

Big Zine, Little Zine...



(a love letter)

In the past month or so I've occasionally been feeling grumpy and frustrated with some aspects of my zine world. Nothing major, but I've caught myself making snarky comments to C. from time to time. It kind of came to a head a few weeks ago when Time Magazine published an article entitled "Anatomy of a Zine: When Magazines Go Indie" (<http://tinyurl.com/3etfj3w>) which starts like this:

On a recent Friday evening in New York City, a collection of young magazine and newspaper writers sipped \$15 gimlets at a hotel bar in SoHo, each clutching a peach-colored journal with the words "*Girl Crush*" spelled out in letter-shaped candies on its cover. The celebrants had arrived from the offices of well-known, even legendary publications — *The New York Observer*, *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review* — to fete, with cupcakes, the launch of a zine: a handmade, self-published magazine intended for a small community of readers. For many, the word "zine" will conjure images of Xeroxed-and-stapled underground tributes to science-fiction fandom or '90s riot-grrrl culture. The form tends to be high on enthusiasm, low on production value. But *Girl Crush*, which features women writing about their female role models, has a glossy professional-grade binding and counts the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Jennifer Egan among its contributors. Neither the zine nor its launch party would strike anyone as countercultural in spirit.

To me there are so many problems with the image of "zines" that Time conjures up I don't even know where to begin. Even writing this at the moment I'm filling with rage at the stupidity of outsiders misreporting about something I hold so dear.

I've also realized that it's been ten years since I went from just making my old zine Mutate to really diving in and making this media/art form a major part of my life. 10 years ago I was the primary organizer of the Media Alliance Zine Expo in San Francisco. It was an amazing change from just working on my own stuff to seeing and networking with other zinesters in real life. At the time there wasn't the myriad of zine events that there are today, and many of us only knew each other through our writing in zines and letters.

As a way of breaking my funk and celebrating the zine world I decided I wanted to write a love letter with a handful of the many things that have been influential or enjoyable to me. The next 26 pages are in no way a complete list, as there are so so many lovely, sexy, amazing people making so much awesome media in zines, chapbooks, comix, and underground films. This is for all of you. I love you. xOMilo | September, 2011

A is for anarchism, and
working collectively.



B is for blogs, which are not zines.



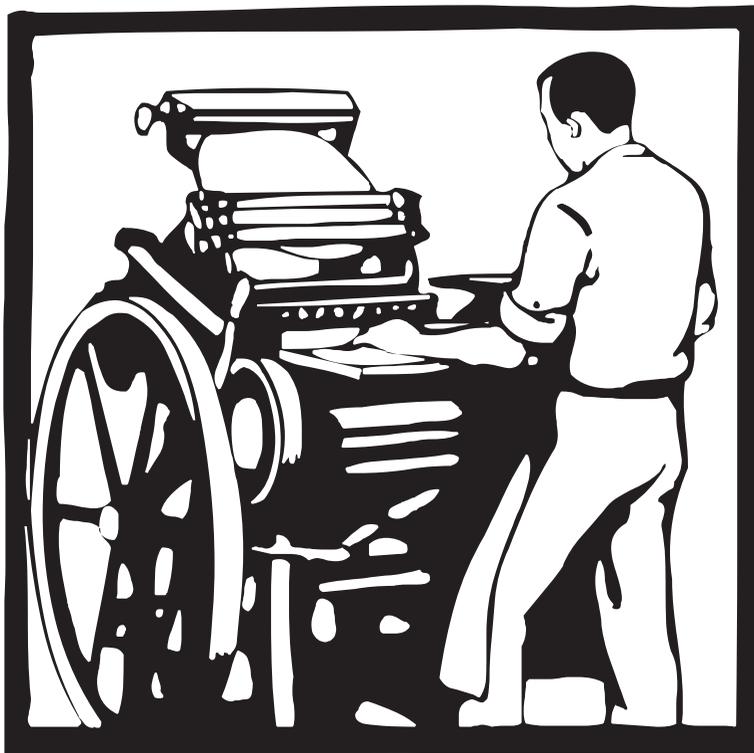
(<http://zines.barnard.edu/about/notblogs>)

C is for Creative Commons,
and sharing alike.



(<https://creativecommons.org>)

D is for DIY, and making media ourselves.



E is for esoteric, which zines sometimes are.



F is for the Fly-Away Zine Mobile, a traveling zine library.



(<https://zinemobile.wordpress.com>)

G is for Grrrl Zines A Go-Go,
teaching feminism, zines
and media literacy.



