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It's a Zine About Zines



MetaZine:

It's a Zine About Zines

Presented in conjunction with the Alt Press Fest, sponsored by the Salt Lake City Public Library. Special thanks to Brooke Young.

All content by Davida Gypsy Breier unless otherwise noted.

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\$1 in person, \$2 by mail.

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Pseudonyms:

If you are writing about sensitive issues or want some level of personal privacy, you may want to consider using a pen name.

Prisoners:

Zine culture tends to be more accepting of prisoners than general culture. Often zines will list as "free to prisoners." That said, show some common sense if you choose to correspond with inmates. Many states allow you to look up prison records, which can help let you know if the person who wants a free copy of your zine really was busted for a little pot (as he claims) or if he is a known predator.

About the Author

Davida Gypsy Breier began publishing zines years before she had her first real email address. To date she has published 78 issues, (79 if you count the one you are holding). She began publishing in 1995 with her first title, SLOW LEEK. That eventually morphed into LEEKING INK, which was published regularly until 2008. She also published a car-related anthology zine, THE GLOVEBOX CHRONICLES, from 1997-2001 and started a zine review zine, XEROGRAPHY DEBT, in 1999, which just published its 33rd issue. In January 2009, she and co-editor Dread Sockett began publishing RIGOR MORTIS, a zombie/pop culture/horror zine. Davida was awarded "Best Local Zinester" in 2000 and "Best Zine" in 2003 by Baltimore's City Paper. Additionally, she is a contributor to other zines and a few magazines, including the popular SMILE, HON, YOU'RE IN BALTIMORE!, and represented the publisher, Eight-Stone Press, at the Literary Death Match, Baltimore 3.0 event in June 2011.



By day she works for Johns Hopkins University Press and sits on the boards of No Voice Unheard, a non-profit publisher, and the Independent Book Publishers Association.

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There are some online review sites:

<http://syndicatedzinereviews.blogspot.com/>

<http://zinereviews.blogspot.com/>

<http://blackguard23.livejournal.com/>

<http://365zines.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.poopsheetfoundation.com/blog/category/reviews/>

<http://www.syndicateproduct.com/>

Zine Resources

While zines tend to be print-based, there are many online communities that help connect zinesters. We Make Zines is among the best and most well-known: <http://wemakezines.ning.com/>

There are also these Facebook groups or pages:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/revengEOFprint/> (Revenge of Print)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/66450269433/> (Smile, Hon, You're in Baltimore!)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/133821320262/> (Xerography Debt)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/32561454731/> (My Small Diary)

<https://www.facebook.com/fanzines> (zines)

Zine websites:

<http://www.zinebook.com/> (not updated, but a good archival resource)

<http://zinewiki.com/>

<http://www.stolensharpierrevolution.org/>

Tips

These are some basic tips to help make sure you receive mail and to help keep you safe.

Address:

Many zinesters choose to use a PO Box instead of listing their home address. Whatever address you use, make sure you include it on envelopes, in your zine, and on letters/orders.

Paying for zines:

In addition to cash and trades, many zines can be ordered with stamps or via PayPal. Many people like to trade for anything of equal value.



“Why write?” The basic reason is communication: written language is an ancient solution to the human problem of needing to express ourselves in our full complexity. The bigger reason is influence: you get to express your philosophy through what you present and the way you frame it, through the dialogue you enter into with the reader, from the point of view you open to them. The propagandistic powers of writing were discovered early on: it's no accident that all the major world religions are based on best-selling books, or that political speech writers can charge more than five cents for their words. Even in our globalized, free-for-all internet age, writers routinely go to jail for their dangerous vocabulary combinations. The power to influence- emotions, feelings, thoughts, opinions; to crack a joke from the grave, to make someone weep with a postcard-is what gives words their meaning and force, and this power is equally available to anyone. It's just a question of stringing the words together in the most convincing order.”

Al Burian, *BURN COLLECTOR* #16



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sold. The usual consignment is 60/40, which means that the store would keep 40% of the sale price and pay you 60%. Occasionally a store will opt to buy outright, but the wholesale discount is usually a bit higher.

