## The Medicine Quilt: Margaret Doom

## Season 1, Episode 3

[Intro music]

**Margaret Doom**

I serve this thing that I believe in, but I am just a tiny, tiny piece of it, and all across South Dakota there are people doing their own part in creating a better place.

**Kara Harders**

Welcome to Home Starts Here, a podcast seeking out the individuals, businesses and ideas that are sparking vibrant communities across South Dakota. We sit down with rural change makers striving to understand their place in their local ecosystem.

**Joshua Hofer**

How do we see establish peacemaking and projects of shared experience between different populations in South Dakota today?

How do we work through a history of claiming land from others in a way that embraces history, but also honestly forges a path for prosperity and healing for everyone involved? Today we're gonna be speaking with Margaret Doom about a project called the Medicine Quilt.

We're going to learn how two groups from communities in South Dakota, Wagner, and Freeman, came together. Specifically, we'll discover how, through the freedom network for justice and peace, and the work of East River Horizons from Wagner, prompted a unique conciliation process that was realized through the prism of cultural exchange, art, and shared story. Finally, join us as we discover how they chose to celebrate the culmination of the project through design and story with a children's book titled "The Medicine Quilt".

**Kara Harders**

Hello, everybody my name is Kara Harders and I'm a Community Vitality Field Specialist. Today, I am joined by my colleague Joshua Hofer, who is also a Community Vitality Field Specialist, and Margaret Doom, who is our guest today, and we're going to be talking about The Medicine Quilt. Margaret, would like to introduce yourself?

**Margaret Doom**

Yes, of course. I'm Margaret Doom, I'm from Wagner, South Dakota originally and currently a resident of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

**Kara Harders**

Awesome.

**Joshua Hofer**

Can you give us a little background on the Wagner area, the people involved, and the players involved with this project?

**Margaret Doom**

Yeah, well, so the project is called The Medicine Quilt it's a children's book that was created to help tell the story of the work of conciliation in, East River South Dakota, specifically in the towns of Wagner and Freeman, South Dakota.

So Wagner, South Dakota is a checkerboard reservation, meaning that there's both whites and native land interspersed within the area and jurisdiction. You know, federal jurisdiction, and tribal jurisdiction are very close to one another. And so, consequently, you know, there’s a great mixing of cultures, of both the Dakota native culture and then the white culture area, which is comprised of Irish, Bohemian, German, all different types of peoples. And then the Freeman community. which is located about a half hour, maybe a little over a half hour east of us, and Josh I understand you're from Freeman - I'm gonna let you take it and say a little bit about that - I'd love to hear your perspective I guess on Freeman.

**Joshua Hofer**

So, Freeman is a community of about 1,300 people located east and a bit north about an hour, hour, and a half from Wagner. It was established as a railroad stop in 1879 and quickly became a center for immigrants of varying cultures and religious beliefs. A large group that was represented among those immigrants were people we refer to as Germans from Russia, who had arrived in the mid-1870s. The town was incorporated in 1893, and I would say it's a community that takes arts and heritage and food seriously in a unique way. Reflected through things like the festival, Schmeckfest, that happens each year. Swiss Choral, which is an annual choral tradition where the whole area gets together and performs historical work. And now the South Dakota Chislic Festival, with chislic being a Germans from Russia delicacy brought over from the Crimea.

The Freeman Network for justice and peace which we'll be talking about here, has 2 purposes: first, to discern God's transforming voice in the Church through prayer and sharing and second to practice the Church's prophetic voice in the world through projects that can be done locally and globally. It was founded 10-15 years ago by Ivan Friesen and S. Roy Kauffman of the Freeman area, and it is represented by a good majority of folks of the Mennonite tradition, but I would say it's not the group that is exclusively Mennonite, and there are a variety of faiths that participate in the Freeman network for Justice and peace, in projects focused on reconciliation and peacemaking throughout the region.

**Margaret Doom**

Yeah, we became familiar with the Network for Justice & Peace out of Freeman when they contacted some members of Wagner who had previously been working through the SDSU Horizons Project, which is a project that targeted communities in South Dakota to help with different development endeavors which had brought together a real unique group from Wagner being a bicultural area, having that tribal influence and the white influence kind of coming together. So when the Network for Justice & Peace reached out to Wagner, originally what they wanted to do was share a meal with the people of the area, specifically the native people, in honor of Thanksgiving, around the time period. But, in order to open discussions about the land, the history of the land, how that land had come to the possession of the Mennonites who had come, you know I mean the community of Freeman has a long history of being a diaspora that moved throughout Europe, throughout the United States. So you know they take land very seriously and I think it's something that they understand on a really deep level spiritually, they're a farming community as well. So you know they too the connection seriously. There was a really special way they wanted to reach out to the native people, of course, being the original owners and the original residence of that land.

