

Dreaming Zine Futures

A resource on emerging & alternative zine-making practises, distribution methods and communities.

Screen reader, colour and printable versions of this resource are available to download via the MCA Website www.mca.com.au This version is the screen reader version. 14/04/2021

This resource was produced on unceded Aboriginal Land. Our respects to elders and communities past, present and emerging.

Made by Mika Benesh, Naomi Segal & Ruby PH



An illustration of a person with black pants and white shoes. Their face is covered and their hand is stylised to be extra large. The figure walks while reading a large Zine titled "Zine Futures"

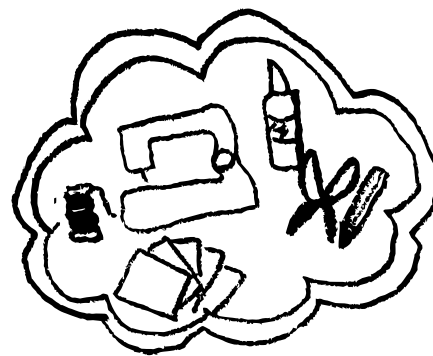
Making Zines

Zines (and other handmade and self-published media) emerged from marginal communities as a way to materialise and circulate ideas - while bypassing the protocols of formal outlets like publishing houses, magazines or academic journals.

Zines are a great medium for personal or niche topics, their capacity to be shaped into something entirely unique to the maker is boundless. Zines do not have to be palatable or marketable to mass audiences!

...Did you know?

Print media, writing and publishing have always existed in formats outside of dominant media outlets. "Zines" first emerged as early as the 1930s as a format for fans make work about their favourite media. During the punk era of the 1980s, zines became a medium for independent publishing and small circulations.



A rounded bubble features mini drawings of stationary and tools including a sewing machine, glue, scissors, pen and paper.

Distribution

Zine fairs are major events in a zine-maker's calendar, but there are many alternative forms of distributing zines. Especially in mid- and post-pandemic times, we are becoming oriented towards lower-contact forms of sharing what we make with each other.

You could try distributing via...

- A Patreon or similar subscription service (like Katy Plummer)
- A zine library initiative at a local business or library etc.
- An online platform like Gumroad
- A vending machine (ACT Zine Emporium, Zine-O-Matic),
- An interactive installation/exhibition
- A lucky dip or chance distribution
- ...or an entirely different kind of activation or happening...

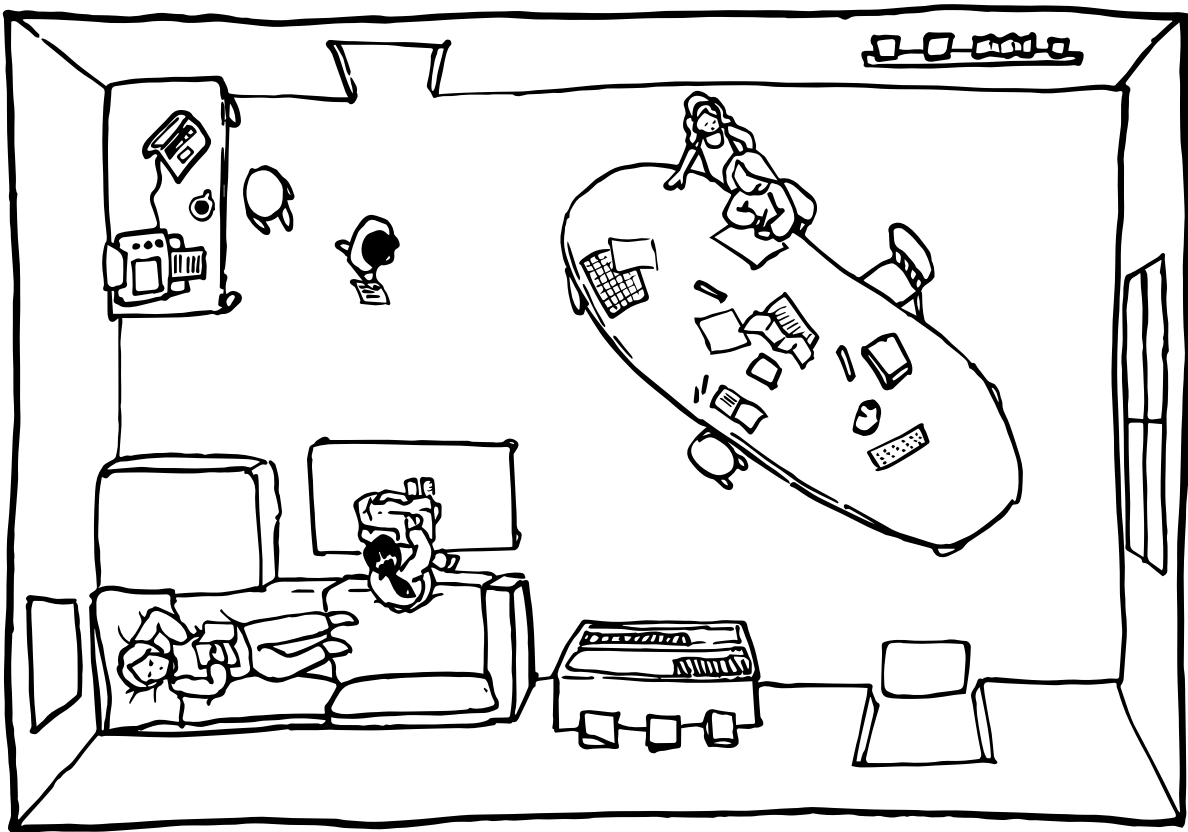
Trading

Trading has always played a part in zine events and practices. It's important to approach a new trade with respect. Trades should always be between items of equal and mutual value. You can always say no to any trade.

