What Problems Can Artist Publishers Solve?

We invited 17 artist publishers to respond to the question: Thinking locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally: What are some social, political, economic and ecological problems that artist publishers are equipped to address or solve using their knowledge, skills, and resources?

Temporary Services / PrintRoom

Temporary Services

This publication is a joint effort between PrintRoom (Rotterdam) and Temporary Services (Auburn, IN, and Chicago). We have asked artist publishers from the U.S., Europe, and the Philippines, to reflect on the importance of independent publishing at the moment. We invited them to think about the strengths and challenges of what they do and how they serve their community.

This compilation was created in conjunction with our residency at PrintRoom in July 2018. We made it to accompany a library collection we have been developing for nearly a decade called The Self-Reliance Library (SRL).

The SRL is an autonomous reading and creating library of over 100 books. It is a collection of older books and reference materials that Temporary Services has found inspiring while doing our own projects and living our lives. It also features new books we are just starting to spend time with. The SRL contains recently published titles that are still available, and out of print books that you can find in public libraries or on the secondary market. It includes a few of our own publications.

The library is designed to provoke the reader, encourage a deeper relationship with our shared natural and human environment, solve creative problems, or suggest imaginative directions for a range of creative practices. Most of these books have strong visual content and an accessibly designed approach to sharing knowledge. A PDF of the booklet on the SRL, and many others can be found here: temporaryservices.org/served/publishing-2.

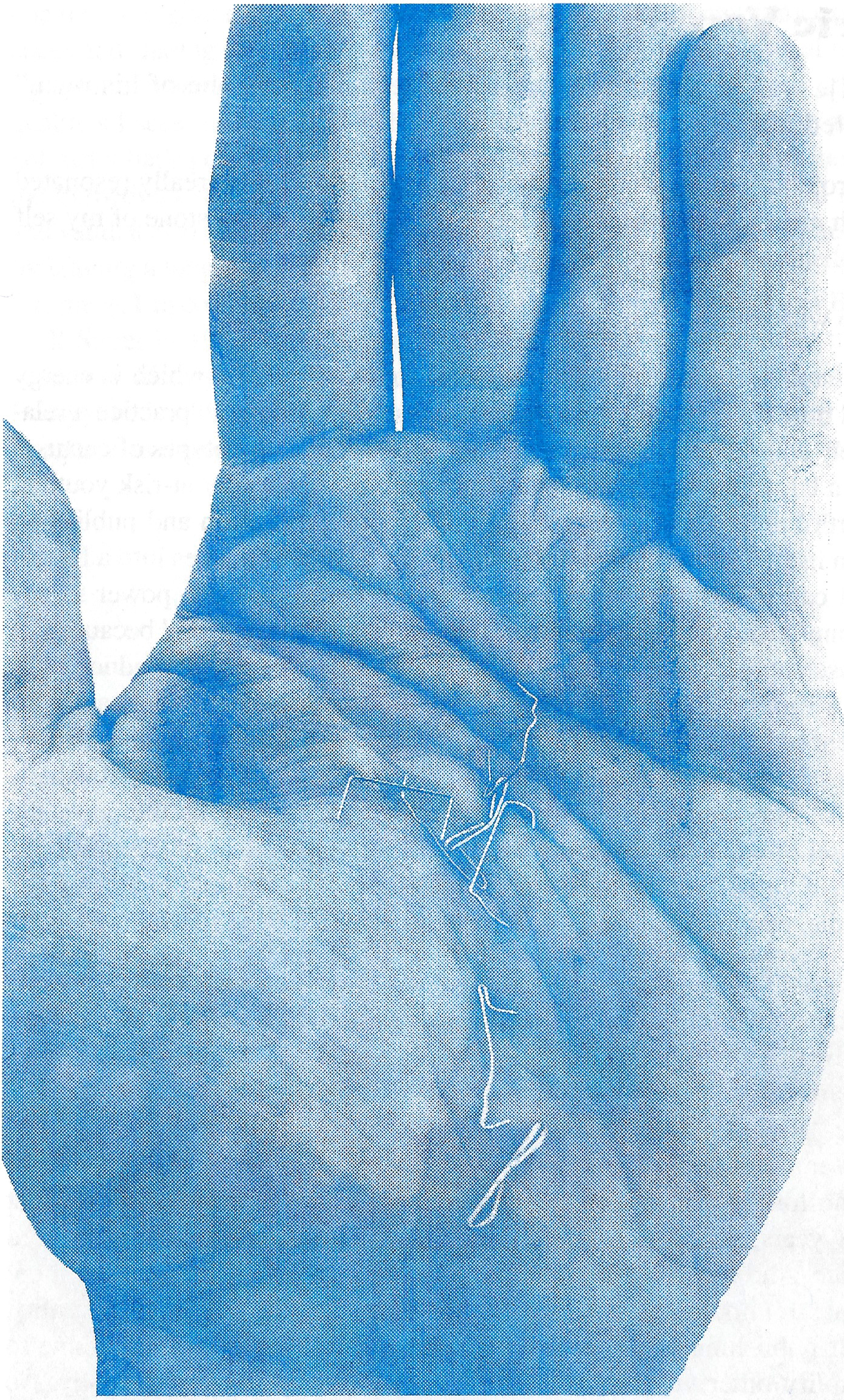
This is our 118th publication. While we continue to exhibit our art work as Temporary Services, it is increasingly common that we move from one artist-book-focused event to another, placing our publications directly into the hands of readers. We spend far more time talking to people when we visit cities for book fairs and a lot less time installing our work in exhibition spaces. We meet a lot of other publishers, artists, writers, readers, librarians, and activists at these events and we try to stay connected. Often we meet up again at other book fairs and friendships develop and continue over the course of many years.

We first met Karin de Jong from PrintRoom at the New York Art Book Fair some years ago. We are excited that we are finally collaborating on a project together and launching it at her home base in Rotterdam. Some of the participants in this booklet have been friends for a long time; we are just getting to know others after meeting them in similar ways. Karin has also pulled in some publishers we did not know beforehand. We are excited to share their work and ideas with you.

We are still understanding the potentials for how we might harness the contributions of others in this highly independent publishing community. This booklet can be thought of as one step for how we can create together, support each other, and sustain ourselves into the future, which looks more uncertain all the time. As always, thank you for reading our work and supporting it.

Josh MacPhee

I want to write a grand statement about the power of self-publishing. But so much of what is interesting about it is its very lack of the grandiose. Where more and more aspects of culture are driven towards stadium seating and laser light shows, maybe the most remarkable thing about self-publishing is its diminutive scale. This is a scale that allows for experimentation. I can print 100 booklets, and if I can't sell them I'll certainly feel bad, but it's not going to sink either my operation or my desire to continue to publish. While I believe there are immense benefits to labor specialization, it is also nice when an individual or small group can become, simultaneously, author-editor-artist-designer-printer-publisher. This breakdown of these defined roles can facilitate the breakdown between other stations in society, such as author/publisher and audience. This opens the possibility for new forms of relationships between these roles, not just in the abstract, but with each specific actor in each specific project.



Eric Von Haynes

"[H]e was disappointed in the world, so he built one of his own."
— Jedidiah Leland in Citizen Kane (1941)

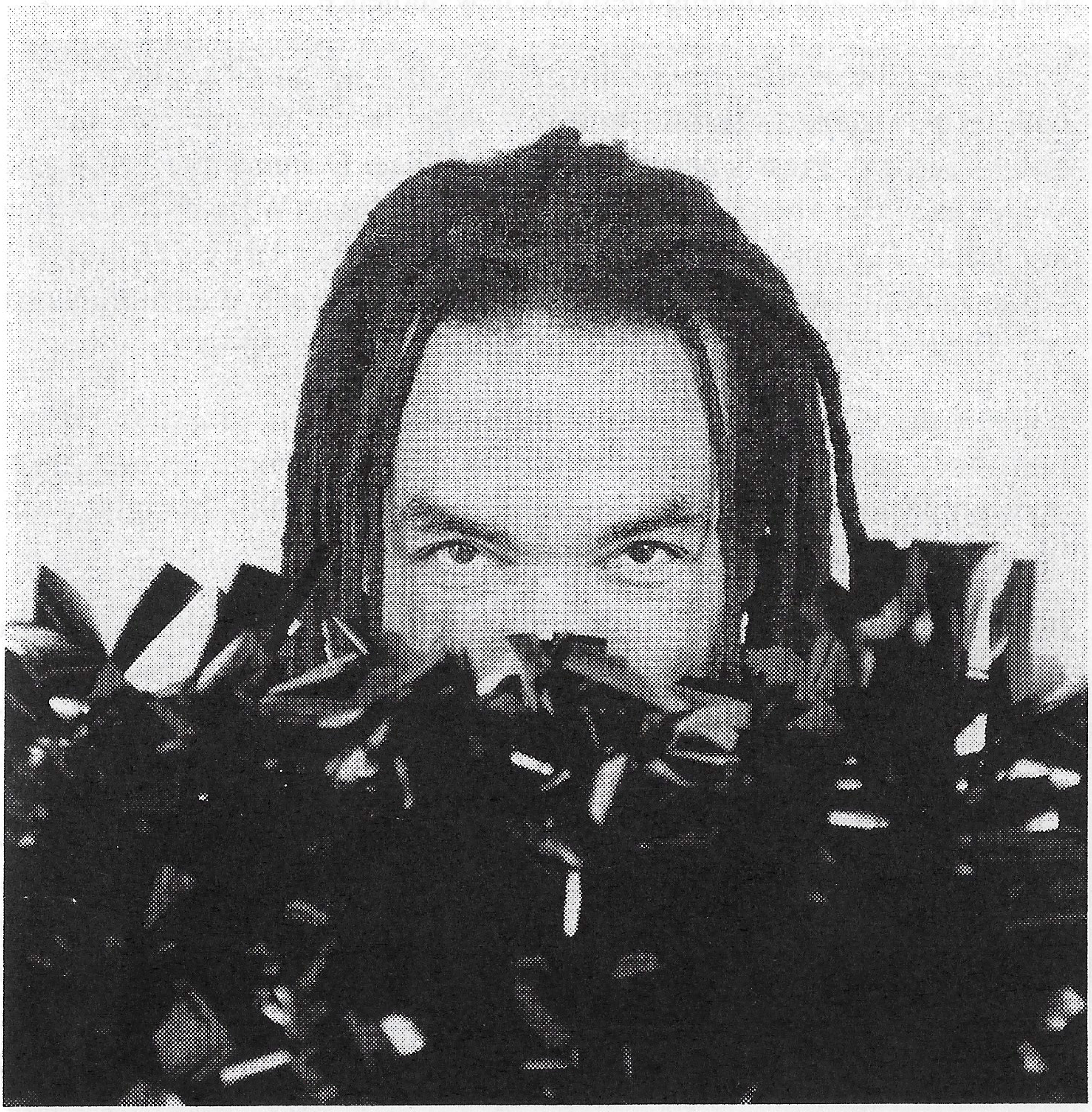
I wrote that in my Book of Lies journal around 2006. It really resonated with me as an artist and a citizen and became the cornerstone of my self publishing manifesto.

I do what I want when I want.

My studio, Flatlands, is focused on Risograph printing, which is energy and time efficient and uses soy-based inks, so I'm able to practice a relatively eco-conscious form of printing. I can create monotypes of cactuses for a UK artist, and at the same time, print broadsides for at-risk youth in North Lawndale (Chicago). By design, book production and publishing is in itself a communal act: actualizing thoughts and images into a format that can be handled, passed around and referred to, lends power to any community. Being part of that process is very rewarding, and because I'm conscientious of the challenges of a tight budget, I'm able to produce work for a variety of socio-economic groups. My studio practice is heavily influenced by the Interventionists, so I use my skill sets and medium to publish subversive viewpoints. These are interesting times for self publishers. We're fully inundated in a virtual world of media now, so the book, the vessel of paper, is becoming precious again. Regardless of the proliferation of virtual chatter and trash, regardless of the mediocrity of the popular media, people are searching for authenticity. That's the space I occupy.

