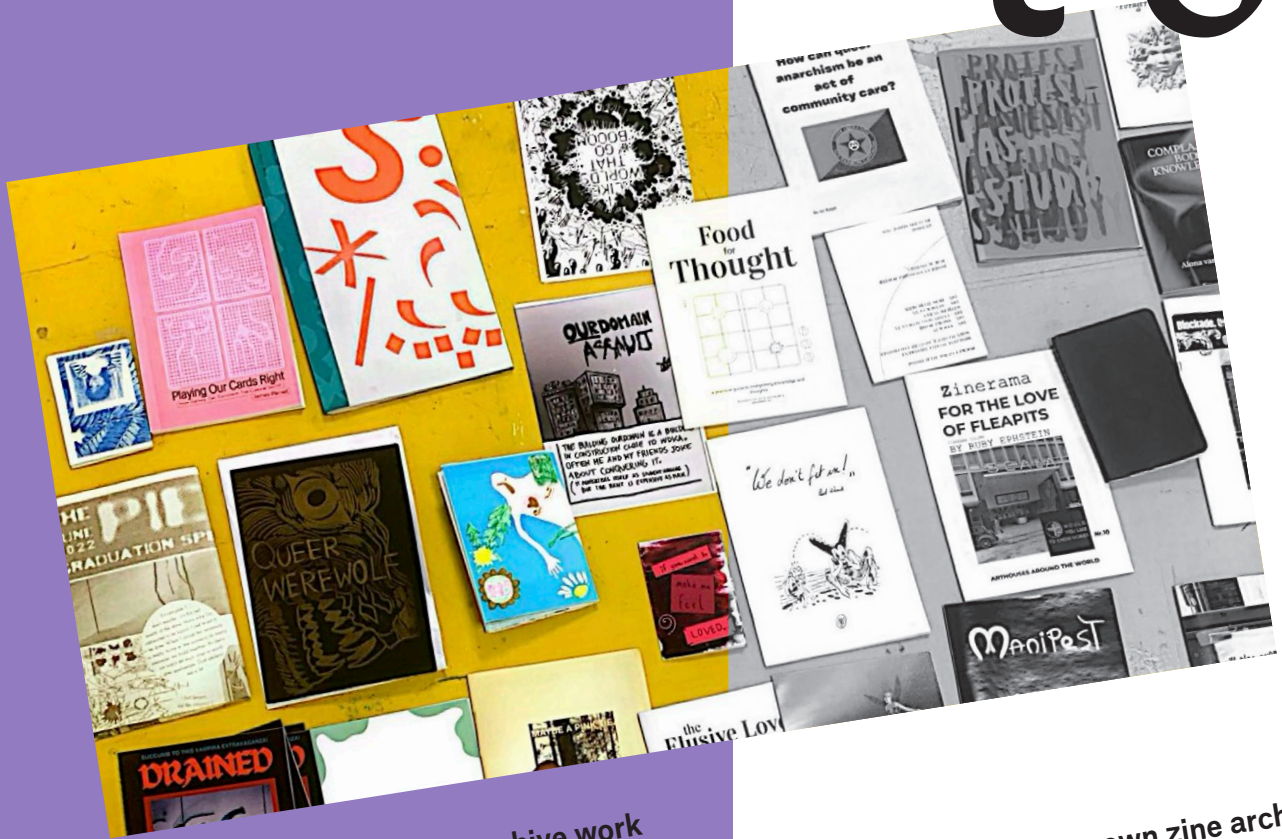


How to



Am I allowed to archive work
created by others?

How will my own zine archive
inspire my work?

archive

What makes a zine archive
different?

Where do I start digging up
relevant stories?

zines

written by
James Parnell and Ari Ralph

Network archives design and digital Culture

Design archives provide insight into the social context of design, the position of designers, the development of their work, and new applications for techniques or materials. In short, archives provide access to the past and contain knowledge for the future – but they have to be preserved and accessible.

There are several organisations in the Netherlands that manage design heritage, and in 2021 they united as the Network for Archives of Design and Digital Culture (NADD). The network shares knowledge around archiving and makes visible existing design archives, with work being done on digital infrastructure to ensure scattered archives are centrally accessible. Through its Seeking Shelter programme, the network also draws attention to managing and preserving at-risk design archives.

