Fieldwork in Zineography

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Abstract

What is a zine? This article—itself a zine—is a meta-analysis of the history of the zine, its evolution, and its ability as a medium to create overlap between social change and artistic and visual production. Through essays, interviews, and illustrations, this article explores zine construction and content, and the legacies of the zine movement and its continuing influence on counterculture and social change. Lastly, this article delves into the continuing creation, circulation and relevance of the zine in the internet age of digitization and social media, and how the crossover in culture between the digital zine and the paper zine translates to both zine creators and their audiences.

Keywords

Zines; Zine-Makers; Fanzines; Self-Publishing; DIY; Digital Media; Counterculture; Book Arts

Acknowledgments

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

On October 1st, I attended an event at Printed Matter called "Show & Tell," organized by Antoine Lefebvre, during which ten zine creators and experts based in New York presented their top ten favorite zines made by New York based artists. This was a pivotal moment for my research, where I met, heard, and spoke to several zine creators who would later not only become my interviewees, but would be largely informative of my thesis work. The last person to speak, Johan Kugelberg of the Boo-Hooray cultural archive, posed a question to the crowd -- can anyone here define the word zine? No one offered an answer, which I attribute to the understanding that the flexibility, adaptability, and DIY nature encompassed by medium of the zine is so universal that defining it seems beside the point.

At that point in my research, which I had begun the previous spring, my personal working definition of the zine was a self-published publication with printed editions that circulate on a relatively small level, and are often traded for other zines. My definition as it stood was not necessarily anyone else's exact definition of the zine; it came from my research, informal conversations with zine makers, and observations of what I had seen in archives and the bookshops I had taken my own zines to. There is no universal definition of the zine: there are no rules in terms of content, construction, and length, nor when it comes to volumes produced and distributed. In my initial considerations of my thesis research, I sought to find a unifying definition of the zine and all it encompasses, but midway through the fall semester, I reconceptualized my research vision to explore the manifestations of the zine and the worlds of self-publication that it exists within, in consideration of as many definitions possible. I pursued this quest by talking to as many people as I could, as well as consuming as much self-published content as possible.

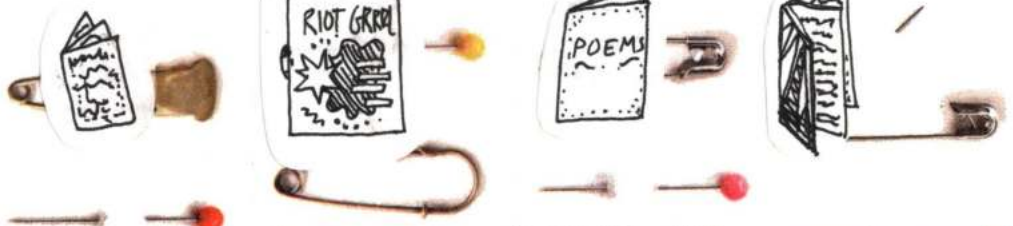
Studying zines requires attention to several key components of zine culture and history. First, I looked at the history of the zine and the publications considered to be its precursors, in regards to its evolution as a medium in terms of both construction and content. Next, I narrowed in on the zine's role in the third wave of feminism, and its ability as a medium to create overlap between social change and artistic and visual production. This lent itself to an investigation of the legacies of this movement and its continuing influence on feminist zines produced today. Ultimately, I explored the continuing creation, circulation and relevance of the zine in the internet age of digitization and social media, and how the crossover in culture between the digital zine and the paper zine translates to both zine creators and their audiences. In a similar vein, I researched whether the digitization of the zine and the accessibility promoted by its presence on social media undermines the original intent and influence of the paper zine, and how the internet may help globalize and mobilize zine culture. To do this, it was necessary to look closely at the term 'self-publication,' and reconsider its implications in light of the internet age. The complete product of my thesis is the zine that you are currently holding: written, illustrated, and photographed by myself, completely self-produced and self-published.

RESEARCH METHOD

Though initially I planned to ground my research in archival work and the exploration of zine fairs and zine distribution locations, I found that the most meaningful and informative research findings came from the interviews that I conducted with zine makers, both in the US and internationally. This series of interviews came from a desire to not only gain insight into the minds of these artists and writers, but into the fluid community surrounding zine culture as a whole.

Most of my interviewees I met by attending zine fairs and panels; finding zine maker's works in archives; and through word of mouth. I spent the fall and winter meeting and interacting as much as possible with zine makers and their work; going to readings done by people who are writers but also make zines; seeing shows of people who make zines as a reflection of the other mediums they work with; and unabashedly approaching zine makers for interviews, through which I've discovered that to learn

about the maker is the best way to learn about the zine. Secondarily, I have enjoyed visits to zine archives and accessing research materials in the form of physical zines, which has also afforded me an opportunity to meet more faces of the zine community, as well as closely examine many different types of tangible zines from different eras. In the fall I applied for the Dean's Global Research Grant to continue my research in Berlin, Paris and Glasgow. My research trip this January offered new insight into the communities and cultures that surround self-publication, and informed not only my writing and thinking about zines, but has also informed how I have constructed the final zine product of this creative thesis.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of zines is somewhat fluid, and there are different schools of thought in terms of the original zines and when they were officially created. It is contested by zine archivists and scholars whether zines began with amateur science fiction writers in the 1930s, or whether they began with the informal chapbooks of the Beats in the 1950s. These precursors to zines emerged with the arrival and subsequent widespread use of the mimeograph machine, which allowed writers to self-publish works which had no hope of representation by established publishing houses, usually due to content.[1] This was especially prevalent throughout the era of the Beats, who often wrote on subjects that were not widely acceptable. The accessibility of the mimeograph machine, which people began to own personally with greater prevalence throughout the 1950s and 1960s, was on a level unmatched by any previous copying and printing technology, though was soon to be replaced with the photocopier and Xerox. It was both technological advancement and radical content that sparked a revolution in self-publishing.[2]

The term *fanzine* was coined in the 1970s regarding publications created by participants in and fans of punk rock and DIY music and culture, who wrote informal reviews of the music they admired which was not being represented or discussed in mainstream publications. The community surrounding these fanzines was a typically white, straight, male-dominated sphere, as was punk culture on a whole, and zine style was scrappy, often relying on collage, photography, and handwritten statements. Out of this culture, publications such as Maximumrocknroll were born, to which people would send their zines for review, and which served as a nexus of the zine community.[3]

The next wave of zine history coincides with the third wave of feminism, more specifically Riot Grrrl, which began in the Pacific Northwest in 1991 and was the feminists' answer to the male-dominated fanzine and punk music sphere.[4] Through the empowerment of self-publication, female artists, writers, and musicians verbalized, politicized, and publicized their art, ideas, opinions, and dreams. Riot Grrrl was a grassroots, DIY community and concept, and it spread quickly across the U.S., and then across the world.

Beginning with the creation of the zine's precursors and extending to the advent of fanzines and subsequent subcultural manifestations of self-publication, zine making has been consistently subversive to mainstream publication. While maximizing the autonomy of the creator, the revolutionary act of zine making has also allowed its participants to engage in artistic, literary, and musical spheres and subcultures without moderation.

CHAPTER TWO

Paper Publications from Internet Communities
an interview with Kati Yewell

I met Kati Yewell for coffee near her Williamsburg studio one dark December afternoon while she was in the middle of finals week at Pratt. For the last few years I had admired her illustrated digitized ~~x~~ zines on Rookie Mag, an online magazine made for and by teenage girls. Kati was an ebullient source of knowledge on creating a community around DIY publication.

December 5th, 2017

Williamsburg, Brooklyn

AL: How long have you been making zines?
KY: Since my junior year of high school. I was in a hospital for like the duration of an entire semester, I was bedridden, so that was my way of being still able to create art in a secluded space.
AL: Were those zines that you made then paper zines?
KY: Yeah, the first ones I did were like the typical zines where you collage it, and then either would scan it and make really cheap versions of it by photocopying and printing it, or you can make the standard issue and only have that one, which is what I had at first, and then when I got back to high school, I was like, people like them! It was free in the art department to scan them, and then I started handing them out!
AL: How is that different from the zines you're making now?
KY: The ones that I did in high school... everyone goes through that teenage angst phase, everyone goes through that phase... but it was very much like, girls with flowers, and was a lot more aesthetically and visually based rather than content-based, and then, as soon as I started creating my own, other people wanted to contribute so it was no longer about myself, but more about helping other people create an artsy community within a high school where it was very academia-based. That was cool 'cause we had recipes and poetry and photography and it was cool to have these people who had never really talked with one another to like come together and make new friends...
AL: So you made a community around it!
KY: It was really cool, it was people that I would have never spoken to, because I was very much the eccentric one who didn't talk a lot at school. And then, I went to the RISD pre-college program over the summer, and I met a really great friend there, her name is Mia, she's like my art soulmate, and together, we are the ones who created "Noisy Kids Zine" which is the one we had here, in New York where we published it. Mia and I started talking a lot, and we loved magazines, I'm really interested in rare books and print in general, and we just were looking at *Dazed*, and all the other magazines we like, and we noticed things that we liked that weren't in it, like it's all very photography based, which is cool, but you never see artists like painters in these magazines, so we wanted to create a magazine that was entirely about painters or illustrators, there was definitely like fashion designers too. And then we got Tavi [Gevinson] on the cover because I work for Rookie, and I just asked her, was like, 'you're like my inspiration for everything, please be on the cover,' and she said yes.
AL: How long have you been making stuff for Rookie?
KY: think I submitted my stuff like beginning of senior year in high school, and then, I got an email from them the next month and after that, I started becoming a monthly-based content provider, so I give them illustrations once a month, and I get to do writing for them too, they're awesome.