Zine Fests are a great place to buy, sell, trade, and meet other zine makers:
SLC Alt Press Fest: <http://slcplaltpress.wordpress.com/>
DC Zine Fest: <http://www.dczinefest.com/>
Philly Zine Fest: <http://www.phillyzinefest.com/>
Richmond Zine Fest: <http://richmondzinefest.org/>
LA Zine Fest: <http://lazinefest.com/>
Brooklyn Zine Fest: <http://brooklynzinefest.com>
San Francisco Zine Fest: <http://www.sfzinefest.org>
Chicago Zine Fest: <http://chicagozinefest.org/>
Philly Feminist Zine Fest: <http://www.phillyfeministzinefest.com>
Portland Zine Symposium: <http://www.portlandzinesymposium.org/>

Trading

Within zines there is a long history of trading. As you find out about new zines you may choose to write or email other zine makers to solicit a trade. You can also send a blind trade, but that may not always work – the other person may not trade, they may be out of the issue, or they may have moved. My advice is to solicit trades for zines similar to your own. For example, an 80-page professionally printed zine may not want to trade for a 16-page comic. It is always good to ask if you aren't sure. Also, expect the trade to take some time – you may not receive a response right away. Many review sources indicate if the zine trades or not.

Reviews

Zine reviews and zine review zines have long been part of zine culture. If you publish a zine and include reviews of your favorite zines it allows for other people to learn about them, essentially cross-pollinating. Personally, I see including zine reviews as being part of the zine community. Zine review zines few and far between these days. FACTSHEET 5 was the most famous and helped spark the boom period in zines in the '90s. ZINE WORLD was well known for its politics and brutal reviews, but it closed its doors in 2012. As far as I am aware, XEROGRAPHY DEBT is among the last of the zine review zines being published regularly. BROKEN PENCIL is another good print resource (PO Box 203, Stn P, Toronto ON, M5S 2S7, Canada, www.brokenpencil.com).

here, but some of the collections listed may have moved to another library or limited access:

http://classic.slcppl.org/details.jsp?parent_id=145&page_id=174

<http://zines.barnard.edu/zine-libraries>

Where to Buy Zines

Independent bookstores are a great place to browse for zines. The three listed below have long supported the zine community and have robust selections. You can also check out places like City Lights (San Francisco), Left Bank Books (Seattle), Powell's (Portland), Red Emma's (Baltimore), and Bluestockings (New York).

Atomic Books

3620 Falls Rd.

Baltimore, MD 21211

<http://www.atomicbooks.com>

Quimby's

1854 W. North Ave

Chicago, IL 60622

<http://www.quimbys.com/>

Microcosm

636 SE 11th Ave

Portland, OR 97214

<http://microcosmpublishing.com/>



There are many small zine distros selling zines in-person and online. Here are a few to check out:

<http://www.stolensharpierrevolution.org/zine-distros/>

http://zinewiki.com/List_of_Distros

<http://wemakezines.ning.com/forum/topics/recommended-zine-distros>

<http://pioneerspress.com/>

Where to Sell Zines

The above list is also a great place to start if you are interested in selling your zine. You'll likely have to send a sample copy for review so the store or distro can make sure that it fits with their section or mission. Zines are commonly sold on consignment, which means you get paid after the zine has

Part I: Zine 101

What is a Zine?

People like tidy explanations. They like definitions. These tend to give people frames of reference and superficial context. Urban legends and water cooler gossip thrive under these conditions. These are commonly held beliefs about zines:

Zines are rooted in science-fiction fandom

Zines are a byproduct of punk

Zines are purely a modern phenomenon

There are shreds of truth in each of these statements, but none are wholly accurate.

Not long after I began publishing my zine review zine, *XEROGRAPHY DEBT*, I started running a regular column on the history of zines. There have been some quality columns over the years, including articles on conscientious objectors' prison zines, gay porn zines, Mussolini's newspapers, Valarie Solanas, non-racist Skinhead zines, the closing of Tower Records (by their main zine buyer), and Turkish zines. The idea that there is one definition of what a zine is or that the history of self-publishing can be summarized by a single era is anathema to many of us.

In my opinion zines have been around for centuries and "zine" is just a current term for a self-published work, published more for passion than profit, with a goal of communication and connection. Zines tend to be part of a barter culture, where ideas and expression become the commodity. Many zines believe in freedom of expression with at least a modicum of rebellion against established media and corporate culture.

Zine makers have a desire to communicate and create something tangible. In the pre-internet days, when being read meant being printed, zine makers self-published because what they had to say and how they wanted to say it was of little interest to mainstream media sources. Individuals wanted to connect and for introverts and obsessives zines were paradise. In addition to being a creative outlet, zines functioned like a social network long before Mark Zuckerberg conceived of Facebook. Furthermore, zine

makers seemed to instinctively know that they were providing documentation for events and subcultures that would otherwise go unrepresented or be grossly misrepresented. It is and was very much an idea of media for the people, by the people.