NADD consists of more than 45 partners including designers, design experts, professional organisations, educational institutions, and heritage institutions of all sizes that manage archives.

naad.network

How to

HELLO ZINE MAKER!

This edition of the *How To Archive Better*-series is specifically created for artists who work with experimental publishing. You can think of this as a manual on the importance of archiving your work and how you can do it, too.

Context is everything. That's why we start with briefly outlining the history of artist's books and zine making, and point out similarities and differences. But the main purpose of this edition is to inspire, motivate and guide you in archiving your own work. For that, we curated a toolbox. We also share pieces of our own archives, discuss questions of intellectual property, and explore how you might protect (or keep free) your work in the future. We listed organizations that focus on experimental publishing in the Netherlands, some of which you might want to contact to share your work. Potential archival-terminology needs, at last, are covered with a compact keywords overview in the back.



How will my own zine archive inspire my work?

archive

If you've never done it, archiving can feel like an impossible mountain to climb without a clear starting ground. However, we believe that with small steps, you can begin to build an artist's archive you can be proud of, and maybe even share in the future.

Where do I start digging up relevant stories?

zines

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ARTIST'S BOOK, THEN & NOW



An early example of an artist's book comes from English poet William Blake: *The First Book of Urizen* (1794). An artist working in the late 1700s and early 1800s, he had an interest in both writing and illustration and would often add paintings to his poetry. He (with the support of his wife, Catherine Boucher) would hand-bind his poetry together, and assemble them into books.



Depero Futurista, Fortunato Depero, 1927

Another example of an artist's book is *Depero Futurista*, published in 1927 by Italian artist Fortunato Depero. This book is popularly referred to as the "Bolted Book" because it was bound together by two large bolts. Depero was interested in experimenting with books as mediums, and even tried to create books that functioned as portable museums.

ARTISTS' BOOKS & ZINES:

A small history

When we talk about experimental publishing, we're thinking about two main artistic practices: artist's books and zines.

An artist's book is simply art in book form. In an artist's book, the design, materials, and the way the reader experiences it are all part of the artistic vision. They are usually self-published and self-distributed. They can be an opportunity to experiment with publishing and to imagine the book as a sculpture. They can allow artists to spread their work easily, without having to wait for the approval (and restrictions) of a publisher.

Zines can definitely be seen as a kind of artist's book, though their history is a bit different. The name zine comes from magazine, and they're known for their collage-heavy, Do-It-Yourself/Do-It-Together style and accessible approach to making and sharing. Zines have always had deep roots in grassroots movements. They've been key tools for countercultural, political, and marginalized voices, used by Indigenous, Black, queer, feminist, and punk communities as ways to resist, express, and preserve culture.

The purpose of artist's books is to make art through the medium of book making while the purpose of zine making is to make community or connections through the process of story-telling. While these two methods are very different they share the common value of self-publishing. Both art forms value putting the power of distribution in the hands of the artist rather than the institution.

ZINE HISTORY TIMELINE

16TH CENTURY

The origins of zine culture can be traced back to early printed pamphlets, tracts, and independently published works. The printing press allowed radical thinkers and revolutionaries to spread political, religious, or philosophical ideas.

1930

In Chicago, IL, USA, the science fiction zine *The Comet*, commonly referred to as the first zine, is published.

1970S

Rise of copy shops, making photocopying and distributing zines easier for zinesters.

LATE 1970S

Punk scene uses zines to highlight punk artists & archive their communities. *Sniffin' Glue*, a British monthly punk zine, was first published in 1976.

EARLY 1990S

Feminist zines and bands come into the spotlight through the "riot grrrl" movement.

1990S

Some established zines like *Bust* (est. 1993) & *Bitch* (est. 1996) transition into more traditional magazines.