So when they reach out to Wagner. you know there was. There was, of course, a little bit of - I don't wanna say friction. I don't think that's the right, I don't think that's the right word, but there is the issue of, you know, Thanksgiving being a rather controversial topic for native people and white people, and the history of thanksgiving, and then the history proceeding that time. And so what was really cool is this opened up a conversation between the communities about what does it mean to want to share this land together? What does it mean to understand the history and that now consequently we're all here together and we all want what's best for South Dakota. We all have a desire to see the children that will come after us have beautiful, full lives. And so in coming together, these conversations started that really changed the trajectory for both communities in a really beautiful way.

**Joshua Hofer**

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. And I would say too, as you describe, the Germans from Russia people were displaced in an interesting way in this story. They had their own experiences of displacement from Germany to the Crimea and under the Russian Empire. And then coming over, there's displacement themes here that in their own way, they've needed to find home, and the same challenges - I think the same themes do come once you know the backstory of the situation.

**Margaret Doom**

Yeah and having gone to Freeman and visiting some of the people there, and the Academy, and the wonderful community it is - it's very cool to experience how they have created a place on the prairie. And, you know the community there is very tight and is thriving and it's just a really cool thing to get to be a part of you know, given their history, and the persecution - I believe religious persecution was a big part of it. I don't know how much racial persecution goes into that as well you know, being the different ethnics groups of Europe, but for sure that religious persecution. And finding the place where they could belong, raise their children, and create their future. I think the Freeman community has created something really beautiful there.

**Joshua Hofer**

Yeah, I think that's true, and without going into the history and so forth. I will say with the caveat balancing this is - even the people - we are all visitors as we came onto this land. We were displacing people in the Crimea when those people, when the Germans from Russia came there and so forth. So, anyway, well said. I appreciate it. I definitely see the synergy.

**Kara Harder**

So, with these 2 groups coming together, and eventually having the creation of the quilts, which led to the book, which we'll talk about later - what was the timeline and catalyst for that actual quilt project?

**Margaret Doom**

So, for our wonderful listeners out there. The quilts have been a symbol of forgiveness within these communities for quite some time. That originally began when the Freeman community wanted to offer a gift. They had been engaged in conversations with Wagner, particularly some of my family members, my grandmother Margaret Zephier being among them, Vince Two eagles being among them, you know, having some conversations about these issues of displacement, these issues of land ownership, and land recognition. Through those conversations, they wanted to make an overture of sort of friendship, kinship. This idea that they wanted to acknowledge; now we are neighbors, for better or worse here we are. And so they gifted the Wagner Horizons community with a beautiful handmade quilts from one of the members of the network for peace and justice. And this quilt, the stitching is beautiful and just, an incredible piece of folk art.

And when Wagner received that quilt, they were they were very humbled by that, and in exchange, Margaret Zephier, who is my adopted grandmother - she created a quilt, and then gave that back to them. And the exchange of those 2 quilts was the inspiration for the book which you know - the story is about 2 grandmothers who both create a quilt, and the purpose of that quilt being to restore their community, maybe restore being an erroneous word, because that would assume meeting that would assume there had been peace in their community before - so maybe it's more viable to say, to create a place of peace that had not existed before, between the 2 communities in the book that mirrored the two communities that are here in South Dakota.

And so those quilts have really come to represent the idea of wanting to create a space to have those conversations. Of having the desire to talk about what happened, and be courageous enough, and loving enough of not only each other, but loving enough of the children that are to come, that are inherit South Dakota that we love them enough that we are willing to take the steps to be brave and have these conversations that are difficult to say the least.

**Kara Harder**

Incredibly difficult conversations to have.