AL: I was a sophomore in high school when Rookie came out, and I was like, whoa, I feel my life changing with this publication.
KY: [Rookie is] such an amazing platform, because [it] really gives you all creative control, like no matter what you want to do, they're there for you, they'll help you.
AL: That's so special. I first found out about your work from Rookie, and also, that was the first time I'd ever seen a zine online... I was like, what? That's a thing? So... just about the production of the zines you have on Rookie, do you make them on paper and then scan them, or do you do digital collaging?
KY: That happened so organically because the first artwork that I ever gave Rookie, they literally just published scanned copies of my sketchbook. And that was wild, because they presented it as a sketchbook series too, which you never really think of. After that, I'd been doing illustration things for them and Lauren Teffner [and I] collaborated on the first ever zine that I presented on Rookie, that was called that in the title. I would just submit the artwork because I'd stay up all night and then I'd be like, Rookie, make up the title, so they always did that part. [Lauren] wrote the words and I drew the artwork, and it's about growing up in suburbia. After that, Rookie was doing printables, which I didn't really know about, but they asked if I'd do a printable, I submitted my sketchbook, and all these people commented asking if they could print it out... and I was like sure, but let me try and make it more coherent, so the next one I made in more of a grid shape so that people could print it out and fold it down, but that totally happened organically, I had no idea that could be a thing, that zines could even be online. I never really thought about that concept.
AL: It's really interesting, I've been trying to study how the internet and social media affect zines...
KY: It's so bizarre... now I'm seeing these Instagrams called, like, 'zine instagrams,' the whole instagram is an online zine, and they're never gonna print it, that entire account is catered to coming out with monthly-basis content. It's so bizarre to see things that were kind of more of an activist element turn into more of an iPhone aesthetic thing.
AL: It's really interesting how Instagram interacts with the zine, 'cause when you think about it, social media is a form of self-publication... Would you call those zines on Rookie digital zines? I thought that I had read that specific phrase, 'digital zine,' on Rookie, but then I combed through the site, and no one is calling them that...
KY: They're definitely tagged as zines, I guess... they kind of became digital zines without me even being aware... they gave me the title, and I was like, ok, this works! You can't call it a sketchbook because it's art that I created for a specific reason, it's not something I'm passively doing. I guess a zine is more of a proper form for it. I'm kind of sad about digital zines, as I said, I'm really into rare books and I worked at a bookstore that specialized in that, and I just have such a passion for having something in your hand... Nylon magazine just stopped doing their print issue, they're done. I loved it, so it was devastating, when they said they were just going to do online from now on.
AL: It's like the end of an era.
KY: I feel like I'm indirectly helping that idea that, 'oh everything should be digital now'... I don't feel like that's the case at all. So sometimes when all my zines are online, I'm like no... but that's the best way to market yourself now. The only reason I have an Instagram is to post my art, I wouldn't have any social media if it weren't for communications. It's inevitable, but I'm trying to fight it... I don't know what's going to happen next, maybe we're going to have a bursting revolution. I have no idea where it's going, all I know is I'm trying to support print publications, especially the ones that are NYC based. It's also weird with zines, people are calling self-published magazines *zines* also, even though they have a glossy cover and are 8 ½ by 11, they look like a magazine, people are calling them zines because they're self-published. People have asked me whether "Noisy Kids" is a zine or not, 'cause it's kind of questionable... I would consider it a zine because it's self-published. I think that anything that's self-published, if you put it out there, is a zine on the broad umbrella. I think it's cool that people are still trying to push for zine culture, in a different way.
AL: So you sort of mentioned this, but one of my questions was, what is your personal definition of the zine?
KY: I guess anything that's self-published, I feel like zines are also kind of cool, because it's socially acceptable for you to be referencing other artists. It's collage-based and it won't be seen as plagiarism. I feel like it's a way for people to openly talk

about what they're interested in, and not be worried... when you're publishing a book, it's a completely different story. I've helped work with people publishing books, and it's so painstakingly painful... everything has to be double checked, like the type of font you use, maybe some other artist already used that font in their book and put some copyright on it so you can't use it... zines are so free-form, you're just like, I want to turn this into a book.

AL: So, going back a little, the zines that are on Rookie, do they all exist in print?

KY: They all exist in real life, the only thing, I used to cut and paste everything when I used to have to create a lot of content quickly. I had to crunch my time and I had all these cutouts from magazines and miscellaneous books, I would cut them out and scan them, and then I would, using Photoshop, collage them on top of my artwork. That was another answer to my prayers, because I had another issue with my pencil drawings, they're very dotted and distinct, and when I would photograph my pencil drawings with the collage, they would kind of get muted, they wouldn't get out right, so I would scan them separately and then collage around them, and it made it a lot cleaner, a lot higher definition, and people could print them.

AL: I love hearing about different people's processes... Talking about accessibility and community, and "Noisy Kids" zine, what was your experience in finding and creating a community around that?

KY: That was also super organic... I had the idea about "Noisy Kids" because I was working at Alt Space helping them with events with artists, I was meeting all these artists in the process. I was like, ok, I'm going to start emailing people, it's going to be such a long shot, let's try it! So I was doing that, and my friend Mia was studying in California... I was talking to Mia, and I was like, dude, I really want to do this, but I am awful at Photoshop. Mia's very digital oriented, so I asked her, I really want to make this zine, but I need help. She said yes, and it was amazing, I was surprised she even said yes, because we were both in school, and honestly, we were so in over our heads, 'cause when I thought of it as a zine, I was like, 'oh, people make them so offhandedly! This will be easy.' And then people actually started responding to it, and I was like, shit, this is going to be a really cool thing now. So it got kind of hectic, because you have to think of all these really small details, for example, the title font, what's "Noisy Kids" on the cover even gonna look like? I asked Tavi [Gevinson] first if she would be on the cover, she said yes -- I just exploded -- she was like, yeah, come to my apartment! So I went to Tavi's apartment, I interviewed her, took photos of her. She also gave me a lot of inspiration and knowledge and advice and what to do. [Style] Rookie was created when she was in middle school, which is nuts, and she's the queen of DIY. After that, Mia and I started working, keep in mind, I'm in the Midwest, she's on the West Coast, so all of this is online, thinking about how the internet involves us, because the way I was contacting people was via Instagram messages, great tool, so I started messaging people.

AL: How many contributors?

KY: There were fifteen artists, all of them I found via Instagram. Nothing would've happened if not for Instagram, Instagram propelled all of this. All of the artists were artists that I have never met in real life, I still haven't met most of them -- a couple of them came to the event, and I hardly recognized them, 'cause I hadn't met them before.

AL: That's so cool that you were able to make this community through the internet!

KY: Exactly, a lot of people also made friends with one another. More than anything, I was really enamored by how many people actually responded and were very happy to work, even be involved.

CHAPTER THREE

Artzines and the Artist as a Publisher
an interview with Antoine Lefebvre

I first met Antoine Lefebvre at the Printed Matter Show + Tell event that he or chestrated in October. Antoine publishes "Artzines," a series of zines that catalogue his ongoing r esearch of art zines and their creators. He also started La Bibliotheque Fantastique, a virtual publisher of artist books operating as Pr int-on-Demand. Several months and email exchanges after our first meeting, Antoine invited me to interview him in his home in the 14eme arrondissement

January 15th, 2018

14eme arrondissement, Paris

GIVEN THAT WE HAVE THE SAME INITIALS, I'LL HENCEFORTH REFER TO ANTOINE AS "ALE," AS IN, "ANTOINE LEFEBVRE EDITIONS," THE SIGNATURE HE USES FOR HIS ARTIST NAME AND PUBLISHING STRUCTURE.

AL: So to start, I'm going to ask you the question I ask everyone, which is how do you define 'zine'?
ALE: Huh! [*laughs*] To me, zines are publications that are self-published and self-distributed. At some point I thought that maybe they should be photocopied, but depending on the context of what the person wants to do, printing it offset on newsprint makes more sense and is cheaper. The most important part is that it's produced with very cheap means, and if it's photocopy, or offset, and then I would say that content wise, zines usually carry what is called a do-it-yourself ethos, this idea of self-organization, and therefore they can be very cultural, or more like activism, for people who are trying to express a voice that is unheard.
AL: I remember at the Show and Tell you did at Printed Matter, Johan Kugelberg asked everyone if anyone could define zine, and everyone was quiet!
ALE: Oh yeah! [*laughs*] I had no problem with this kind of thing, because I'm an artist and a researcher, and I think that it's important to name things. And of course my definition is not the best possible definition, and other people will think that other aspects are more important, but I think it's important for a researcher to name his or her objects in order to work. If you don't know what you're talking about, how can you research about it?
AL: I feel like that's the tricky thing about zines, there are so many ways to define a zine, and you don't want to exclude anything that was made with the intention of being a zine, but also, where do you draw the line?
ALE: It's also very important, that came naturally, that people consider them zines. That's also something that is quite different in France from Anglo-Saxon countries, which is that French people are very literary and have the greatest respect for the book, so they want to make everything serious, they want to make everything into a big, actual, serious book. There's a lot of stuff that is published that people wouldn't consider a zine in France, even if it's very close to what is considered a zine. So it's very important, as you said, that people consider it a zine... it's not because it's photocopied and stapled and that it's automatically a zine. If people don't feel close to this DIY ethos I talked about, it would be absurd to call something a zine if it's creator isn't aware of that, or if he or she doesn't agree with that idea. There's no such word as chapbooks in France, this would be called *brochures* or *livrés*. Especially for everything that is political, and there is a very strong tradition in Europe of *brochure politique*... political brochures are not zines, they are often published by institutions published by a political party and that kinda stuff, and those are not, there's a very strong tradition of this in Europe, so it's also very

important that people name it zines, otherwise you can call everything a zine, just 'cause it's the format doesn't mean it has anything to do with it.

AL: Yesterday I went to *La Monte en L'air* -- they have a lot of little publications, I wasn't sure if they'd be qualified as zines but I did notice that they were all very good quality, a lot of them seemed to have been printed by a publisher who was printing a bunch of people's art and comics.

ALE: The very strong tradition we have in France is the comic zines, and for a lot of people when they would talk about fanzines, because we use the term fanzines rather than zines in French, they would directly think about something with comics, bands-dessinées. In France it's sort of the traditional way for artists to get artists, they will start a zine, very often collectively, and that may be the kind of stuff you saw. And then when they grow up and move along with their career, then they have access to publishers and they can make the book that they want. And often, most of the time they are done with self-publishing because they are now a published author and they don't have the need to, but some of them continue to self-publish.

AL: You've done so much work in Europe and the United States, what have you found to be definitive of zine culture across the borders of countries, and what have you found that's more specific to France?

ALE: I really like what Julia Lipscombe at the Show and Tell at Printed Matter said, which is that zines are political in nature, no matter the content. That's one of the reasons why I work on this, this idea that anyone can try to make his or her voice bigger. This idea that, like Stephen Duncombe says in *Notes from Underground*, that the personal is political. That anyone can speak and can try to expand the number of people that you would speak to. One thing that is important is this idea that people do this by choice, that if they have another choice they won't switch media, they use zines because they see a value in self-organization. I think that is one thing that is common across the borders, this idea that some people make zines because they don't have any other choice, and some people have the choice they will make a bigger actual book with a publisher, but that a lot of those people continue to make zines because it makes sense to them to express themselves in this way, to have total freedom and control over what they are publishing. In the eighties and nineties people were making zines to connect themselves, and now that they have internet to connect, they are making zines to meet face to face. And so it's, for the zines that are made today, it's very important for people because they want to connect in a more tangible way... So I talked a bit about France, and what was specific about French zines... and then, the English zines are more comparable to the American ones, they have sort of the same history, they appeared at the same time and for the same reasons, than elsewhere... In Germany, there's fanzines and also a bit graphzines, as well as in Spain, and I'm talking mostly about artzines, because that's what I know the best. When I was doing research, one of the conclusions that I had was that there could only be zines where there is freedom of speech and democracy, because in a dictatorship there is the power trying to control every press that is available. When I ask to people in Romania if there were historical self-publishing that was important to them, they told me that during the Ceaușescu communist regime, you would be jailed just for owning a typewriter. And what they knew that was closer to self-publishing was the mother of a woman my age, and she used to copy novels of Franz Kafka to give to other people, but she would copy them by hand. In France and other countries, there is a very strong history of self-publishing, but in other countries it's much more complicated. In Brazil, for example, as a colony of the Portuguese, the Portuguese forbade everybody in Brazil to own a printing press for centuries.