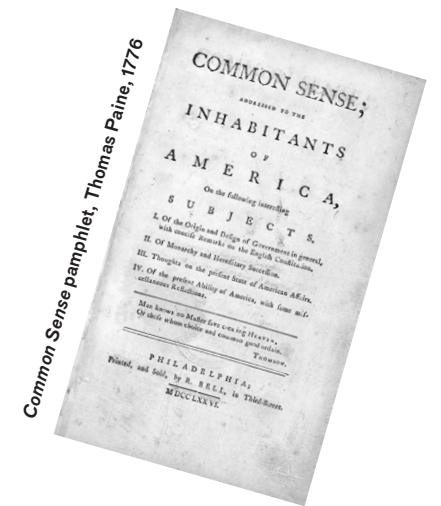
LATE 1990S

Evolution of a Race Riot, a zine discussing the intersection of race and punk, is published.

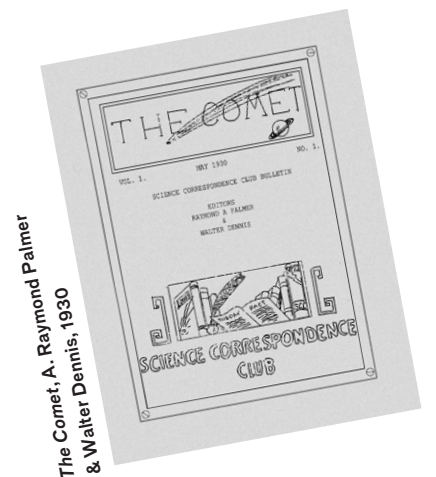
2000S

Following the rise of the internet, many zines transition to a digital format. Zinesters can now share their work digitally, and are connected to a wider network of makers.

ZINES THROUGH THE CENTURIES



Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776), a widely distributed pamphlet advocating for US independence.



First issue of *The Comet* (1930) produced by the Science Correspondence Club.



First issue cover *Sniffin' Glue* (1976).

“WHEN WE VISIT ARTISTIC ARCHIVES, OF OTHER ARTISTS, WE ENGAGE WITH THEIR STORIES OF THEIR ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND THUS, THEY OPEN DOORS INTO THE VALUES THAT ARE EMBEDDED IN THEIR PRACTICE.”

Charlotte Østergaard
Danish textile artist, costume designer
and artistic researcher

ARTIST ARCHIVE

DOCUMENT, CONNECT, CONTRIBUTE

It’s clear that artist books and zines have a rich history. As an artist working with these mediums, you might be wondering: what is my role in this?

Artist archives can help you to answer this question. An artist archive is a collection of material related to an artist’s life and work. Archiving empowers artists to control their own legacies, fostering education, inspiration, and agency by giving individuals the power to shape their own narratives. Building and organizing your artist’s archive is an opportunity to document your process, connect your work to future generations, and contribute to the stories of artistic communities.

A LOOK INSIDE: James’ and



MASTER COPIES

“Some of my own zines and many zines from the workshops I facilitate are analogue. I always keep the “master copy” of these in a folder in a closet (away from the sunlight). The folders are organized by name, and all kept in the same place.”



BOOK COLLECTION

“Most of my zines are research based- therefore, I have a lot of books around me! I wrote a zine about apologies and was really inspired by *So You’ve Been Publicly Shamed* by Jon Ronson. In the beginning of my zine journey, I was looking for more zinesters of color and stumbled across the work of Nia King. She has a podcast in which she interviews different artists of color, and compiled the interview into a (self published) book. Finally, *Shotgun Seamstress* is a punk zine that was later compiled into a book.”



MAILING LIST

“In the beginning of my career, I did a lot of zine workshops and would invite people to sign up for my mailing list. These lists have become archives of connections- they highlight the people who I’ve met through my zine journey. Some of the participants have even gone on to make their own zine collectives!”

Ari’s Personal Archives



ZINE COLLECTION

“An important step for zine makers is to get comfortable around the medium of zine making. Many artists do this by building up a zine collection.”



CASSETTE COLLECTION

“As much of my artistic practice involves working with obsolete and forgotten media, I take a lot of inspiration from cassettes and VHS tapes. I love that, due to the material, these items will degrade and slowly die with me. This is my living sonic archive.”