We tend to imagine that journalists and writers are these special people, ordained with degrees and credentials, telling the most important stories, delivering the "news." But that's hardly true anymore. I remember after Obama was elected and the popular media was pushing social constructs like "post racial." I knew then that I needed to amplify my voice, to add dissent to that conversation. Here we are 9 years later and post racialism is no longer a term in the common vernacular of the NOW. In the last few years, it's become even more important to have my own unfiltered voice. And the more of a dumpster fire the media has become, the more it has reinforced my comfort to create a contrary construct of reality. Self publishing provides that platform for me, and in turn, I'm able to amplify other voices in my community, both locally and globally. No

one needs to give me permission—I'm capable of documenting my experiences and sharing them through my own unique lens. For my personal work, I gravitate towards artists that inspire and challenge me. One of the critical qualities I seek out in artists I work with is the ability to see the long game, not just what's possible right now. Although the beauty of self publishing is the immediacy of it, the ability to document the NOW while it's still fresh and valid, it also affords me the opportunity to add to the catalogs of history by leaving a tangible object for a future person to muse over. Even as I write this piece, I'm commemorating the 97th anniversary of the bombing of Black Wall Street in 1921, in the wake of the Red Summer of 1919, two major American history events that most citizens know absolutely nothing about. Every time I publish a book, I am exercising my freedom of speech, my right to agitate, and paying homage to my ancestors. It's not an exercise in vanity.



Tim Devin

I'm a fan of small press books in general, but right now I'd like to talk about one sub-sub-sub-genre that means a lot to me (and that I've tried to contribute to, over the last few years). These types of books explore and document the alternative approaches to politics and daily life that were taken by radical groups in the past.

What's so great about that? Well, one issue with grassroots and radical groups is that their stories get forgotten really easily. This means that only a few people can learn from their successes or failures. It also means that ideas and methods that might be helpful to folks in similar situations just aren't readily available. I think that's where us small book makers have come in handy over the past however-many decades: by exploring these long-buried, marginal ideas, and bringing them to a new audience.

These days, the Interference Archive is probably the most successful at this, with their Documents series—but some other recent favorites of mine include Eberhardt Press's beautifully-printed *Jane: Documents From Chicago's Clandestine Abortion Service, 1968-1973*; Miriam Wasser's stand-alone newspaper, *Pilgrims: 50 Years Of Anti-Nuclear Mass.: An Oral History*; and Leslie James Pickering's mini-sized zine on 1980s radical environmentalists, *The Evan Mecham Eco-Terrorist International Conspiracy*.

Each of these titles delves into a little-known radical grassroots movement; they summarize ideas, provide context, and sometimes even try to draw out lessons for today. Given America's hard shift to the right, books like these books (and the ideas in them) are pretty important.

(For my part, I've tried to add to this genre with my booklets for Free the Future Press: *What Are You Raising Them For?* reexamines 70s countercultural parenting techniques, and *Mapping Out Utopia* is a three-part look at the Boston area's 70s counterculture.)

Other book makers add to this conversation by reprinting original material from past movements. Some recent standouts for me are Gato Negro's reprint of *Statement* by a Boston-based, black lesbian feminist group called the Combahee River Collective; Black Classic Press's reprint of *Fu-Kiau and Lukondo-Wamba's Kindezi: The Kongo Art Of Babysitting*; and Half Letter Press's reprint of *Trying To Make The Personal Political: Feminism*

And Consciousness-Raising. Each of these reprints carries important analyses, and ideas for moving forward by changing one's own life. And their messages are very inspiring and timely now.

It's hard to imagine Harcourt or Random House putting this type of stuff out—which means it's up to small book makers to rebroadcast these ideas. Currently, we're living in a time that needs some inspiration, analysis, and a whole lot of alternative approaches—so I think that's why you're seeing more of these books now. Unfortunately, the current distribution network is pretty limited, so I'm hoping this interest will lead to wider distribution for these kinds of books. Either that, or a massive, radical social change that would make the messages in these books completely irrelevant. You know, either one.

Thoughts on a Self-Relience Library

I slept last night in the most generous of public accommodations, a very inexpensive hostel that is housed in—and is a part of—an ongoing political project. I've lived here in Berlin for some months now, but until now, I haven't felt like I have any handle on how it feels to be here without anxiety—I've recently been dealing with a set of issues. Some of them are personal—money, relationships, jobs, professional questions—though other problems are quite political– like many others, I'm concerned with the rise of racism and nationalism that is concurrent with the looming shadows of climate change. I understand these as two sides of the same coin. I spent the afternoon cycling around to events I don't normally go to after deciding to sleep the night in this new way and place.

So with my head upon my pillow in this hostel's 8-person room, I realised that I was sleeping next to a complete stranger. He'd gone to bed before me, before I even had a chance to see his face—and as I was falling asleep I realized I would have to commit to trusting him and the hostel and to a general goodness of the world—as I drifted off to sleep, to vulnerability. Luckily for my sense of trust, I'd had a pleasant evening cycling through the city: I'd even had a problem with the bike but had received good advice from a passer-by on how to fix it.

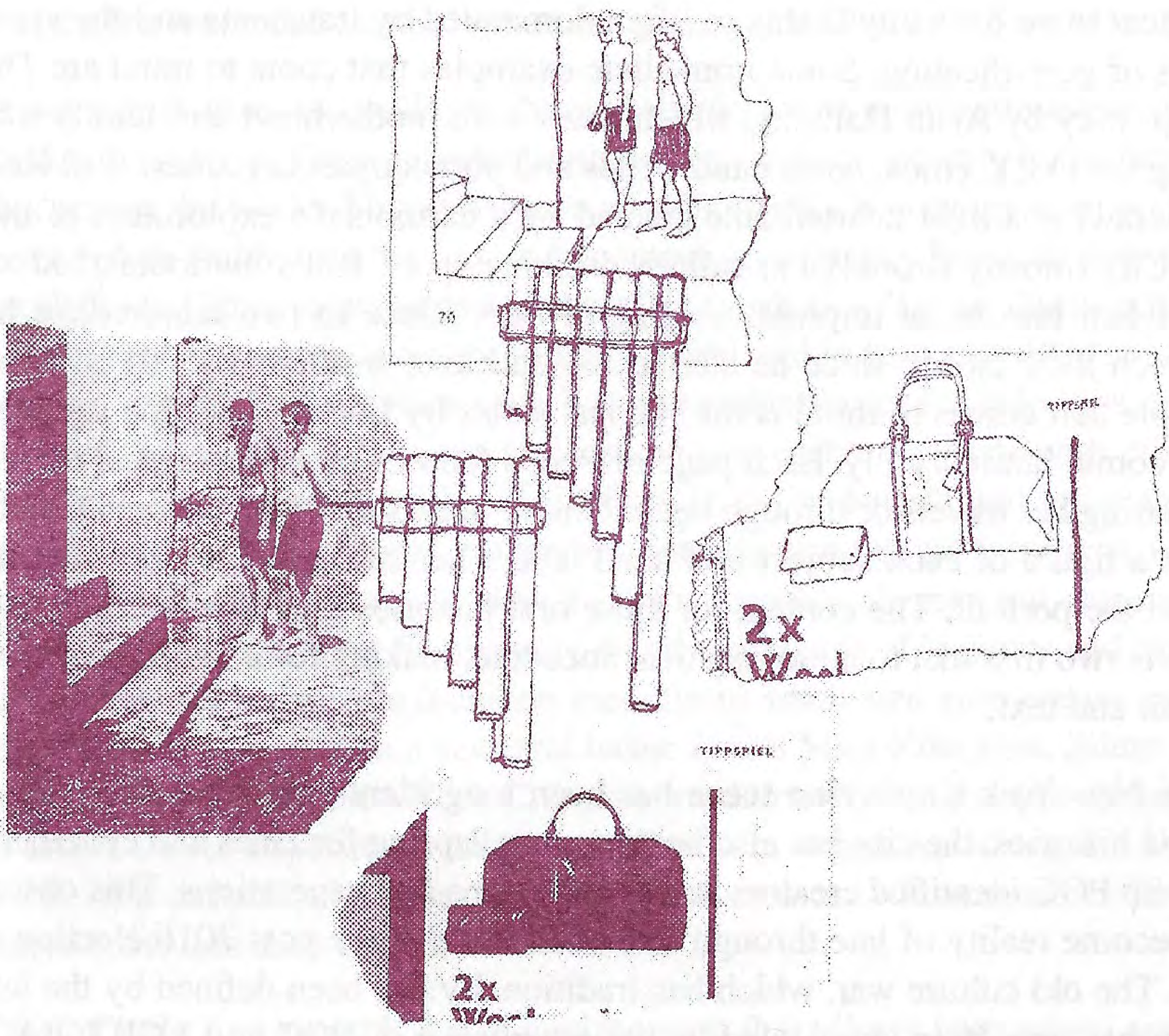
I've been reading political philosophy lately, and have been struck by how at even the origin of Western Political thought (Aristotle's works are over 2000 years old) is an effort to deal with inequality. That is, a consistent strand throughout philosophy is an effort to think through the facts of what it means to govern a society of rich AND poor, free man AND slave. The earliest solutions, and much of what follows after, are ways that articulate how the ruling class and all who they rule might feel that they gain some advantage by the status quo arrangement. This, of course, serves as a justification of inequality.

As I get older, I recognize more and more how much the games of art and power seem stilted towards those who master the art of power. "Seems" is the key word, as elsewhere and in other ways of being, other rhythms, continue nevertheless. I dreamed about a way of being that was outside this definition of politics and power, of a way not dominated by such singular and overbearing force. There were two images in my head constructing this dream in this shared room—one image was built on the sense I got during my day's cycle ride; it was an awareness of ways common strangers treated each other well enough while thinking that nobody was taking note. The second image was from

a dream that preceded this one that I am now writing about. In this first dream I was sitting enviously while watching someone I know act as a healer to others.

Through the printing of some meaning, we can watch variations in understanding grow.

In addition to being intimately engaged in printing the words, the ideas and the troubles of communities that are directly engaged in meaningful political struggle, it happens that words and images, like time, settle down in surprising places and in surprising ways. Common people do not have the words and time to articulate things like the philosophers, artists or presidents, though like everyone else their affinities and tendencies are informed by the stuff that settles around them. I'm in no position to act on this knowledge at any large scale, but I do think its meaningful to consider and reproduce the thoughts of my group of friends and colleagues.



Collaged photos from a magazine I grabbed off the table of the commuter train, from the pages of the train-line's own magazine. This issue had a multiple-covered version of the German National Soccer team. Andean Pan-pipes can only be played in the double, with two players each with a slightly different instrument. These pipes should only be played in the dry season.

Richard Lee / Booklyn

Zine making has long been defined as a democratic and D.I.Y. endeavor, a craft that requires little to no formal artistic training. Free form and purely imaginative, zines and zine creators create a shifting forum where a variety of issues can be discussed, built upon, and even recreated. New York City has a rich supply of artists schooled in visual storytelling, design, and printing that view zines as a method to experiment with their craft without commercial barriers and creative limits.

For the last six years of my life and a large portion of my twenties, I've been a zine curator for Booklyn Inc., an artist alliance in Brooklyn that represent artists that create works on paper. Our mission is to uplift and give credence to those artist that create, materialize, and reside within the fringes of New York's established art world. These are some of the observations I have noticed during my times in the trenches.

A city of stories, New York has a tradition of long running per-zines spearheaded by innovative creators and sustained through the years. These zines serve as an anthropological trove for a city that is so often dominated by transients and the associated effects of gentrification. Some immediate examples that come to mind are The East Village Inky by Ayun Halliday, which deals with motherhood and family life. Following the D.I.Y. ethos, Ayun hand writes and photocopies her zines. Bill Roundy's Bar Scrawl is a light hearted zine created by a cartoonist's exploration of the New York City (mostly Brooklyn's) various drinking spots. Bill's 'bartoonist' adventures have taken him to an impressive array of bars (close to two hundred), a handful of which have closed since he started the endeavor in the early 2010s. The finest example that comes to mind is the 'Peops' series by Lower East Side squatter, now indie comic luminary Fly. Each page of Peops focuses on an individual that Fly has met during her travels or through her extensive network of international friends. She draws a figure of each subject and hand letters her subject's interview oral history behind the portrait. The content for these oral histories will be varied ranging from how the two first met to a biographical anecdote, making for a intuitive ensemble of portrait and text.