AL: I read your essay, "Portrait of the Artist as a Publisher," and at the end, you talk about publication being inherently political... How do you see today's artzines as political versus the fanzines?

ALE: I think that of course, self-publication is more political than regular mainstream publishing, which is often owned by very big corporations just like the media, so really it's another alternative media which is totally uncontrolled. Zines represent a way for artists to exist aside from this dominant art world, a way to share and show their work in a different way, without having to do exhibitions in commercial galleries. I think artzines are a political way of making art, but they are not political, that's what

Jean-Luc Godard says, that one shouldn't make political movies, but should make movies politically.

AL: That's great... I should have asked you this earlier, but how do you define 'artzine' versus 'zine'?

ALE: To me artzines are artist publications that are both artworks and zines, and when I say artworks, I'm saying it in the sense of artist books, which are not artist catalogues or a reproduction or documentation of one's work, they are the work itself, from cover to cover. They are imagined and thought by the artist to be original artwork, not a reproduction of something that is already existing elsewhere.

AL: I want to talk about digital publication... in reading about your work with the *Bibliotheque Fantastique* what do you think it means -- in the internet age, or the 'post digital' age -- what does it mean to be self-published, how is that changing?

ALE: To me, there's a series of technological breakthroughs that led to the situation that we are in today, and each of them change slightly what we are expecting from self-publishing, what we are expecting from books... there are dozens of types of books that completely disappeared, like the phone book, due to the fact that we have constant access to internet. And I think that's what happened to zines, in the eighties and nineties, zines were made by a bunch of misfits who were trying to connect with like-minded individuals, who discovered that all across the world there were people who were as weird as they were. And there's no need for that because of social media and the internet, but there is still the need for zines. And then there's something that I use a lot with *La Bibliotheque Fantastique*, this idea of POD... I thought that making a book wasn't necessarily printing a thousand of them and destroying forests, and if with my computer I made a PDF I could print one, and if I needed another one I could print another one... and that's how I started making *La Bibliothéque Fantastique* from this idea that the realization wasn't the most important, but it was also the idea that was very important, and somehow the PDF was the idea, and that anyone could [print] it anywhere in the world.

AL: So you would qualify those as artzines?

ALE: Yeah.... I have a very broad idea of art and artists that are important to me have a very experimental or radical artistic practice, so I consider my way of considering myself as an artist publisher is very conceptual, meaning that it's my activity as a publisher which is my artistic practice, and all of it is the artwork, I'm saying this because with this very narrow definition of what an artist book is, this wouldn't be considered an artist book. That's why I prefer to talk about artist publications, which would contain artist books and ephemera, and zines made by artists, and yeah, I would consider that an artzine.

AL: And when it's online, do you still consider it an artzine?

ALE: I think it's a PDF. If people want to print them, then it would be a zine, but if it's a PDF then it's just waiting to be something else, it's not the actual stuff. It's like... an mp3, it's not music, it's a digital file. If you play it, then it's music, and if you play it by printing it, then it's a zine.

AL: In my research I've come across some digital zines, and then also digitized zines, but I'm curious if you think that something that only exists on the internet could be considered a zine, if it only exists digitally.

ALE: There has been a huge decrease of the zines produced at the moment that the internet appeared, because people thought it would replace everything. From 1995 to 2005, there were a lot less zines and self-publishing than there was in both the years before and after. And that's the moment when people were doing webzines... there's a word, skeuomorphism, which is when you try to reproduce a technology in another technology. For example, in my phone, there is this icon of the clock, and it mirrors an actual clock, but there's no reason for this to look like [a clock] unless to imitate what is happening on an actual clock, so that's what a designer calls skeuomorphism. That's what people tried to do when they saw this new technology... to make a zine on the website, and [call] it a webzine, that doesn't work. If you make a zine you have to print it at some point, and if you print it you will have to stop adding stuff...

whereas to make a webzine, you can still issue it at some date, and decide that you published it, but if the next morning you decide that you want to change some stuff, you can. Anything that you find online couldn't be the same as the experience that we have when you have an actual physical object, like the one that you just gave me. That's why I think that you will have to use any medium for its own characteristic, instead of trying to do something that would exist in another way. There's a really great book just above your head, the one with the cat...

AL: *Wasting Time on the Internet*?

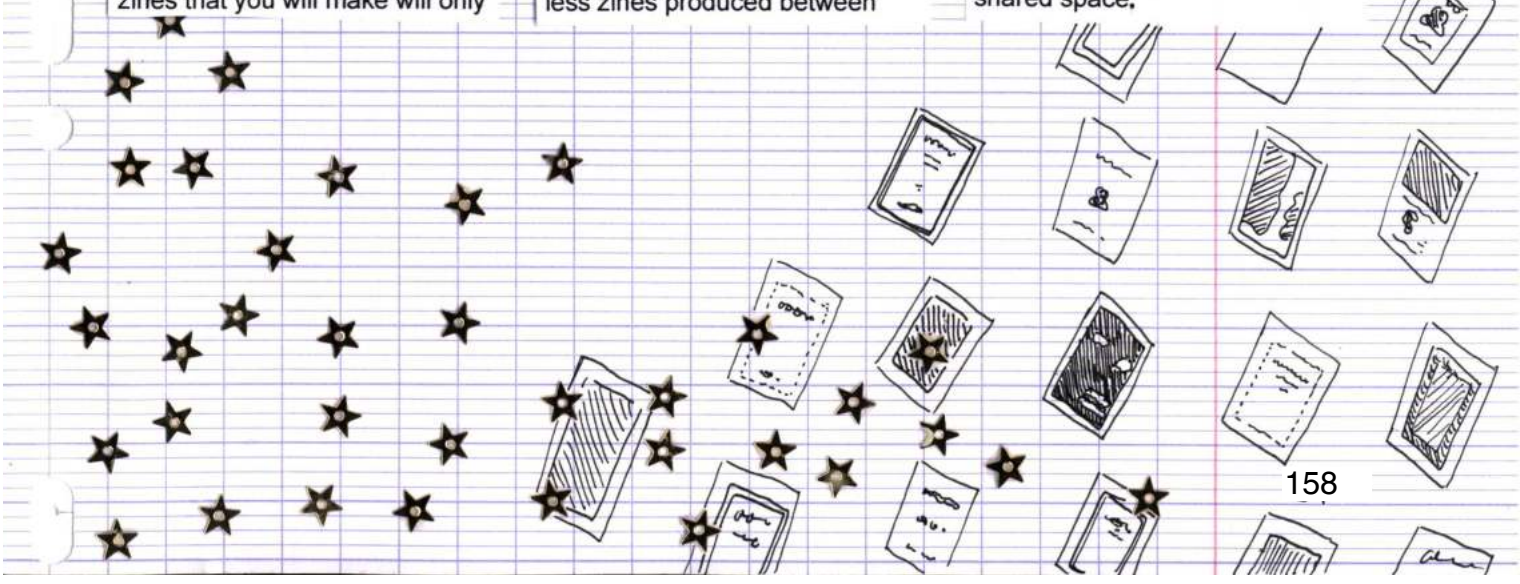
ALE: Some of the stuff I said is inspired by what Ken Goldsmith says in this... And one thing that he says, is that the content of the device is the device itself. For example, if you post stuff on Instagram, what you're posting is Instagram itself. Like, you try to use Facebook to do something that hasn't been thought of by the developers of Facebook, it's impossible, like everything that you will post on Facebook will always be Facebook, there is no way to escape that. And that's also something that is very different from zines, is that the zines that you will make will only be what you want it to be. The only limit is your imagination, there won't be a developer that will tell you that you can't do it like there is on Facebook. I think that one of the reasons why this is so different is because the people who are running these very big corporations which are sort of ruining our lives today. Those internet corporations have this ideology which is the opposite of the ideology that's in making [zines]... It's very hard to find freedom on the internet. The people who created the internet had the same kind of utopia that zine makers can have, but that changed a lot. Tumblr is one of them... when I asked AA Bronson, he told me that Tumblr was the same as zines, and that's actually pretty true, Tumblr offers a lot of freedom, Tumblr is actually a tool that will allow you to escape the device a little bit, like, I have five or six different Tumblr blogs and they all look very different because they all serve different purposes.

AL: I've heard people compare Instagram to zines, but now after hearing what you've said about Facebook, I think Instagram must be even more limiting, because there's even less that you can do. So you mentioned that there were less zines produced between 1995 and 2005, and then there's been an uprise in the production since, why do you think that is?

ALE: I think because people got fed up with the internet, they wanted to meet in real person, and that's when people started creating book fairs, like you know the New York Art Book Fair started in 2005, and that was maybe one of the first that was created in Art Book Fairs, there were book fairs before, the Frankfurt book fair I think exists almost since the book was created, but the art book fairs and the zine fairs as we know them, it's a fairly recent creation.

AL: So do you think more people discovered the zine as a medium, or do you think that the people that had gone online were now just coming back offline?

ALE: There was this promise that online everybody would be able to be free and express themselves, and then people were then parked on Facebook, and they were put behind barriers, they could only talk to each other in the way that Facebook decided it, and maybe they wanted to express themselves in a way in which they would have more freedom, and actual interaction between them... At the beginning, the internet was a utopia, it was a shared space.

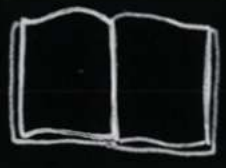


"Objects That Don't Behave"
an interview with Jules Pelta Feldman and Hannes Bajohr

January 7th, 2018

Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin

Jules Pelta Feldman is a Joan Tisch Teaching Fellow who has worked as an archivist and curator, and Hannes Bajohr is a writer who works with Print on Demand. Neither are zine makers, but the three of us had an illuminating discussion about self-publication, and defining the zine as a medium versus a genre.