(<http://gzagg.org>)

His for Halifax, Nova Scotia, which is home of the Anchor Archive Zine Library.



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

I is for the Independent Publishing Resource Center (IPRC) in Portland, OR.



(<http://www.iprc.org>)

J is for J.D.s, one of the first queer zines.



K is for Kelly Shortandqueer,
co-founder of the Denver
Zine Library.



(<http://denverzinelibrary.org/>)

L is for librarians, who rock my socks off.



M is Mutate, which got this whole adventure started.



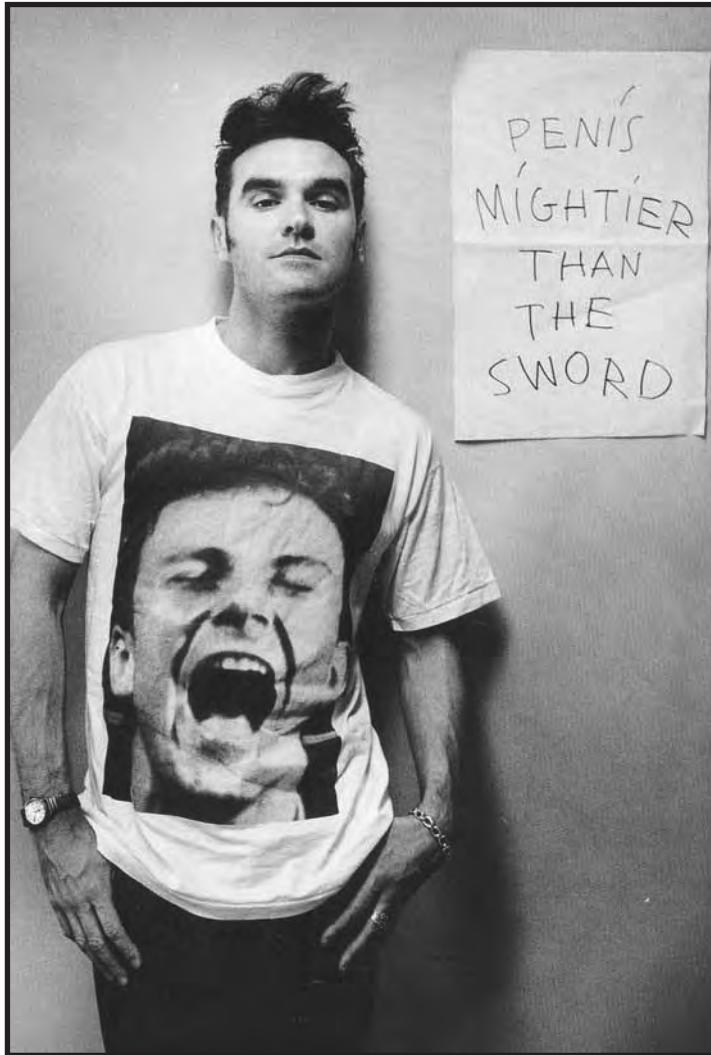
N is for nerdy, which most zinester are.



O is for Outpunk, and it's influence on queercore.



P is for the pen being mightier than the sword.



Q is for queer zines and zinesters. My love for you is never ending.



(<http://www.qzap.org>)