While New York City's zine scene has been long identified as a vehicle for underground histories, the city has also become a wellspring for zines and ephemera dealing with POC identified creators across spectrums and generations. This observation has become reality of late through a revitalization of the post 2016 election culture wars. The old culture war, which has traditionally has been defined by the left/right binary has now been supplanted by the emergence of POC and LGBTQIA groups that seek to create their own legacies and histories through creating not collecting their own printed matter. Right now, New York City's and New Jersey's latinx identified have formed a formidable zine presence setting up their own events and running distros that sell and represent other POC zine creators. Example of such art collectives that come to mind are The Bettys (Jersey City) and the The Mujeristas (New York). Another collective that can be associated with this category is Deadass Tho

NYC which is a Bronx based POC artist collective that releases zines about life in the Boogie Down. While mostly visual, Deadass' zines are a curated collection of real life stories brought together with text, photographs, and other print based imagery.

Another observation about zines in New York City is that they are unique material occurrence and how their relationship to space can be understood as a step in a cycle. The in between spaces that allow zines to thrive are quickly disappearing due to surveillance pressures and rising rents. Because of their decentralized nature, zines have an interesting relationship with the city's DIY spaces. First off, DIY in New York City is such an unstable endeavor that people who manage these spaces often host music as their main economic foundation. Alternative zine collections are especially becoming a rarity due to the city's hyper-commodification of real estate. Zine collections or zine libraries (not zines in academic libraries or bookstores) are among one of the first casualties when a DIY space shuts down or has to relocate. One example of such a casualty that I've been following with much interest is the relocation of the ABC No Rio Zine Library in 2017. Although ABC No Rio closed to renovate in 2016, its massive zine library was meticulously transferred box by box across the street to the the renowned cultural space and gallery, the Clemente Soto Velez Center.

While not a final observation, this paragraph speaks to the unique properties of zines as ephemeral art form. Zines related events are on the rise, not only in the New York City but across the world. This is because zines are again becoming more accessible than ever before and in turn the form is becoming absorbed by larger art events. First off, the skills and labor spent behind zine creating such as collating, digital collaging, and printing are becoming more technology based and in turn expedited. Secondly, the internet, especially Instagram serves as a massive forum for solo zine creators, zine collections, and art collectives to communicate and collaborate with efficiency and gravitas. Zines, despite having their roots in cut and paste and bricolage have entered mainstream educational curriculum introducing the art form to a younger and more passionate audience. In New York City large-scale zine only events, such as the defunct Brooklyn Zine Fest require massive amounts of logistics and overhead to pull off. Instead organizers focus on medium to small size zine events, many of which are annual or occur on a seasonal basis: Pete's Mini-Zine Fest, Silent Barn's Paper Jam & Paper Jazz. New York City zines traditionally are a stepping stone that visual artists use to experiment on their craft. Event organizers recognize this and adopt a flexible attitude, also accepting artist book creators, illustrators, and independent cartoonists into their events.

New York City's zine scene is a rich environment that allows both artists and amateurs to express themselves and become part of a large story building and sharing community. From Peops' anecdotes about squatting in the Lower East Side, to Deadass Tho's pages about ordering chopped cheese, New York City's zines are collections of underground dialogues that define the city's history and empower its residents and creators.

Press Press

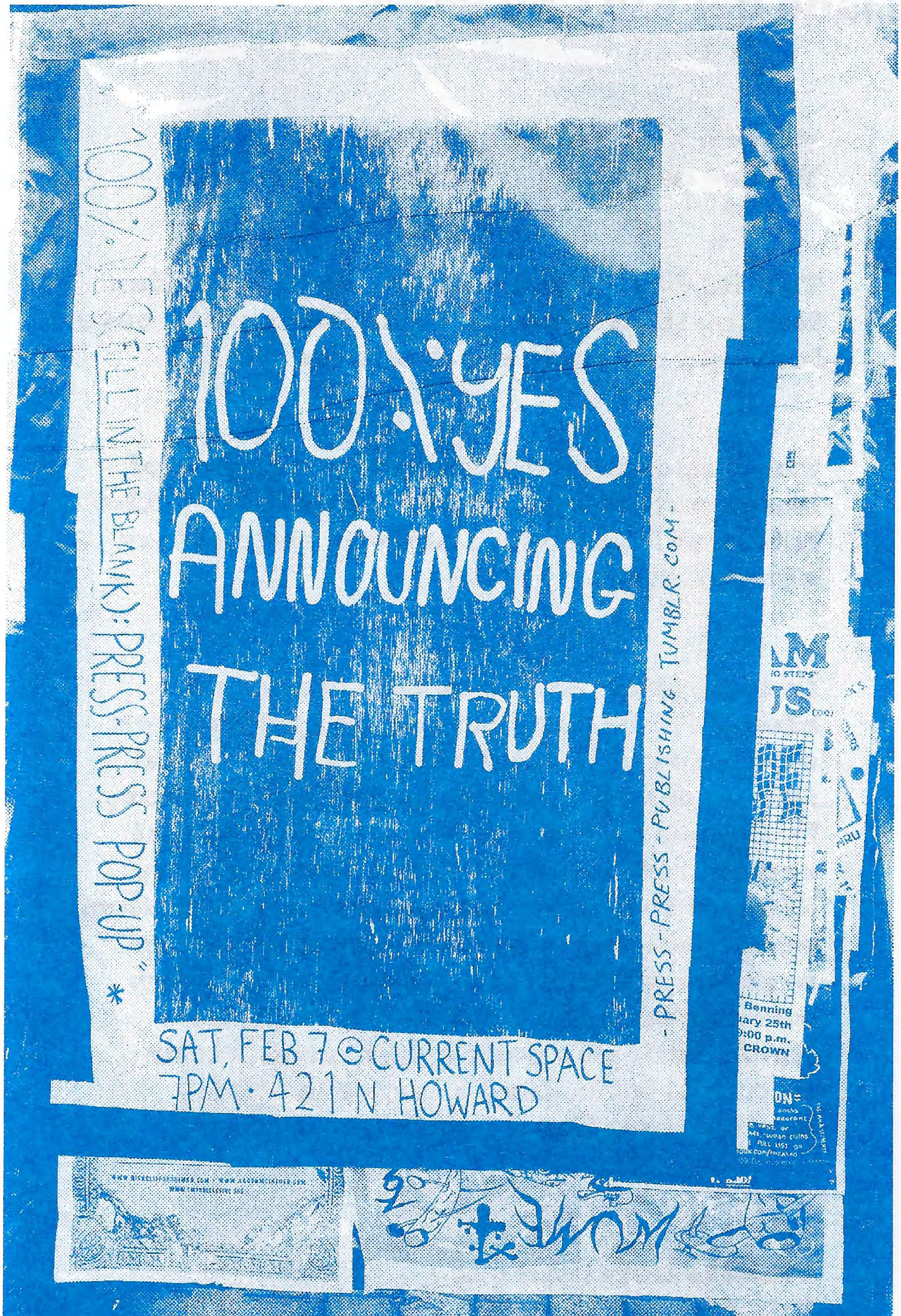
Coalition-Building as Publication: Press Press's Collaborative Approach

In 2014, my collaborators and I started a partnership with Baltimore City Community College Refugee Youth Project, an organization that hosts afterschool programming for youth across Baltimore city. Through this partnership, we started hosting writing, art, and publishing workshops in a completely immigrant and refugee only space, where everyone in the room was a second language English speaker. When we first started to publish the work of our collaborators, we realized we needed to give our initiative a name, and so, Press Press was born. Since then, Press Press has broadened its activities beyond youth programming. However, our youth workshops have continued to be a large thread of our practice as we carry the principles the program was initiated with throughout all of our work: embrace difference, not just similarity; commit to ongoing and open-ended dialogue; support the emergence of collaborative projects; and emphasize the importance of personal life experience.

Today, Press Press's publishing practice is organized around two key goals; first, to shift and deepen the understanding of voices, identities, and narratives that have been suppressed or misrepresented by the mainstream, so far focusing on immigration and race in the United States; and second, to build networks of relationships through publishing practices centered on self-representation and gathering. Through an understanding of publishing as the act of gathering a public, Press Press's streams of work include public cultural programming, an open-access publishing studio that's based on an Exchange Economy, youth publishing workshops, and the ongoing production of print and digital publications. Through our work, we are pushing for a culture that values and learns from the lives, minds, and experiences of communities whose voices have historically been suppressed or misrepresented by the mainstream, while calling on our society at large to rethink the ways we interact with others in the world.

One of the most important aspects of our work is the collaborative approach to publishing we practice. We are able to facilitate meaningful collaborative workshops, conversations, and manifestos because of our ability to work reflexively, reacting to our immediate context and collaboratively molding the various structures and forms that our projects take around the people who are involved. We always prioritize process over product, as we value the relationships that form between us as collaborators as a central part of our work. By acting as a model for a tender, non-hierarchical collaborative process, Press Press serves as a utopian alternative to the 'oppressive systems and spaces that overwhelmingly structure our current reality. We invite you to participate in our efforts by joining us for an event at our studio, participating in one of our ongoing projects, or by reaching out to say hello!

Kimi Hanauer
Founding Editor, Press Press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THE TRUTH
SAT, FEB 7 @ CURRENT SPACE
7PM · 421 N HOWARD
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Llano del Rio Collective

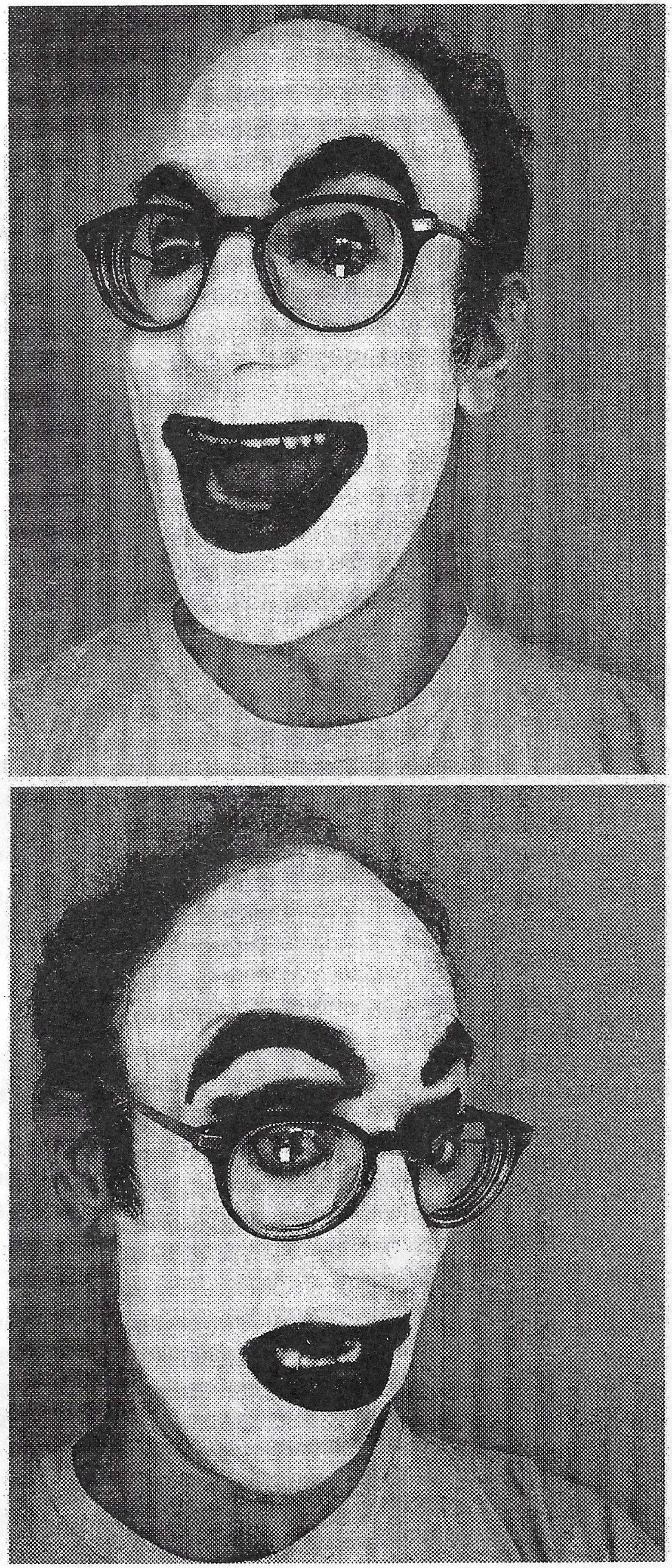
**We Are The Underground /
Where Are The Undergrounds?**

The Internet creates new opportunities for dissident voices / The Internet creates less opportunity for dissident voices.