AL: So do either of you make zines?
HB: What is a zine?
[*Jules laughs*]
AL: There's a lot of different definitions, but as I define it, it's a self-published piece of art or writing, or art and writing, and usually it circulates in a low volume...
HB: It's low stakes?
JPF: It's deliberately alternative, right? The aesthetics reflect that.
AL: I also brought you guys one of my zines, so this is *a* zine, but it's not *the* zine.
HB: What's the difference between this and a chapbook?
AL: I think chapbooks are more based in literature, whereas zines feel more like a mix of media to me. I think just also on the level of construction of zines, it feels like there is more intention than in chapbooks, but I haven't studied that much about chapbooks, I've just seen them in bookstores.
HB: I wondered what the difference is because there's a lot of this, what you would traditionally call a chapbook sort of publication in literature with a bunch of, all kinds of forms, there's tons of literary groups that do this... and when you write about digital zines, or zines that have been made digital, there's also this post-digital aspect. On the one hand, it can all happen, on the other hand, it can be a gesture against digitization.
JPF: [*to Hannes*] You've done a lot of work that's kind of about this relationship between books as physical objects and digitization... Print on Demand [*referred to hereafter as POD*] is sort of the center of that.
HB: Yeah, exactly, 'cause it is... it's also cheap, the aesthetics of POD is a bunch of shitty books. Have you tried working with Lulu?
AL: My mom made a calendar on it years ago, so I'm familiar with it...
HB: It's famously difficult to get the cropping right. I use it mostly to pirate books, you just download the PDF...
JPF: So Hannes basically steals books... I can say this, right?
HB: Sure.
JPF: If they already have a cover, then he'll just use that cover, if they don't, he'll just design one himself. Because you have all these PDFs that are scans of books anyway, and just like everybody else, he likes PDFs, but he also likes reading books. I feel like a lot of people talk about this being a contradiction but I don't feel like there's any contradiction at all.
AL: Yeah, it seems sort of revolutionary... take the book back from the internet!
HB: I think the relationship between digital to analogue is very interesting, because can you just transfer it, or can you use it as a counter force?
JPF: That's not the only way you use it. What's interesting about POD self-publishing is that you don't have to make a run of ten or one thousand, any time someone wants one, the company just prints one off. So you can kind of delay the publishing, you can publish something theoretically without making any copies of it.
HB: I wonder if this has anything to do with your zines.
AL: I think POD is a form of self-publication, if you're printing your own works. If you're taking them off the internet it's a little different... I use InDesign to compile my zine, and that's really different than if I have one precarious object that I'm photocopying and then hopefully not losing if I want to make more copies. So I guess that's sort of POD. How do you see the DIY and self-publication sphere coinciding

with POD and digital publication in general?
HB: Ok, if the question is about aesthetic of handiwork that defines zines, yes, then I think it's very far away from that. If it's about alternative ways of circulating material, I think it's very much in that kind of spirit, it just uses newer technology. I've seen a lot of the aesthetics of the eighties and seventies zines, the photocopy thing just reprinted digitally, to me that seems a little odd, nostalgic in a way that I don't find very interesting. You create the circulation, the people that know about it, it's not easily accessible even though it's on the internet... you have to know what they're talking about, because a lot of it's completely obscure, you just download the PDF but then have no idea what's going on unless you know that they're working conceptually, that they somehow always address the conditions of digital production.
JPF: In fact, it's less work to click a button and have Lulu make a PDF than to actually go get it printed yourself.
HB: It's a good question what one considers publication, one standard is ISBN, that all books have ISBN numbers.
JPF: Which zines usually don't, right?
HB: However... [*picks up* Publishing as Artistic Practice] This has a lot of interesting texts, one is about no-ISBN... They kind of want to be off the grid, they talk about the 'cage' of the ISBN number, some try to fuck with library systems, so librarians don't know what to do then, because the title is the ISBN.
JPF: So they don't want their books to be findable in libraries or catalogues.
AL: Very subversive.

HB: So how do you get out of this standard?
AL: And at that point, are you publishing something just for the sake of publication, or are you publishing it to share it, if you're making it so obscure?
HB: This whole book is about the act of publishing as itself being an art...
JPF: ...as a kind of gesture.

HB: So publication, making something public, you are talking about what it means to make something public, in the sense of literature and publication.
JPF: And there are interventions into an existing system in a way that's maybe not so different from finding a copy machine, using something that already exists in a way that it's not intended to be used, but kind of exploiting that system.
JPF: [*referring to Hannes' two books* Monologue *and* Durchschnitt] What you notice about these is that they want to look like real books, right? Even if they're ok with being POD, they really want to look like books and not something handmade, though they basically are.
AL: And you would qualify these as books and not chapbooks?
JPF: They could be chapbooks, no? Because they are basically poetry.
HB: I think they could be considered chapbooks, in a way.
AL: [*referring to Jean Keller's* The Black Book*, mentioned in Hannes' essay -- a book printed via Lulu with 720 pages, all of which are completely black with ink*] The black book was the most interesting to me, because it's the most economical way to print on Lulu, even though it's so absurd...
JPF: It's so ridiculous, and it's directly about Lulu, it's about the medium of Lulu: how many pages it is, and it's definitely about messing with the system in a similar way to the no-ISBN-ers, in a sense... we have it [the book] it's really nice to hold it...
HB: it's not nice, it's shit quality, it's awful.
JPF: It feels good. I'm glad that I bought it, even though it's completely conceptual, you don't need to have it in your hands, but it is an object as well.
AL: The book as a piece of art, as well as a piece of literature.
HB: Exactly, the notion that it's about value, it's not about craft -- it's completely anti-craft. It is self-made, but not by someone themselves. It's like a conceptual thing in a way, you employ someone to do this for you, and it's not done very well, and they all look kind of mediocre.
JPF: But isn't that in a way conceptually aligned with doing something yourself shitty? I'm not saying it's the same, but I think there may be a lineage in a sense, that when you make a zine that looks handmade and looks like you

don't know how to make a book, or when you don't make it and you let somebody else make it.
AL: Jules you do a lot of archival work ... have you come across zines at all?
JPF: Yeah, certainly there are archivists who work with zines. When you were talking about ISBNs before, I was thinking about librarians, and in a way archival work is easier in a sense, because with archives you can treat everything like a one-off, you don't have to catalogue it, in the way that a librarian does. So if I were to come across a zine in an archive, I would basically write down, if there was an ISBN, if there was something like a title, if there was a date, an author, I would write those things down but I wouldn't worry about if they conformed to a database, whereas librarians want to make information as generalizable as possible, so my first thought with these no-ISBN people is that they don't know the librarians that I know, who are used to objects that don't behave, making them fit. I do respect the rebellion, but making them fit not for fascist reasons but for taking care of these objects, for respecting them maybe, often in a way that their creators never even imagined, like people dealing with tiny little zines from the sixties and seventies... and taking care of them in a way that the people that made them wouldn't have thought of, wouldn't consider.
AL: At NYU there's this giant collection of Riot Grrrl zines, there was a collection of zines that had been sent to Sheila Heti when she was a teenager probably, and it's not only the zines, but the letters that came with the zines and the envelopes they arrived in. You're looking through them, and you're like, the person who made this, a fifteen-year-old girl in Canada, was never going to think that it was going to be so carefully kept. You said something earlier about objects that don't behave... can you give me an example?
JPF: There are so many! When I was working in archives, I did a lot of work on Fluxus... there were a lot of artists who were really interested, in a kind of *Black Book* way, in messing with the categories of art and the institutions of art and making things that just couldn't be handled by the system. One thing that's kind of correlated is mail art, where you don't have a gallery, you don't have a museum, you have an audience of one, or you have instructions to send it on to another person so you have an audience of two, but then the second person gets a slightly different version. These things sometimes end up in archives. In an archive you have two goals, take the thing and take care of it and make it physically safe, but you also have to make it intellectually findable for someone, a researcher like yourself who's actually looking for an object. How do you help somebody to find that thing, especially when you're not using a library system that has all these moveable parts, and a single object has its own identity?
HB: What I would wonder about zines is how do they behave, or how are they different from other types of publications. Is publication the umbrella term, is it somewhat of a category, and zine is just a genre?
AL: I feel like to make a zine, you almost have to have the intention that you are making a zine.
JPF: I think your idea of them being a self-aware act is really meaningful, and it relates to your work on this idea as publishing as a gesture... you perform a zine and then you have a zine, it's self-selecting.
AL: I like the idea of it as a performative act.
HB: Is it a genre?
AL: I don't define it as a genre... just because it encompasses many genres. Zines can be about anything... and they can be about nothing too.
JPF: They can be art, they can be punk, they can be poetry chapbooks.
AL: They can be informational.
HB: I think I don't know what a zine is, after this.
JPF: But you kind of know it when you see it!
HB: I think my problem is still the digital analogue... can you call them zines when they are online? What's the difference between a personal Tumblr and one that tries to reach out to a broader audience than a zine, or a zine like the PDF. I guess there's a pragmatic approach to this, but I always wonder about these questions... I think the difference between a zine and an artist book... I mean, is this a zine? [*holds up my zine*]
AL: Yeah.
HB: It could be an artists book, with an edition.
JPF: Yeah, but are you an artist?
AL: I am.
JPF: Well then it could be an artist book.
AL: But how do you define an artist book then?
JPF: Not a book made by an artist. It has to be... it's an artwork in the medium of a book. Which doesn't actually help all that much.
HB: But it can be a single object, or it can be a print run of a million. That's my essay with Stephanie Syjuco, she uses print on demand books for installations, but is not a poet, and the books are produced

for the purpose of art, and I would say for the system of art... because what is anything but in the system... if it circulates in the art system or not. And that is in a way an artist book. Even if it's POD, the print run could be infinite, or potentially infinite, because it's produced on demand, and yet she only printed one copy each. So the genre of art is very fluid. I don't know, I feel like an artist book takes itself more seriously.

JPF: Ah, but what do you mean by seriously? Because a zine can take itself very seriously in like a passionate, personal way, but it's not, it takes itself way less professionally.

JPF: It's alternative. If we're describing something as alternative, then you can easily have that online. And the other thing about the internet is just because everyone can see does not mean that everyone is *going* to see it. And that becomes more true the bigger the internet gets, right?

On Monday, my first day in Berlin, I visited the **Archiv der Jugendkulturen**, an archive of youth culture, which housed many zines spanning decades. I looked through three boxes of queer/feminist zines, and found publications from Germany, the U.K., the U.S., Belgium, and beyond. One zine I found, "Yard Wide Yarns issue #7"[7] by 'Jessica' credited its cover design to 'Caroline of Brazen Hussy,' which was the name of Caroline Paquita's (my first interviewee) first zine. I began looking for zines that had been created within the last couple of years in Berlin which provided contact or information about the maker of the zine. Two that stood out to me in these categories were "Love Straight From the Internet" (2015) and "Void Mail #1" (2015) both by Alexandra Ruppert.

Also on Monday, I visited **Neurotitan**, a shop selling zines, comics, posters, and art. To access the store, one must walk down a well-lit alley, then ascend two flights through a stairwell covered in stickers and graffiti. When I did finally locate the shop, I was surprised how well-populated it was for a Monday evening. I spent around an hour looking through zines and books, and ended up buying, among other things, a zine of silkscreens called "Fantôme" produced by a group of French art students. Much as I'd have liked to stay there, they were playing very stressful new-agey but also metal sounding music, so I made my zine-purchasing decisions (weighing cost versus size versus weight, as I was still on the first leg of my trip and had grand illusions of keeping my load light) and left the shop in search of **Pro qm**.This bookstore also had a lot of 'specialty' books, but these seemed mostly to be high-end production architecture books. There were a few items that had a chapbook-esque air about them, but nothing I'd specifically qualify a zine -- I'm still including it in my write-up because it was recommended to me by several people as a resource for independent publications, and it had many!

Note from 2024: Before my second Berlin interview I visited Motto, a small bookstore with many zines, chapbooks and artists books. In 2023 I became aware that Motto has for years routinely failed to pay not only their employees, but also many artists who have brought work to sell on consignment. You can read the accounts of these artists and employees and follow updates at @paymemotto on Instagram.