PROCESS BOOKS + SPREADS

“Process books are where I keep all the behind the scenes of my artworks. It includes planning, notes, experimenting, mind-mapping, reading lists, reflections, and more, and allows me to look back and reflect on what has been done and how improvements can be made.”

exercise



WHAT’S IN YOUR TOOLBOX?

Take a look at the things around you.

- What types of material do you keep, and what do you get rid of?
- What items do you think are worth archiving?
- Have you ever considered the things around you a part of your “artist archive?”
- What stories do you think your archive might tell about you as an artist?

[illegible]

- **ARCHIVE AS EVIDENCE:** an archive can

- Original artworks (including different

- **IDENTIFY:** Determine what materials you

have and which of them have archival value.

- **ORGANIZE:** Sort and arrange your saved

materials

- **LABEL & RECORD:** Describe your materials

for easier identification in the future – date

- **DIGITAL FILES:** Download the other How

to Archive Better issues on the website of

- **PRESERVE:** Store your materials carefully to

extend the longevity – think of sun damage.

harmful moist and creating regular backups

ARCHIVAL QUESTIONS

Asking questions and critically assessing the media used within your work is an important step in deciding what and how to archive. Here are some questions to consider. This might help you to identify the context and process of your work, and provide meaningful insights on where you come from and where you might be going in the future.



Would loss of this item decrease understanding of your work?



Could this item be of interest to a researcher or beneficial to future generations?



Does it help bring context to your practice or another item in your archive?



What condition is your archive in?



Who would you want to hold your archive in the future?



What does “preservation” mean to you (is your archive meant to live forever?)

ARCHIVAL ISSUES AND HOW TO SOLVE THEM



1. MATERIAL DETERIORATION

Zines are often made with cheap, fragile materials like photocopy paper, staples, or newsprint, which degrade quickly.

SOLUTION: Use descriptive cataloging that emphasizes Store zines in acid-free folders and boxes, and handle them with care. Use extra sleeves for very fragile items. Prioritize digitization to preserve content.



2. NON-TRADITIONAL FORMATS

Zines and experimental publications often break away from standard publishing formats. They may feature unusual sizes, handmade or sculptural bindings, fold-outs, or interactive elements.

SOLUTION: Use descriptive cataloging that emphasizes content, context, and community relevance rather than relying on rigid classification systems. For storage, prioritize adaptable housing such as custom boxes, oversized folders, or flat files, and always preserve the original form and physical integrity of the work.



3. UNCLEAR DATES

Many zines aren't dated, or have ambiguous timelines, making archival sequencing harder.

SOLUTION: When no date is given, make an educated guess based on content, context, or creator activity. Then label it as “circa” (e.g. c. 1996). Keep track of your reasoning in internal notes or metadata.



4. CONNECTIONS TO LARGER NETWORKS

As zines are DIY, it is easy for your zine practice and archive to become isolated without actively seeking for connections to the larger zine scene.

SOLUTION: Partner with zine libraries, community archives, or DIY spaces to build collaborative networks. Make connections with the spaces you identify with.



JUST BAG IT!

When you visualize the archive, you might see floor-to-ceiling office shelves stacked with an impressive amount of boxes. But the shape of an archive can also be light and transportable. In fact, it could contain just about everything that fits your backpack.

Try this alternative to the communal lunch break stroll. Gather with a group of designers and (zine) makers. Now have everyone open up their bags.

- What's in it?
- What stories do they hold? What are they doing in your bag, and why?
- Could you curate the contents of your bag?
- Could you order them in a different way?
- How about swapping contents with the bag of someone else? Would you organize or curate their contents differently, and why?

“REPRODUCING OR SHARING ZINES IS NOT JUST ABOUT COPYRIGHT. IT’S ALSO ABOUT A ZINESTERS’ RIGHT TO DECIDE HOW THEIR WORK IS DISTRIBUTED, HOW WIDELY, AND HOW IT IS CONTEXTUALIZED. IT’S ALSO ABOUT COMMUNITY, RESPECT, AND JUST BEING A NICE PERSON.”

Brown University article

THEIRS OR MINE?

