

# Book of Abstracts

## Symposium Selfing and Shelving: Zines, Zine Media, and Zintivism

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# DecoloniZine: Building Community through Arts-based Projects

Emilee Bews, Margaret MacKenzie, and Samantha Nepton

A 'zine' is a written and/or visual piece designed to explore topics of personal interest by nonprofessional (student) writers and artists. The "do-it-yourself" creative nature of zines has made these projects virtually accessible for anyone to create and consume. Within educational contexts, this medium encourages learners to engage with their world(s) collectively, critically, and creatively in the pursuit of producing and sharing knowledge.

Within a Canadian context, the term 'Indigenous' collectively refers to the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples of Turtle Island/North America and is a preferred term in international usage (University of British Columbia, n.d.). Through an Indigenous lens, this presentation will explore the ways in which classrooms can build community through arts-based activities and consider how zine-making is an act of decolonisation in process. By exploring the capacity of zines within the classroom, we can better understand the role of arts-based activities in supporting the voices of traditionally marginalised and Othered youth, supporting the idea of utilising zines as a tool in making identities ("selfing"). Furthermore, we pose the concept decoloniZine: zines created by and for Indigenous people. This is achieved through disrupting colonial forms of knowledge sharing, strengthening communities of creators and consumers, and making room for Indigenous creators to reclaim space in media.

**Emilee Bews** is a member of the Batchewana First Nation of Ojibways. She earned her B.A. in English from the University of Calgary and is pursuing her M.A. in Education & Society at McGill University as a McCall MacBain Scholar.

**Margaret MacKenzie** is a citizen of the Métis Nation British Columbia. She recently graduated from McGill University with her B.Ed. in Kindergarten and Elementary Education.

**Samantha Nepton** is a member of the Pekuakamiulnuatsh First Nation of Innu. She recently graduated from McGill University with her B.Ed. in Kindergarten and Elementary Education.

## Finding Peers: From Fanzines to Livres d'Images

Marie-Pierre Bonniol

Livres d'images is a series of four picture books (to date), published digitally between 2023 and 2024. Composed of photographic images and meta-texts in the form of epigraphs, notes and credits, they support an experimental practice I'm currently developing. They constitute a continuation of my recent practice as an experimental filmmaker, but also as a person whose path was strongly shaped by the production of fanzines during adolescence, then blogs, for some twenty-five years.

Several production dynamics, similar to the fanzine field, are at play in this series of books: independent assemblage and distribution, an address to an imagined and real audience of peers to whom the books are rapidly disseminated, a content that forms a review of sensitively lived experiences without a break with affect. These books are produced with an intention of sincerity and a Lyotardian dynamic in which the works "find their recipients through the intense affection they transmit" (Lyotard, 1973), making the establishment a circle of peers, also at a sensitive level, possible.

The dimension of *amatorat*, common to fanzines, is also at work in these books: not only in its conceptualisation by Bernard Stiegler (Stiegler, 2011), i.e. as a process of individuation and transindividuation, through works from the love for knowledge and its transformation into *philia* and societal commitment; but also in its dimension of the beginner's positioning, in heightened curiosity and increased sensitivity to the elements.

This presentation proposes to return to these common medium dynamics, to establish the Livres d'images that I'm experimenting with as an extended form of fanzine, as an

experimental medium driven by affect and amatorat, open to other codes (contemporary art, photography books, digital publications, bibliophilia).