If you are looking for another place to visit in Berlin, I would instead recommend Colorama, a small publisher and risograph studio who sells zines, comics, prints, and offers workshops. They are fantastic!

"Why have I not been doing this my entire life?" an interview with Claire Biddles

Claire Biddles is a zine maker, writer, music lover and social media afi&ionado currently based in Glasgow. I met with Claire to talk about her zine "Fuck What You Love," and about the musical and artistic manifestations of Glasgow's DIY spirit.

January 20th, 2018

Merchant City, Glasgow

AL: I'm going to start with the question that I ask everyone, which is how do you define the word 'zine'?

CB: Oh man... that's hard. It sounds stupid to say 'make something that wouldn't exist otherwise,' because that's like making anything, but I think it's about making something that's completely self-motivated. It's not like a magazine where you'd be making it for advertising... it's about making something for you, and maybe for a very niche audience. It's about making something for maybe a more marginalized group, a group where something like that doesn't exist for them anyway.

AL: How long have you been making zines for?

CB: Maybe like three years? When I first started making them, I'd been buying zines for a long time, and reading them, but when I first made one, I was like, 'why have I not been doing this the whole time?' I graduated from art school and did environmental art, which is kinda like public art, making art in contexts outside of the gallery, so I'd been trying to make art for ages and I was doing writing as well. I basically found zines and was like, 'this is exactly what I want to be doing!' It feels like a culmination of all that stuff I was doing.

AL: Did you find a community of zine makers?

CB: I knew people who were making [zines]... I really found community and zine makers online, through Twitter, and mainly through zine fairs, going to zine fairs and meeting people who came from all different places, finding collaborators through that.

AL: That's really cool! What was the first zine that you made?

CB: I think I made some that I think I didn't put out, I made them because I wanted to make them... most of my zines are about pop music, and kind of fandom and stuff, they're typically fanzine type stuff. I made a zine about a band I like called Years and Years, and I made a zine about a trip that I'd been on, this was ages ago, they're probably somewhere deep in my house. I made a more fanziney one, and then a more personal one, and I realized that what I really liked was the fanziney one, so that's where I went forward. And then, but it really started when I made the first issue of "Fuck What You Love," and then I started making zines for public consumption after that.

AL: How many issue of "Fuck What You Love" do you have out now?

CB: There's two out at the moment, and the third one is gonna be out in April. I launch it at Glasgow Zine Fair, which is end of April. I'll be doing the call-out in a couple of weeks, it's quite a long process... some of the zines I do, I have an idea and I make the zine that night because it's the sort of thing I can do myself, but then some of the zines, like "Fuck What You Love," it's properly designed, there's contributors and there's an open call, my friend does illustrations for it, so it's more of a group effort. This one takes a couple of months to put together.

AL: So if you're looking at the production in terms of content and construction, what does it look like from start to finish?

CB: So what usually happens, is 2 ½ to 3 months before I'm launching it, I do an open call on Twitter and Tumblr and that gets sent out to people, people see it and then respond with their ideas for pieces... I pretty much take everybody, I say you have to pitch it... it's not peer reviewed

journals, but I like to have an idea of what kind of stuff I'm gonna get before I get it. So after that, they have a two week open call and then after that they have two weeks to send me their full piece. And then I spend a week copyediting it. My day job is communications, so I do a lot of proofreading and project management, print, so that's actually been really useful in my zinemaking.

AL: Good skills to have!

CB: I can plan it quite well, it's useful. I copyedit it, then I send it to my friend Kate who does the design, and while this is happening I'll be sending some images to my friend who does the illustrations, she'll be working on the illustrations for a few weeks and then it kind of all comes together and gets printed. It's a long process involving a number of people, but like I said, that's why I only do it once a year.

AL: How many contributors do you usually have per issue?

CB: Usually it's about 15 or 20, depends on how long the pieces are, and how many people want to contribute, but I'll usually find 15 to 20. It will be a combination of me asking people, because there'll be writers I've gotten to know who I'll want in the zine, I'll keep them in mind throughout the year. I've met so many amazing people through doing the open call, then they've become friends. It's really nice to build up not only a network of people who make zines, but also people who write about pop music, because that's what I do, it's really nice.

AL: That was going to be my next question, what has it been like finding your community with your zine, and making a community through your zine?

CB: It's just been really great, everybody's said the same thing but it's just been really encouraging, finding people who do this. I think that if you do this, you have to be a certain kind of person, because it's such a labor of love. We always joke about this at zine fairs... money in the zine community just goes round and round, nobody gets money or spends money, it just transfers through everybody... nobody's in this for the cash. For the first issue of "Fuck What You Love," I made £30 in the end, I didn't know what to do with it, I couldn't pay anybody who was making stuff, so I just invited everybody for a drink who lived in Glasgow. [*laughs*] I know a lot of people just make zines themselves but so much of zine making is collaborative, for me that's one of the key things, so it's nice to meet other people in a community, because you can all help each other and work on projects together. Every time zine fairs happens, we'll all go for dinner after, and there'll be like twenty zines planned that we're all going to make together, and maybe three of them happen... but it's good.

AL: That's so fun! A lot of the zines I've come across in Glasgow have been collaborative... a lot of people contributing to one zine, and then I've noticed the same names in a bunch of zines. It seems like there's a really tight-knit community!

CB: For me, that extends for Glasgow, the kind of music and art in general is very collaborative... everybody who's in a band in Glasgow is in like four bands, everybody works on everybody else's stuff, so the zine community's just an extension of that community.

AL: Do you feel like there's a strong DIY theme between the art and the music?

CB: Oh for sure... it's very DIY, and people put on gigs in weird places and all that stuff, it feels accessible as well, it's always felt very accessible, and it's not like some places I've moved or been to where it feels like if that's a scene that doesn't involve you you can be a part of stuff here and it feels very natural.

AL: That's really cool! Accessibility is super important for community. So talking about music and more collaboration, I found an essay of yours in the fanzine about the Long Blondes...

CB: Oh yeah, my friend Dan did that!

AL: I think it was on the website [for the] Glasgow School of Art archive, they had a quote from the Long Blondes saying, "we always wanted to be a big enough band that someone wrote a fanzine about us" [*laughs*]

CB: [*laughs*] yeah! I wrote that in like 5 minutes on my phone, I'd been meaning to send this... yeah, he'd been saying he was going to make this zine for ages,

we both really liked the Long Blondes and I was like, 'yeah, I'll do something for it,' eventually he was like, 'I'm printing it today'... I was like, 'fuck!' I really like contributing to other people's zines. Also, it means that you get zines, 'cause like, it's the kind of thing, it's a known thing that you won't get paid for writing in zines, but you'll get a copy of the zines... it's often really worth it!

AL: Just in it for the zines!

CB: I've got fucking hundreds at home, 'cause you get them steadily through the year, if you go to a zine fair you do swaps with people, and you come home with like fifty zines stacked up, you have to set aside an evening to go through your zines!

AL: I have a crate of zines that I keep by my bed, and I'm an insomniac so I always go through the archive when I can't sleep... What is unifying about zine production in Glasgow, or what is distinct about it?

CB: I'm not sure, really. Even though zines have to be place specific, they're printed items, they're not on the internet, they must be rooted in place... I think the thing that I like about zines and zine making is it somehow transcends place, maybe because of zine fairs, or people selling things on the internet. It doesn't feel specific to Glasgow, it feels kind of universal, but maybe it's a kind of universal thing that feels like it fits Glasgow, because of our history of art and music. It feels like it would naturally belong here, it's not inherently off here. Another thing I'd say about that, because we have got a lot of independent shops that have maybe lasted longer than in a lot of other places in the UK... like Monorail, which is the record shop, they've been open for fifteen years... have you been to Good Press?

AL: Yeah, I was there for like an hour today!

CB: Oh man, it's so good... They used to have the shop here, which is now Monorail's stock room, they've been around for maybe about 6 years. People care more about these places, feel more ownership of these places, so people will make an effort to keep them open. I think that's important, the community around actual spaces. For me it was important with "Fuck What You Love," I didn't want to necessarily get it in a ton of places, but I was really wanting Monorail to sell it 'cause it's a music specific thing. It's important to have these physical places to go. In Good Press they do a lot of readings, they'll have tiny exhibitions on, and Monorail will host installs, a band will play here, and they've done a lot of book launches as well. I really like how, if you make something [in Glasgow] it's not just like, you've made it and it's there. If you make something, it's as important to think about the party you're going to have to launch it... everything's an opportunity for a fanfare, but it means that it's tied to a place and you get people coming, you get to talk to people. It can feel kind of weird if you make a zine and then just sell it online. You've made it and then launched it and then sit at your laptop and wait for people to order it, or wait for people to get it and post a picture on instagram.

AL: I think you're saying something super important, and something I've noticed about the zines that I've found [in Glasgow] is that in looking online, most of them don't seem to be digitized...

CB: Yeah, that's really important for me.

AL: I think so too! Especially because I feel like in my research I've come across a lot of zines that are completely online, you can read the whole thing online and never touch a piece of paper but still feel like you know the zine... but is that really a zine?

CB: I get why people do that, I guess for accessibility reasons, or maybe not everybody has access to a printer or all these things that you need, but I think it's a different thing, I think a zine has to be printed, really. I always say for "Fuck What You Love," to everybody who writes for it, 'you own the essay, I'm just hosting it on this paper. If you want to put it online'... I know a lot of people who have written for me will be starting out writing stuff, for those people especially it's important to have that stuff accessible online. So I say, if you want to host it on your Tumblr or website, you can do that. But for me, the whole thing has to be... you have to hold it in your hand, you have to read it. I'm really one of those

people who's romantic about print... you're not on your computer with Twitter and all this stimuli, you have to kind of step away from that. But then I like how that can then be taken, and put on Instagram... like when you send zines out to people and somebody might do a video of the flip through, I like the interaction of that, it can be quite nice... but the zine for me has to be printed.

AL: Do you feel like social media and the internet in general have increased the accessibility of your zines?

CB: Oh, absolutely... I don't think I'd sell anything if it wasn't for Twitter. I'd sell stuff at fairs, but part of my day job is social media so I'm quite good at promo. I really found my community on Twitter, which is good, and you'll find a lot of what's going on [for] zines on Twitter, it's invaluable really. And just keeping in touch with people that you meet at fairs.

AL: Do you mainly just do the Glasgow zine fest, or do you travel to other fairs as well?

CB: I've mainly done that Glasgow zine fest, but this year I'm going to make an effort to go to some different ones... Zine fests are weird. I don't know if it's the same in the US, but here, sometimes it's all zines, sometimes it's more of a self-publishing fest, it's people who make art books, and you go along with your zines about Harry Styles, for like 3 quid. Sometimes you turn up and you're the only person making fanzines and it's a bit weird! A thing that I like at Glasgow Zine Fest is, as well as running the zine fair, they also have a lot of workshops where people can come and make zines, they have a lot of the stuff you can make zines with, just to share. You can come to a zine fair and see someone who's got 40 zines, and you're like, how the fuck do I get started with this? I think it's really nice, once you've made your first zine it can spark something in you where you're like, I want to make 20 zines! I think a lot of zine fairs and a lot of distributors are kind of focusing on is letting people know that it's really easy to do it, here are ways you can do it.

