



AUTHENTIC OUTREACH

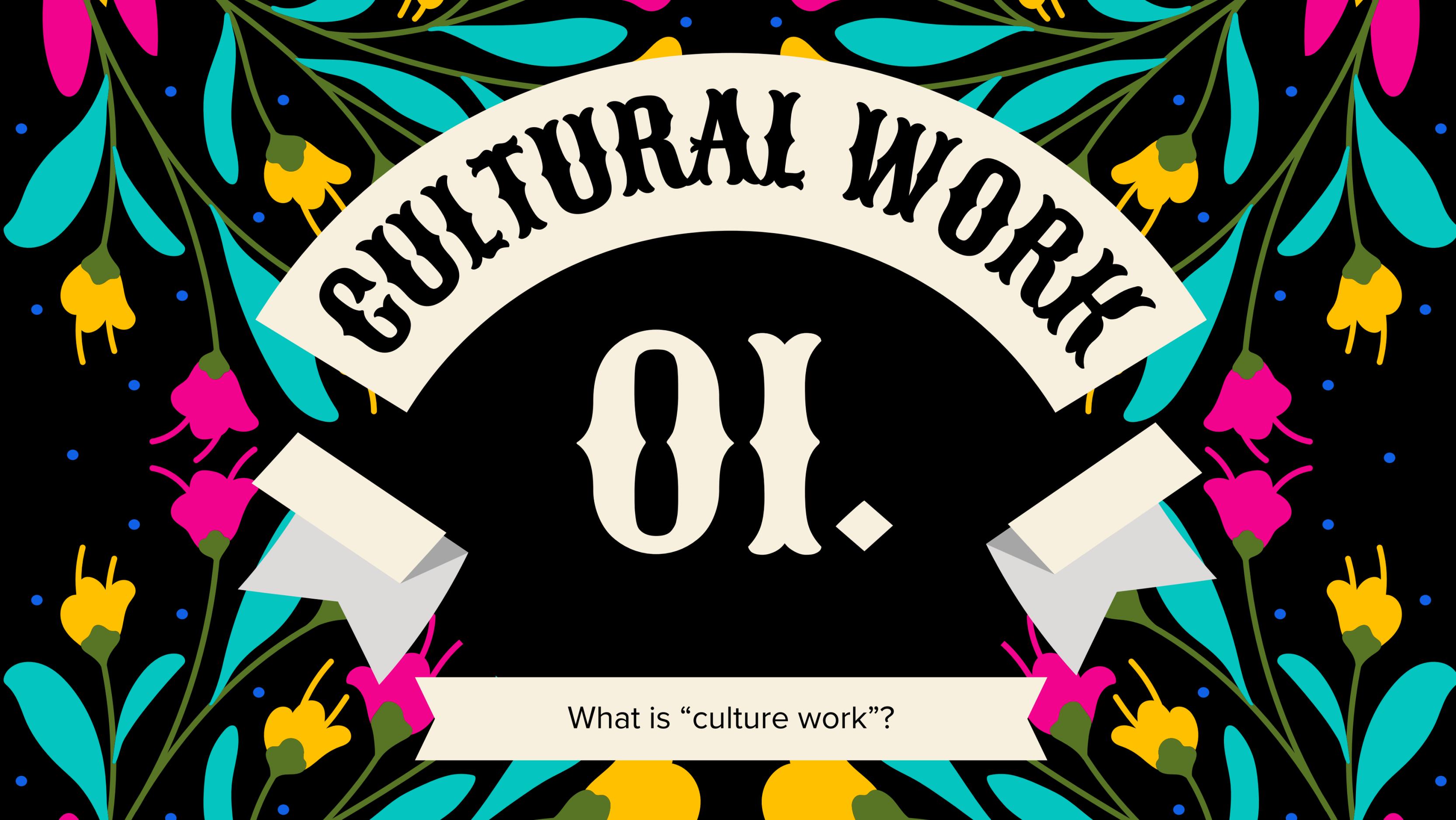
Culture work in academic libraries



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California Conference on Library
Instruction | Making the (In)visible
Visible
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CULTURAL WORK

OR.

What is "culture work"?