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**13:00**

**It strikes me, too, that you made an interesting point that a lot of times we think of these things as repairing or rebuilding the relationships. And the fact of the matter is when you, when you go back and listen to the history, and so forth, it started on pretty bad... well, bad terms. It wasn't a situation where they had 100 years, and this went really well. I mean, yes, in the beginning there were probably land that was turf here, and turf here, you know, on reservation, alliances, etc. But at the end of the day we're really looking for - some of this is solutions that have never existed, and I often, you know I even think of it as rebuilding relationships. But it's really not - it's forging them.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**13:51**

**Yeah, absolutely. I mean we're kind of on untested ground here. you know Governor Mickelson started the 100 years of reconciliation. I don't know when those began. I know we hit a big landmark here recently. But that word reconciliation - that is a really difficult word because reconciliation pretends that we once had a bond between us, and that we're reaching we're re-conciling, creating that again. But what we're really doing is just conciliation, I mean, we are just starting to have these conversations, and we're not going back to the good old days necessarily. We are doing something even more brave than going back to the way things were, which is imagining, dreaming like artists. You know, like artists do - we're dreaming the future, we’re seeing something that doesn't yet exist. And it takes artists with that creative spirit and sort of that hope. It takes a lot of hopes to make art, it takes a lot of hope to make a community to have that vision for the future, you know. like the grandmothers in the book do. They're having a vision of the future, what they have and what it was.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**15:06**

**I think it's a unique topic of issue, or struggle too, because you're right - we’re trying to make something that has never been, trying to fix a problem that's always been. It existed for so long that you almost feel like there should be almost a manual on how to do this at this point - we're still plugging away, moving forward trying to figure out what the answer is to make these things work better together.**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**15:37**

**What do you think, not to put you on the spot, but how would you parse out the difference between conciliation process and a reconciliation process? What comes to mind when you think of those features?**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**15:52**

**Reconciliation, to me, is easier because you have a template of something that may have worked at one time. You know, at one point we were great friends, or at one point we lived together peaceably, or at one point we had this figured out.**

**Conciliation is a much bigger concept because there's a lot more trial and error involved. As we see in rural reservation communities, as we see in the relationships in South Dakota between native and white peoples. There's no there's no manual. There's no - there's no way to create that future, right, and I think that where place making comes into this and where the book comes into this because you know the book doesn't seek to tell us how we will find peace with one another, or what we need to do, what steps we need to take, you know, like 1, 2, 3, 4. If you do these things there will be peace. Everyone will be happy. Everyone will be satisfied and be able to move on and that's just not the reality. The book is much more about creating a space for these conversations to take place in a space that says, hey, this is safe enough, because we are all agreeing together that we want to continue forward - that we want something better. And creating that space to say we want something better and making that safe place for people to come into and say some of the things that are hard to say which you don't have usual bias.**

**We have the conversations about land conversations, about boarding schools, you know. Tough conversations about people who have suffered to make their land something. Those are hard conversations to have and unless we create a place that is receptive to the truth, nonjudgmental, courageous, and open to those who would be willing to step into that space and have those conversations. So yeah, I mean the big difference is that we don't know what conciliation can look like. Nobody does. And that's why South Dakotans are incredibly brave. And that's why we have a tremendous but very worthy challenge ahead of us to begin the work of creating better future.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**18:30**

**As you've been talking about this, I've been kind of trying to think of another way to explain or think about it and it's almost like if you tell someone they have to make a cake, even most people who have baked a ton of cakes without a recipe would struggle with it. And so, it's almost like you're trying to bake something that you don't have a recipe for and maybe you don't even know what it's supposed to be turned out or to be shaped like - and is this flavor is good enough - you never know quite when you're done. It's this constant evolving solution that we're looking for that hopefully one day we get to the point where everybody feels pacified with how this cake has turned out, and we can remake the cake or tweak the recipe and figure out how to make it better. And in a way, it's one of those topics that you hope is always getting better or always being tweaked. I don't know. How do you feel about that?**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**19:27**

**You just blew my mind. I loved that - I loved that so much. I wish I'd taken notes. I think the cake metaphor is awesome. I'm obviously a very metaphorical person - judging by the book I've written. And I really think there is a children’s book in that cake metaphor. Absolutely - how do you create something that you don't even know what it tastes like? My dad's a great cook and he can have a flavor in his head, and it's not even a real flavor, but he has almost - you can feel it and he says - I don't know what it tastes like but I know what it doesn't taste like, and maybe that's what we're doing, you know, we don't know what community is - but we are starting to figure out what community isn't. Just getting a little closer to the final product in doing that. I mean, it's such a long process, and I think that that's where maybe other means of achieving it that are not art-based have fallen short. Not because other means are unworthy, but the concept of art is that it is constantly evolving and changing and getting closer to something different and I just feel like I feel like art is a great way to envelop community, because community is always changing and finding way to do it better and finding ways that don't work. And that's why I'm really passionate about art as a means for place making, art as a means for having difficult conversations, because it just seems such a worthy frigate for getting there.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**21:15**