AL: Because zines can be anything content-wise, I'm like, 'everybody should always be making zines! What are we doing if we're not all making zines?'

CB: That's what I felt, when I first started making them -- why have I not been doing this my entire life?

CHAPTER FOUR

Back in New York, the winter semester kicked off with many hours spent transcribing the interview material I collected on my trip. Speaking with zine makers was my favorite part of research, and transcribing these interviews only made me want to conduct more! I spent the next few months reaching out to zine makers near and far, continuing to collect thoughts and ideas on self-publication.

Fieldwork: San Francisco

I finished my research in mid March after traveling home to the Bay Area for spring break. It would have felt wrong to conclude my thesis without writing about San Francisco and the zine culture I have explored there over the past couple of years. I grew up in the city, and it was in San Francisco that I made my personal discovery of zines and created my first publications. San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area have a history of self-publication and counterculture. the most prominent landmark of this is City Lights Bookstore, which opened in 1953 and was a hub around which the Beat Generation and subsequent aspiring writers gravitated.

Mia at Green Apple

There are two book stores in San Francisco that I rely upon to find contemporary Bay Area zines, as well as to sell my own work. My favorite book store is Green Apple Books on Clement St. I've been going there since I was a kid and it continues to be a favorite haunt of mine. They have a wide + revolving selection of zines + other publications, not to mention a great collection of used books + music. The other book store I like is Dog Eared Books on Valencia, which also has a wide representation of various zine makers + additionally sells a number of poetry chapbooks.

My last archival visit took place at the San Francisco Public Library Zine Archive. There, I was able to explore zines that highlighted the Bay Area extension of the Riot Grrrl movement and its intersection with Queer core and Bay Area punk in the nineties.

GRRRL VISIONS OF THE FUTURE: RIOT GRRRL & QUEERCORE

"When she talks, I hear the revolution," asserts Kathleen Hanna in a confident if not corrosive snarl on the track "Rebel Girl" from Bikini Kill's 1993 album *Pussy Whipped*.[9] Hanna and her band, Bikini Kill, were at the forefront of Riot Grrrl, a subcultural revolution in music, punk culture, and feminism. As is the case with many subcultures, it's hard to pinpoint the exact moment when Riot Grrrl began. Some scholars such as Lisa Darms will point to the movement's year of origin as 1989;[10] however, it was in the early 1990s that the movement began to gain real momentum, beginning at first in the Pacific Northwest and then relocating to D.C. before spreading across the U.S.[11] The Riot Grrrl movement was a grassroots, do-it-yourself response to punk, which had historically low female influence and participation; it was the birth of a new punk revolution, one that rejected the male domination of music and accompanying culture as it was manifested in the form of zines. Grrrl-fronted acts such as Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, and Heavens to Betsy created a platform for a new type of feminism, one that redefined female identity, reappropriated female sexuality, and inspired generation of DIY feminist musicians and zine makers. The participants in the movement, typically teenage girls and young adult women, stood in stark contrast to the 'typical' girl, or "Teena," as she was referred to by *Seventeen Magazine* at the dawn of the commercialization of teenage culture, who was supposedly fixated on shopping, popularity, and attracting the interest of the opposite sex.[12] It was these types of heteronormative stereotypes that had been forced upon females at the end of the 20th century that Riot Grrrl stood to subvert.

This contrast and associated rebellion, however, was only apparent through the narrow lens of the white, suburban, middle class teenager. Despite the fact that Riot Grrrl was formed in response to the exclusivity of the male-dominated punk sphere, it was a movement that was reflective of the third wave of feminism, which, though more progressive than its precursors, was still considerably white-washed. Just as the previously male-dominated punk sphere had not been intentionally exclusive of women, Riot Grrrl was not a largely white and middle class affair by design, however there existed certain barriers that contributed to a lack of inclusivity and diversity among the Riot Grrrls.[13] At the same time, however, it would be reductive to think of Riot Grrrl as another narrow minded feminist movement: as Lisa Darms writes in the foreword to the book *The Riot Grrrl Collection,* "riot grrrl was never a single thing, and never really wanted to be," also referring to riot grrrl as "complex and contradictory."[14] To borrow a term from Hebdige, who is borrowing from Genet, the way in which the Riot Grrrl lives and presents herself is a "Refusal," a threat to the status quo.[15] Riot Grrrl represents both a feminist and alternative (punk) awakening shared by many of the girls who took part in the movement: she rejects societal assumptions about the typical goals of a heteronormative high school girl.

As much as Riot Grrrl centered around female punk musicians, the movement was both documented and perpetuated through the creation and circulation of the numerous zines elicited by the movement. One theme that marks many Riot Grrrl publications is a rejection of an assumed heteronormative femininity. In a zine from the Riot Grrrl era found in the NYU Fales archive, titled "Loud as Hell #3,"[16] the creator Anne reimagines a heteronormative icon and ideal that has been forced upon young girls for decades: "Barbie is punk as fuck, and she didn't ask to be born with her body… when she's alone, I bet barbie listens to bikini kill, writes RAPE in big letters on her plastic tummy, and gets upset because she has no clitoris." To borrow a phrase from Carley Moore, on the surface, Barbie represents the "everygirl"[17] who, despite her attempts to control her body, is still "deeply embarrassed by

the ways in which her body and her desires betray her."[18] As she is reimagined by Anne, Barbie still feels shame at her limitations (i.e. lacking a clitoris) but also reacts with a Riot Grrrl type rage to these shortcomings.

As a subculture, Riot Grrrl contains a multitude of subsets: for example, the intersection of Riot Grrrl and the Queercore movement of hardcore queer music as manifested by queer women and men alike in San Francisco and the Bay Area in the 1990s. In the San Francisco Public Library zine archive, there is a collection of zines such as "Riot Gear"[19] and "Fembot,"[20] which were created by queer men in positive response to Riot Grrrl. In some cases the invitation was extended by female-identifying Riot Grrrls themselves: in the zine "Slututopia #2," also found in the SFPL archive and published by the female collective Riot Grrrlz Outer Space, there is a message on the inside of the cover, "'slut-identified' and bi/queer boys welcome."[21] The creator of the zine also explains that they have designated themselves as "Outer Space" Riot Grrrlz, because "I wanted a RG network that wasn't localized in any one place," while also asserting that "lots of feminists talk about 'herstory' vs. 'history,' trying to have a feminist vision of the past. RGOS encourages a Grrrl vision of the future!"[22]

In J[illegible] Halberstam's *The Queer Art of Failure*, the term "failure" is taken to mean a "way of refusing to acquiesce to dominant logics of power," and can be used as an "oppositional tool," meaning that the "failure" of individuals and subcultures to slide seamlessly into societal standards can be reappropriated as a subversive and powerful act of existence.[23] In examining the role of queer men in the Bay Area's Riot Grrrl scene, there are several layers of this "failure." In their writing, Halberstam points to queerness as a "failure" to comply with the mainstream, which is parallel to their notion of "failure" existing in terms of the punk rejection of societal standards, which can be applied to both the punk movement of the 1970s, and perhaps doubly applied to the rejection of this punk in the form of Riot Grrrl. These layers of "failure" are magnified in this extension of the Riot Grrrl movement and its inclusivity of queer men, which was an opportunity for this specific group to "fail" at "failure." Queer men were rejected from the original punk subculture for the same reason as female punks: it centered around and was dominated by male heteronormativity. In the aforementioned "Riot Gear no. 3," a zine created by two San Francisco based queer men, Deke Motif Nihilson recounts a 1992 pilgrimage to Olympia where he hangs out with Tobi from Bikini Kill, and Allison from Bratmobile loans him a skirt to wear to a music festival, about which he writes, "It was easier (i.e. safer) to wear this dress earlier in the week, when attendance was more of the local-and-in-on-it / freaks-on-the-road variety."[24] In this, Nihilson designates Riot Grrrl as not only source of allyship but also a space in which he can participate in a new version of punk that doesn't threaten him. Although Riot Grrrl was relatively inclusive of queer men in the movement, there was nevertheless another layer of "failure" of these men, in the sense that they were not women and could not make a claim to this culture that would be accepted in the same way that Riot Grrrl women accepted other female-identifying Riot Grrrls. This raises the question, does a subculture-within-a-subculture strengthen the initial subcultural movement or subvert it? As Lisa Darms asserts in her aforementioned foreword, Riot Grrrl was claimed by its participants, who were drawn to the movement for a number of reasons, and who engaged with it in a number of formats.[25] The participation of queer men contributed to this intentional "failure," adding strength to the "Refusal"[26] represented by Riot Grrrl, in the same way that thousands of feminists across the U.S. did when collaged zines, formed bands, and wrote their own Riot Grrrl manifestos.

REVOLUTION GRRRL STYLE NOW!

"Feminism and Activism are Vital"
an interview with Microeditorial Amistad

This fall at the NYABF, I checked out the table of Microeditorial Amistad, a Chilean press whose table featured a number of zines and printed items, such as a deck of prayer car ds featuring feminist heroes. I chatted with the present members of the press for a few minutes, and they gave me their "Manual Feminista," a pink, pocket-sized piece of paper stating feminist principles. This winter, I reached out to Microeditorial Amistad for an email interview, and was lucky enough to have the four creators of the press send back a thoughtful reply.

February 25th, 2018

the internet

AL: Can you please each introduce yourselves and tell me a little about the types of zines you're creating? Also, can you each please offer your own definition of the word "zine"?
MA: We are Amistad, a Chilean micropress created by a photographer, a journalist and two art theorists. We publish the work of young artists and writers about feminism, sculpture, painting, photography, poetry, illustration and contemporary popular culture. We understand zines as an economic object because of its material and printing methods, which helps us to make visible questions, processes and investigations of young artists with whom we collaborate. They are also an excuse for bringing together people, ideas, experiences and trades. They are a portable, affordable and personal way of creating, exploring and communicating critical discourses. It's highly political because creators learn and manage the means of production and make a shift from the personal to the public.
AL: How long have you been working collectively as Microeditorial Amistad, and what has been your experience in collaborating with one another?
MA: We actively started working in October of 2016, after we went to a graphic art fair in Chile. As we said before, we understand self-publishing as an excuse for collaboration and experimentation. Because we are interdisciplinary team and we work with young artists and writers of different trades, we value different points of views and share our knowledge with each other. We invite our friends and people with whom we collaborate to be part of the zine making process, from editing, designing, printing and binding. We are always learning, experimenting and finding new ways to self-publish. Through workshops and fairs we share our knowledge and invite people to be part of this revolution. It's very amazing how, with a little push, people are amazed of themselves can create their own pamphlet, flyer, poster or zine to share their ideas, writings and investigations. They also value the collaborative processes behind each publication. We also have been many friends! We consider this project as a way of destabilizing our own conceptions of work. Its fundamental to consider our collaborations as a political proposal: to transform our creative and productive space and time into friendly moments.
AL: What has been your experience in finding and creating a community surrounding feminism and self-publication in Chile?
MA: We denominate a collaborative and feminist micropress. So, in a way, all of our publications and processes can be read from a feminist perspective. So far we have worked on three publications about feminism, in addition to making visible the work of women. We have our "Manual Feminista" which was created for a protest; our deck of feminist saints where we highlight the work of awesome ladies from all over the world, which is an investigation by Camila and Daniela, and where they invited 15 illustrators to pick the women that inspires them. Today a second edition of the feminist deck is being made with new

collaborators and even more women we admire. We also have our "Feminist Self Defense Guide", that was edited by Tarix. The first time it was printed, the screen printer gave us half of the production. During January of 2018 we organized a series of talks on contemporary popular culture from a feminist perspective and shared experiences, questions and reflections on these topics. By creating instances of horizontal conversation, where ideas and questions are shared, and knowledge is created collaboratively we feel like we are working in a more honest, political, affectionate and feminist way. Through these processes, we are always finding new ways of working together and that subvert industrialized ways of labour.