As for the physical nature of a zine – they can be just about anything. The zine form most people are familiar with are photocopied letter-sized pages, saddle stapled and folded or full-size pages saddle or corner stapled together. There is no clear definition about what constitutes a zine – it is more an ethos than a final product.

Why Create a Zine?

Every person who has ever created a zine has done it for his or her own reasons. Very often the inspiration to begin publishing is seeing another zine and thinking, “I could do that!”

I go about my business of making zines because I still believe in tangible artifacts. I still feel the need to create. I still want to connect. I still want to be part of the community.

Zines don't give you the immediate gratification of a blog or posting a pithy comment on Twitter. They take time to create and once finished reader and reviewer response may take six months or more. But they are tangible and don't rely on electricity or a server to exist. They fit in your pocket. They can be beautiful and have a handfeel that electronic media can never replicate.

The bigger questions to ask are why are you creating and who are you creating for? Zines are just one medium to use, one that is accessible to just about everyone.



Where to Find, Trade, and Sell Zines

Usually the first question people have when they discover zines is, “Where do I get more?”

Where to Find Zines

Zine libraries are an excellent place to learn about new zines and also to explore the rich and ephemeral history of zines no longer published.

Salt Lake City Public Library

210 East 400 South

Salt Lake City, UT 84111

http://classic.slcp.org/details.jsp?parent_id=145&page_id=174

DePaul University Library

2350 North Kenmore

Chicago, IL 60614

<http://www.lib.depaul.edu/Collections/Zines.aspx>

Barnard College Collection

Barnard College

3009 Broadway

New York, NY 10027

<http://zines.barnard.edu/>

Wisconsin Historical Society

816 State Street

Madison, WI 53706

<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/libraryarchives/collections/news.asp>

Independent Publishing Resource Center

1001 SE Division St

Portland, OR 97202

<http://library.iprc.org/>

There are zine libraries – both public and private – scattered across the country, but some have closed to staffing or funding issues. There are lists



Printing Your Zine

Where to print

This is an age-old question. Many zinesters utilized illicit methods to create their zines – from underreporting copies at large chain stores to making photocopies at work (one famous zinester has claimed to have stolen over a million copies from his former employer).

If you are paying for copies your options depend on a few things. Do you have a mechanical (the cut and pasted master copy) to print from or do you have a print-ready digital file? A mechanical is going to limit you to printing locally unless you are comfortable shipping your master copy for printing. You should check out the prices at local copy shops and if they are affordable, use them. If that isn't an option, chain office supply stores usually have copy centers. They also offer an online ordering option, often with free shipping. If you go that route, check out the sales circular or join the mailing list for coupons. If you are printing online you can usually search and find a coupon code to use. If you think you will print regularly, join a rewards program. Between coupons and rewards points, you'll save quite a bit.

How many to print

How many do you plan to give to family and friends? How many do you plan to send out for review? How many do you plan to trade? How many do you think you can sell? That will give you a basic idea, but there is another consideration...bulk printing discounts.

For example, if you print one copy of your 24 page half-sized zine, that is six sheets of paper. Printed double-sided, it is twelve impressions. However, if you print in bulk, the unit prices drop. Often it is just as cheap to print 300 as 150. Check the pricing charts and make friends with the copy shop employees.

Printing one copy: $12 \times .12 = \$1.44$ per unit (per issue)

Printing 100 copies: $12 \times .08 = \$.96$ per unit (per issue)

If you plan to sell your issue via a distro or store, these costs are important to take into consideration. If you sell your zine for \$2.00 and it cost \$1.44 to print, you are going to lose money for every zine sold at a discount. If it is a labor of love and you are more interest in finding readers than breaking even that may be perfectly fine with you. It is just something to consider.