The Underground is a vibrant space of ideas and action in the digital age / The Internet flattens all activity regardless of medium.

In exception to the spectacle there's always space for counter-organization and power / Society isn't conditioned for communications of the 21st century. Publication is a medium fitting social organization of 19th and 20th century. Effective models for social-organization accompanying contemporary medias aren't available yet. Communications has superseded social-organization itself. Independant communications as a tool for social-change is an ineffective, if not quaint, tool.

**Print is not dead yet /
Print is not dead yet.**



BECAUSE OUR PRESS IS BRAND-NEW, WE CREATE AS WE REFLECT.

(But really, who doesn't?)

We, Erin and Julie, a social worker and a graphic designer, came together around a problem that Erin had been wrestling with for several years. It goes something like this: people in the West involved in caregiving and justice-seeking sometimes feel overwhelmed and alienated by narrow *(i.e. neoliberal)* framings wherein good work is about problem-solving,

"achievement gap"
"obesity prevention"[1]
"early intervention"

FULL STOP.

The problem-solving impulse is worrisome because it replaces generosity with austerity and efficiency. It erases lived experience. It crowds out possibilities for unplanned outcomes that emerge from dialogue. It often privileges ideas of progress[2] that hurt people and planet.

(We, on the other hand, long to privilege love and care!)[3]

The good news is that there are now many opportunities to explore and expose the ways that racism, ableism, heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism turn people into problems and injustices into symptoms. In this vein, activists and academics and artists do marvelous work.

But that work can feel removed from the day-to-day actions[4] people perform as they provide care, seek justice, and build community.

That's why we formed Thick Press, and that's where artist publishing comes in.

(For the record, we do not really identify as artist publishers—just people who ground our book-making practice in art and design.)

Grounding our work in art and design makes us feel less constrained by prevailing notions of what warrants publication, and what doesn't. We don't feel pressure to make lots of money, reach lots of people, or diagnose and treat problems

(except for the problem of the problem obsession!).

The less we worry about marketability and productivity, the more space we have to take on meaningful projects for their own sake. We butt up against the world we live in[5], but this becomes part of the practice—and the books we make become artifacts of a loving, process-driven ethos.

Joyful Tender Helpless Defeated Rageful Cheerful Sympathetic Powerless Bored Outraged Content Adored Rejected Hostile Proud Fond Distrustful Disillusioned Bitter Satisfied Receptive Suspicious Inferior Grateful Excited Interested Cautious Confused Scornful Amused

(Content matters, but not as much as we thought at the get-go.)

We have a hunch *(magical thinking?)* that great power lies in the materiality of books. Don't you agree that books are spaces of deep engagement, poised to inspire dialogue and introspection? That's why we feel hopeful that marvelous books can nourish folks who feel alienated or overwhelmed by the problem-solving ethos.

(Remember, we long to privilege love and care!)[6]

Footnotes:

1— J: My daughter asked me this morning why her tummy is fat and why her big sister is thin. She is five. Her sister is seven.

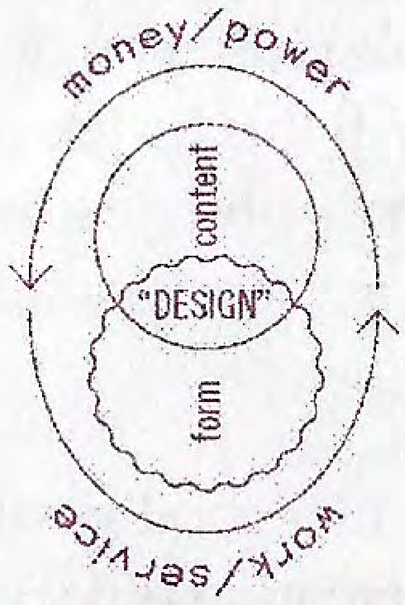
E: "Obesity prevention" stigmatizes fat people and perpetuates power structures that are helpful to a few, harmful to many. Are we really so sure it's a problem to be fat? Who says so?

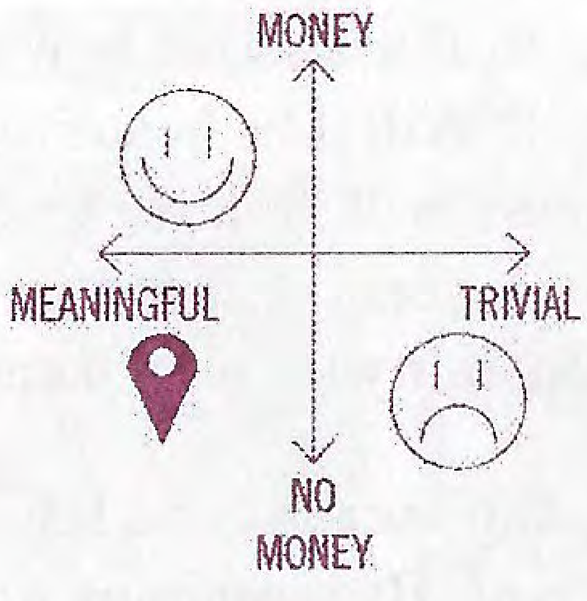
2— The march of civilization making its mark: can we engineer the perfect cityscape? the perfect crop? the optimally developing child?

3—

4— November 6, 2017
This is how a Senior Wellness Center hallway looks this time of year.

5— Our real world of graphic design services in 3 diagrams





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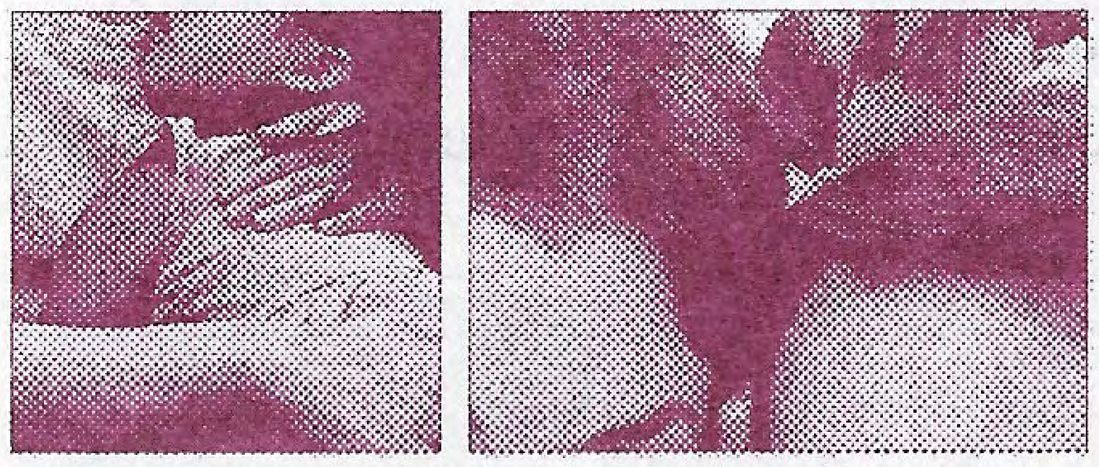

Alex Arzt

The potential for problem solving in artist publishing comes from its alacrity for collaboration and exchange. Printed publications remain powerful carriers of ideas, and offer access to artists' work beyond the time and space restricted gallery/museum presentation/sales model.

The two publishing projects I am currently involved with are Whiz World, a collaborative quarterly publication by women artists who write from a speculative magical feminist perspective, and The Positions and Situations Project, a series of books of letter correspondences and interviews with back-to-the-landers from the 1970s. Based on my experiences creating these publications, both collaboratively and on my own, I considered two questions that address how artist publishers can make both their personal practices and publications sustainable over time.

In what ways can this practice become invigorating instead of draining?

When embarking on a project with a deadline for an opening or a release, I typically work nearly every waking minute for a few weeks up until the deadline. It takes a toll on my body, and it bears the question–how can this process be energizing rather than depleting? There are practical ways to approach this problem: make realistic timelines, stick to a budget, get enough sleep, stretch, reward yourself. But the essential thing is to identify the project's motivating force, the fuel that propels it forward. Shortly after an exhausting two weeks making the first book for Positions and Situations, my two friends and I created Whiz World. Creating our first two issues was a wholly collaborative venture. The work was distributed among the three of us, and we made all the decisions together, yet it was still an arduous process. We learned that collaboration, friendships, and mutual idea exchange and development are what put the joy in Whiz World. Joy is naturally energizing and life affirming, a "whiz elixir," if you will. It has become one of the forces that gives us the energy to keep Whiz World going and growing.

How can we produce work that resists becoming future trash?[1]

An artist publisher must ask themselves: Am I making future trash? Where is this object going to live and for how long? Will it last? Will it be meaningful enough to resist the landfill? Will it be beautiful enough to remain on the shelf? Will this be the sort of object someone will want to keep when they move apartments? Will libraries, collectors, or archives deem it necessary for their collections? In this way, artist publishers can create sustainability through meaning.

Resisting burnout and future trash puts artists and their work in a good position to solve problems. By sustaining a publishing practice over time and creating objects that persist with meaning as their inherent value, artist publishers can continue to create, contribute to, and maintain the radically open, imaginative, accessible, and inclusive community that makes up artist publishing.