**Marie-Pierre Bonniol** is an artist, curator, and independent researcher who graduated in Arts (Maîtrise, Université d'Aix-Marseille) and Aesthetics and Sciences of Arts (MA, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne). Her work has been presented at the ZKM in Karlsruhe, the National Library of Argentina in Buenos Aires and the Anthology Film Archives in New York. She is currently a research assistant for the project Die Ausstellung Les Immatériaux: Interdisziplinarität, Epistemologie, kuratorische Subjekte (Institut für Philosophie und Kunstwissenschaft, Leuphana University, Lüneburg, Germany). In 2024 and 2025, she's part of Strasbourg UNESCO World Book Capital 2024, with a solo exhibition at CEAAC and a series of lectures at the National academic library on the topic of the aesthetics of books and collections. Marie-Pierre Bonniol is an artist, curator, and independent researcher graduated in Arts (MA), and Aesthetics and Sciences of Arts (MA) from Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. Her work has been presented at the ZKM in Karlsruhe, the National Library of Argentina in Buenos Aires and the Anthology Film Archives in New York. She is currently a research assistant for the DFG project Die Ausstellung Les Immatériaux: Interdisziplinarität, Epistemologie, kuratorische Subjekte (Institut für Philosophie und Kunstwissenschaft, Leuphana University, Lüneburg, Germany). In 2024 and 2025, she is part of Strasbourg UNESCO World Book Capital 2024 with a series of three exhibitions at CEAAC, and a series of lectures at the National academic library on the topic of the aesthetics of books and collections.

<http://mariepierrebboniol.com>

## Zines against the state: ethical considerations for zine collections within national libraries

Laurence Byrne

In recent years, zines have become recognised as a valuable resource for academic research and have become increasingly present in libraries and archives (Barton, 2018). The recognition of zines as 'worthy' of attention from academics and librarians is often

attributed to the fact that zines often exist as the only physical record of marginalised individuals and communities (Fife, 2019), and this coupled with their ephemeral nature lends them a unique sense of ‘authenticity’ as primary source material. Although libraries and archives offer increased levels of preservation and access, the presence of zines within archival spaces is complex and contested. This is perhaps especially so in the context of a national library that operates according to legal deposit, where submitting published material is a legal requirement. This paper will reflect on how national libraries have approached this tension, focusing on the ethical considerations that emerge when zines are removed from their intended communities of creation and circulation. By drawing on examples of community-led collection building (Fife, 2019; Keenan & Darms, 2013), we will consider the question of whether it is possible for large archival spaces to learn from and collaborate with community zine libraries in order to ensure that zines and their creators are treated ethically, and that their power as objects of self-determination is not diminished.

**Laurence Byrne** (he/him) works as a Curator of Printed Heritage Collections at the British Library (BL), having previously held the roles of Research Librarian at Senate House Library, University of London and Curator of Latin American Collections at the BL. He has a longstanding interest in zines and DIY culture, and has published on the subject for the *Art Libraries Journal*, as well as regularly running teaching sessions involving zines and ephemera.

## Zines as Crip Doulas

Lea Cooper

Wellcome Collection, a museum and library in London, UK, has intentionally collected zines around health, medicine and the human condition since 2016. In my creative practice-based PhD research, a Collaborative Doctoral Award between the University of Kent and Wellcome Collection, I explore health, liminality, lived experience and the zines in Wellcome's collection. This paper draws from a chapter of my thesis to explore the zines at Wellcome that, in different ways, birth disability. After Stacey Milbern Park's notion of a 'Crip Doula' I

consider how zines name, document, make visible, and doula the life stages and rites of passage of becoming disabled. I consider doulaing as: knowledge sharing; as forming divergent disabled or crip identities; as holding space for grief and bad feelings; and as the work of imagining pasts and archiving futures. This exploration moves between physical and digital zines, feeling out both their distinct qualities and the space between them as a route into contemporary zine (re)production, cultures and communities. I end by discussing how these zines figure in the central argument of my PhD project: that the concept of liminality offers a productive framework for examining material, cultural and political aspects of contemporary zines' content, production and communities of practice and in turn, that zines contribute to a reconceptualisation of liminality, beyond the carefully managed processes of transition described in ethnographic accounts, as ongoing, affective, embodied, messy, and non-linear. Alongside presenting an academic paper, I will also present the zine *Afterbirth* – one of the twelve zines which make up the creative practice-based component of my PhD.

**Lilith (Lea, as in sea) Cooper** is a zine maker, comics artist, printmaker, facilitator and DIY organiser. In 2017, they co-founded Edinburgh Zine Library, a DIY collection of contemporary zines. They have been part of the organising team behind the annual Edinburgh Zine Festival since it began in 2021. They are in their final year of a creative practice-based PhD, a Collaborative Doctoral Award between University of Kent and Wellcome Collection, exploring some of Wellcome's 1000+ zines. They are based in Kirkcaldy, Fife.