Examples of Zines



The Revolution Will Not Be Televised, It Is Being Published

by Davida Gypsy Breier

Originally published in *XEROGRAPHY DEBT* #29 (updated in July 2013)

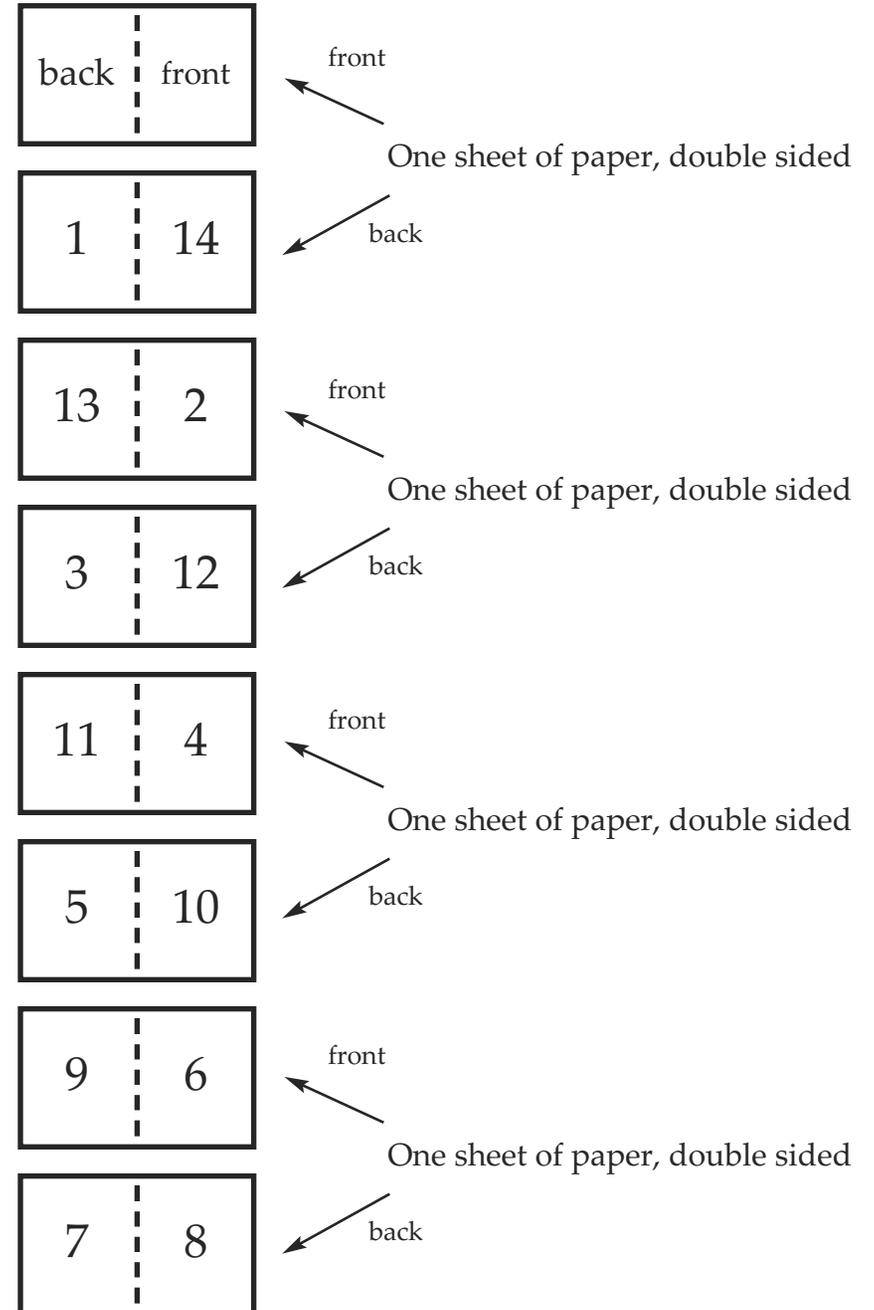


What is a zine? No, seriously. I'm not trying to sound like an MTV reporter in 1996 trying to hype a "youth fad," I'm genuinely questioning how the combined loss of generational history and the massive rise in independent publishing over the last five years has blurred lines and broken down walls. When I got into zines it was a culture of barter, freedom of expression, and rebellion against established media. We published zines because we wanted to communicate and because what we had to say and how we wanted to say it was of no interest to commercial publishers. That was fine, they had their world and we had ours.

Zines that got big enough to carry ISSNs or barcodes of any kind were scorned. And anything with an ISBN might as well have carried the mark of the beast. We were in a culture war of sorts, defying the commodification of art and ideas. Many of the people I knew and traded with at that time were in their teens and twenties. We were figuring ourselves out and zines were how we did it.