**Well, the artistic route you took with the children's book has turned out to be the perfect recipe. I think it looks beautiful. Do you want to tell us a little bit about the Medicine Quilt book?**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**21:30**

**Well, first of all, I have to give a giant shout out to Lashawn Medicine Horn, who I know, I’m biased, but she is the most spectacular artist.**

**I went to high school with her, and actually really looked up to her in high school. She's an incredible artist and always has been. I think she was probably born that way but the images she creates are just incredible, and when we came to her with the original manuscript, and the manuscript has gone through so many iterations, and I can get into that in a minute - and we can have a conversation because I know you are artists in your own right and it'd love to have conversations about how it is created. We came to Lashawn with the manuscript, and it was a very, very raw piece. I wrote it when I was very, very young. It was sort of this dream of an idea that I had while having conversations with my grandmother Margaret Zephier. It didn't necessarily have bones yet.**

**It had some material there that was good, but it didn't have the punch, and we brought it to Lashawn, and we're like - do you want to take a crack at this - can you do this? And she took the manuscript, and she just ran with it. She came back, and she's like, what do you think of this?**

**And my jaw hit the floor and I was like, how did you take the feeling, you know, the feeling of what it's like to be in this conflict and be able to simplify and distill it into these vibrant, beautiful, and yet very linear and simple images that are that are understandable universally, to do adults, to children. Because the book is a children's book, but I think that the story there has much, much greater reach than just for children. She's incredible - check out her work, she's really, really amazing and I just can't wait to see what she does in the future.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**23:38**

**Yeah, I open the book - we have a couple of copies of it here with us, and I've opened into a random page, and you can look at the picture and you immediately get this feeling. And there's so many things going on in each one, and I don't want to give away any of the stories, you know you have to sell books, too. But each page, and the artistry and the work in it. I feel like you would get the gist of what this book is about, without even almost having to read. It's such a beautifully done piece of art.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**24:13**

**Absolutely.**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**24:15**

**How do you think the book would be different if it was not practical art. And I asked that because for both these groups, Germans from Russia, the Mennonite traditions, and the native traditions, and then the practical art are a specific thing that has a different meaning in both those cultures. I'm just imagining this book in a performing arts setting performing our story versus a practical art story. Do you have any thoughts about that?**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**24:50**

**Ya, first of all - so flesh out the word practical art for me a little bit.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**24:54**

**Me too.**

**24:55**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**Yeah, I’d say practical art would be things that you use in everyday life - applied art. If you think - it's not common in some societies to have something you sit on, or something you wear where you'd use it in the everyday setting to be art at the same time. So when the Germans from Russia, and Mennonite folks came over. They had quilting - blacksmithing would be another example. So graves - you look at those old gravestones - the metal crosses and such were beautiful art. But they're also signifying gravestones. Quilting is even more practical because quilting is warmth. I know the native tradition has aspects of that too and I’m just trying to think of how the experience would be different if it wasn't practical art for both parties.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**25:56**

**Yeah, no, I love what you said there, I think we did. I’m taking that and the cake metaphor with me in my pocket out of this conversation. Yeah, practical art is incredibly powerful.**

**You know the first thing that came to mind as you said that was the Greek amphoras - beautiful vases that people carried water around every day and now we've got them in museums because they're so beautiful but they really were meant to utilized and you know. I think that practical art really comes back to being a prairie culture. You don't have ancillary items on the prairie. You don't have - for the native people I mean they would pack everything up and move from one place to another. And so, that obviously makes you I guess have less - kind of naturally you're gonna have what you can carry with you.**

**You know, in in the Mennonite tradition you - I’d be curious to see because of the displacement that they experienced, if that affected the way that they saw art and practical art in any way. But more than that, you know the farming culture, the working culture, you know that your art is going to center around the things that are most important to you. Another aspect of this book that kind of touches on the practical art theory is just the idea of oral tradition. The idea of storytelling and using stories to explain really complex things. So concepts that would be much more difficult to understand like if we just sat down and had them - let's talk about the conflict between native and white people in South Dakota. You know, people - their eyes would get really big...**