When making an artist’s book, or zine, or any type of self-published item, it’s important to consider questions of *intellectual property*. Intellectual property is all about who owns your work once it’s out in the world (or once you’ve passed away). Another way to think about it is to consider the follow questions:

- Who do you want to have access to your publication?
- How would you feel if anyone reused your work?
- Would you like for your work to be able to be reproduced? If so, would you like any rules about that?

If any of these questions gave you pause, or made you nervous, you should probably consider questions of intellectual property! In fact, it’s always good to think about it. Makers should think about *where* they would like for their work (or archive) to go once it’s out in the world. It’s important to know about your choices so that you can make an informed decision about the future of your work.

Questions of intellectual property are not only about “owning” ideas. It’s about respect towards artists, and where they would like their work to be.

WAYS TO DEAL WITH QUESTIONS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY



COPYRIGHT

A copyright is a type of intellectual property that gives its owner the exclusive legal right to copy, distribute, adapt, display, and perform a creative work, usually for a limited time.



COPYLEFT

Copyleft is the legal technique of granting certain freedoms over copies of copyrighted works with the requirement that the same rights be preserved in derivative works. In this sense, freedom refers to the use of the work for any purpose, and the ability to modify, copy, share, and redistribute the work, with or without a fee.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Creative material that is not protected by intellectual property laws.



CREATIVE COMMONS

Creator still holds the ownership of the material, however, the material may be distributed by anyone anywhere. The material can also be revised and remixed.

exercise

SAY IT WITH A SMILE!



Questions of intellectual property may sound serious, but they don’t have to be. Zinesters (zine makers) have played with ideas around intellectual property for years. Zinelibraries.info shares some playful ways of talking about intellectual property, pulled from their own zine libraries:

- Share it. Copy it. Paste it. Cut it. Destroy it. Remake it.
Do whatever the fuck you want. Don’t do it for cash. Credit me. Tell me about it.
Gravestones/Church Signs by Moose Lane, 2016ish.
- Feel free to swipe whatever you want from here, with polite attribution, of course. Or make a hundred copies and leave them in the waiting room at your doctor/midwives’ office.
Self Defense for Pregnant Ladies by Kelly Wooten, 2012.
- Please do not reproduce this zine in any way, shape, or form. No photocopying, scanning, uploading, emailing, etc. Please do not catalog and/or otherwise add to a library collection. This is for *your* eyes only.
[no attribution] 2020

However you decide to deal with your intellectual property, be sure that you make a *choice*. Add it to the front of your publication or the back, or nowhere at all.

What type of intellectual property fits your own work?

KEYWORDS

AGENCY: The ability to act independently and make creative and distribution decisions, shaping work according to personal vision and values.

CATALOGUING: The process of writing a description for the records that you are transferring. This allows for records to be searched at a later stage, using descriptions and titles within catalogues.

DIY (DO IT YOURSELF): A hands-on approach to creating, producing, and distributing work independently, prioritising personal control and autonomy.

DIT (DO IT TOGETHER): A collaborative method of publishing where groups share resources and effort, emphasising community, inclusivity, and shared authorship.

EXPERIMENTAL VS INDEPENDENT VS SELF PUBLISHING: Experimental Publishing focuses on innovation and pushing boundaries in format, technology, and distribution. Independent Publishing concerns small presses or autonomous efforts outside major publishers, emphasising creative freedom and curation. Self-Publishing at last, is more author-driven, where the writer handles everything with full control. Each form of publishing has its own priority: experimental publishing prioritises creativity, independent publishing prioritises autonomy, and self-publishing prioritises author control.

LITTLE BLACK BOOK

Here are some programs, stores and institutions with a focus on or interest in artist's book or zines in the Netherlands.

- **HET FORT VAN SJAKOO** – Bookshop/zineshop in the heart of Amsterdam run by volunteers. An institution (established 1977) with a huge leftist zine collection, focused on more political matters.

- **HOCUS BOGUS PUBLISHING** – Located in Roodkapje (Rotterdam), Hocus Bogus Publishing sells art books, zines, and other printed material. They also have Xerox machines, stencil duplication machines, and help people with DIY publishing.

- **KAPITAAL UTRECHT** – Open studio for analog print techniques. Check out their changing program filled with exhibitions, lectures and music.