CULTURE WORK

- Culture
 - “...the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group...” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1982).
- Cultural work
 - “..interactional labor involved in creating, defining, and negotiating perceptions of culture and the relationships between these perceptions and individuals socially constructed identities” (Carter & Bolden, 2012).

LIBRARIANS

- Libraries and librarians are active cultural workers, not neutral bystanders (Chiu et al., 2021).

LIBRARIES AS CULTURAL STEWARDS

- Libraries are enablers of cultural participation and transformation (Bennoune et al., 2016).



WHITE SUPREMACY CULTURE IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Perfectionism

Written word

Individualism

Paternalism

Sense of urgency

Neutrality myth

Professionalism

A prioritization of academic-style lectures or panels over storytelling, performance, or community circles.

Outreach efforts are delayed or avoided unless they can be done “perfectly” or meet institutional norms.

Efforts to center marginalized histories or experiences are framed as “biased” or “controversial”

Overemphasis on formal qualification of the MLIS, faculty, or administrators to determine who is “qualified” to lead programming.

Programs organized by staff or community partners with marginalized identities are scrutinized more intensely than those from dominant-culture staff.

Library programming avoids directly addressing systemic injustice under the guise of neutrality or “not being political.”

Decision-makers assume they know what communities need without authentic engagement or a process of accountability.

Individual leadership or staff claims “ownership” of a program, rather than sharing success as a community effort.

Outreach is “for” rather than “with” communities

The background features a repeating pattern of stylized, colorful flowers in shades of pink, blue, and teal, interspersed with white skulls decorated with colorful floral patterns. The skulls have black eye sockets and mouths, and some have small black crosses on their cheeks. The overall aesthetic is vibrant and culturally rich.

REIMAGINING OUTREACH AS CULTURAL WORK

Cultural work is constantly occurring and is never neutral.

Race radical library instruction centers race and power in teaching, challenging systems of oppression.

AUTHENTIC OUTREACH

Authentic outreach brings the framework of race-radical library instruction and cultural work together, for library workers co-create library programming that reflects and respects the histories, identities, and needs of marginalized communities.

AUTHENTIC OUTREACH

02.

Making the (In)visible visible

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

CHICO COMMUNIDAD

Three Community ofrendas

- Meriam Library
- Valene L. Smith Anthropology Museum
- Student Services Center Plaza
- 178 area youth toured the ofrendas

ANTHRO FORUM

- Collaboration
- Student Mini-podcast/ testimonios



RASQUACHE NICHU WORKSHOP

- Aesthetic of resourcefulness
- Intergenerational gathering



DIA DE LA FAMILIA

- Hispanic Serving Institution Faculty Learning Community
- Lambda Theta Nu Collaboration
- 140 children's books to local families





REACHING OUT TOWARD AN AUTHENTIC FUTURE

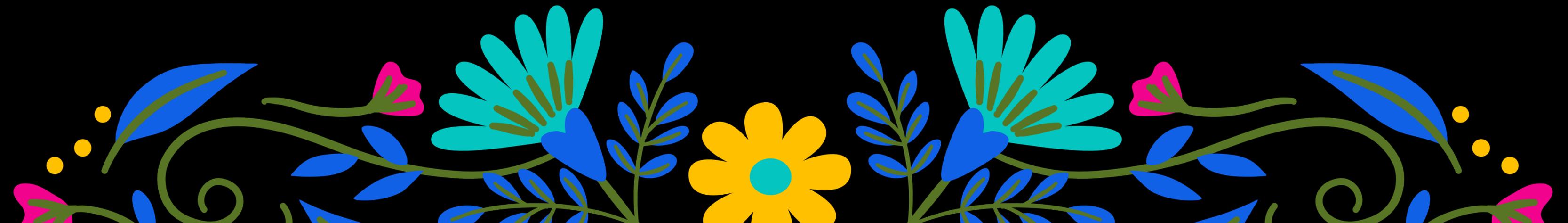
- Community accountability
 - Culturally relevant and historically informed
 - Solidarity, not service
 - Disruption of dominant norms
- 



QUESTIONS FOR YOU

Whose cultural knowledge and labor are you centering, and whose remains invisible or undervalued in your institution's outreach work?

How does white supremacy culture show up in your outreach or programming work? What do you need to shift to name and disrupt it?



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