## New printed punk zines in the small scene: the case of Riga's 'Puve' and 'Grūst' (2022-2024)

### Jānis Daugavietis

After a hiatus of almost 20 years in the Latvian underground music fanzine scene, a printed zine (PUVE) emerged in 2022, joined the following year by another (GRŪST) (Daugavietis, 2023). Behind them is one man who is the author, publisher and distributor of practically all the content (including the design). This is Dāvis Avotiņš, AKA Dave Raven, who has been active in the local punk scene since age 15, playing music, organising gigs and festivals, and

publishing zines. The Riga underground scene has flourished to an unprecedented extent since 2019 (Daugavietis, 2022), and he is considered this scene's main organiser, manager and entrepreneur. PUVĒ and GRŪST are classic small-run DIY punk zines that focus on the local scene. Published in Latvian and English.

How to interpret the emergence of the printed zine in the digital age, where the circulation of information has achieved unprecedented efficiency (speed, cheapness, accessibility), and in an environment (Latvia) where underground music zines stopped appearing around 2003 (Daugavietis, 2024)? It can be seen both romantically, as a nostalgia-based replication of practices of the un-lived past or a desire to return to the production of tangible artefacts, and utilitarian, as the creation of a new object/commodity that cultivates the various capitals (economic, subcultural, social, etc.) of its producer. The publisher's motivation is most likely to be found in a combination of different factors (Scott, 2012). Based on a content analysis of the eight issues of these two publications, an interview with the publisher and the author, and a situating of this practice within the entire ecosystem of the Riga (and not only) underground scene, I will attempt to explain this example of contemporary Latvian zine production.

**Jānis Daugavietis**, Dr.sc.soc., is a researcher at the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia. He got a PhD from the University of Latvia in applied sociology. He has worked on many research projects, mainly employing quantitative methods (surveys, statistical data analysis, quantitative content analysis, etc.) since 2002. His main research interests are amateur arts, cultural policy, sociology of music and digital humanities. Throughout the 1990s, he was active in the Latvian underground music scene, playing, organising, producing and recording music, as well as publishing zines.

# Affected Fan(dom)s, Affecting Communities: Women Fans and the Golden Age of British Science Fiction (1950-1960)

Abi Hockaday

This paper explores British 1950s science fiction (SF) fandom through the first all-female SF fanzine: *Femizine* (1954-1960). I consider how women mobilised the particular network structures provided by fanzines to create safe, accessible fan spaces for themselves, which, in turn, challenged the gender hegemonies of mainstream SF magazines. I argue that these women fans created spaces of solidarity, friendship, and collaboration that challenged male SF fans' notions of community. Using *Femizine*, I read textually (fiction, letters, editorials), and materially (circulation, seriality, networks) to demonstrate how this fandom restructured British SF through the use of the fanzine. I draw on theories of affect (Ahmed 2004; Cvetkovich 2011) to articulate how these women created a fan network with a focus on community: through conventions, social gatherings, libraries, shared spaces of residence, and networks of letter writing, all documented in the fanzines they created and circulated. Affects stick and circulate through the community, generating further affective responses to/from fellow fans, creating an 'affective circuit' (Yockley 2012). I developed this new methodology to help us understand both fan culture and modernity and to expand upon how we read zines and materiality.

**Abi Hockaday** is a PhD student in English Literature at Newcastle University, UK. Her PhD is titled *Affected Fan(dom)s, Affecting Communities: Women Fans and the Golden Age of British Science Fiction (1950-1960)* and recuperates the role of women in SF fandom. She has received funding from the Killingley Trust and the Science Fiction Foundation to support her research.



# TL;DR Zine Archive: Collecting Creative Research & Fostering Collaboration

Shreyas R. Krishnan and Aggie Toppins

This paper presents a case study on the TL;DR Zine Archive, located at the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis. The authors position this archive as a space for cultivating material experimentation and practice-based research in creative fields. TL;DR (meaning “too long; didn’t read”) collects zines that make critical investigations in illustration, graphic design, and visual culture through formats that are illustrated and designed. The archive currently includes 75 zines from five countries and 18 states in the U.S.A.

