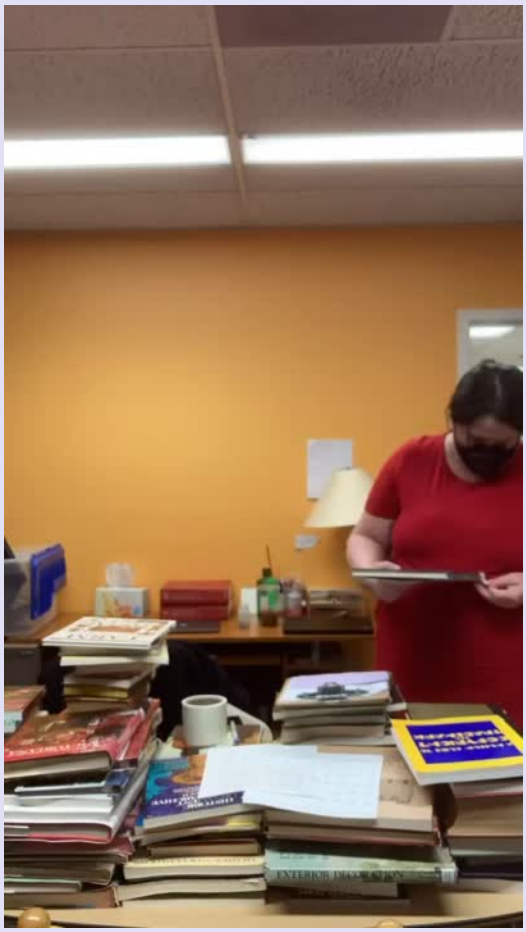

JANUARY 20, 2022

DAY 4

I wish I could move this fast IRL! Here's a taste of the work I've been doing. Being a librarian isn't all glamour and fame ☺, sometimes it's tedious and repetitive. Here I am removing the old labels (some are more stubborn than others) and relabeling the books with their new call numbers.

Over the past couple of years, I have collected books from all corners of the museum. Some had call number labels (Dewey Decimal), and some had older, handwritten labels, and some had none. I decided to recatalog all the books using Library of Congress call numbers. Was this a ton of work? Yes. But Library of Congress is more standard for museum libraries. PCC uses it as well, and since we are located on the Rock Creek campus, I hope that this makes the collection more accessible to students.

The really cool thing about this process is that I got to know the books so well and re-introduce the collection to our staff and board. At the same time, our volunteer (and my personal savior) Dennis Trune and I were building out the library. The room you're seeing used to be an office that wasn't getting much use. Now, it will be a place for researchers to pore over books and archival materials. I can't tell you how good it feels to put these books in order on the shelves we built, knowing that people will be able to look them up and find them, or just spend time browsing.

What would you be researching in the library?

#library #librariesofinstagram

JANUARY 21, 2022

DAY 5

Happy Friday everyone! On the penultimate day of my IG takeover, I wanna talk death.

Most people who are drawn to death care and death work feel it is a kind of calling. For me, it is a way to use the strengths and knowledge I have gained from losing my brother, James, when we were in our 20s. His was my first death, and it was a pretty terrible one.

After years of grieving and trying to understand, I found that I had a lot of space in my heart for others who were experiencing loss. I don't think all grief and suffering has to have a "silver lining" - you have to let it be what it wants to be - but for me I felt really driven to make death care and grief support a part of my life. I wanted a way I could use what I learned to support others in death...a thing we all face, but which is also more or less a taboo in our society.

There is a huge amount of bureaucracy and industry and emotion and fear around death, and most of us come to it unprepared in one way or another. There are laws, and forms, and wills, and big decisions. Part of my work is to help dying people and their families know what's within their rights, and help them reflect and imagine what a good death might look like for them. There is no right answer, and there's no getting around the fact that death is hard. But, I believe, it's also sacred.

I have recently been able to start volunteering for hospice, spending time with folks who have six months to live or less. I hear so many incredible stories from people's lives, and I see people come to terms with their own death in so many ways. I am learning SO MUCH. It makes me believe even more that the most important thing we humans can do is care. More on that tomorrow :)

Here's my little death library. It's still growing, and not everything is directly about death. There are soooo many great resources online too.

When you think of a good death, how do you picture it?

PS, if you want to follow along with my death care journey, my IG for my practice is @meadowlightdeathcare

#deathcare #grief #hospice

DECEMBER 22, 2022

DAY 6

Whew this week flew by! On the last day of my IG takeover, I want to remind everyone (and myself) to find ways to be kind to yourself. For me, that looks like a nice long walk with my family :)

I have thought a lot about what makes me excited to do what I do, and it comes down to care. The work of @leahlakshmiwrites has been so powerful in helping me develop a practice and ethos of care.

In Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's book Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice, they write about the societal and governmental failures to provide the care and support that people with disabilities need. In response, they and other disability justice activists have formed their own networks of care. Their own experiences of disability and shortcomings of care they've received guide them in caring for one another in ways that actually WORK.

Reading about the brilliance of these care networks changed the way I approached teaching, librarianship, and living. I began to pay more attention to moments of care that I witnessed and experienced, and the ways that I tried to care for others. I wondered about what prioritizing care would look like in my different types of work.

This was/is not always easy! With a new lens, I realized that not all my "care" was truly about helping others. Sometimes it's about control instead. Sometimes, care looks like asking someone (or yourself) to grow or change in ways that can be uncomfortable. I will always be a student of care.

I think at its heart, a practice of care is a practice of liberation. Knowing that we got each other, on any scale, frees us from certain ways of thinking and doing. It's radical to care! And difficult! And just like anything else, care is almost impossible to practice if you don't direct some of it back at yourself.

So, I hope you will find some time this weekend that makes your mind and body feel good. Thank you so much for spending time with me this week. And swipe if you'd like to see some very happy dogs
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#care #carework #library #librariesofinstagram