Zine/Queer Zine FAQ

Contributed by QZAP
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Zine and Queer Zines FAQ

1)Q: What IS a zine, anyway?

A: A zine (pronounced "zeen," rhymes with "bean", no apostrophe) is a self-published, small circulation, non-commercial booklet or magazine, usually produced by one person or a few individuals. Zines are publications done for the love of doing them, not to make a profit or a living. Most zines are photocopied, but their production can range from handwritten or handmade booklets to offset-printed magazine-like publications (but with a print run of hundreds or a few thousand instead of hundreds of thousands).

Zines come in all shapes, sizes, topics, and formats. They can include personal essays, political discussions, fiction, craft or do-it-yourself advice, articles about music or movies, comics, reviews — anything under the sun, really. In a zine, you might find typos, misspelled words, improper grammar, and brilliant or radical or just plain honest ideas that simply aren’t allowed in Time, Newsweek, or People magazine.

Zines, underground press, small press, alternative press … these are just a few of the names for publications that are not produced by a corporation with an eye to the bottom line, but by ordinary people who want to make their voices heard. The underground press is written by street punks and lawyers and stay-at-home moms, and covers topics from politics to fiction to personal observation. At its best, it offers insight into the real lives of the 95% of us who don’t look like the people on TV.

(From: http://www.undergroundpress.org/faq/#whatarezines)

Jenna Freedman has written an article titled "Zines Are Not Blogs" where she states:

Definitions of the word "zine" vary tremendously, but they do tend to have these common characteristics:

1. Self-published and the publisher doesn't answer to anyone
2. Small, self-distributed print run
3. Motivated by desire to express oneself rather than to make money
4. Outside the mainstream
5. Low budget

For the sake of this discussion, I will add:

1. No need for any special equipment or knowledge
2. Portable*

3. An expression of Do It Yourself (DIY) culture

4. Foster a community among their creators and readers

* QZAP note: hand-to-hand distribution

Click here to read the whole article (via Archive.org)

2)Q: SO, if that's a zine, what's a Queer Zine?

A: At QZAP we've taken a broad view of what makes a zine "queer." For our purposes, if the content of the zine is queer then the zine is queer. Additionally, if the creator identifies as queer, then the zine is also queer.

3) Q: Well then how would you define "queer"?

A: Queer is all about people's expression of gender and sexuality. This is not exclusive by any means, but people who are queer (or ID as queer) may use descriptors like: queer, kweer, gay, lesbian, bi, bisexual, fag, faggot, dyke, trans, tranny, queen, king, princess, Nancy boy, Brucey Boy, nelly, femme, butch, bulldagger, bulldyke, polyamorous, pansexual, omnisexual, asexual, homo, Saphist, faerie, and of course Friend of Dorothy.

4) Q: Ok, that's people... what about queer content?

A: Queer content can be literally anything created by folks who identify as above. That said, the most common content you'll find on QZAP is usually about the following:

sex

same-gender sex

same-gender love

same-gender attraction/desire

gender

transgender issues

bisexuality

sexual health

HIV/AIDS

STI's (STDs)

Safer sex

music

popular culture

feminism

activism

politics

racism

classism

fat phobia

ageism

traveling

anti-assimilationism

art

DIY (do-it-yourself)

comics/comix

erotica/porn

journaling/diary zines

manifestos

poetry

5)Q: So other than QZAP, where can I find zines and queer zines?

A: Zines can be found in lots of places. One of the main distribution channels is hand-to-hand. A zinester will make a zine and give it to a friend, who will pass it on to another friend, and so on. In addition to that, zines can be found or purchased through the following:

Infoshops

Independent bookstores

Music stores and record shops

Local music shows or other performances and venues

Catalogs

Pen-pals (similar to hand-to-hand)

Online zine distros

Zine festivals and zine fairs

Radical and art events

Libraries (Public, Institutional, and Zine Libraries)

Please note: this FAQ is ongoing and will be updated regularly