Illustration and graphic design are historically commercial trades which have become academic disciplines within the last five or six decades. Because these fields are nascent within the academy, there is less infrastructure for supporting practice-based research. There are few academic publications and most are often inaccessible, exclusionary, and can take years to bring articles to fruition. Zines, on the other hand, are accessible, inclusive, and timely. They are available to everyone, and yet they can be rigorous visual examinations of scholarly themes. Zines lend themselves to visual and material experimentation and innovative or in-progress content. They challenge long-held notions of authority and transgress the boundaries of traditional scholarship. While the industry and academy put individuals in competition with one another to succeed, the TL;DR Zine Archive is a space and resource where people with similar interests can come together. This case study addresses the methodology — and inherent tensions — of building a zine archive within an academic institution. It discusses how we define zines as scholarship, developed collection criteria, and curate exhibitions with our holdings. The authors share the challenges of institutionalising material that is culturally anti-institutional, as well as the radical joy of collaborating and fostering communities through these alternative artefacts.

**Shreyas R. Krishnan** is an Assistant Professor in Illustration, Comics and Visual Storytelling at Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis. She is interested in the ways gender and visual culture impact and influence each other and

makes non-fiction comics and zines about memory, identity, and complex social issues. Her research focuses on how gender and visual culture inform each other. She is a co-editor of the award-winning *Bystander Anthology: Stories, Observations and Witnessings from South Asia*, to which she also contributed. Shreyas founded and co-organizes Bad Drawing Club, an informal monthly drawing group for people of marginalised genders.

**Aggie Toppins** is an Associate Professor of Communication Design and Chair of Design at Washington University in St. Louis. She combines studio practice and critical writing to explore the social life of graphics. Aggie's creative work has been internationally exhibited and garnered national design awards. Her recent writing has been published by *Design and Culture*, *Design Issues*, *Diseña*, *Slanted*, *Eye*, and *AIGA Eye on Design*. She has written essays for *Baseline Shift: Untold Stories of Women in Graphic Design History* and *Feminist Designer*. Her first book *Thinking Through Graphic Design History* will be published by Bloomsbury in 2025.

## Shelving zines and zine media from Latin America: The example of Chile

### Ricarda Musser

The production of zines in various media formats is very active and diverse throughout Latin America. In Chile, the creation of fanzines received an enormous boost from the social unrest that shook the country in 2019/2020 and the following pandemic and its measures. Fanzine artists were able to draw on extensive traditions and experiences in their own country, dating back to the 19th century and including, for example, the broadsheets and chapbooks that provided the still largely illiterate population with the latest news and information, but which also included the secretly written and disseminated imprints that circulated during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

Most academic libraries have only recently begun to identify fanzines in printed and electronic form as relevant collection items, which are becoming increasingly important as source material for multidisciplinary research. Various factors are proving problematic for the creation and expansion of corresponding collections in libraries, such as:

- the identification of what actually belongs to zines and zine media and to find a definition,

- the distribution channels, which are almost completely outside the official book trade and
- the widespread lack of bibliographic data.

The presentation deals with the experiences of collecting and shelving zines and zine media in the library of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute, IAI), including acquisition channels, cataloguing and making the media available.

**Ricarda Musser** studied Portuguese Philology, Psychology and Librarianship at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and received her PhD in Romance Cultural Studies with a thesis on the history of libraries and librarianship in Portugal. She works at the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, PK Berlin, as head of the Department of Acquisition and Cataloging and as director of the Brazilian, Chilean, Mexican and Portuguese collections. Her research fields are Ibero-American popular literature, illustrated magazines and German migration to Latin America. She is editor (with Christoph Müller) of the book *De la pluma al internet: literaturas populares iberoamericanas en movimiento (siglos XIX-XXI)* (Medellín: EAFIT, 2018) and author of numerous contributions in books and journals on popular literature.

