

Zines, Punk Rock, and Empowerment

I can't quite recall the exact moment when I fell in love with zines. It was less of an "aha" moment than it was a gradual process, but before I knew it, I was already in too deep. I first encountered zines through my interest in punk rock, particularly that of the feminist variety. Though I have played guitar since the age of ten, it wasn't until I was fifteen that I first started to seriously listen to music created by other women musicians. Over the course of my freshman year of high school, as I delved deeper into the histories of women in rock and roll, I encountered books about the Riot Grrrl movement of the early 1990s. Spearheaded by musicians like Kathleen Hanna of Bikini Kill and Alison Wolfe of Bratmobile, Riot Grrrl advocated a doctrine of punk rock feminism that emphasized self-expression and solidarity with other women. And inextricably linked to this form of creative self-empowerment was not only music-making, but zine-making.

Zines are small-scale and typically homemade magazines that are created and distributed with the intent of giving one's ideas and work a platform outside of traditional routes of media distribution. They are typically photocopied by hand and champion a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) aesthetic and mode of production. Their ability to sidestep conventional chains of distribution allows for a diverse set of perspectives to be read and heard, which is why they became such an important medium for groups of people who have historically been silenced and marginalized, such as gender and sexual minorities, people of color, and people with mental and/or physical disabilities. Zines also have a close history with alternative art and music movements; some of the earliest zines were self-published "little magazines" made by French artists associated with the Dada movement in the early 1900s, and fanzines of all sorts are closely tied with the Punk explosion of the late 1970s and beyond. Though internet platforms like Tumblr and Twitter have largely superseded zines as the primary medium for radical and alternative communities to communicate their ideas with one another and the world at large, zines themselves still have numerous advantages over the internet, primarily that of their physicality. It's immensely satisfying to be able to hold and flip through a zine that I've bought or made in a way that a blog could never hope to be, and they can also be fantastic means of serendipitously stumbling upon new things I wouldn't have found otherwise.

The first zine that I consciously remember buying was the March 2010 issue of the long-running punk zine *Maximumrocknroll* in my freshman year of high school. This zine helped introduce me to a musical underground that I erroneously assumed had died out with

the waning of the Riot Grrrl movement in the mid-1990s, but was happily still very much alive and kicking. Throughout high school, I acquired zines through events like the Brooklyn Zine Fest and bookstores like New York's Printed Matter, and made plenty of my own as well. I mailed mini-zines of miscellaneous photocopied ephemera to internet pen-pals across the country, and in the Spring of my Senior year of high school, I embarked on my first large-scale zine project—*2017zine*, a print zine that consisted of poetry, prose, and visual art of all kinds created by future members of UChicago's class of 2017, whom I had met and interacted with through the Class of 2017's Facebook group. Since moving to Chicago, my zine collection has ballooned in size through frequent expeditions to local bookstores like Quimby's and events like the Chicago Zine Fest, and through meeting and trading with other artists and zine-makers. I have also made many zines since matriculating to the University of Chicago—I am presently in charge of coordinating the zine for WHPK, UChicago's community radio station, and have also made some personal zines, one of which is now sold at Quimby's.

Though my initial introduction to zines was through music, my involvement with zine collecting and creating has expanded far beyond that. The zines in my collection cover more general themes like gender politics and disability issues, as well as more arcane topics like secret societies, the history of the Nez Perce Indians, and poetry based on Sonic Youth albums, amongst many others. From here on out, I only see my zine collection increasing in size and scope, both through zines that I've bought and zines that I've made. I am currently working on the fourth issue of the WHPK zine, as well as the second part of a personal zine titled *IMPULSE/CONTROL/DISORDER*; I am also eagerly awaiting this year's Chicago Zine Fest, which is to take place in May.

What I love most about zines is their highly democratic nature. Zines have a relatively low barrier to entry—all you really need to make a zine is some paper, scissors, tape, access to a photocopier, and a few good ideas. As such, I am not merely a zine collector; rather, for me, zine collecting and zine making are a two-way street. Not only do I buy zines at zine festivals and local bookstores, but I make my own to trade and sell. Over the past few years, I have been fortunate to learn about many bands, artists, stories and ideas, and to connect with many people through projects like *2017zine* and the WHPK zine that I likely wouldn't have encountered otherwise. The nature of the medium has allowed me to not just collect zines, but to be an active creator as well, and the agency and empowerment that is facilitated by self-publishing is what drew me to them in the first place, and what has kept me collecting and making them ever since.

Annotated Bibliography

Aarons, Philip. *Zine Masters of the Universe*. Los Angeles; Printed Matter, 2013.

Bartholomew, Eric. *Junk Drawer Landscape #6*. No Location; Self-Published, 2012. Good Condition.

Campbell, Jessica. *The Public Life of Bees*. No Location; Oily Comics, n.d. Good Condition.