In many cases zines actually lead (or even helped) us into careers as librarians or in publishing. I fall into the latter camp. I started out working for a non-profit that supported itself through publishing. From there I went to work for a distributor that specialized in small presses. In some cases, the small book publishers I worked with were like zine publishers — only they were older and had the capital to fund their projects. They had something to say, wanted to connect with readers, and commercial publishers weren't interested. It has often been said that zines are defined by a lack of financial gain. Well, if that is the case, most book publishers I know are actually zine publishers.

Pagination example for a 16 page zine.



Bindings

A long-armed stapler is essential if you are planning to staple and fold your zine. You can fancy that process up with multi-colored staples. Some zine makers make specialty binding part of the crafting process. Good examples of that include *NOT MY SMALL DIARY* and *28 PAGES LOVINGLY BOUND WITH TWINE*. With *NOT MY SMALL DIARY*, Delaine has used brads, ribbon, and shoelaces. In my opinion, she has some best-crafted zines around. *28 PAGES LOVINGLY BOUND WITH TWINE* was bound with different weights of twine.



Templates

Pagination is probably the most confusing part of creating a zine for new zine makers – and even us old-timers screw things up on occasion. Creating a full-sized zine that is double-sided and stapled in the corner is probably the easiest to create. Once you start folding, the pages need to appear in the correct order, and they need to be created in multiples of four.

I watched the struggles these small publishers were experiencing and they mirrored some of what we faced in zineland. Up until 1998 we had *FACTSHEET 5* to help readers and publishers find each other. Small book publishers had no such vehicle. Other zine review zines sprang up, but none of us ever had the distribution into the retail market that *F5* had. Speaking of distribution, it is very hard for small presses to get distributed and when they do it can be expensive. Again, this is a similar barrier in zines. How many of us remember zines that just disappeared – how many of you realize that some disappeared because their distributor (anyone remember *Desert Moon*? *Fine Print*?) went under owing them money, which meant that print and postage bills went unpaid and the publication was compromised or ultimately folded. How many of us had to scale back after *Tower* went under?



I was working with these small presses as POD (print-on-demand) technologies really started developing. At that time stores didn't want to touch anything they thought was POD because they felt the supply was limited and the quality was poor – sound familiar zine people?

Let's flash forward a few years. In 1995, 113,589 ISBN's were registered with Bowker; in 2011 there were 347,178. What happened? Fucking independent publishers happened! We all talk about the death of print (both zines and books), but look at those numbers. More books are being published than ever before. We act like blogs are killing zines. What if books are killing zines? What if the people, faced with all the barriers we faced in 1995, wanted to publish and couldn't. Chances are some of them would be making zines. Instead, in 2011 the barriers between the worlds of book publishing and zine publishing disintegrated. If I wanted to create a book today there are companies that will help me do everything from registering an ISBN (I don't have to buy an expensive block of 10 or 100 now), do the layout in an automated template, and set my file up with a POD printer. Imagine something like that existing in 1995! Is what you have created a zine? A chapbook? A book? What the hell is it? And does that matter? Recently, I've seen two zines outgrow the binding limitations of staples and publish books – fantastic books – that are still somehow zines.

Within the book publishing world there is a lot of identity crisis going on right now. Digitization and the easy access to the industry have broken

down so many walls that used to exist. I mean, even the term book is being challenged by the larger notion of *content*. Here's a question to exemplify how things are changing: What is your favorite recording artist or song? Did you hear the music or picture a band or person? Or did you picture a CD, LP, or MP3 file? If you pictured the recording artist you are interested in the content. If you pictured the CD you are interested in the format or media. The term book or zine defines how you will read, not what you will read. It is the media, not the content. What matters more to you?

These days I wear several hats in the land of publishing (and a few in zineland) and some of my focus is digital content. I have read on an e-reader and on a laptop, and I can see the potential value of this media, but as you can see by this zine in your hands I have not given up traditionally printed zines or books. One thing I see ebooks doing is something we all were doing in 1995 — independently produced ebooks are challenging the establishment. They are providing readers with alternatives. They are often cheaply produced or free and filled with typos and poorly rendered design. But are they zines? No, of course not. But they sound a hell of a lot like a zine, don't they?

So this brings me back to my original question? What is a zine? Is a definition created to try and explain the "fad" to the uninitiated in 1995 still accurate? I don't think so. I think that zines, like publishing, have undergone a few changes and that we should keep our community open instead of trying to hold onto established labels because we are fearful of change. Does that mean I think a blog is a zine? No, I don't. But maybe you do. Does that mean I think a paper zine created by cutting and pasting directly from a blog is a zine? Well, yes, technically, but I also think it is hella lazy.