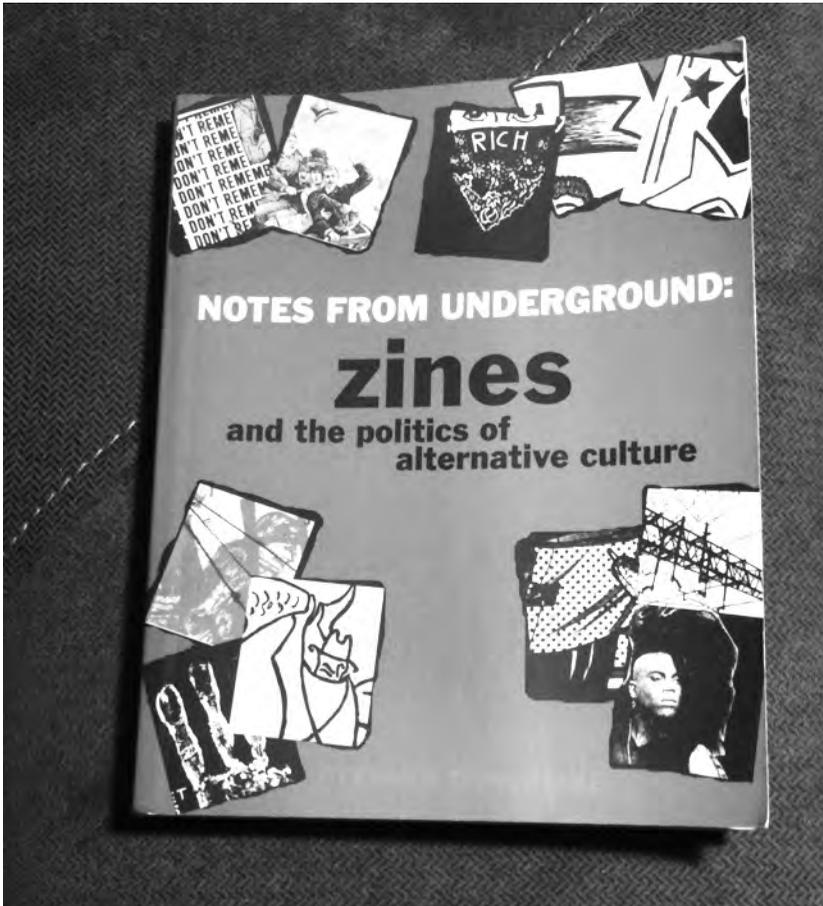
S is for stencils... on zine covers, walls, and the sidewalk.



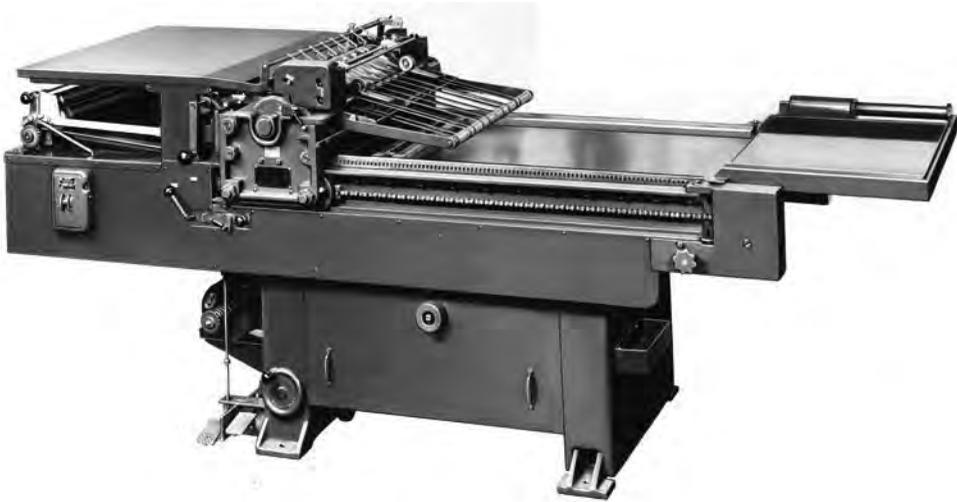
T is for typewriter (and typewriter tattoos.)



U is for underground (and the notes from...)



V is for Vandercook, a brand of printing press.



W is for We Make Zines and the amazing and helpful community of zinesters who hang out there.



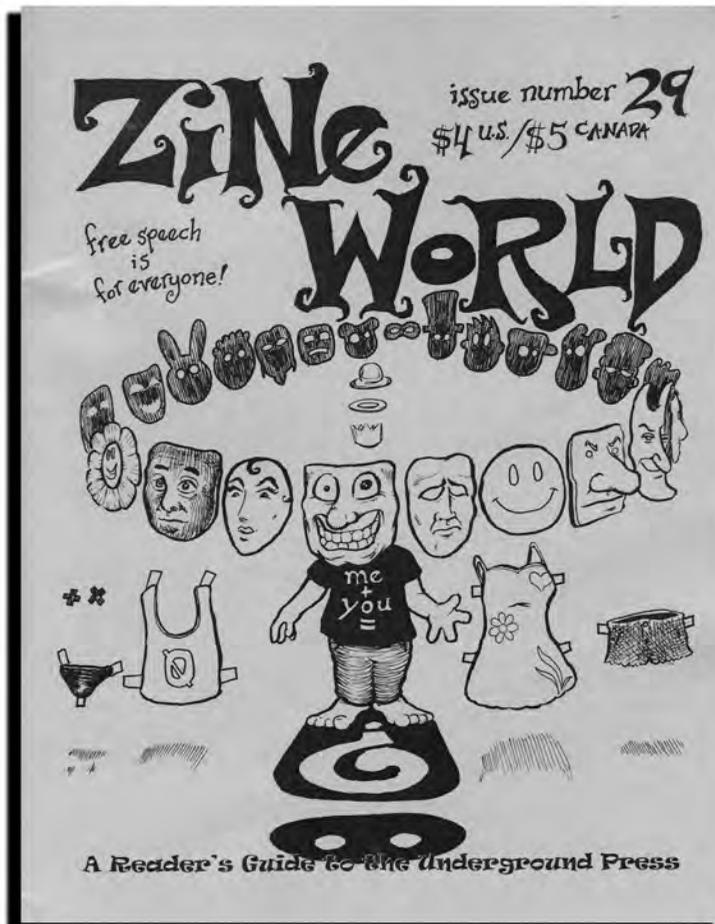
(<http://wemakezines.ning.com/>)