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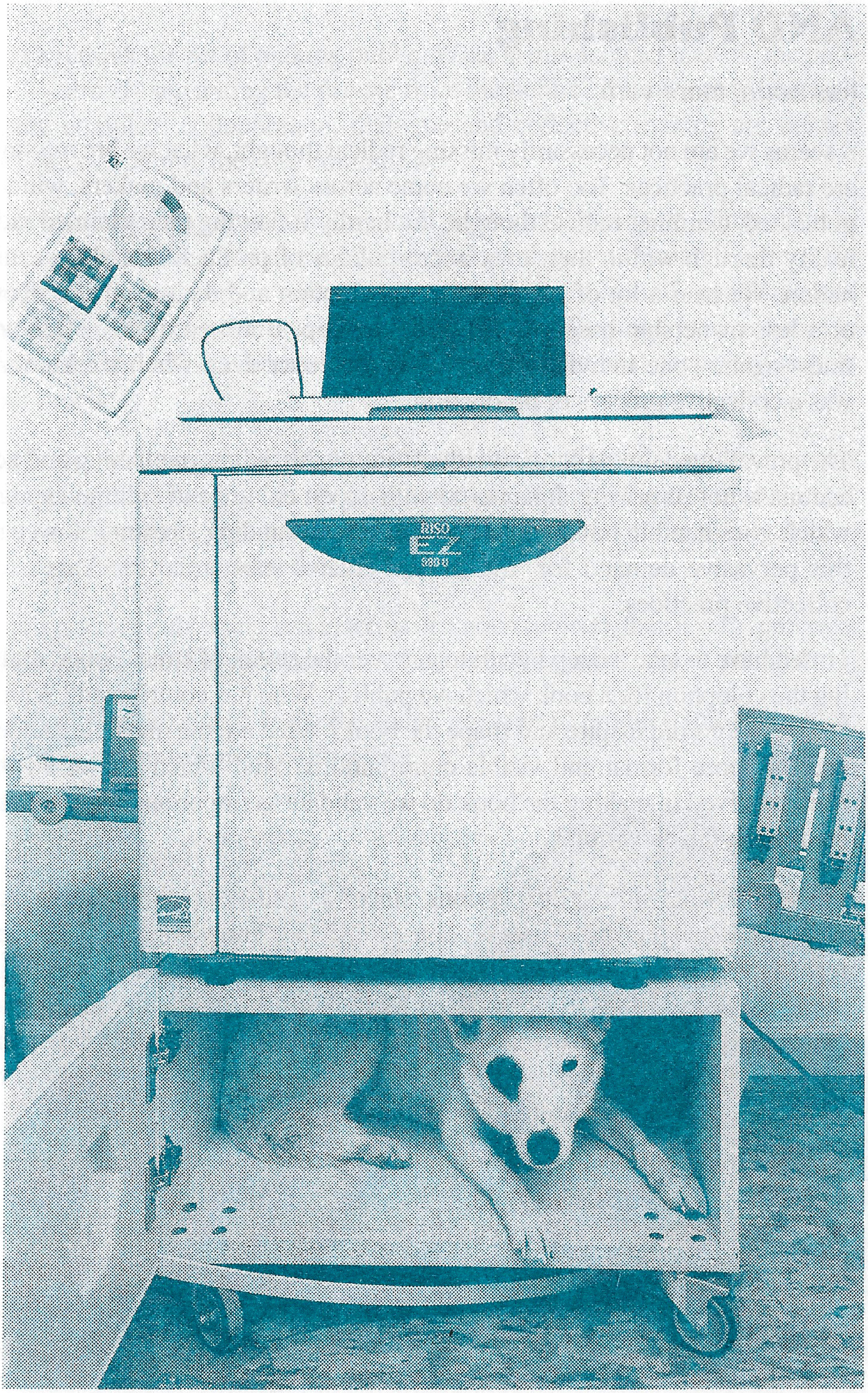
1 I first heard the term "future trash" from David Bermier, an elementary school teacher in Richmond, Virginia, when referring to objects made for children that are ultimately intended for the landfill.



AND Publishing

less *noun*, more *verb*

It seems we are not necessarily missing radical thought, what we are missing are radical practices. Too often we come across writers and makers, widely published, claiming radical thought, but hardly following their claimed radicality through within their own micro-politics of production and dissemination. We hear a lot of talk about co-production and dialogical practices, or a less ownership-based model of authorship. But then, rather often we find—again—one individual's name on the cover even when we know it was a collective process of production.

The prevailing demand for (individual) authorship in art, publishing and academia is not surprising. It has to do with expert culture and cultural capital, which goes hand in hand with sales figures and funding streams. However, this pervasive demand for 'the author' creates substantial blockages for collective practices.

I often have to take a deep breath to get over the streak of stress, when drafting the colophon for a book which we publish. Who has contributed? Which conversations did inspire and shape the book? What are the invisible, hidden and the more formal and visible contributions? And which one of all the roles involved in making the book do we validate as important enough to be credited in the colophon?

We are having similar discussions since second-wave feminism, when women campaigned in 'wages for housework' to acknowledge domestic and reproductive labour, which is mostly hidden, un-authored, unregistered and unpaid. But the problem seems even more poignant today: the individualised, entrepreneurial self is supposed to extract cultural capital from every move, be it ever so small, in order to survive. Every tiny step needs to be authored, framed, accounted for: this is called 'professionalisation'.

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What independent publishers can do is creating unprofessional, yet plausible economies, alliances and systems of support and friendship. For example collective practices such as AND form temporary alliances that never fit together smoothly. This way of working and knowledge sharing helps to resist the demand for individualisation and competition.

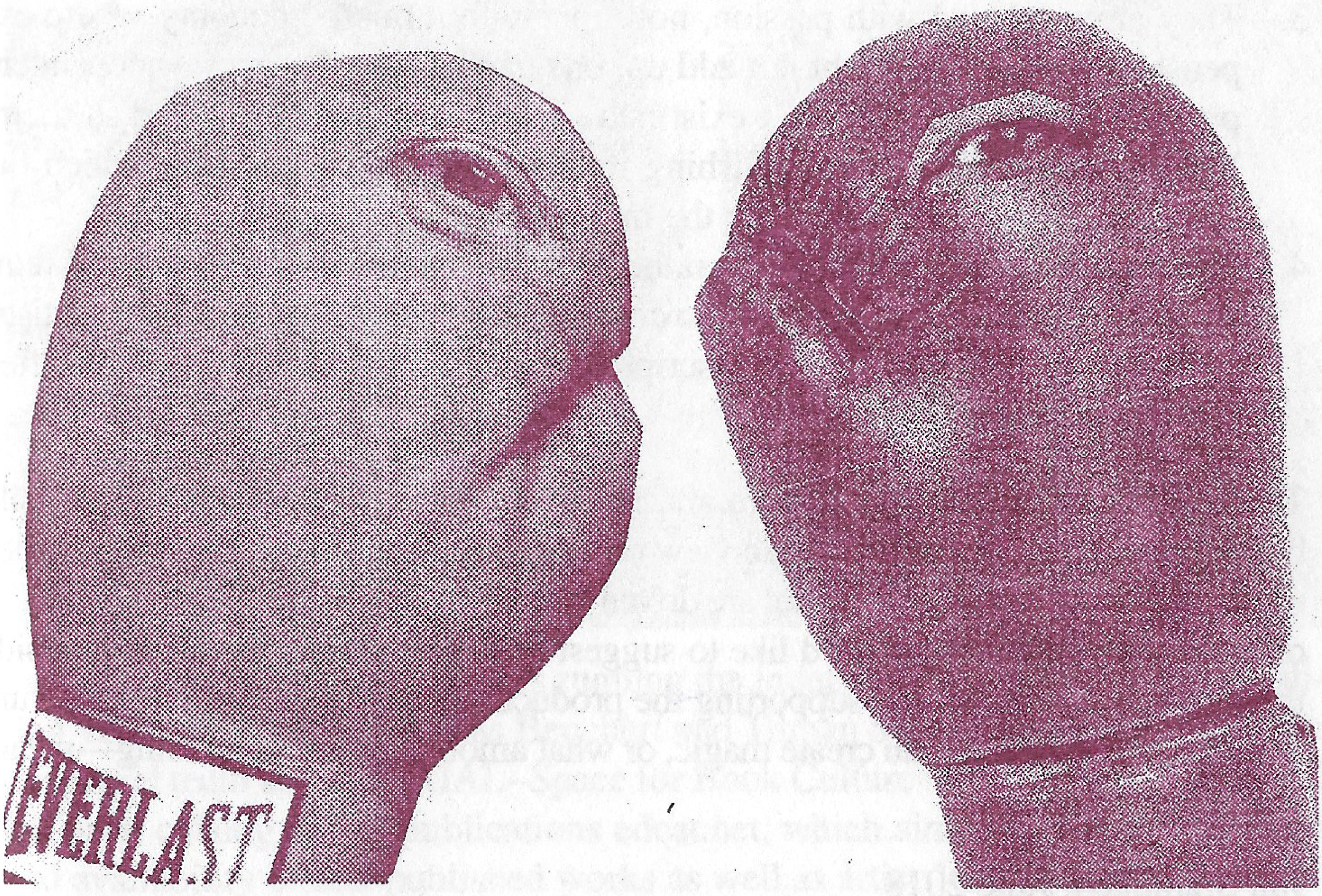
Let's rethink the act of making public. What is this abstract idea of 'the public'—already separating the private from the public? It turns out to be much more complex: collaboration, dialogue and collective making are neither private nor public: they are communal.

Let's not shy away from working with public institutions. It is important to strengthen public institutions in a time when they get dismantled from the right. Let's be generous with what we have learned by self-organising and help them to recognise and analyse their limits. They need us, in order to re-invent and reform themselves. We need their financial support to sustain our practices.

Let's not get cynical, but think of the struggles and contradictions in terms of boxing training. It is all about negotiation, technique and stamina, anger and transgression, care and support. Let's take the risk to be vulnerable, to compromise, to accommodate.

Let's practice publishing less in terms of a noun (object), than a verb (process). That means 'working politically' instead of making work 'about politics'.

Let's cut up boxes and resist the social pressure to produce smooth brands. We don't want to have a unified face.



Jan Steinbach
Edition Taube, MATERIAL

Four propositions for why we need independent publishing to fight the Singularity

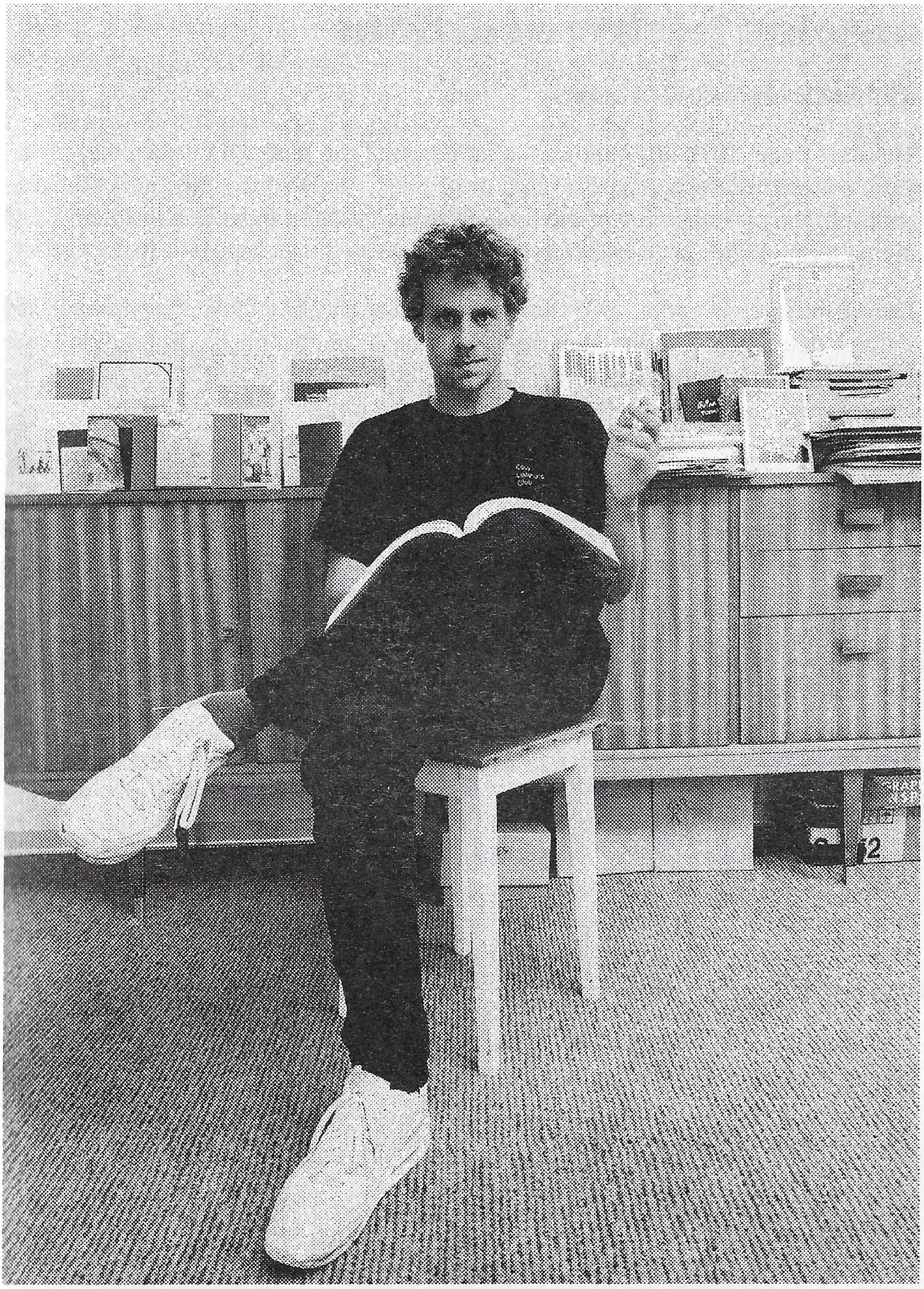
With the rise of interconnected mobile devices, mainstream media (which today chiefly consists of digital services and mobile applications) has gained the power to distribute tailored content to individuals and has thereby already hypnotized a large part of society by "reshaping and restructuring patterns of social interdependence and every aspect of our personal life." (McLuhan)

Independent publishing and artists' publications contradict current trends in mainstream media:

1. They are slow, not fast. We can neither publish nor consume books at the same frequency as we can interconnected digital media. The slow medium can be a weapon against the saturation of virtual interactions, against algorithmic manipulation, and against corporate control in the social sphere. Taking it slow, taking some time to produce a publication rather than posting material in a rush, produces deeper content and creates more conscious moments of reflection.
2. They tend to be physical, not virtual. Printed matter is invulnerable against later manipulation, censoring or blackouts. Its use can not be perfectly tracked and analyzed. Printed matter can move freely in space, cross borders, and spread to an audience influenced half by personal connections and relations, half by chance.
3. They are produced with passion, not money. In a micro-economy where expenses and earnings might not add up, one can be sure that most independent publishing products wouldn't exist had someone not put their heart in them. It is important to sustain publishing infrastructures and spaces in which the selection is not based on getting the most attention.
4. Artists' publications can activate rather than placate us. By exploring and reinventing the medium, by refusing to communicate purposefully or at all, artists' publications can challenge our scripted perceptions and routines, and often expand our view on the world.