If we are going to have the label talk, let's step back in time a moment and discuss how we got here. Current nomenclature stems from the term "fanzine." When I was a wee geek I actually subscribed to a few SF fanzines, but didn't really think about their relationship to zines until I was firmly entrenched in zine culture. "Fan magazines" are another thing entirely. An example would be *Sports Illustrated* — this is created as a for-profit venture and caters to the interest of fans. So back to fanzines — these were everything from DIY to semi-professional publications that originated in science fiction circles. In many cases they were modeled after existing professional publications. These were generally genre specific to a largely homogenized audience. Existing publications provided a blueprint. Not a lot of boundaries being pushed here.

Other printing mediums used include silkscreen, linoleum block, potato block, and letterpress.

Supplies

Basic supplies that you might need include something to write/draw with (pen, ink, typewriter, or computer), paper, a cutting tool, a ruler, tape or rubber cement, paper, and a way to bind the zine (staples being the most common).



Legibility

The desire to create should come with it the desire to communicate outside of your own head. That means people need to be able to read what you are writing. If you have terrible handwriting it probably isn't the best idea to handwrite your zine unless you have no other options. If you are designing your zine on a computer you should use a legible font at a decent size. For example, creating a zine in a six point font means few people are going to risk the eye-strain to read it. Generally speaking, body copy should be 10-12 point type. Likewise, just because you have a *cool font you want to use* doesn't mean you should use it for your body font. Often less is more when it comes to font use.

Margins

One of the most common legibility issues I see is forgetting about margins. It is advisable to leave about ½ an inch of space between your text/image and the edge of the page. Text that runs too close to the edge risks being cut off when copied.

Papers

Despite being printed as cheaply as possible at a local office supply store, I was able to enhance the design of my zine by using specialty papers for the covers. This is most feasible if you are creating limited print runs. Even just choosing a colored paper for the cover will make it look more interesting. You can also add a personal touch with stickers, rubber stamps, die-cut punches, and hand-coloring.

Part II: Making Zines, Tips and Tricks

How to Create a Zine:

Methods

Once of the nice things about zines are that they can be as basic or as a fancy as you want. For some zine makers the crafting is part of the process. Others use a ballpoint, scrap paper, and a photocopier. The most common zine styles I see fall into three categories: handwritten or drawn, typewritten, and designed with a computer.

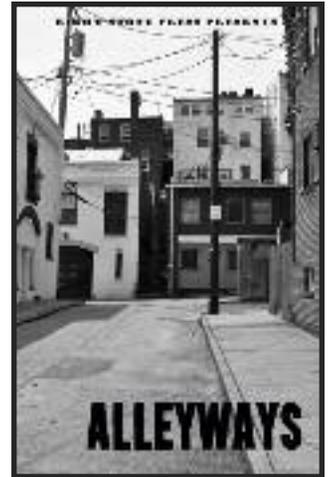


Here are three good examples:



Handwritten – COMETBUS
Typewritten – PILTDOWNLAD
Designed – SMILE, HON, YOU'RE IN
BALTIMORE!

People like to write about their obsessions, so early SF fanzine culture lent itself to other fan-based genres, such as horror, music, and sports (note that these were traditionally “male fan” genres — we’ll get back to that in a minute). Music will become an important genre as independent music gains a foothold, but commercial music magazines and radio stations refuse to cover and play these underground bands. Sub-cultures form around these marginalized arts.



With early fanzines there was an attempt at aesthetic — again emulating professional magazines. Remember, we are talking about the '30s-'50s here, so these were being printed on mimeographs and ditto machines. These took time to set up and were labor intensive. So what happens to bring modern zines to the fore? Two things: 1) technology — photocopies become cheap and accessible and 2) the cultural revolution of the '60s leaves people realizing that mainstream media is not addressing their interests or culture. That thread of individuality flourishes in the '70s and people start documenting their own lives and cultures. This is passed onto the next generation and participation in zine culture peaks in the mid-'90s. So to get back to the idea of fanzines covering “male dominated” genres — the rise of the women’s movement allowed for societal changes to begin in the '70s and one interpretation of those changes led to the rise in Riot Grrrl zines in the '90s. Unlike with fanzines, zines as we know them today were very inclusive of people and sub-cultures that had little power in mainstream society. If you were LGBTQ, dealing with mental health issues, or just the class weirdo, zines were a relatively safe place to call home.