**KARA HARDERS**

**27:47**

**Made me nervous just hearing you say that.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**27:48**

**Ya - some people would faint - it would get very intense, but the idea that we can say, hey, here's more of a parable or a fable about it. And then we can use that fable to dig into the conversation without having to necessarily look it straight in the face right away. It doesn't mean that we don't have to go there someday, but if we can start in this way where we can use our imaginations to start touching on what can be, because again, imagination plays such key part in the future that we're creating. Without that imagination and the ability to believe in a different future than the one we may currently see ourselves heading towards we have to have - imagination requires you to be fearless in that way. It is scary to look at what could be. Sometimes that can be a really terrifying place to inhabit.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**28:42**

**Sometimes I think, too, is when you cross over into adulthood, whatever age that happens at, I think you there's topics that make you feel uncomfortable, and it's very hard to teach yourself to feel comfortable talking about them.**

**But as a child who doesn't have those kind of predisposed feelings about a topic reading a book like this or experiencing the story, it could definitely - it definitely is going to create those less anxiety around the subject.**

**You know it's not a new thing or something that they've had nothing but uncomfortable conversations are heard uncomfortable about. It's something that they're more familiar with as a generalized concept which I think is a neat way to present the story.**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**29:30**

**Also, its captured in the nook, one of the things I appreciate in the book were the colors of courage and hope. So it was nifty in a way the importance of the colors in the quilt process, was pretty integral, you know, 2 pages you know. So yeah, I think that's very true.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**29:58**

**So, projects like these are marks on a long journey towards building community, and we've talked a little bit around that.**

**But how do you think this work has maybe changed the group's perceptions of home & belonging?**

**If you feel like it has - do you think it had the impact on you personally, even, or the way people perceive these places as home?**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**30:21**

**I think that more than then the book itself has just made an impact, the journey to get to the book made a pretty tremendous impact on everyone involved. There was a person from the SDSU Extension who worked with us in the Horizons Project who the book is dedicated to – Dave Olson, who was a really, really incredible man. He knew my family very well and the relationships that were built along the way to this book, they’re still there. Those relationships that are sort of a safety net for all of us that are the foundation of a lot of the work we continue to do.**

**I also think for the community at-large this book is sort of an opening act to a lot of art that's now thriving within the Wagner community. They have a pair of painted travelling buffalo that are really cool. They received a grant to do an incredible mural in the gym of the boys and girls club that is quite honestly breathtaking, and I hope that if any of you are ever traveling and get the chance to go see it – it really just brings a lot of life every time I look at it.**

**I have so much, like, this infusion of life in me. So I think it really opened the door to some of those art projects and using art more decisively to have conversations and look at different topics on top of that, you know Wagner hosted the 605 Unity jam which was an unbelievable success, it was a music festival based on unity. And you know, kind of finding these unique ways to get in there and create change using art. I definitely think the book laid the groundwork for that. For me personally, it’s really had a huge impact in my life. Because the story is in many ways - it went through all these different phases that were really an example of where I was at in my life.**

**So when I originally wrote this, and the idea came to me, between the ages of 16-18, playing with ideas in your head – and that’s where this story really started. And when it was first written it had this happy ending – like “and everybody hugged!” (laughter) was happy and everyone figured it out.**

**But by the time it was published I was quite a bit older than that. And by the end, the story is really left open-ended, and I think that that is a mark of maturity within myself and in a maturity of the issues and understanding the issues in South Dakota now - because I can't write the story for South Dakota. I can’t speak for any of the people here. This book is a dream that I have, but I cannot speak for them. It is up to us as a community of South Dakotans, being a macro community, and then, Wagner being the micro of that, all of us, all of the tiny communities, and many of these kinds of communities that make up the whole, and they have to speak for forgiveness themselves. They have to speak for the vision of what the future looks like themselves. And I think the older you get, the more you open yourself up and say - I can't solve this. I can't even lead people to solve this. It's so much bigger than that, and understanding your tiny, tiny role in this gargantuan, beautiful scheme of life is really incredible.**

**So, I’ve seen this transition within myself, almost having more of a servant’s heart about it. It's like I serve this thing that I believe in, but I am just a tiny, tiny piece of it, and all across South Dakota there are people doing their part in creating a better place. You know, like in Freeman - and I’d love to know what the impact has been on Freeman in that thriving community.**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**35:00**

**When I think about that question of how it impacted Freeman’s perception – how the arts impacted Freeman - and that iterative aspect - doing things again and again while getting a little better each time would be my easy definition of iterative. I think it's similar in some ways, and very different, because the visual arts, some of this is focused around visual arts tradition, which can be very iterative in form because you're always building on something, and that was part of the heritage of the area.**

