

Collection Development Policy for the ABC No Rio Zine Library
Arielle Cohen

What is a zine?

There is no single definition of a zine. In fact, many writers of zines (zinesters) and zine librarians hesitate to define zines in any strict terms. Zines are created and function outside of the mainstream and by defining them we are attempting to include zines within a structure against which they often actively fight. We recognize the radical nature of zines; however, it is important to clearly define our holdings so as to assure the smooth running of our library. Therefore, we present the definition provided in the Online Dictionary of Library Science:

Derived from "fanzine" (a contraction of "fan magazine"), pronounced "zeen." [While zines have been in existence since the 1960s, the] term came into use during the 1980s to refer to a small, low-circulation magazine or newspaper, self-published out of passion for the subject rather than for personal gain, usually produced with the aid of desktop publishing software and high-quality photocopy machines. Zines represent the convergence of amateur publishing hobbyists, high school underground newspapers, the literary small press, political radicalism, and do-it-yourself popular culture. They are usually not available by subscription, often appear irregularly or infrequently, and may have a lifetime of only one or two issues (Reitz, 2004).

I. Our Community and Library

Founded in 1980, ABC No Rio is a collectively-run community center for the artists and activists committed to political and social engagement, and we continue to function as such to the present day. Our community is defined by a set of shared values and convictions. It is both a local and international community. It is a community committed to social justice, equality, anti-authoritarianism, autonomous action, collective processes, and to nurturing alternative structures and institutions operating on such principles. Our community includes artists and activists whose work promotes critical analysis and an expanded vision of possibility for our lives and the lives of our neighborhoods, cities, and societies. It includes punks who embrace the Do-It-Yourself ethos, express positive outrage, and reject corporate commercialism. It includes nomads, squatters, fringe dwellers, and those among society's disenfranchised who find at ABC No Rio a place to be heard and valued.

In 1998 the ABC No Rio Zine Library was created to serve the aforementioned community as both a repository of zines created by community members and as a collection of zines to help fulfill the intellectual and recreational desires of said community. The Zine Library is there to provide open and free access to all. A potential user does not require special permission to access the library, nor do we place geographical, age, or any other limitations on users. While we would love to

allow 24/7 access to the Zine Library, currently we are only open to users during the hours stated on the ABC No Rio website. We recognize that our community is constantly changing, but we will maintain our free and open access to all, as is the mandate of ABC No Rio.

Also, as part of an anti-authoritarian organization, there is no hierarchy in place among the zine librarians. There is no head zine librarian; librarians are trusted to perform their duties; and all major decisions are made through consensus.

II. Circulation Policy

Due to the unique and fragile natures of many zines, along with the transient nature of many of our regular users, the collection is non-circulating.

However, if a patron requires their own copy of a certain zine, we have a scanner set up at which they can scan all or a portion of said zine. See section III. General Policies

III. Acquisitions/Selection Guidelines

The Core Collection

Our collection consists of zines dating from the 1960s to the present day, and we continue to select both retrospective and current titles. Our collection includes independent, underground and marginal publications on subjects such as music, culture, politics, personal experience and travel; however, our priority are those zines addressing political and social issues.

Exclusions

We do not include poetry zines in our collection, nor do we include pamphlets or newsletters. Also, we do not collect magazines. Librarians will help users locate such material in other zine libraries, from zine distributors, or online. Whenever and wherever possible librarians will work to forge relationships with these organizations, so as to provide better access to our users.

Special Interests

We recognize that in order to combat social injustice we must include zines that challenge the status quo. Therefore, we make a special effort to include zines written by women, trans women and men, people of color, and members of the queer community. We also recognize the dominance of the English language in the

western world. While the majority of our collection is in English, we do try to collect zines in other languages, so long as they fit the criteria spelled out in this section.

Purchasing and Selection

ABC No Rio is funded entirely through volunteer work and the occasional donation, as such, the Zine Library does not have the funds to purchase zines. All materials are donated, and their inclusion is left to the discretion of the zine librarian on duty at the time of sorting. All zine librarians are well versed in our collection policy and are aware of the needs of the community. Items that are not chosen for inclusion are placed in our “Zine Sale Box” (see section IV. General Policies) or are offered to other zine libraries in the New York City area.