- **KIOSK** – A Rotterdam Bookshop, riso print shop, and a Leaky Press run by artist Philipa Driest. Selection of radical/critical theory, fiction, poetry and self-publishing practices.

- **LIMESTONE** – a bookstore in Maastricht that sells artists' books from non-Western perspectives and underrepresented voices.

- **PAGE NOT FOUND** – Page Not Found is a bookstore in The Hague specialized in artist-made publications.

- **PRINT ROOM** – Rotterdam artist-run space that highlights experimental publications created by artists with a dedicated workshop to learn and develop printing skills.

- **SAN SERRIFFE** – an art bookstore located in Amsterdam's Red Light District. They focus on artists' books and also host events.

- **SPREAD ZINE FEST** – A recurring festival in Groningen that focuses on self-published arts, books, zines, and prints.

- **XPUB** – XPUB is the Experimental Publishing master course (XPUB) at Piet Zwart in Rotterdam.

- **ZINEDEPO** – Zine library based in Arnhem.

REFERENCES

Auto/biography and Identity: Zines as Life Narrative by Anna Poletti (2008)

Examines how zines create personal and collective identities in underground publishing.

DIY Culture: Party & Protest in Nineties Britain by George McKay (1998)

Explores the intersection of zines, DIY culture, and grassroots activism.

From A to Zine: Building a Winning Zine Collection in Your Library by Julie Bartel (2004)

Examines how libraries and communities use zines as an educational and archival tool.

Make a Zine!: Start Your Own Underground Publishing Revolution by Joe Biel & Bill Brent (2018)

Focuses on zine history and how zines create and sustain alternative communities.

To zine or not to zine?

<https://bubblemclub.co.za/art-and-culture/zine-not-zine-cultural-significance-self-publishing/>

What's an Artist's Book?

<https://blog.library.si.edu/blog/2012/06/01/what-is-an-artists-book/>

Why Zines Matter: Materiality and the Creation of Embodied Community by Alison Piepmeier (2007)

Argues that zines build intimate and interactive communities beyond traditional media.

ARCHIVAL RESOURCES

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/manage-information/selection-and-transfer/cataloguing-and-preparation-of-records/#:~:text=Cataloguing%20is%20the%20process%20of,descriptions%20and%20titles%20within%20catalogues>

<https://www.artworkarchive.com/blog/what-and-why-should-artists-archive-their-work>
<https://www.danceusa.org/archiving-preservation-artists-legacy-toolkit-organize>

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How to archive zines

Even though archiving might seem boring, it's one of the most important things you can do for your work and for future generations. It is a way to contextualize your work and make it historically relevant. How do you take (better) care of your zine archive? What can you do if your time or budget is limited? How will better archiving remain helpful in the future? This edition shows, among other things, why archiving does not and should not be so complicated!

“EACH ARTIST IS A PART OF A RICH HISTORY. BY CREATING YOUR OWN ARTIST’S ARCHIVE, YOU CAN POSITION YOURSELF WITHIN THIS HISTORY, AND HELP A FUTURE GENERATION OF MAKERS AND SELF-PUBLISHERS. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO GO DEEP INTO YOUR OWN ARCHIVES, AND DISCOVER WHAT STORIES ARE THERE.”

James Parnell and Ari Ralph

How to archive zines is a short DIY guide with practical information and simple tips to help zine makers archive their work. Soon, archiving can become a less difficult task, and even prove to be a habitual and lucrative part of your practice. Part inspirational resource and part practical workbook, this specific cahier is the fourth in a playful series on the essence of archiving for designers and makers.

This guide is meant for you as a zine maker, so feel free to write in it, work in it and, above all, use it your way.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

James Parnell is a Hague-based curator, facilitator, dancer, and zinester who focuses on community building, collective learning, and the conflicts that arise in these practices. He often works in cultures and artistic communities on the margins, such as queer communities, Black communities, and independent publishers.
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Ari Ralph is a queer, South African trans-disciplinary artist, activist, archivist, researcher, community programmer and writer. They mostly work by incorporating socio-political elements into works through non-linear forms of expression and narration. Within their creative practice, Ari works with a wide range of materials but specialise in textile work, writing, audio-visual and sculpture.
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