AL: What is your perception of the culture surrounding self-publication in Chile, and why is it important to be self-published?

MA: In Chile, self-publishing has been around for over a century, from popular poetry from the XIX century like "La Lira Popular"; self-published newspapers of the the earlier feminist movement as "La Palanca"; catalogues by V.I.S.U.A.L, and others graphic experiences as a political response in the dictatorship from 1973 to 1989. During the last years there have been different fairs that curate the work of different micropresses, zinesters and art collectives from all over Chile and nearby countries. These moments of encounter and exchange are very inspiring and help us create networks with other projects. Also, it is possible to see how the scene has grown (and has become more specific) and we can see how more and more people value zines. But still sometimes we go to fairs that are not exclusively zines and we have to explain what it is. For us, self-publishing is a political and creative tool. Its a medium for formal experimentation and it allows us to problematize language at different levels, from what to how it is told. Through zines we can experiment paper as a media and medium spreading counter cultural manifestations and artistic creation. We also love the idea that you can collect zines and generate a file that can be reactivate whenever you need or want.

AL: When I stopped by your table this fall at the NYABF, you gave me a pink, pocket-sized "Manual Feminista" (which I now have on my wall!) -- can you talk about the importance of feminism and activism in your work, as well as the importance of accessibility to your audience and readers?

MA: Our "Manual Feminista" (Feminist guide in english) is a small publication we made for a protest organized in Santiago, Chile, for the legalization of abortion. One of the reasons why we created Amistad and carry out our editorial work is to propose materials for local political discussions. Our guide works as a provocation device because we state through 12 short sentences different topics and positions within the feminist movement. They are playful, political and recognizable. Its form, material and way of printing is a solution that also considers the medium as an opportunity to massively disseminate this critical apparatus. We wanted the content to be efficient, direct, self-critical and also an object as such; a repository of collective memory to safeguard the affections that arise in the political organization.

Feminism and activism are vital for us. They are problems, practices and activities that we are still finding ways to deal with. Our editorial work can't be separated from the political potential that paper, printing and distribution has. We try to make publications that can be read from different levels and places: that the reader can access through their interests and experiences, but at the same time it's crucial to recognize our publications as a result of reflections and activities. This recognition is to materialize the system of production, to make tangible –for example– the process of binding and not only finished publication. When we decided to be a feminist micropress, we do not only want to self define ourselves in terms of a categorization of our work, but to share and transmit an experience of feminism, political action, which can be a starting point to exploring new ways of living.



"listen to what format feels right"
an interview with Bobbi Salvör Menuez

I reached out to Bobbi Salvor Menuez for an interview via Instagram, and when they agreed, I noticed them post about an exhibition of their etchings opening at Picture Room, a gallery and art space in Cobble Hill. Although our interview ultimately took place over email, I went to meet them, see their work in person, and give them some of my own zines. Bobbi, whose multifaceted artistic tendencies of ten lend themselves to zine making, had a lot to say about discovering DIY while growing up in New York.

February 16th, 2018

Cobble Hill, Brooklyn

March 11th, 2018

the internet

AL: How do you define "zine"?

BSM: I like to think of it as a loose category, the main defining factors for me being that it's self published, self assembled, and generally of a DIY spirit.

AL: At the Printed Matter Show & Tell event, you presented a zine by Maggie Lee ([Untitled], edition of 3) because Maggie was the person who had introduced you to zines. Can you talk about your discovery of zines and self-publication -- what were the first zines you made like, and how does that compare to what you're making now?

BSM: I met Maggie when I was about 13 or 14, she was working at the aNYthing store in Chinatown where I lived, and she always seemed to be working on a new zine at the counter or giving me a copy of a tiny 32 page, one sheet folded zine wrapped w colored rubber-band filled with psychedelic collages and confessional love poems. I remember hearing Clayton Paterson refer to her as "the zine queen". At the same time, there was an amazing, underage music scene happening in NY, so I was going to concerts every weekend and making friends outside of school. There was Showpaper a "FREE bi-weekly print-only publication which aims to list and promote all ages DIY shows in the NYC and tri-state area" which I coveted to plan my life around, and hung many of which on my walls. Showpaper was a zine itself, and I even got to go with a friend of mine to the industrial printers in Queens where they were produced, with a friend of mine who helped distribute. The first zines I worked on were a short lived run of this zine called "No Label" I helped a friend do. We would interview bands, review shows, collect poems and drawings from other kids on the scene, spend a weekend printing, cutting glueing and folding, and then sell them for like a dollar or hand them out for free at shows. It was out of all this that I started organizing art shows and the art collective I co-founded came to be (Luck You Collective). I remember I used to put the posters for the shows I was putting together on the back page of No Label. These first zines were very community focused, and although I still work on zines like that, for example Affinity Journal, put out through 8ball community, I much more make zines now as a kind of diary practice or as supportive content to accompany performance work.

AL: Last night at Picture Room, you showed me Repro Rights Zine, a zine you collaborated on which was printed by Endless Editions, that covers topics like self-defense and reproductive health and rights. I checked out the Repro Rights Zine website this morning and found that the zines are free to download (along with a handy guide on how to fold them!) Can you speak to the intersection of self-publication and activism, as well as the importance of accessibility for zines, and how the internet plays a role in this?

BSM: Well Zines came pre-internet, but I think they still hold the same function they always did and can extend themselves even further now through the internet. For RRZ in particular, accessibility of format was key; so many systems

through which information & resources are distributed, are shaped by exclusivity and limitations of access. If information is power, then how it's distributed is so important consider. DIY, as a model for anything, is very much about the power of the people. It pushes to bypass systems of expertise through higher education & pressures to professionalize in order for our outputs to be legitimized. A zine is an extremely comprehensive, low-cost, format through which we can share ideas, work and information; the experience of how we receive the content in a zine is distinctly unique from how we receive and place information we gather from the internet in our minds, and that distinction is what will continue to make zines an important format for people to work with.

AL: You've worked with two art collectives which involve zine production: Luck You, which you co-founded, and 8ball, which you've been a part of since the Newsstand days. What has been your experience in creating / joining these communities of artists / zine makers? Also, can you talk a little about your work with the Newsstand specifically?

BSM: I spoke briefly about Luck You in answering the first question, and it really came from wanting to elevate the work that I saw was already being made in a community otherwise centered around music. I was 15 when I organized my first art show, about a year before some friends and I more formally put together Luck You. In organizing that first show, the feeling of support and demand for more was made evident by the community. Honestly, collaboration is NOT easy, but somehow it is a format of making I have returned to always. The way you are forced to learn about your own process in sharing it/opening it up, how you learn about/from other people's processes, and how the work is born of a communal space (rather then debut in one after being stewed from a solitary place), are some parts of why I find value in it. I have certainly learned a lot about communication through these practices, and about formats for accountability and task delegation etc...

... I was really excited by and taken with the Newsstand project, as soon as I heard about it, and made it a point to go to as many of their events as I could. This was how I met Lele Saveri and became involved with and a part of 8ball community (as that was who ran the Newsstand). I brought my own zines there and eventually pitched an idea for an event to hold there. This was around the time Luck You as a functioning collective was petering out, but many of the artists I knew through that network continued to make work in and around NYC. I organized the first of a series of performance art showcases with Luck You, which I then continued on my own. The series was called Booklub, the 10th of which I brought to MoMA for their commission of the Newsstand. For this series I encouraged artists without a performance practice to come up w a work to present in a performance context, and what people came up w was always so exciting to see. From knot-tying demonstrations, singing, poetry, dancing, to artists making marionettes of themselves and putting on a silent puppet show, it was always an eclectic showcase, and inevitable both opened to artists with more of a performance practice and even pushed certain artists to develop performance practices further. I wasn't interested in the work presented being "good" per say, it was just about holding a space for people to try things, and people seemed to enjoy it as much as I did. We always also included an open mic component, which was particularly fun when doing it at the old Newsstand, because the diversity of who commuting through the station might stop by to on a whim share or perform something was always such an exciting variable.

CHAPTER FIVE

Defining the Zine

(or why it shouldn't be defined)

When I began my research, I prioritized finding *the* definition of the zine. I imagined I would both find and develop a patchwork of ideas and constraints that I could point to and say, 'these are what makes a zine. Everything that ever was a zine and everything that ever will be a zine fits neatly within these terms.' In my interview with Antoine Lefebvre, he made the point that it was important, as a researcher and an academic, to define the terms one is working with. That being said, the zine has proven itself to be a medium that does not need to adhere to the strictures of the academic sphere: it exists as an untraditional entity that transcends and defies the definitions that have been been assigned to mainstream publications, both digital and physical. In every interview that I've conducted, I've posed the question, how do you define the zine? Everyone offers a different definition, typically prefaced with either a deep and dramatic sigh, or by the statement that they can't speak definitively, that their definition will inevitably exclude some type of zine, and that they are therefore flexible with it.

As Antoine iterated in his interview, there are no constraints to the making of a zine outside of the zinemaker's vision. And as Jules Pelta Feldman stated in their interview, "you kind of know it when you see it." In short, the attempt to define the zine has proved to be a completely impossible and ridiculous way to go about my research -- given that there is no true limit to what a zine can be, there is no limit to its definitions. For the purpose of my research, I've created my own rubric for what I consider a zine -- what I've considered zine-like enough, at least, to include in my research. These are my unwavering terms:

1. THE ZINE MUST BE SELF-PUBLISHED
2. THE ZINE MUST BE NON-COMMERCIAL
3. THE ZINE MUST BE SELF-CIRCULATED (ALTHOUGH ULTIMATELY IT MAY BE TRADED/PASSED AROUND BY A NUMBER OF PARTIES, IT MUST FIRST BE DISTRIBUTED BY THE ZINE MAKER.)
4. THE ZINE MUST BE MADE WITH THE INTENT OF BEING A ZINE.