X is for xerography, the dry photocopying technique.



(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xerography>)

Z is for Zine World, both the review zine and the one I inhabit.



(<http://www.undergroundpress.org/>)

Notes:

A: I try to practice “little-A” anarchism, which for me is about working collectively and non-hierarchically using consensus-based models.

B: “Zines Are Not Blogs: A Not Unbiased Analysis” is an article by my friend Jenna that is a good break down of the differences between the mediums and why a blog is *NOT* a zine.

C: Creative Commons is a different form of copyright which allows the rights-holder to specify how their work is used.

D: Do-it-Yourself. Make it yourself. Pretty self explanatory.

E: Esoteric (adjective) - understood by or meant for only the select few who have special knowledge or interest;

F: The Fly-Away Zine Mobile took it’s inaugural tour this past summer and hopefully will be traveling around for years to come.

G: Grrr! Zines A Go-Go is a collective based in San Diego, CA that puts on workshops to teach zine making and media literacy in it’s surrounding communities.

H: A number of friends have had the pleasure of doing 2 week residencies at the Robert Street Social Center over the past couple of years, working on their own projects and with the community in Halifax.

I: The IPRC in Portland has so many awesome resources including a zine library, print shop, and offers classes and workshops for indy publishers.

J: J.D.s is often recognized as the first queer zine. Started in Toronto in 1985, it ran until 1991 and was published by Bruce La Bruce and G.B. Jones.

K: Kelly Shortandqueer was one of the founders of The Tranny Roadshow, helped to start the Denver Zine Library, publishes Short and Queer, and is generally amazing.

L: I think librarians are superheroes, and my love for them is often a verb.

M: While technically not my *first* zine, Mutate was the one that really helped me to submerge myself in zineland.

N: I don't know what to say about nerds. They're sexy and fun. Zinesters are also definitely the nerds of the punk world.

O: Outpunk both as a zine and a record label was hugely important for bringing queer and punk together and to folks who desperately needed to see ourselves reflected in both senses.

P: Words over weapons. Thought and writing and reading and discussion will always win out over the tyranny of violence. Plus it's Morrissey, h-e-l-l-o!

Q: Well, yeah. Queers. We're everywhere. In this instance, this photo is from the Queer Zinester Roadshow from 2009. (left to right) Dave, Kisha, Kelly, Chris, John, Max, me.

R: Zines, music, media, life!

S: The night after I got queerbashed in San Francisco I went back to the spot where it happened and let the world know about it. A different photo of my stencil can be found in Josh McPhee's book Stencil Pirates.

T: While I personally don't use a typewriter very often, they *are* cool, as are tattoos depicting them.

U: Steven Duncombe's book about zines isn't the only one, but it is quite excellent. Highly recommended.

V: Vandercook proof presses are often used for letterpress printing.

W: We Make Zines is a web-based social media site for zinesters and zinefans. It hosts tons of discussions about all aspects of the zine world from organizing events to new releases to how-tos.

X: Xerography is the formal term for a form of photocopying. Because it's inexpensive and readily available, it tends to be the medium of choice for most zinesters.

Y: The Yo-yo Gang is G.B. Jones classic underground film about rival girl gangs. It features several zinesters including Bruce La Bruce, Carolyn Azar, Deke Nihilson and Donna Dresch.

Z: Zine World was the long-running zine review zine. In a pre-internet age it was *the* zine to find out about emerging zines and underground publications after the demise of Fact Sheet Five. Zine World ended publication after 31 issues in the summer of 2012.





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september / 2011