Clement, Candace. *Power Plays: "the media" vs. media vs. the media*. No Location; Fvck The Media, 2014. Good Condition.

Colpitts, Carrie. *Transphobia. Let's Stop It*. No Location; Zines For Students, 2013. Good Condition.

Cometbus, Aaron and Fristoe, Travis. *Radon*. Chicago; Imparted Publications, 2013. Very Good Condition.

Copy & Return: A Compilation Zine from Exhibitors at the 2013 Chicago Zine Fest. Chicago; Chicago Zine Fest, 2013. Good Condition.

Eldred, Juliet. *IMPULSE/CONTROL/DISORDER*. Chicago; Self-Published. 2015. Very Good Condition.

This zine, which I recently completed, is an artistic and personal exploration of trichotillomania, an impulse control disorder. It is my first substantial art zine, and it is now available for purchase at Quimby's Books in Wicker Park, Chicago.

Eldred, Juliet. *2017zine #1*. New York; Self-Published, 2013. Good Condition.

This zine is the first in a series of three zines, entitled *2017zine*, that I coordinated in the Spring and Summer of 2013. It is composed of visual art, poetry, and prose created by the (then) future members of UChicago's Class of 2017 that I solicited through the Class of 2017 facebook group. I completed and released the first issue in June of 2013, and completed two more over the course of the summer. I donated copies of all three issue of *2017zine* to the Special Collections Research Center.

Eldred, Juliet. *2017zine #2*. New York; Self-Published, 2013. Good Condition.

Eldred, Juliet. *2017zine #3*. New York; Self-Published, 2013. Good Condition.

Eldred, Juliet. *WHPK Zine #1*. Chicago; Self-Published, 2014. Good Condition.

I was put in charge of coordinating the zine for WHPK, the University of Chicago's community radio station. Soon after I was hired as a DJ, the staff had heard about my work on *2017zine* and asked me to revive the station's former zine. The zine's three issues (the fourth one is currently in progress) are composed of content created by DJs and friends of the station, including features, interviews with local bands, album reviews, concert listings, visual art, and photographs, and have been distributed throughout Hyde Park.

Eldred, Juliet. *WHPK Zine #2*. Chicago; Self-Published, 2014. Good Condition.

Eldred, Juliet. *WHPK Zine #3*. Chicago; Self-Published, 2014. Good Condition.

Gaar, Gillian G. *She's a Rebel: The History of Women in Rock & Roll*. Seattle, Wash.: Seal Press, 1992. Good Condition.

This book was crucial to my development as a young musician and artist. I first read *She's a Rebel*, which focused on the important yet often-overlooked role that women musicians have played throughout the history of Rock music, from Nina Simone to Janis Joplin to Siouxsie Sioux to Sleater-Kinney. Though this book did not focus particularly on zines, it was one of my first introductions to the Riot Grrrl scene, which eventually led me to zines.

Gatsby, Roo. *Play Juror*. Chicago; Self-Published, n.d. Good Condition.

Gerlatch, J. *Simple History Series #8: The Nez Perce Indians*. Bloomington, IN; Microcosm Publishing, 2011. Good Condition.

Girls Rock! Chicago Volunteer Zine. Chicago; Self-Published, 2014. Good Condition.

I received this zine, which functioned as our volunteer handbook, when I volunteered as a band coach at Girls Rock! Chicago, a nonprofit summer camp for young women, in the summer of 2014. Though it is largely composed of schedules, guidelines, and other administrative policies, the zine itself is representative of the DIY ethics that are valued by the camp and its community, and are partially what drew me to volunteer there in the first place.

Gordon, Kim. *Chronicles Vol. 2*. Zurich, Switzerland; Nieves Books, 2006. Good Condition.

Gray, Sean. *Disabled in D.I.Y.: Expanding discourse about Inclusion, Access, and Punk*. No Location; Fvck The Media, n.d. Good Condition.

Greer, Katie Alice. *Defending Community Space: What is space and why do we need it?* Washington, DC.; Fvck The Media, 2013. Good Condition.

I purchased this zine from online alt-weekly The Media's editor-in-chief, Liz Pelly, at Pitchfork Music Festival in July 2014. This zine was one of a set of five print zines published by The Media on various topics relating to community and do-it-yourself spaces, which are all issues that resonate closely with me as a musician and artist.

Heather. *Dig Deep #5*. No Location; n.p., 2013. Good Condition.

Hoax Zine #9. No Location; Self-Published, 2013. Very Good Condition.

I got this copy of *Hoax*, a densely-packed "US bi-annual queer feminist compilation zine that aims to create a space to analyze the feminisms of our everyday lives," from a vendor at the 2014 Chicago Zine Fest. Though it was only started in the mid-2000s, it channels the feminist spirit of the first wave of Riot Grrrl zines while attempting to highlight submissions from voices often ignored by mainstream feminism, such as those of transwomen, incarcerated women, and sex workers.