## Searching for identities: how fanzines provided meaning and communities to the youth in Madrid in the 1980s

**Blanca Algaba Pérez**

The global phenomenon of autonomous zine production arrived in Madrid at the end of the seventies. That coincided with the important period of transition to democracy in Spain. At first, the arrival of fanzines was connected to the spread of new musical tastes, aesthetics, and styles. But there was also a growing demand in this generation to vindicate their voice. The social situation was characterised by generational conflict, and young people perceived themselves as excluded from society. Throughout the eighties, Madrid experienced a vibrant period associated with the emergence of many different youth cultures: mods, rockers, punks, punks heavys, etc. All these youth cultures had one key aspect: the search for an individual and collective identity. Fanzines became tools to articulate these identities, which were often tied to transnational trends, and made it possible to construct shared meanings.

In this paper, we intend to go deeper into these fanzines and how they became fundamental pieces of the construction of significant youth cultures in the city. In the eighties, these cultural products became the independent communication channel accessible to youth to express themselves and explore their identities. This paper aims to consider, based on historical research, the importance of zines in creating imaginative alternatives for subjects who are not represented in the mass media. In this case, young people in Madrid managed to create their communities, which helped them to feel part of larger, sometimes even global, groups. In conclusion, this paper raises questions about fanzines as places of encounters and dialogues on the margins, which allow resistance to social exclusion and the construction of cultural alternatives.

**Blanca Algaba Pérez** is currently developing her PhD project "Youth culture in Madrid (1976-1986): leisure, sociability and cultural practices", at the Complutense University of Madrid, which focuses on the new cultural practices and forms of sociability that young people engaged in and how that contributed decisively to transform urban life in the capital. She is part of the research group "Space, Society, and Culture in the Contemporary Age". In recent years, she has made several contributions to scientific congresses and has published on youth, music, youth cultures, leisure, and media.

## Whimsy as method: Using zines in ethnographic research

### Sally Campbell Pirie

"Whimsy," writes Joanna Mann, "provides a glimmer of hope that other ways and worlds are possible if we allow ourselves to be nourished by the energy their surprise affords" (2014, p. 71). So also zines and zine making have been described as inherently joyful and hopeful; as Rethman (2021) writes, these are the "Kantian categories of beauty or the sublime, but because they point out the pleasure and joy that attaches itself to the riotous, irreverent, sprawling, vernacular, ubiquitous, and cheap" (n.p.). This paper seeks to provide nourishment in the context of our contemporary ontological emergency by offering zines as a necessarily whimsical, physical ethnographic research method. Specifically, we will explore

the unique possibilities—and areas for care and concern—associated with the use of zine-based research (ZBR) methods in ethnographic contexts, which have their own unique methodological concerns as well as histories around the use of drawings and small stories—and of the politically subversive work of exploring margins and marginalisation as alternative texts.

Beginning with an overview of visual arts-based methods, the paper will open up a methodological discussion about the role of the zine as a unique form of visual arts-based research and specifically used in ethnographic storytelling, both as a tool for structuring writing and disseminating findings. The paper will recount my experiences offering zine-making as a workshop for ethnographers and how we used the tactile, kinesthetic nature of the zine to identify, transform and open up important moments from our research into tiny jewel-box illustrated stories. The paper will conclude by making connections between zines and comics-based research (CBR). While many comic artists draw using digital formats, returning to the structure, joy, and physicality of the zine can be transformative for their craft.

**Sally Pirie is Professor** of Child and Family Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. An anthropologist of childhood and comics-based researcher, Professor Pirie is the author of a range of zines, research comics and full-length graphic novels focusing on diverse childhoods. You can learn more about her, and about comics-based research at [www.sallypirie.com](http://www.sallypirie.com)

## On the reciprocal and interwoven practices of "selfing" and "shelving" in and with zines

**Christian Schmidt**

In my lecture I will explore the relations between the practices of working on one's own self by means of zines ("selfing") and the practices of collecting zines ("shelving"). I will present some theoretical considerations and ideas on these relations and underlay them with empirical results of a research project realised at the Archive of Youth Cultures in Berlin. In this way, I understand "selfing" in and through zines not only as work on the individual self

of the editors and as work on the collective self of a community but also as a work on the "self" of the media form "zine", which determines what is regarded as a zine and also the form it actually materialises within a specific historical and cultural context. In my opinion, these levels of "selfing", in turn have an effect on practices of "shelving", i.e. the collecting of zines. They influence not only what is collected as zines but also how they are systematised and ordered and also digitally recorded and catalogued. The Archive of Youth Cultures was able to explore the relationship between the practices of "selfing" and "shelving" by researching the development of its own zine collection and the collecting activities within the archive. The results of this qualitative research project showed that practices of "selfing" and "shelving" are mutually dependent and closely interwoven. I would like to discuss these considerations at the symposium in Mainz.

