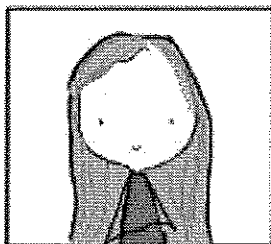


Publish it yourself

Talking About Zines: Halifax's Anchor Archive Zine Library

By Amy Belanger



Deriving its name from an abbreviation of fanzine or magazine, a “zine” is characteristically self-published work of original or appropriated text and images with limited circulation (Wikipedia, 2015). Zines are often reproduced using a photocopier, but can be found in a variety of other formats. Innovative, creative, and expressive, zines give people a platform to share and express their ideas and feelings.

“Often voices and subjects found in zines are not commonly represented in mainstream media,” says Karen Vermeylen, a volunteer at the Anchor Archive Zine Library in Halifax. “Zines can be personal, unique, creative, and can be about any topic that interests you, so making zines can be a great way for young people to express themselves and discover their own voice.” While having a creative outlet is important for everyone, it is especially attractive for young adults, who are figuring out who they are and learning how to assert their individuality.

“The Anchor Archive Library has no one leader. It is run by a group of volunteers,” Vermeylen explains. “We support critical, creative projects to inspire social change through DIY, non-hierarchical, and consensus-based approaches.” The zine library’s values are reflected in the way the library is run, with executive power resting in the hands of its volunteers. Membership is procured through either a donation of two dollars or the contribution of a zine. It boasts a collection of over 5000 zines sorted into subject-based “collections” that are publically available to browse and borrow. (Their catalogue is also available to browse online, though they have yet to digitize the zines to view online.) Of the many collections available in the library, the largest is the “personal” collection, which encompasses a number of subjects of personal importance to the zine creator, and the second largest is the comic collection. Other popular collections include D.I.Y zines (instructions for fixing cars, knitting, making films, etc.), trans and queer zines, indigenous zines, zines about

mental and physical health, zines about race, and poetry zines. Although the zines made by teens and adult books are mixed together, the Library does have a “teens” and “for and by kids” section.

The Anchor Archive Zine Library Space

Established in 2005, the Library is located in the back gallery space of a cooperatively owned second-hand shop called Plan B on Gottingen Street. “[The zine library] was very much a D.I.Y project that originally operated out of the founders’ living room in a house on Robert Street in Halifax,” Vermeylen says. As the Library grew over time, the tenants moved out and the house became known as the Robert Street Social Centre. “In addition to the zine library, the space housed a screen-printing studio and the People’s Photocopier, hosted an artist residency program, and provided an event space.” Since relocating in 2013, the library has moved twice and changed its operations slightly. The Library rents an apartment for the artist in residence, the silk-screen studio is now gone, and most of their workspace is in storage with some items available for workshops. Despite the changes, they are happy with the current location.

D.I.Y Zine-Making Workshops

One of the ways that the volunteers work with young adults, Vermeylen explains, is through zine-making workshops. “In addition to our zine library collection,

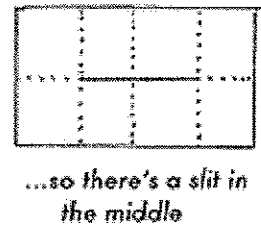
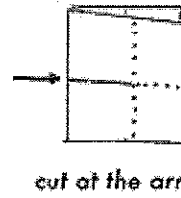
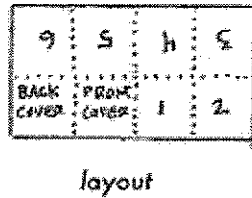
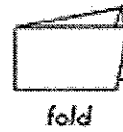
we provide zine-making workshops in the community, and host events such as zine readings, skill share workshops, a zine making residency, and our annual 24 Hour Zine Challenge...we give workshops in schools and libraries with teens,” she says. Their aim is to provide free (or at least affordable) access to independent, alternative media, art, and education.

Workshops are a great way to introduce youth to zines. The Anchor Archive Zine Library has a section in the collection called “zines about zines” to gather ideas. There are also a number of books and online sites available to guide a zine-making workshop.

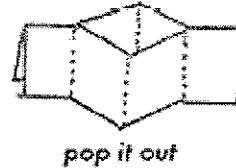
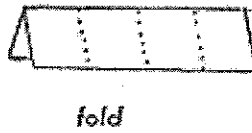
The ROOKIE magazine article *How to Make Zines – Zine-making isn’t about rules or knowledge; it’s about freedom and POWER* (2012) by Emma Dajska suggests that you don’t need to read everything about zines before making one. It is far more important to have a story, drawing, or poem to share and to capture what burns inside you looking to express and explore than to strive for perfection. The article includes step-by-step, easy to follow instructions for creating a simple 6-page zine, which would be a great introductory workshop for teens. This can be done as a group project where entries are submitted individually and compiled in one zone to distribute or individually. A zine can be all drawings, poetry, collage, prose, or a mixture of everything; the work can be edited and reviewed, or not. It depends on the group and the zine creator’s personal tastes.

What you need:

- legal zine paper
- scissors
- glue
- paper and magazine scraps for collaging
- drawing materials
- paper for writing or drawing
- a photocopier



After crafting a zine, it can be distributed to friends, kept in a personal collection, or donated to a local zine library.



The instructions can be found at:

<http://static.rookiemag.com/2012/05/133589646612.jpg>

D.I.Y Zine Collection

Librarians interested in starting their own zine library may want to consult Julie Bartel's *From A to Zine: Building a Winning Zine Collection in Your Library*, available on Google books. The book is a do-it-yourself guide to creating a zine collection which answers the following questions;

- What is a zine and how does a library zine collection work?

- What are the pros and cons of having a zine collection in the library?
- When promoting zines, what appeals to patrons and non-library users alike?
- What is the best way to catalog and display? Where can libraries get zines and how much do they cost?

Below are a list of resources to help get you acquainted with the world of zines and zine making.

Enjoy!



Resources

Broken Pencil Magazine: The magazine of Zine Culture and the Independent Arts

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

Anchor Archive Zine Library website:

<http://robertsstreet.org/n/zine-library>

Halifax Pop Explosion Zine Fair (or zine fairs in your local area):

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halifax_Pop_Explosion

A to Zine: Building a Winning Zine Collection in Your Library by Julie Bartel

Available on Google Books: [http://books.google.ca/books/about/](http://books.google.ca/books/about/From_A_to_Zine.html?id=IsI9qlQIT3kC&redir_esc=y)

[From_A_to_Zine.html?id=IsI9qlQIT3kC&redir_esc=y](http://books.google.ca/books/about/From_A_to_Zine.html?id=IsI9qlQIT3kC&redir_esc=y)

ROOKIE Magazine: How to Make a Zine:

<http://www.rookiemag.com/2012/05/how-to-make-a-zine/>

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[From_A_to_Zine.html?id=IsI9qlQIT3kC&redir_esc=y](http://books.google.ca/books/about/From_A_to_Zine.html?id=IsI9qlQIT3kC&redir_esc=y)

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