**But the trick, the tricky part, without getting too much into the weeds, is that the choral arts in some ways would have been the number one thing I would've identified immediately before the visual arts. The quilting, it’s true that's strong but then the choral tradition would have been the other one, and the choral process in some sense, is the performing arts. You get together and do it again. You come together and tell the story again. So, it's iterative, but in a different way. And the other thing about the iterative - like doing these things again, or the performing arts - is we didn't have recordings of you know the 1890 choir. Now, that's changing a little bit with modern multimedia like recordings and video and audio recordings. But in that way. Yeah. So in that way it's been a little bit of a different journey for Freeman. But I definitely see the veins of arts and heritage also undergirding how people think of home there, too, and how I think of home in regards to Freeman.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**36:59**

**Yeah, when you think about land in South Dakota, It's really interesting the - I went to the festival of the book not that long ago, and in every talk I went to they, you know they would start with like a land acknowledgment. And that - that becomes part of your definition of home. You know it's - it doesn't have to be - I think a lot of people look at it like it’s this alienating thing like - Oh, we don't belong here. We're – Or, gosh, I’m getting into a difficult topic here, but I'm going to try my best to say what I mean.**

**Yeah, you know from me is it's not like - land recognition doesn't take away, it adds to the story - it doesn't take away belonging, it adds to meaning of what that belonging is. Because it's not this simple story that I think we told for a lot of generations about pioneers, you know, the Oregon trail, kind of this simple heroic story, it’s more complicated than that but that doesn't make it - just because it isn’t what we have been telling ourselves a really long time - it doesn't have to take away from you know what it means to be in South Dakota, or what it means to be south Dakotan - and I know that that's a really dicey thing and everybody's gonna have their own feelings about that and I welcome those feelings and realize everybody's gonna understand that differently, but for me, it doesn't take away.**

**You know being in Freeman and knowing the history of the land, you know, and knowing the history of the Freeman people which I find really beautiful and interesting. For many people inside South Dakota and for all white people in South Dakota - we come from somewhere else, and we have our own histories of how we got here, and it could be an incredibly healing process for all of us to look deeper into those histories and understand that if we look at them, and say hey, I came from somewhere else. And maybe I came from a tremendous persecution, religious, ethnic, maybe there was no future for me in the other land that that my people came from, and understanding that and understanding the violence that then came with that and followed white people to the United States, I don’t think that that has to take away from what it means to belong here, because of history for all of us I don't think there's a person here who doesn’t have history somewhere along their lines that they have to come to terms with.**

**So yeah, to delicately step on it, the delicate topic there.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**40:25**

**Yeah, like if you go back far enough, nobody is perfect.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**40:27**

**Yeah. Absolutely not, absolutely not.**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**40:30**

**Yeah, and I would say too, every action, for better or for worse is another layer on the cake**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**40:31**

**Yeah, yeah!**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**40:37**

**You know, just from before, that's whether we like or not, we're layering like these things are Iterative and almost entrepreneurial or innovative processes and yeah, everything, every action is a new layer on the cake that you're - we're all created together.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**40:58**

**Right. Well its really cool to think that your or everybody’s words are, even in this conversation is another layer on the cake, every thought that we have is another layer on the cake. Every action that we take in our communities is, and that's to me incredibly empowering. Some people are like well, that makes it feel very small, but to me that's like your action is something, you know, I think, in today's day and age it can be difficult to feel like what you're doing is something, but it it’s always part of a story - the little micro stories that are moving into that good.**

**But now I’m going to turn table really quick and I’m gonna ask you guys a question.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**41:33**

**(laughter) I’m not ready for this.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**41:36**

**Just to mix things up cause I am curious about your own feelings about art and storytelling, and how that has affected your lives and maybe even the way that children's literature has affected your lives, and maybe shaped who you are today. If there's you know books or stories that have stayed with you for a really long time.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**41:55**

**So I’ll go I’ll go first, and let Josh think a little bit, especially taking this from the direction of what you're talking about childhood. I think I was always I always wondered why there weren’t more types of things like, why are there only so many colors Is there a color out there that I can't see? Like thinking like what can't I know? what can't we do?**