When it comes to the questions of, 'how many editions must be printed?' 'what quality must the publication be?' and, of course, the traditional, 'must it be photocopied and compiled by hand?' I am flexible in my considerations. Ultimately, everyone will have a different definition of the zine, because everyone is making their zines for different reasons, and there are countless reasons to make a zine. As Pat McCarthy stated in his interview, "it comes down to spirit and authenticity, spirit and the situation in which it was made." While authenticity can be a slippery slope of a term, it remains applicable to zine creation -- there is an authenticity that comes when you hide behind no editor, no publisher, when the only name assigned to the work is that of the creator. In an interview with Leo Findeisen, Bernhard Cella states that within self-published artists' books "was the potential for direct translation: in self-publication people act without filters."[27] Again, as most of my interviewees are quick to point out, no one is making zines for money or acclaim: there is no ulterior motive behind the creation of the zine. In this sense, then, it's a mode of authentic communication of a person's ideas.

Autonomy and Community

As I have learned more about the community surrounding zines and their makers through meeting the individuals mentioned throughout my research, I have found that it is a collection of genuinely open and enthusiastic artists and writers who are more often than not willing to share their perspective and time. As Claire Biddles relayed during our interview, zine communities often center around a physical place. Although Claire was speaking with specific regard to Glasgow, what she said rings true for the communities in the US. For example, in New York, there existed the Newsstand, a zine distro and performance space created by 8-Ball (a non-profit organization for zine makers and artists formed by Lele Saveri in 2012) which was located at the Lorimer / Metropolitan subway station. Although the Newsstand closed after about nine months, it was recreated for a stint at MoMA, and is currently on exhibition at the Fondation Louis Vuitton outside of Paris, representing an important piece of recent zine culture in New York. Perhaps the need for the physical location is a reflection of the physicality of the zine. Despite the relatively new potential for the digitization of the zine, there still exists the need for meeting place: the distro, the zine rack, the shelf to be perused by hand. This is apparent in the example of Printed Matter: the non-profit is viewed by some as a standard of artists books and self-publication, and its position as touchstone of the zine community extends beyond New York, as is exemplified in the widely and internationally attended New York Art Book Fair that Printed Matter puts on each fall. Institutions such as Printed Matter and their associated events exist in an anti-institutional community, so while these types of establishments can be seen as a physical nexus of the self-publication world, they are not necessarily representative of DIY zine culture and the accompanying community on a whole.

The zine world is a small one in which creators are likely to know one another, meaning that there is a lot of collaborative effort and minimal competition. For me, this was apparent in moments such as the one at Archiv der Jugendkulturen when I found the zine "Yard Wide Yarns issue #7"[28] which featured the art of Caroline Paquita; or the many zines in Glasgow that overlapped in terms of contributors; or even the expertly assembled crowd of presenters at Antoine Lefebvre's Show and Tell, many of whom I came across again in my research, or eventually pursued as interview subjects. It's surprising to discover such universality and closeness in a community based around low-volume, small-circulation publications: to find names of artists I know from New York or California having their work preserved in archives in Berlin and Glasgow is exciting. To think that a flimsy ("pathetic," as Pat would say) paper publication has found itself halfway around the world in a specialized box in a specialized archival organization seems almost counterintuitive to the DIY ethos, but at the same time is proof of the importance and tight-knit-ness of this world. It's also an inclusive and supportive community: there is mentorship and enthusiastic collaboration, and, as Jo Rosenthal said in her interview, ultimately "everyone is really nice." New York, where I have conducted the majority of my research, is of course a large territory for artists of all kinds, but the zine community feels intimate if not compact. The zine world is becoming increasingly diverse and inclusive, given that there are no constraints about who can participate -- however, as Paul John pointed out in his interview, large-scale venues for participation such as art book fairs are still exclusive, especially when it comes to representation. Although in theory zines can be produced cheaply, there remains an issue of a lack of access to resources and funds needed for production, distribution and participation in self-publication.

The Inherently Political

The autonomous act of self-publication is an inherently political one, especially given the zine's radical history in counterculture, which demands a reconceptualization of how art and media are produced and consumed. As Julia Lipscomb stated at the Printed Matter Show and Tell, "zines, no matter what topic or subject matter, are political in nature."[29] This idea has been reiterated by many of the people

I've spoken with throughout my research: regardless of whether the content is political, to self-publish and self-distribute is a revolutionary and radical act that is subversive to standards of the publication and art markets. It is not only a refusal of the content constraints enforced by publishers that monopolize media consumption, but also a refusal to participate in a standardized and 'acceptable' way of engaging with publication.

J___ Halberstam writes in *The Queer Art of Failure* that as a practice, "failure recognizes that alternatives are embedded already in the dominant," while also iterating that this "failure" is a refusal to subscribe to mainstream authorities.[30] To create a zine, or to self-publish a book, is an intentional failure to comply with the codes surrounding artistic and literary production. In my interview with Antoine, he spoke about the trend among French zine makers relying on self-publication before being accepted into a more professional publication sphere, though some creators, both in France and beyond, continue to choose to make zines even after being represented by a publisher. Another example of this intentional failure is the NO-ISBN movement that Hannes Bajohr and Jules Pelta Feldman discussed in their interview, in which self-publishers refuse to assign an ISBN number to their work, therefore refusing to participate in an internationally recognized system that allows a publication to be searchable and archivable within a greater system of mainstream media and academia.[31] In his previously mentioned interview with Leo Findeisen, Bernhard Cella speaks about the political act of self-publishing a book with no ISBN number, "NO-ISBN can, quite succinctly, indicate that someone is not at all bothered by others who assign him or her to the mainstream, that is, something everybody is doing."[32] Though my own work with the medium of the zine is not overtly political, it is radical in the sense that I am self-publishing with no constraints, and without anyone's permission.

Feminism & Activism

In my archival work and in a portion of the interviews I pursued, I chose to focus on the intersection of feminism, activism, and zines, which often coincided with LGBTQ zines. Given that feminism and zine culture have a historical intersection in the Riot Grrrl movement and associated publications, I found that there was a strong foundation of material in archives that could be compared to the research I was doing with contemporary publications found in shops, fairs, and from current zinemakers. In general, I found that the publications from the Riot Grrrl era reflect the ethos of third-wave feminism: it is empowered, but largely uninformed in contrast to the works of feminist thinkers and zine makers today: while two decades ago Riot Grrrl theory and content was revolutionary, it seems fairly whitewashed and heteronormative by today's standards.

Riot Grrrl zines were born out of a need to claim territory in the male-dominated punk music / art / cultural sphere. Twenty years later, this stake has been claimed, and there is a legacy and history that cannot be denied. Yet feminist and LGBTQ and activist zines are still being produced: there is a need for a new and more universal feminism, one that does not merely look at a male-dominated subculture and demand to be let in, but one that is indicative of that which feminists and activists must continue to demand from society. A lot of the Riot Grrrl zines I found through my archival research were similar in terms of content: there were feminist manifestos and declarations of the meaning of Riot Grrrl feminism; writings rejecting traditional heteronormative female roles; laudations of Riot Grrrl musicians which often involved criticisms of other female non-punk musicians; and spreads sharing self-defense knowledge that commiserate street harassment and provided generalized tactics of dealing with it. When meeting Bobbi Salvor Menuez this winter, they introduced me to Repro Rights Zine, through which I found their zine *Self Defense Starter Kit,* which features a guide to self-defense specifically for women who are targeted when

wearing a hijab.[33] This is an example of the movement of feminist zines becoming more specific and accessible, casting aside aside a typical and generalized audience of white women, and instead addressing a specific hate-crime experienced by a marginalized group. To this effect, Repro Rights zine also casts away heteronormative assumptions regarding reproductive rights and options for trans identifying and gender non-conforming people. Repro Rights Zine has their zines digitally accessible on their website, with instructions on how to fold the zine once it's downloaded and printed, creating even more accessibility for their publication.

On the other end of feminist zines, zines created by self-defined feminists and LGBTQ community members don't have to be explicitly revolving around related content to be included in that sphere. When I asked Caroline Paquita about her zines fitting into a feminist and queer-positive category, she replied, "there's not a lot a lot of separation from that in my daily life, it's not compartmentalized," meaning that her existence as a feminist and queer identifying person is reflected in her zines without a specific intention to make her zines feminist or queer. This was interesting in contrast with my interview with Alexandra Ruppert, who also talked about identifying as queer, and participating in a queer zine fair -- although Alexandra stated that the queer zine fair wasn't "exclusive, because [it] is a topic that connects people," she also stated that she felt "observed" for the content of her zines, which was neither queer-themed nor explicitly political. There remain certain assumptions (if not standards) surrounding an ideal of what the work of a feminist or queer identifying zine maker should represent, although these false constraints are disappearing in the progression of feminism and associated activism.

The Zine and the Internet

I will start by saying that I would have a much different concept of the term zine if not for the internet, and the information it allowed me to access. For example, had neither Claire Biddles nor Alexandra Ruppert attached their websites to their zines (or had they not been google-able) I would not have been able to contact them for an interview while on my research trip. Had not Ray Potes, Bobbi Salvor Menuez, and the team at Microeditorial Amistad been available by email, I would not have been able to interview them via email and include their contributions. The internet has not only increased the accessibility of information, but it has also increased the accessibility of self-publication: you don't need a printer and associated costs to produce a publication and send it around, you can use the computer at your local library. If your publication is a PDF that can emailed around, or posted on your website or Tumblr, anyone with access to the internet can find it. But is it a zine?

You may have noticed that in the above section when I tackled the definition of the zine, I left out the digital zine and the internet. Still, the question looms: can an online zine still be a zine? This is another question I've tried to work into all of my interviews, and it is certainly very divisive. There have been comparisons between the zine and various social media platforms, raising questions of how self-publication changes when something is being posted to Tumblr, Instagram, or a personal blog. Although I have been hesitant to draw a line between physical and digital self-publication, I have no problem drawing a line between the zine and 'publication' via social media, mainly due to the fact that social media is commercial, corporate, and controlling in a way that is antithetical to zine production. Although zines can come across as esoteric due to traditionally low-volume circulation, a big piece of zine creation is their accessibility (or lack of) and the ephemerality of the zine. As we all know, nothing is ever erased off the internet, but at the same time, the internet is so vast a publication platform that things do get lost, or, as Hannes pointed out in his interview, online publications can be so obscure that they are inaccessible to those who are not aware of the specific publication.

Ultimately, I would argue that a zine can exist solely online, if it exists in a fixed state (as a PDF, rather than an editable blog.) Although it feels a bit contrary to the DIY spirit behind zine production, I think that this is an avenue that the future of self-publication will extend along, and it seems like it would be excluding a lot of great self-published content to state that a zine is a purely physical object. In my own work, I personally believe in the physical paper zine: this zine that you now hold does not exist online, it is meant to be handled as much as it is meant to be read. That being said, I don't discount either the digitization of the zine, or the digital zine from the zine sphere.

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