**Christian Schmidt** is a cultural anthropologist, modern historian and exhibition organiser. He has been active in the Berlin Archive of Youth Cultures for about 20 years. There, as a research assistant, he researches the history and presence of zines and the possibilities and limits of their archiving, cataloguing, and digitisation.

## Towards a Material History of Zines

### Peter Willis

This paper draws on my PhD thesis, *Duplicate, Copy, Print: Towards a Material History of the Zine*, to explore how specific technologies, such as the stencil and spirit duplicator, photocopier, risograph and digital inkjet, have impacted zine production and zine culture. I propose a socio-technical understanding of zines and how they are created, drawing on emerging theoretical turns within book theory and wider media theory, which seeks to ground the emerging field of Zine Studies within a materialist media theoretical framework. While the academic study of zines has significantly increased over the last decade, a dedicated field of Zine Studies is still emerging. While most research into zines to date has had a sociological underpinning related to specific subcultures or the role of zines within wider movements, little attention has been given to their material form and the influence of certain technologies of production on their materiality, often treating the zines materiality

as an extraneous element, subordinate to the textual or visual content, rather than a co-constitutive part of it.

This paper draws on archival research to outline some specific examples of zines' relationship to their technologies of production over the last century, starting from the coining of the term 'fanzine' in 1940 up to the postdigital zines of today, in order to outline the ways in which contemporary zine production maintains and diverges from the ways zines have historically enacted their iconic properties of DIY, anti-mainstream, intimacy and intensity. This paper argues that zines are instructional, dialogic, and communally produced, and that these factors, integral to zine culture, are informed through the technologies used in their production and performed through the materiality of the zine object.

**Peter Willis** is a PhD candidate with the Centre for Postdigital Cultures at Coventry University. His research looks at the development of zine and self-publishing practices and the ways in which they are mediated through their technologies of production, for example, through the use of stencil duplicators, the photocopier, and contemporary print-on-demand and digital offset processes. He currently runs BOOKS, a secondhand book and zine shop based in Peckham, South East London, and co-runs the publisher and risograph printers Studio Operative with Alice Lindsay.

## Fanzines – Genres of Political Writing

### Matthew Worley

The emergence of British punk in the mid-1970s led to a reimagining of the fanzine, home-made magazines self-published and self-distributed to fellow 'fans' within a particular cultural milieu. Where fanzines had previously been carefully collated and geared towards disseminating information, punk's fanzines were produced speedily and irreverently. In line with the cultural critique inherent to punk, fanzines such as Sniffin' Glue and London's Outrage began to develop literary and visual discourses locating 'the new wave' within a wider socio-cultural and political context. Expositions on punk's meaning and the media-generated moral panic that ensued following the Sex Pistol's infamously foul-mouthed television appearance in December 1976 soon led to formative political analyses on

everything from racism and commodification to anarchy and gender relations. By the early 1980s, anarchist punkzines engaged with a variety of political causes (e.g. CND) and recognisably feminist and socialist analyses found space between record and gig reviews. This chapter examines a selection of punk-related fanzines to argue that the medium provided space for young people (overwhelmingly teenagers) to test and cultivate political ideas and, in the process, develop a distinct genre of writing informed by punk's impulse to simultaneously destroy and create.

**Matthew Worley** is professor of modern history at the University of Reading. He has written widely on punk-related cultures, including work on fanzines. His forthcoming book, *Zerox Machine: Punk and Post-Punk Fanzines in Britain, 1976-88*, will be published by Reaktion Books in April 2024. He is also the co-founder of the Subcultures Network.