Hughes, Steve. *Stupor*. No Location; Self-Published, 2008. Good Condition.

Kline, Greta. *Frankie Cosmos 2nd Tour Zine*. No Location; Self-Published, 2014. Good Condition.

I got this zine, a classic small-scale handmade affair, from an old classmate of mine whose band, Frankie Cosmos, made a stop in Chicago while on tour in April of 2014. Many bands distribute zines alongside their music, or even make special zines when they go on tour, providing a physical, visual document of their experiences to accompany their music.

Lewis, Jeffrey. *Sonnet Youth: Confusion is Sex*. New York; Self-Published, 2012. Very Good Condition.

The *Sonnet Youth* zine series consists of humorous sonnets and illustrations based on song lyrics and album art from three of Sonic Youth's best-known albums.

Lewis, Jeffrey. *Sonnet Youth: Daydream Nation*. No Location; Self-Published, 2013. Very Good Condition.

Lewis, Jeffrey. *Sonnet Youth: Goo*. No Location; Self-Published, 2012. Very Good Condition.

Manic Static Fan Club Zine. N.p; Manic Static, 2014. Good Condition.

Mashurova, Nina. *Making Safer Spaces: Reflecting on the Silent Barn's Safer Spaces Panel*. New York; Fvck The Media, 2013. Good Condition.

Mason, Joe and Liz Mason. *Caboose #9: How to start a Secret Society*. Chicago; Self-Published, 2014. Very Good Condition.

This zine, which I bought at Quimby's Books in Chicago, focuses on the histories of various secret societies, particularly Masonic Lodges and the Illuminati.

Maximumrocknroll, Various Issues. San Francisco, 2010-2015.

Maximumrocknroll is an underground punk zine that was first founded by a group of San Francisco-Area punks and college radio personalities in the early 1980s. It has a large (by "underground" standards) and devoted following, and has continued to put out monthly issues ever since. The March 2010 issue of *Maximumrocknroll* was the first zine that I ever bought, and the zine as a whole has introduced me to many musicians that eventually became some of my favorites, such as the New Jersey band Screaming Females.

Maximum Tremolo #2. Buffalo, NY; Self-Published, n.d. Good Condition.

McCaughey, Kevin. *Fashionable Activism #3*. Austin, TX; Self-Published, 2014. Good Condition.

Monem, Nadine Ka. *Riot Grrr!: Revolution Girl Style Now!* London: Black Dog Pub., 2007.

This comprehensive book on the history and aftermath of the Riot Grrrl movement was one of my first introductions to punk feminism. It chronicled the music and politics of the early 1990s music movement, and spoke in-depth about the significance of zines at the time, referencing punk zines like *Maximumrocknroll*. Reading about zines sparked my interest in creating and finding more of them.

Mono.Kultur #33. Berlin; Kai von Rabenau, 2013. Very Good Condition.

My Aim Is True #3. No Location; Self-Published, 2011. Good Condition.

Pelly, Liz. *Fvck The Media: defining and saving the spirit of alt-weeklies*. New York; Fvck The Media, 2014. Good Condition.

Peña, Andrew. *A Sausage Story*. No Location; Self-Published, 2013. Good Condition.

Peña, Andrew. *Read Me #6*. No Location; Self-Published, n.d. Good Condition.

Polan, Jason. *Artists' Fanzines Art Basel Book*. Switzerland; Printed Matter, n.d. Good Condition.

Psycho Moto Zine #22. No Location; Antagovision, 2013. Good Condition.

Ramen: A Student Publication #1. Chicago; Self-Published, 2011. Good Condition.

Ramen: A Student Publication #2. Chicago; Self-Published, 2011. Good Condition.

Sari. *Thou Shalt Not Talk About the White Boys' Club: Challenging the Unwritten Rules of Punk*. Pennsylvania; Self-Published, 2012. Very Good Condition.

Sollenberger, Amber. *That Shit's Racist*. Chicago; Self-Published, 2015. Good Condition.

I got this zine, made by a prolific zinester and UChicago alumni, at a concert in my friend's basement in January of 2015. She gave away copies of *That Shit's Racist*, which examines issues of race in 21st-century America, particularly in regards to the recent non-indictments of the police officers who killed Michael Brown and Eric Garner and the Prison-Industrial Complex.

The Rainbow Monster Is Hungry. Chicago; Self-Published, 2013. Good Condition.

Van Asselt, Matthew. *Real Life Buildings #1*. No Location; Self-Published, 2012. Very Good Condition.

Wawrzaszek, John. *Field Manual: Human Body*. Chicago; Self-Published, 2012. Very Good Condition.

Zizzamia, Christopher. *The Distance Between Bodies Can't Be Measured In Miles*. No Location; Self-Published, 2014. Fair Condition.