These four propositions might seem anachronistic, or even naive, and might easily be challenged by a more optimistic view on so-called progress in technology. They might also seem technophobic, but are driven more by a love for print than a rejection of technology. All the same, I'd like to suggest that creating and publishing outside the mainstream media, and supporting the production and circulation of art and unconventional thoughts, can create magic, or what amounts to the same thing—meaningful experiences.

Jan Steinbach, June 2018



Jan Steinbach has founded and is running the independent publishing house Edition Taube together with Jonas Beuchert and Tilman Schlevogt, and is part of the curatorial team at MATERIAL–Space for Book Culture in Zurich. He has started the open catalog for art publications edcat.net, which aims to augment visibility and availability of self-published works as well as artists' publications.

ARTZINES 1977-2017 (Abstract)

The date frame 1977-2017 shows the influence of the punk DIY subculture on today's self-publishing boom. Mirroring these two eras is to draw attention to the mirror itself, the pivotal period of the turn of century and the apparition of Internet and digital technologies in almost everyone's life around the globe.

During the Internet boom, 1995-2005 zines almost disappeared, as everyone seemed to think that this new technology would replace all printed media. But it didn't take long until people realised that even if the World Wide Web was extremely useful for a lot of things, a lot of people stayed committed to printed matter.

In the zine world, the apparition of Internet marks a great transformation, as many zine-makers shifted to webzines in the late 1990s. Indeed, as zines primary function was to circulate information and to create connections in a network of like-minded individuals, Internet took over this function almost instantly and made the sharing that was part of zinesters' lives a part of everyone's life. Thanks to the idealism of the creators of the World Wide Web, the DIY voice expressed in zines was now accessible to everyone through emails, blogs and personal webpages. But Internet didn't stay this new anarchist frontier and it didn't take long until corporations took over this idealism for themselves, and created the so-called social media to propose a great exchange of ideas within their controlled pens. That's when zines reappeared!

When people realised that social media would not necessarily offer the same liberty, as they would have on paper, they turned back to the good old printed page. Freed from the information and networking function that was now taken care of by digital technologies, the zines produced since then can focus on more visual aspects, and on creating beautiful printed objects. That's what we call art zines.

As Annette Gilbert demonstrates in Publishing as Artistic Practice (2015), since the last century, the attention shifted from the medium towards the practice. Unlike in the 20th century artists' books, there are no masterpieces in zines. They are artists who build a long term publishing practice and whose sensibility and personality is not necessarily accessible through one auratic masterpiece, but in the accumulation of numerous published works.

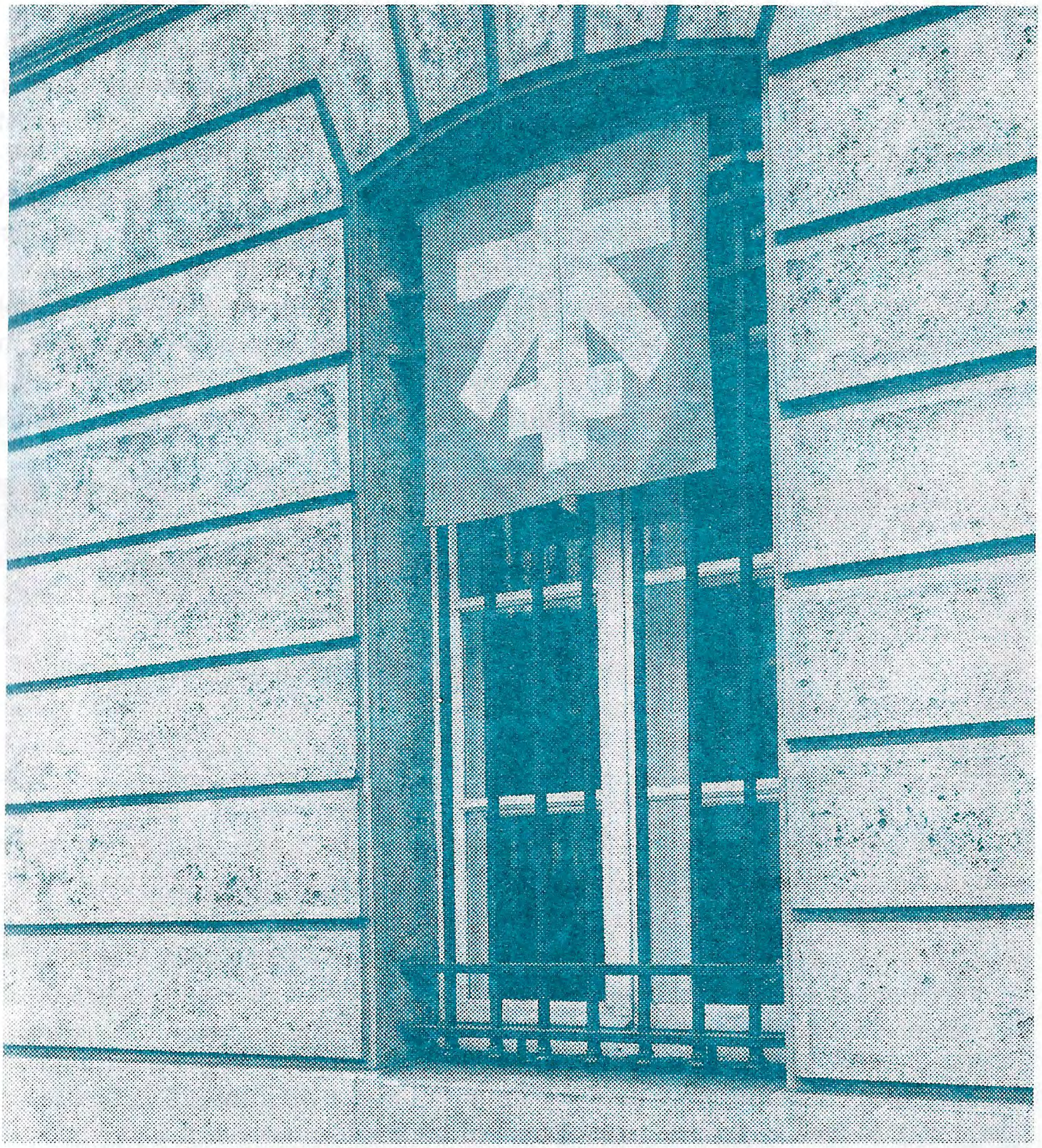
The recent paradigm shift in artists' publications is therefore the consequence of multiple technological breakthroughs: desktop publishing, Internet, social media, print on demand, digital photography, cell phones, etc. A lot of zines made by people born in the new century propose a reflection on the place that technology took in our life, because that feeling is hard to express through technology itself.

In this context the explosion of book fairs and zine fests reshaped what people usually expect from artists' publications. Basically, young people are fed up with staring at screens all day long and prefer to spend their weekends sharing over printed material rather than

staying at home waiting for another like. The explosion of the number of book fairs shows the continuing interest that people—often really young—show for the book object and the sharing possibilities that it offers. It also shows the incredible empowerment that printed media offers to new generations as there are more new publishing projects created each day.

Coming from this rich tradition, the recent boom in self-publishing has very deep roots in the tradition of freedom of expression, and it is currently coupled with an unruly youth energy.

Zines are here to stay!



As an artist publisher, it didn't make sense to me to have a studio. That is why I created 本 \hon\ books a project space for artists' publications, as a way to go back local after circling the book fairs for a few years. www.hon-bookstore.com

Simon Worthington
Hybrid Publishing Group / Mute

The Busiest Libraries Ever: Collaborative Libraries and Book Liberation

Work on making collaborative libraries got into action in the summer of 2015 when the Hybrid Publishing Group (HPG) and #bookcamping got together in Madrid to work on a software sprint to make an online book library. HPG had formed as a research collective from Mute's publishing work, and #bookcamping was an online library that came out of the 15-M Movement—the Spanish anti-austerity movement.

HPG had a proposal for #bookcamping and for our hosts Medialab Prado a technology space in Madrid. Loraine Furter of HPG had made a software program using Zotero, a FOSS bibliography manager, to make web pages of reading lists that could be updated by multiple people in real-time. The proposal was like this. For #bookcamping the real-time web libraries could be used for exploring subject collections together, what #bookcamping later termed #zoomateca after the concept film *Power of Ten* by Eames architects from 1977. With our hosts Medialab Prado the pitch was for collaborative libraries was a way for the hundreds of people who visited their community tech workshops to share helpful pointers with the outside world and one another. The work with Zotero continues and you can make a collaborative library of your own with the instructions at the end of the text below.

Earlier in spring 2015, HPG had published the *Manifesto for Book Liberation*, a pamphlet covering the structural economics and technical issues, in a European context, that contribute to stopping books from being free-to-use in digital and paper forms. In academia there is the Open Access movement to make publications free, and for books in general there are online shadow libraries. The very last thing that should be happening is that people should be punished for reading, but this is what is happening. The legitimacy of knowledge institutions has to be put into serious question when people en masse are forced to be criminalized, with the violence of the state used against them to defend property, because they want to read, or help circulate reading.

As well as this crisis of publishing the manifesto was also addressing the freeing up of the act of publishing and reading. As an example, books are used in very different ways, sometimes to read a few pages, at other times to read one book for hundreds of hours—again, and again. With such different uses, why does the reader need to be the one who pays the same unit price, especially when digital books can be recombined?

This is where the manifesto gave rise to the collaborative library software proect, as a way to create: pointers to sections of books, to books in places you could go and pick them up—AKA public libraries—or where book play lists could be speedily shared. The next step will be to connect the collaborative library to library space proper: public libraries, research libraries, and book spaces. Libraries

are already places where the point-of-payment has been moved away from the reader, and a little more busying up by the readers sharing their reading-play-lists would shake things up. Think of it, telling people what they like in a library; that's the collective library.