**And I think that using art specifically or stories or pictures or song or dance it's a way to almost add that layer of this is a color that we've never seen or a flavor we've never tasted or something and you’re kind of, combining something that is so fluid and flexible, and art can be used to describe anything, and applying it to concepts that are sometimes hard or rigid.**

**Or you know you know it's events in history that can't be changed, and I think when you add things like art, and it really expands the way a person can think about it. I was from childhood reading, and I mean my mom is an author, and she was very pro. “Children need to be reading books more than they're watching Tv” and so I don't know if I can name any off the top of my head right now, I know I read and read because I wasn't allowed to watch Tv - all kinds of different stories. I don't I don't know how I would be different without that. But I feel like it probably has shaped the way that I see the world.**

**Did that answer your question?**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**43:37**

**Yeah, it did. That was a beautiful answer.**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**43:41**

**Well, I think that for myself, you know. I think that art and story about a huge impact on how I think of place, and how I think of what makes a home and the arts and heritage have had a huge impact on my identity and how I see myself and communities.**

**I think it's different for me in that not so much remembering books, although I also have the same similar story to Kara of having a lot of books like my parents were conscious about reading to us and limiting screen time, which now by the way is even more difficult. (Laughter) Just as a parent now.**

**But, yeah, for me, it was performing arts that was my big impact that was the songs that we sing, the traditions, and the story and how that brings people together.**

**So there's an interesting, there's an episode here on visual art against performing arts here. but so for me it's quite different and in the way the same.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**45:00**

**But yeah, it's kind of cool to give you a call back, what you're talking about is about how every time you recite a story, you’re essentially creating a new form of art, I mean you are you are performing the story to some degree, and every performance is gonna have, you know, a different feel. You might emphasize different parts, you might, different things might stand out to you. One of the ways that we presented the book when it first came out is puppets. We had, this is, I mean I’m gonna out myself, in that my family really loves puppets, which I think is…so weird**

**KARA HARDERS**

**45:34**

**I got so excited when you said that (laughter) I wasn’t expecting it and I really feel like we need, this should have ben a video recorded conversation.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**45:44**

**Yeah, we definitely, growing up we had Marionets and I… this is totally embarrassing, I made puppets in college, and like, we’re a puppet family.**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**45:55**

**No, that’s cool.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**45:56**

**No, its not (laughter).**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**45:57**

**That’s a form of theater, yeah. I like it.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**46:00**

**I love it.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**46:01**

**So yeah, that was one of the ways that we initially presented the book to make it as engaging as possible for children, because the story again it's meant to be for many different ages, of people and although it's**

**geared toward children, you know we wanted to make it as immersive as possible. So they could engage with it. and you know that was really cool. We had puppets of all the animals, and, you know, allow children to kind of come into it from that direction. Yeah, I mean it's amazing how every different person who reads the book aloud, because like I’ve read the book aloud a lot now, so much so that, like it's a little crazy I could probably recite it myself from memory.**

**But the different voices carrying the words is really amazing because every voice finds a different emphasis and that's just - that's really that's one of the most beautiful things about you know the oral tradition.**

**Is that - it does - It's different with every person who's performing it, and it never happens the same way twice so I find that to be something really special about the book and I'm gonna encourage people to read it aloud, to you know, to put their own spin on it, even if you change some of the words in it, you know. Maybe you wanna add colors you know the there's a big piece in the book that's about the different colors representing different virtues that we need to have on the road to forgiveness, and you know I am totally open to believing that there are colors and virtues I haven’t even though of yet, that maybe your family might need, or other families might need in their own Forgiveness journey. And so this is a great starting point to get creative. And you know, find out what can you do with the story because you know the story isn't mine. It's there to serve. It's a living it's a living thing, and it's there to be used it's almost like that Greek amphora we were talking about earlier. Or practical art - it's not meant to belong to one person in the way that is, it's meant to be a living thing and used to make a difference in the world.**

**And it should be, you know, should be made better by other people telling it even, so yeah, I just think that's a really amazing thing about this particular piece of art.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**48:29**

**That's wonderful.**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**48:30**

**A living, evolving, form of home.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**48:34**

**Yeah, oh, I want that on a t-shirt, a new SDSU t-shirt.**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**48:43**

**So what advice would you give for future leaders and future innovators in this story looking to get engage in in projects like this?**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**48:54**