Zines were filled with raw emotions and gritty personalities. Again, a huge difference from fanzines. People were often learning to talk and write openly and it felt anonymous because the only interaction writers had occurred months after they finished a zine and dropped it in the mail. People talked about obsessions, traveling, bands they liked, abuse, politics, and their personal experiences. Aesthetics were often not a high priority and legibility seldom taken into consideration (margins, what are margins?). “Cut & paste” was done because it was all we had in the old days. The tools to create a zine were accessible — this wasn’t a medium of the entitled or established. Scamming copies and reusing uncanceled stamps were the norm.



When I got into zines there were a few basic criteria used to define what a zine was (and none of them really worked). 1) it was created without intent of monetary gain and was bartered for other zines; 2) fewer than 500 (or 5000 — depends on who you ask) copies were printed; 3) zines allowed voices who had no other outlet to be heard; 4) no ISSN or ISBN (ironically, this means that zinedom's sacred cow, *FACTSHEET 5*, was, in fact, not a zine). So did zines that started out small and grew get grandfathered in? For some people, yes. For others, ridiculous indy creed was more

important. And truthfully, a lot of us were just in it for mail and could care less about debating *BUST's* standing as a zine.

The boom period in the '90s saw a lot of zines born and die. Much like the '00s saw a ton of blogs born and die. Many of the same reasons that drove people to create zines drove them to create blogs, only blogs were faster, easier, cheaper, and allowed for immediate gratification. Now, headed into the 10's, some of us see where a blog can in fact be useful and compliment a paper zine without cannibalizing it. Technology has, in many respects, helped push forward the agenda of book and zine publishers and to not use tools that are within our reach to help us complete our ultimate missions seems self-defeating.

So how do the early definitions of "zine" and "fanzine" hold up in 2013? Well, email has pretty much killed my neurotic compulsion to stop by the PO Box regularly. Instead, I neurotically check my email. The Internet now allows for a din of individual voices to be heard and finding likeminded souls is not the same weird crap shoot of putting your zine in an envelope and sending it off to a PO Box wondering if you are about to meet someone who will become a part of your life. (A brief tangent — remember how it used to be weird when people said they met online? Now try explaining to people that you met your best friend through the mail and you have never actually met in person.)

I think the original ideas behind the labels "fanzine" and "zine" are dated. I think fanzines could learn from zines by opening up to more diverse, personal, and critical content. Similarly, I think that zines could learn from

fanzines and start making publications that are easier to read and dare I say it — actually interesting to look at. Do we hold to the old definitions and try and work within those boxes? Do we create new terms to explain what is going on now? I don't have any answers. Here is a good example why — someone uses a library computer to create a publication. She cannot afford a computer, internet access, or copies, so she creates a PDF and emails that to people or posts it to a site like Scribd. She is giving it away and soliciting people to send her their zines (via email or mail). Her motivation and content are very much in-line with old-school zine ethos, but her method of delivery is new-school. Has she created a zine? I would argue yes, based on the ethos.



Personally, I would love to read more international zines, but postage is often a barrier. Is a PDF of a zine created and printed in New Zealand, but emailed to the rest of the world any less of a zine? These are the questions I am asking myself as a zine writer, zine editor, zine reviewer, book publisher, and book distributor as I continue to move forward as a creator and merchant of words and content.

As I see it, what matters is intent. The how and the why are more important to me than the what. I view myself as an independent publisher, who enjoys zines as a culture and medium. I edit and manage *XEROGRAPHY DEBT* for the community and co-edit *RIGOR MORTIS* to fulfill my creative needs. My monetary goal is sustainability, which pretty much means attempting to break even based on content. I don't sell ad space, nor do I sell my mailing list (again, *F5* is held aloft, but there were a lot of rumors about Seth Friedman bartering and selling the *F5* mailing list. Our culture wasn't what held value, but what we could be sold.). I define *XD* and *RM* as zines to those who understand the term and to those who don't they are "small press publications." Many reviews have defined *RM* as a fanzine (which makes my co-editor apoplectic). None of these labels change the content.

So these are my truths. Your truths may vary or settle during shipping. And the truths of today may not be the truths of yesterday or tomorrow. If you must have a label and can't find one that suits you, make one up. The important thing is that we each examine the what, how, and why and make sure they are in line with our intent. Now go publish something, anything.