Collaborative-Libraries: Zotero Workshop - Building a Library and Reading Room. 2015. Hybrid Publishing Group, Furter, Worthington et al., 2017. https://github.com/consortium/Collaborative-Libraries

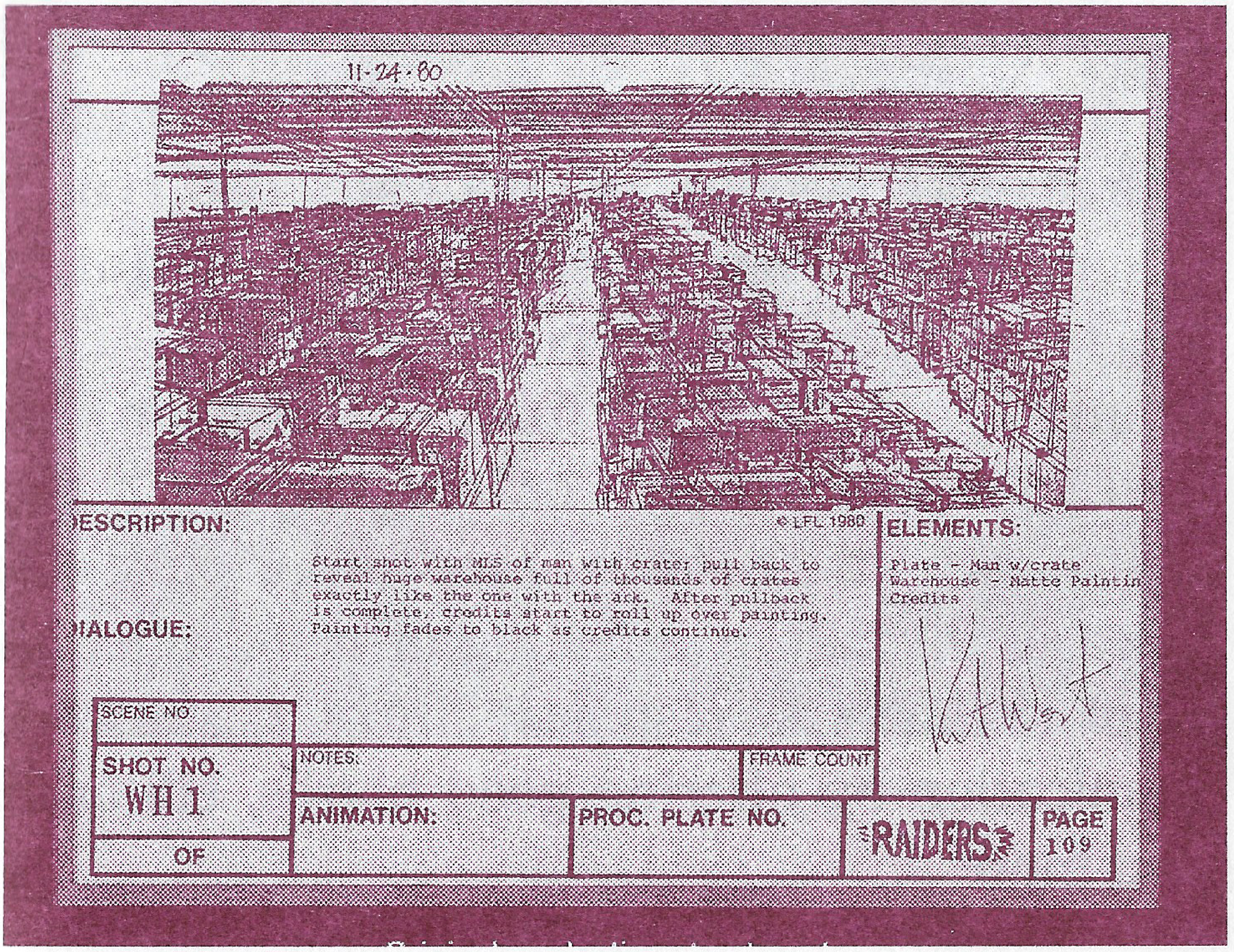
Eames. *Powers of Ten*, 1977. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fKBhvDjuy0

Instructions: Collaborative-Library-Prototype. 2018. Reprint, Technische Informationsbibliothek (TIB), 2018. https://github.com/TIBHannover/collaborative-library-prototype

Worthington, Simon. *Book to the Future - A Book Liberation Manifesto*. London: OpenMute Press, 2015. https://research.consortium.io/docs/book_liberation_manifesto/Book_Liberation_Manifesto.html.

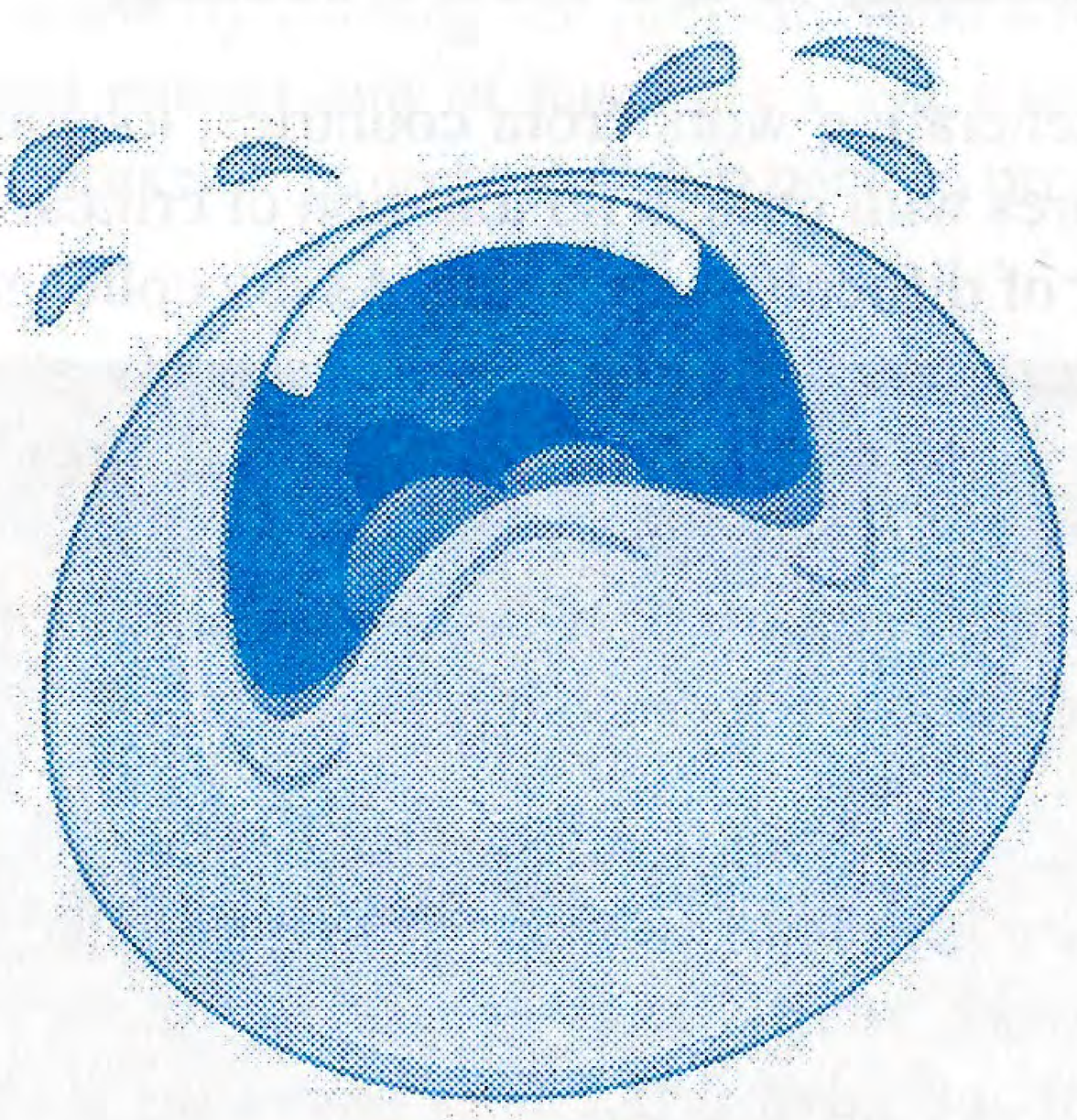
Simon Worthington, Hybrid Publishing Group/Mute, @mrchristian99.

Hannover, June 2018



Freek Lomme / Onomatopee

There is much rhetoric everywhere. Rhetoric sells and offers gospels to hold on to. Everyone knows the rhetoric of punk, but only an intellectual few of them open up dialogues beyond their beloved safe haven of puke and hate. Independence can easily be trapped in self-indulgence, especially now we live our lives along the likes of our bubbles. We should avoid bubbles and go beyond. Independent publishing, when left somewhere in a place that is still public, can spark something more. I loved reading Nazi zines I once found in a train. I love zapping cable-TV and looking at stuff that sickens me. The enemy spans our biggest market, offers the biggest source of knowledge. Big data are conservative in nature. Analogue dissent offers opportunity. Please advocate whatever you hate, please ban promotion of your likes from appearing in your feed. Get fucked up in order to live truly. Let that be why we turn to zines full of puke and diseases instead of a feeling of being rejected. Explore that; take responsibility over your communication by offering good blurbs, editorials and more.



Dag
kunstdemocraat

Clara Balaguer / Hardworking Goodlooking

Artist publishers generating work from countries, locations, contexts, communities, and cultures with little to no tradition of critical cultural production have a different set of difficulties to tackle. As my colleague Kristian Henson once said in an interview (the quote was erroneously attributed to me and I paraphrase it here), in these contexts, any act of publishing is revolutionary. The problem we face—practicing in a vacuum of interest—is at once the preface to our relevance. Almost everything we dare/risk to publish is worthy of attention and preservation because it is born endangered.

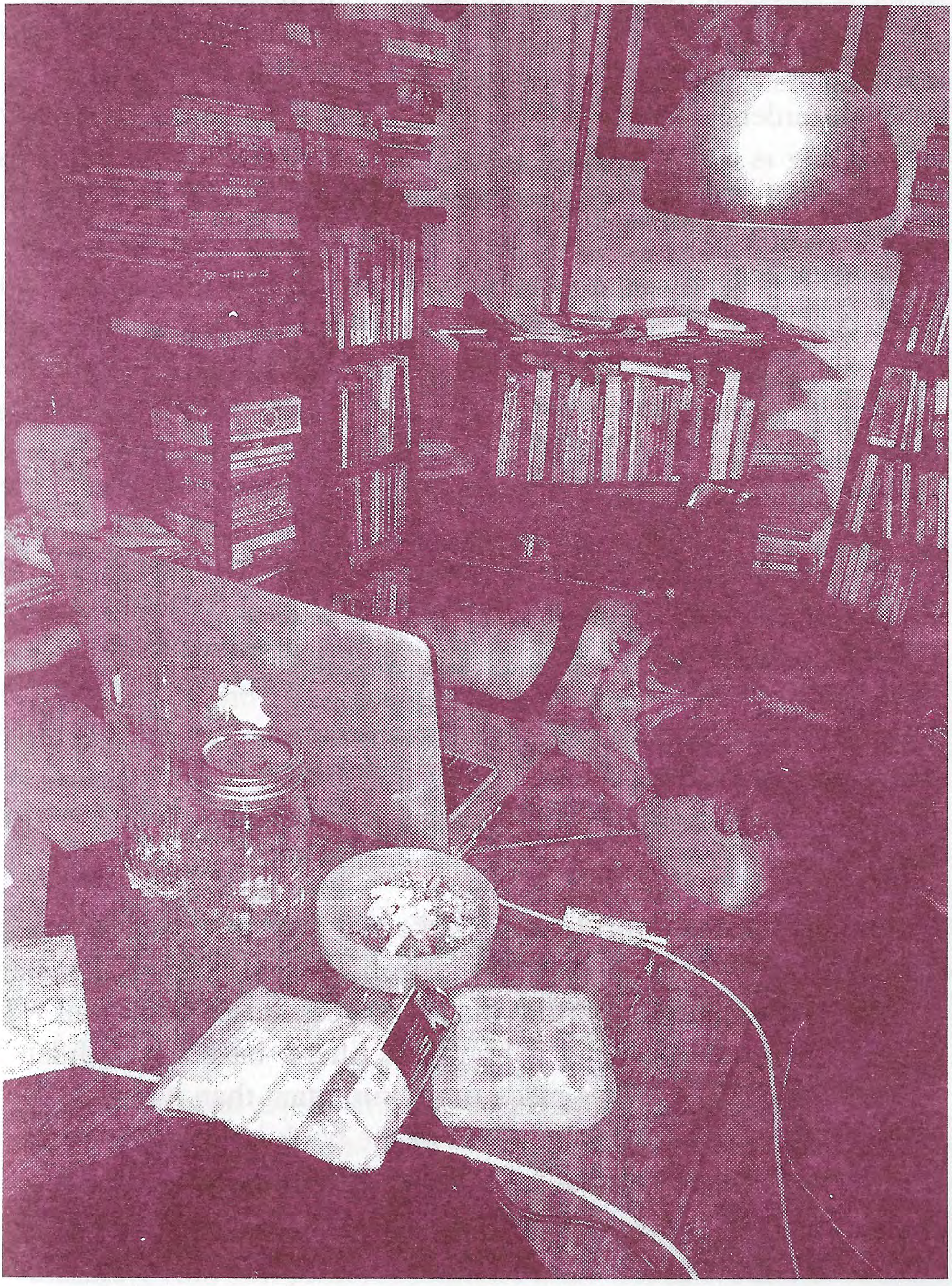
I'm unsure of what social, political, environmental problems an artist publication can solve on its own. I would say none, which is why collaborative efforts that land, work, reach, evolve outside of the art audience are vital. Even with this collaborative process in place: an act that sits inside the framework of the elite cultural market, even one that critiques or resists it, is necessarily part of the capitalist paradigm that begets the ills we are (supposedly, in the best of cases) trying to dismantle. Many publications that emerge from the art context are preaching to the choir, circulating within privileged environments wherein people have the leisure time or baseline theoretical literacy that allows them to consume these objects without feeling overwhelmed, alienated, or even discriminated against by the language these publications favor. The trickle-down argument is a comforting thought—as long as critical works are produced and visible, their contributions to cultural capital will trickle down to underserved places where change is most urgent—but it doesn't hold. Nothing can trickle out of a hermetic intellectual space, no matter how socially relevant or valuable the content may be.