**Yeah, Oh, gosh, Well, okay. So South Dakota is involving with so many amazing resources nowadays to tackle projects like this. So I’m going to name a few people who are out there who I’ve come into contact with during this work. And have just been really mind-blowingly cool. So first of all East River horizons, you know are the ones who served as the push for the book. they took the scripts, got the grant to make it happen, and they are always looking for arts projects. That further the work of unity in South Dakota so east river horizons, I mean, it covers a huge area. They, you know they just. they really want to encourage these discussions. They want to give advice. They want to be utilized as a way to dig more into these subjects you know. There's a lot of expertise there now, in the number of projects that they have tackled that they can share with people who are interested in getting their feet wet into this.**

**On top of that South Dakota community foundation is amazing. They gave the grants to help create the book they fund all kinds of amazing projects in South Dakota. I’ve gotten to work with them personally a few times, and they I can't say enough about the staff there, and about how much they, you know, they’re really about taking small, taking people who may feel small, and being like “No, you can do this” and here were gonna help put the resources in your hands to do it. So very, very cool people there that would be worth looking into.**

**South Dakota Humanities Council are obviously really incredible in the festival of the book is a really incredible way, if you’re interested in South Dakota literature to just kind of, looking into that and you know I've been to a ton of festivals of the book, I go to all of the speeches, like workshops that they give, gosh they're so nourishing, the people who are there, the authors are always so warm and open to just discussing art.**

**And so you know I don't wanna say South Dakota is an art and desert cause it's not.But sometimes it can be hard to find places to get together and talk about art like, hey? I need help as an artist or I’m stuck or I don't know where to go from here, and you know they in creating the festival of the book they just they’ve given this tremendous resource to those who are interested in literature in south Dakota.**

**And then finally just you know, I think one of the really cool things about living in a small state like South Dakota, is you really can pick up the phone and call people who are like, you know, like, have written books in South Dakota or have you know, done all these like crazy cool things in South Dakota and you can just pick up the phone and call these people, most of the time, and they’ll be like “oh yeah I’m on lunch break let me have a conversation about this” like the number of times I’ve like picked up the phone and just call people who I’m like “Oh, he will never wanna talk to me” and they will just like mentor you through whatever you’re going through. I mean that is one of the huge gifts about living in a state like ours where you know it is a lot of small communities,**

**I’m sure lots of people from Freeman would be happy to pick up the phone and talk about arts and talk about the book and talk about the work that they do there, I know the people from Wagner would be thrilled.**

**And then finally, it would be incredibly remiss not to give, a serious nod to the SDSU Extension and all of the work that they do in South Dakota, they created the foundation for Horizons. They have put, many, many communities in in contact with resources to help develop and create these innovative projects that range from art to economics to what have you. So yeah, you just kind of have to look around, and you have to be brave enough to pick up the phone and make the calls. I just encourage people to do it and to find ways to continue to be wild flowers on the prairie and create art out here.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**53:00**

**Well, thank you so much for your time, Margaret and sharing your incredible story, and letting us ask you all of our questions, and just putting up with us this whole time, and I feel like we would really be leaving something on the table if I didn't ask you to share with our listeners where they might learn more about the story, and where they could buy the book, if they're interested in that.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**53:28**

**Yeah, absolutely.**

**So you can google it, “the medicine quilt” inspired by a true story by Margaret Doom and Lashawn Medicine Horn, and it will pop up on Amazon, which is super nifty, if you’re Amazon people.**

**It will also pop up in other places if you’re not Amazon people. All of the proceeds do go to east river horizons and the work that they do developing communities in South Dakota. If you're interested in engaging with the work more, please contact either me, Margaret Doom, you can find ways to contact me hopefully in conjunction with this podcast, I can give them some information to get a hold of me.**

**And if you're needing inspiration, resources, if you want to get in contact, with east river horizons to possibly have a reading of the book with the aforementioned puppets, we can arrange that. So please feel free to reach out and yeah, and that's a great way to connect with it.**

**And then Freeman has a museum about their history and contacting that museum for more information on the work they do. I believe the quilts are there to be visited if that's something that someone would be interested in doing, and learning more about their incredible work, you can check out the Freeman museum.**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**54:39**

**For sure there's one quilt I’m wondering if the both of them are there.**

**But yeah, it's great great idea the museum is a real asset.**

**KARA HARDERS**

**54:47**

**Alright, well, thank you, Margaret, it's been wonderful talking to you and we’ll hopefully see you soon.**

**MARGARET DOOM**

**54:52**

**Yeah, thank you.**

**JOSHUA HOFER**

**54:55**

**Thank you so much**

[Outro music]