Finding Space

Reach out to nonprofit galleries, community & council spaces, arts venues & studios. Some venues may charge a fee for renting the space - consider how this will impact your costs.

You can apply for a grant or other funding, crowdsource, or ask participating artists a small amount - \$5-10. Consider accessibility and layouts of your space, and how you will source tables and chairs for the event if applicable.



A birds eye view illustration of a small room with five figures working and resting. Two sit at a large work table, making zines. One is walking across the room. One sits at the couch while another lies down on the couch.

Community

While zine fairs and conventions are often annual events sporting huge market halls/expo layouts, smaller events don't require as much planning and resources. That means they can then be run more frequently - allowing for a steady stream of opportunities to nourish different communities all year round.

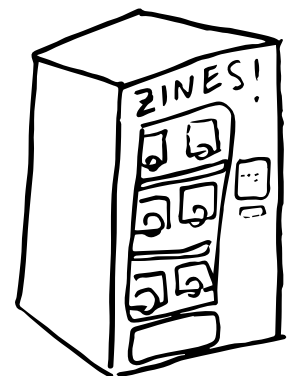
Although zine fairs are vital opportunities for artists to generate income from their work, we should also encourage other programs - like zine libraries, reading groups, art installations and workshops - that do not prioritise the marketability of the zine. For example a potluck zine-making workshop like Zine Dreams emphasises being curious, experimental and connected with one another.

Communication

Not everyone has internet/social media. Try promoting your event through snail mail, email, flyers, posters, notice board and word of mouth.

Remember

Zines are not beholden to institutions! It's amazing when institutions and organisations provide events, venues, funds and other resources to support zine communities, but you can put on a zine program just about anywhere, with or without external support by keeping it small.



An illustration of a vending machine stocking zines.

Fundraising

Identify a local grassroots fundraising campaign or organisation to donate funds to. Keep things simple by donating all proceeds, rather than figuring out a percentage.

Communicate clearly to makers that all proceeds will be donated. You can encourage makers to contribute old stock, rather than making new work for the event.

Create a streamlined process you will gather funds with on the day, and communicate this with participating zine makers and the event space/venue.

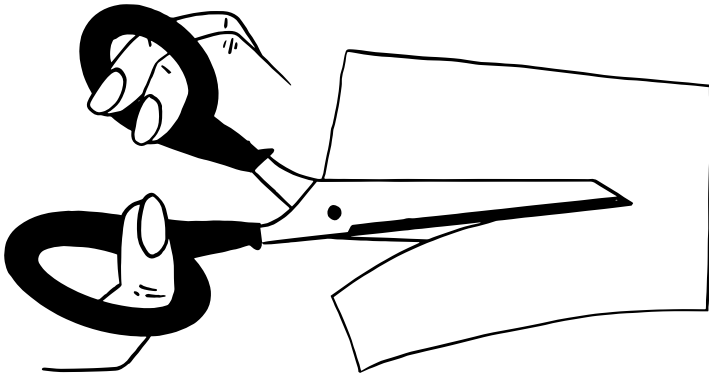


An illustration of two flyers taped up next to one another. One flyer reads "Zine Fair" and has a heart drawn underneath the title. The other reads "Hi" with a simplified zine drawn underneath the title (the zine pages have a heart and star on them)

Accessibility

Accessibility is a critical factor to consider in your planning. As a further reading have a look at the resources provided by orgs like Arts Access Australia and Accessible Arts. People who are marginalised often use zines as a medium to share experiences and find community. Make sure your event is safe for all. No racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia or transphobia!

Large zine fairs can be overwhelming for many. Stallholders onsite all day, patrons & anyone experiencing noise and social related anxiety. Quieter programs offer a more accessible way for people to engage deeply with makers and their work. Consider letting patrons know in advance if the event could be overwhelming or loud. Allocate a quiet space away from the bustle for folks to step away to recharge if they need.



An illustration of a pair of scissors cutting into a small piece of paper.

About the artists

Mika Benesh (@mikabenesh) is an artist, writer and designer working on unceded Gadigal and Dharug lands. Their practice traces relationships between cultural institutions, spirituality and theology, archives, queer/trans lives and movements, and white supremacy. A finalist of the 66th Blake Prize, Mika is interested in facilitating emerging & marginal Jewish ritual practices through Judaica-object design.

Naomi Segal (@_naomisegal) is an arts worker who makes zines, comics, installations, and collaborative projects based on the unceded lands of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples. Counter to the idea of an artist being self-sufficiently skilful, Naomi embraces non-mastery as a conduit to more inter-reliant and collaborative artmaking processes. She is also committed to diasporic and queer subjectivities and illegibility, with particular attentiveness to practitioners emerging from Asian histories.

Ruby PH (@irlrubyph) is a multidisciplinary art director and communicator located in Darlinghurst, Gadigal Country. Their work is driven by a desire to cut through the expectation and connect deeply with people. Ruby works on intentional creative projects that prioritise transformation and growth at every step. They believe creative practitioners should use every available medium and wish to spend their career discovering all of them.