How to overcome the paralysis of your own lack of consequence and agency, as a publisher of (socially engaged) cultural content? On the one hand, a slowing down, a refusal to further populate what is already bursting at the seams, is a romantic disobedience. On the other hand, this refusal means you run the risk of furthering voicelessness, invisibility, co-optation, and extermination.

At this point, after nine years of social practice and five years of self-publishing in the Philippines, I haven't a straight answer. I'm sorry. I only have more questions and often contradict myself in the same breath.

Even so, we persist. We take the time to publish, feverishly but in small amounts. A thousand issues for a first edition of a niche artist publication?

What for? Most of these editions waste away, eating space, feeding mites, eroding self-esteem. At the very least, we could perhaps address the problem of dwindling life-space by curbing the pressure (and appetite) to produce in surplus for no good reason, out of narcissism, excessive optimism, or just because that's the supposed "minimum" you need to produce.



Nina Prader / Lady Liberty Press

Tending

Written June 1. 2018, Risofest, Paris

1. Intention: I deeply appreciate the intimacy, privacy and humble gesture inherent in the materiality and content of a diamond in the rough zine. They are like honest wildflowers, the community a botanical garden. I hold onto the belief with a clenched fist that art publishing is a tool, technology and a method to blueprint utopias, encrypt and encode intimate secrets, political dissent or notions of freedom. A zone to plant seeds for autonomous mental spaces. Artist publishers—myself included—are arm-chair ideologues or anarchist-activists. I am not sure art publishers can end wars, though I certainly started making zines and artist books because I thought they were a peaceful megaphone; a material, viral message; a loophole in the profit-oriented art market. They could attempt to draw up a borderless peace treaty.

2. At Stake: I think it is necessary to tend to safe-spaces like the un-competitive not-for-profit book arts and zine communities that continue to share resources and strategies. Nurture, maintain and support the ecosystem, don't eat the smaller fish—which is often the case on larger markets. The publishing communities based around the Risograph printer act as such a safe-space. They operate on solidarity, friendship, trade, and sharing the means of production and information.

3. Lament: The art-world-book-market frustrates me when art books function solely as aesthetic material objects or commodities–their surface value more important than the access to their content. The social media aura around a book, its filters, hashtags, validation through likes or its ISBN made more important than its inside message. The easily consumable myth of the book is enough. The book acts as a signifier, a stand-in for things like democracy, freedom of speech and knowledge. However, the invisible work-processes to the reader, in between the printed lines reflect these values more:

What is the economy of labor, production and distribution like? Who is printing? What is their set of values? Who is publishing? Who put the ISBN on it? Or why does it not have one? Does the artist receive payment from their distributor? Challenges remain readership, funding and self-exploitation of communities. When the funds are low, you rely on the solidarity of your community, and this, on one hand, creates mutually supportive autonomy from the market, but, on the other hand, often the agents remain precarious and deplete themselves on emotional levels.

4. Hope: In the digital age, it is possible to share and produce in a global village of artists. Autonomy has new shapes and sizes. We can embrace new forms of reading. The Internet offers new methods of pagination, formats of content like GIFs or ways of scrolling. There are many ways to show and display a book than just a book-case. Our filters of awareness are wider. It is easier to find an exotic orchid, the artist book community has gone digital on instagram. However, I also think it is necessary to uphold those processes and technologies of book culture that are a gift. Don't underestimate the power of hand to hand circulation. It's communication, the sentences are made of paper. It's a slower conversation, but it has reach. I remain hopeful that artist books can be active agents that can change the minds, hearts and actions of cultural and political contexts. Plant libraries, support independent bookshops and buy directly from the artist.

Nina Prader is an artist, writer and researcher in Berlin and Vienna, exploring printed matters from subcultural to high cultural shifts, from artist books, zines to the Risograph. Her most recent projects include the OZL, a open zine library and a radio show on Vienna community radio on printed matters: Radio Orange: Paper&Tape.

Eleanor Vonne Brown

NETbooks is a series of publications initiated by X Marks the Bökship and PrintRoom which takes self-publishing as a starting point for other "self-reliance" projects. These projects are made by a small group of artists and designers—often after a collaborative exercise or workshop–and distributed via like-minded small publishers and publishing platforms using Risograph printing facilities. Each NETbook dips into a particular field of knowledge and presents a selection of findings with an emphasis on process, sharing and collective experience.

NET book #0

This is a brief introduction to self publishing and a guide to brewing beer at home. As a self-publisher and occasional home brewer I have noticed similarities between the micro-brewing and independent publishing industries.

PUBLISHING
Publishing is defined as the dissemination of literature, music, or information–the activity of making information available to the general public. The word publisher can refer to the individual who leads a publishing company or an imprint, or to a person who heads a magazine.

SELF-PUBLISHER
Artists and authors may be their own publishers, meaning originators and developers of content. The author is in control of the entire process including, for a book, the design of the cover and contents, formats, price, distribution, marketing, and PR. The authors can do it all themselves or can outsource some of the work to companies which offer these services. Self-publishing is not limited to physical books. E-books, pamphlets, sales brochures, websites, and other media are commonly self-published. Self-publishing is a growing industry. since 2008, for the first time in history, more books are self-published than those published traditionally.

SMALL PRESS
Small presses are often defined as those that publish up to 10 titles per year and are not part of a large corporation. Since the profit margins for small presses can be small, many are driven by other motives, including the desire to help disseminate material with only a small audience. Small presses tend to fill the gaps that larger publishers neglect. They can focus on niche genres and experiment with content, production, format and distribution.

INDEPENDENT BOOKSHOPS AND PUBLISHING SPACES
Independent bookshops support the small press by stocking from smaller distributors and sometimes directly from self-publishers. Publishing spaces often have the equipment to print and distribute books on site to a targeted audience, books are launched and discussed while drinking a bottle of beer.

BREWING is the production of beer. Cereal grains are steeped in water, and the sweet liquid is mixed with yeast in a process called fermentation. It may be done in a brewery by a commercial brewer, or at home by a home brewer. Beer has always been brewed on

the domestic level and was done so thousands of years before its commercial production. There is archaeological evidence to suggest that emerging civilisations including ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia brewed beer.

Since the nineteenth century the brewing industry has been part of most western economies.

HOME BREWING is the brewing of beer on a small scale for personal, non-commercial purposes. People choose to brew their own beer for a variety of reasons. Many home brew to avoid a higher cost of buying commercially sold drinks. Brewing at home allows people the freedom to adjust recipes according to their preference, and create drinks that are unavailable on the open market.

A MICROBREWERY produces small amounts of beer, and is independently owned. Although the term microbrewery was originally used to describe the size of a brewery, it has gradually come to reflect an alternative attitude and approach to experimentation, brewing flexibility and customer service. Microbreweries have adopted a marketing strategy that differs from those of the large, mass-market breweries, offering products that compete on quality and diversity instead of low price and advertising.

A NANOBREWERY is a scaled-down microbrewery, often run by a solo entrepreneur, that produces beer in small batches for sale. These breweries usually don't brew more than one batch at a time, or desire to see their beer served at bars across the country. They are taking producing and drinking craft beer locally to the next ievel.

CRAFT BREWING is a new term for developments in the industry succeeding the microbrewing movement of the late 20th century. Craft brewers are small, independent and traditional. 'Independent' is defined as at least 75% owned or controlled by a craft brewer; and 'traditional' is defined as brewing in which at least 50% of the beer's volume consists of traditional or innovative ingredients. The three-tier system of alcohol distribution is the system for distributing alcoholic beverages. The basic structure of the system is that producers can sell their products only to wholesale distributors who then sell to retailers, and only retailers may sell to consumers. Craft Breweries are free to act as their own distributor and sell to retailers or directly to the consumer through a tap room, attached restaurant, or off-premises sales.

A BREWPUB is an abbreviated term combining the ideas of a brewery and a pub or public-house. A brewpub is a pub that brews its own beer and sells it on the premises.

D.I.Y BREWING STEPS

Extracting sugar from grains to make wort (unfermented beer)
Boiling the wort with hops
Cooling the wort
Pitching yeast
Fermentation
Secondary fermentation (conditioning)
Bottling
Carbonating
Drinking

Participant Information

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justseeds.org/artist/joshmacphee
Eric Von Haynes (Chicago, IL)
instagram.com/flatlands_press
Tim Devin (Somerville, MA)
timdevin.com
Journal of Aesthetics and Protest (Leipzig)
joaap.org
Booklyn (Brooklyn, NY)
booklyn.org
Press Press (Baltimore, MD)
presspress.info
Llano del Rio Collective (Los Angeles, CA)
ldrg.wordpress.com
Thick Press (Washington D.C. / Los Angeles, CA)
thickpress.com
Alex Arzt (Oakland, CA)
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Hardworking Goodlooking (Rotterdam / Manilla)
officeocd.com
Nina Prader / Lady Liberty Press (Berlin / Vienna)
ladylibertypress.org
Eleanor Vonne Brown (London)
bokship.org
el-x.org

PrintRoom

PrintRoom is a presentation space and shop dedicated to artists' publications based in Rotterdam. Since 2012 PrintRoom runs a risography stencil workspace where artists, designers and other interested individuals can take part in workshops or print their own projects.

PrintRoom started in 2003 as a travelling and growing collection of artists' publications. In 2010 the initiative acquired a fixed address in Rotterdam (Schietbaanstraat 17), where it has become a vibrant hub for promoting and selling publications by artists, designers and small publishers from all over the globe. The PrintRoom collection comprises various material: from lusciously designed, full colour publications to small flipbooks, and photocopied zines. The space hosts talks, presentations, book launches, and workshops that explore artistic strategies of independent publishing.

PrintRoom
Schietbaanstraat 17
3014ZV Rotterdam
The Netherlands

www.printroom.org

Temporary Services

Temporary Services is Brett Bloom and Marc Fischer. We are based in Auburn (IN) and Chicago (IL). We have existed, with several changes in membership and structure, since 1998. In 2008 we founded the publishing imprint and webstore Half Letter Press. We produce exhibitions, events, projects, and publications. The distinction between art practice and other creative human endeavors is irrelevant to us.

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