

# FEMINIST BOOKMAKING & CURATORIAL ACTIVISM

May 4 – June 1, 2021

***“I FEEL, THEREFORE I CAN BE FREE.”***

~ Audre Lorde *Sister Outsider*

*“As the feminist critic & philosopher Gayatri Spivak reminds us, we must always acknowledge not only who we are, but where we are, that is, where we are positioned in relation to hierarchies, and to questions of authority & privilege.”*

~ Marcia Tucker *Talking Visions*

*“And I think it’s important that you don’t look away, that you sit in that discomfort. There is a lot of productive work that happens in these uncomfortable spaces where we’re forced to confront history’.”*

~ Roxane Gay, MOMA Talk reflecting on Kara Walker

*“How can each of us act to guarantee that more voices are included?”*

~ Maura Reilly, *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethic of Curating*

*“Merely a notion that the tape-recorder should have caught some ghost of us: that tape-recorder not merely played but should have listened to us, and could instruct those after us: this we were, this is how we tried to love, and these are the forces they had ranged against us, and these are the forces we had ranged within us, within us and against us, against us and within us.”*

~ Adrienne Rich, *A Dream of a Common Language*

*“I tried to be always me. I’ve tried to always fully be.”*

~ Stephanie Neal-Johnson '85 in conversation Jan 10, 2021

Welcome! This exhibit is a welding of communities widening across genres & gestures & generousities ~ members of The Arts & Activism Club’s original works exploring themes of gender, feminism, race and inclusion; a dance-poem-ography of Dr. Stephanie Bramlett, Dr. Courtney Marshall, Zoe Barron '21, Anna Rose Marion '21, Sophie Zhu '24; students’ in a winter 2020-2021 course, “*Bookmaking as Feminist Archival Practice: Reinscribing Histories within the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of Co-Education*,” designed with former Curator of the Lamont Gallery, Lauren O’Neal.

Within the draining & consuming contexts of this time, students in this course began their time together in Zoomworld studying the lenses of critical bookmaking, intersectional feminist theory/practice, curatorial activism, personal reflection. The pulse: the necessity for imagining & creating coalitions as a possibility for transformative justice, for imaginative acts of resistance & for healing within the power dynamics of white supremacy. *The Curation of Care: Joy. Rage. Fear. Uncertainty. Mirrors. The Moon. Margins. Memory. Bridges. A Bench. Binaries. Beginnings. History. Hierarchies. Privilege. Patriarchy. Proximity. Projection. Perception. Patience. Blind Contours. Our Bodies. Boundaries. Safety. Shadows. Silence. Reliance. Radical Care. Empathy. Compassion. Appreciation. Liberation. Differentiation. Inhale. Exhale. Imagine. Celebrate. Nurture. The Small Gestures.* Working from the assumption that lived experience is knowledge & within the spirit of legitimizing/un-silencing truth & the belief that listening is an act of radical love/justice, students created unique, sculptural, celebratory, dynamic “books” inspired by interviews with womxn/women & trans men of BIPOC, Queer, white trailblazing worlds within the expansive PEA community. *Signature. Map. Glue. Tape. Typewrite. Zine. Box. Accordion. Mobile. Mold. Fold. Cut. Clip. Trace. Space. Silhouette.* The handmade “books” you will discover reflect intricate lives, sometimes untold stories we hope to highlight & to reinscribe into institutional memory ~

*“... thresholds to other realities, archetypal, primal symbols of shifting consciousness... passageways, conduits, and connectors that connote transitioning, crossing borders, and changing perspectives... (to) span liminal spaces between worlds, spaces I call nepantla, a Nahuatl word meaning tierra entre medio.”*

~ Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands*

*“To disrupt the existing systems of dominant values and to challenge the very foundation of a social and cultural order is not merely to destroy a few prejudices or to reverse power relations within the terms of an economy of the same. Rather, it is to see through the revolving door of all rationalizations and to meet head on the truth of that struggle between fictions. Art is a form of production. Aware that oppression can be located both in the story told and in the telling of the story, an art critical of social reality neither relies on mere consensus nor does it ask permission from ideology. Thus, the issue facing liberation movements is not that of liquidating art in its not quite-correct, ungovernable dimension, but that of confronting the limits of centralized conscious knowledge, hence of demystifying while politicizing the artistic experience.”*

~ Trinh Minh-Ha, *When the Moon Waxes Red*

This exhibit is dedicated to all of the working womxn/women with so many stories, who in the last 50+ years at PEA have been/are often unseen, unheard, unacknowledged and who allow a place like PEA to function; to the BIPOC & Queer alums/current members of our community who have stories to listen to; to Dolores Kendrick; to those who have been & are Resisters, Creatives, Artists, Abolitionists, Survivors, Liberators, Visionaries, Revolutionaries, Imaginationists, Activists, Spirit Citizens, Healers in their own ways, in their own spaces. There are so many we wish we could

have interviewed, so many untold stories. *“When stillness culminates, there is movement.”* (Trinh Minh-Ha) May we rest in stillness & revolve in motion ~

*“You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world.  
And you have to do it all the time.”*  
~ Angela Davis Lecture 2014

*“Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day,  
I can hear her breathing.”*  
~ Arundhati Roy *“The Cost of Living”*

So much gratitude to Lauren O’Neal, a collaborative spirit always; to Lissa Soep, friend & producer at Youth Radio & VOX, for guiding us through ethics & ways of interviewing; to Gail Scanlon and Magee Lawhorn in the Academy Library for offering their expertise, archives, interviews, new ways of conceptualizing; to Stephanie Neal-Johnson ’85 P’19 for ushering us into a spiritual recentering after the January 6, 2021 white supremacist insurgency at The Capitol; to Margaret Norsworthy-Edghill, Brody Faliero, Lyric Zimmerman for late night construction of a paper-mâché urinal; to all the students whose voices are in the “book-mobile,” to the students in Arts & Activism & Feminist Bookmaking, to all those who were allowed us to listen to their stories &&& to Stacey Durand and Dustin Schuetz for swinging into a beautiful collaborative spirit, for opening the Gallery for this Exhibit, for teaching us book-making, book-stacking; for resurrecting *The Pink Stage*; for their curatorial labor & aesthetic you are now in. *Thank You* ~

*“Bless the poets, the workers for justice, the dancers of ceremony, the singers  
of heartache, the visionaries, all makers and carriers of fresh meaning—We will all  
make it through, despite politics and wars, despite failures and misunderstandings.  
There is only love.”*  
~ Joy Harjo, *Conflict for Holy Beings*

~ Mercy Carbonell, English Instructor