Zines that are selected for inclusion are assessed from the following guidelines:

1. Relevance to other ABC No Rio Programs

Zines which directly support the projects undertaken at ABC No Rio, such as punk music, bicycle maintenance, vegan cooking, screen-printing, and more.

2. Relevance to the collection

Zines which round out the collection. These are zines on a particular subject that we are lacking. These are also zines from any underrepresented time period or geographical area, as well as zines written by an author from a similarly underrepresented group.

3. Quality of content

While recognizing that quality is subjective, we do require non-fiction zines to be intelligible, and fiction zines should have some literary value.

4. Space/Duplicates

The Zine Library occupies only one small room in the ABC No Rio building. We therefore take our limited space into account when making acquisition decisions. We will not add more than two copies of the same title to our collection even if said title satisfies all other criteria. Triplicates will be dealt with in the manner described above.

5. Estimated use

While we do try to accumulate zines in a wide array of subjects, we will only accept a zine that the reviewing librarian believes will be of use to our patrons.

IV. General Policies

Privacy

ABC No Rio respects and protects the privacy of our volunteers, donors, supporters, and patrons, as well as of individuals visiting our website and other online projects. The library maintains a database that includes the number of users who visit the library on a given day. We also note which zines or topics were requested; however, we do not record the names of the users. We do not sell, rent, share, or exchange any of this information.

Copyright/Copyleft

While we accept, and therefore follow, the current duplication policies associated with copyright, many zines in our collection are licensed under copyleft or ShareAlike rather than copyright. In addition, the majority of our materials are Anti-copyright, encouraging readers to reprint the content freely and in any manner desired. Please see the links in our bibliography for further information.

Allocation of Funds

As previously stated, the library is run by unpaid volunteers and is funded entirely through donations made to ABC No Rio as a whole, which are then allocated by the ABC No Rio administrator to various ABC No Rio programs, including the Zine Library. The ABC No Rio administrator is also the person who initially handles donations made specifically to the Zine Library.

Additional funds are generated through the “Zine Sale Box.” As previously mentioned, most unwanted zines are placed in this box; any person may then pay whatever they can for any of the zines within; if a zine is in the “Zine Sale Box” for more than three months then it is thrown out. Funds are also generated through fundraisers, such as concerts. The allocation of all these funds is then determined through consensus by the zine librarians at their next scheduled meeting.

Intellectual Freedom

We respect the right of zinesters to express their, sometimes controversial, opinions, and we acknowledge the fact that there are those who will find some of the material within our walls offensive, but we do not condone censorship in any form. If a patron wishes the library to reconsider the inclusion of a particular title, said patron can follow the steps laid out in Section VII. Reconsideration/Removal.

V. Punk Music Special Collection

Early librarians at the Zine Library were particularly interested in punk music; as a result we have developed a special collection consisting of three punk music themed titles: *Punk Planet*, *Razorcake*, and *Maximumrocknroll*. While the preceding titles more closely resemble magazines than zines, they are still considered to be the latter by many in the zine and leftist communities, and therefore, their inclusion in our collection does not contradict our collection policy.

All three of these titles have been, at one time or another, an important presence within the punk music scene, functioning as both documentarians and influencers.

The library will accept any issue that is not already in the collection or is in better condition than the same issue already held in the collection. We will not accept duplicates. We also attempt to acquire special publications associated with any of these titles, such as anniversary issues or art supplements.

VI. Collection Maintenance

The librarians continually and carefully review the older holdings of the main collection. The decisions to retain, repair, or discard zines are based upon the following criteria.

Retain: The library will retain any zine that continues to meet the aforementioned selection requirements, that is, any title that continues to be relevant to and used by the ABC No Rio community will remain in the collection.

Repair: A zine will be repaired if the damage is so great as to prohibit its use. If there is a second copy of a title that is in relatively good condition, then the damaged copy will not be immediately repaired. The repair of a zine will be the responsibility of a zine librarian who has the appropriate training. The library will not send a zine away to be repaired, as the library cannot afford such a measure.

Discard: The library will discard a zine that is no longer of use to the ABC No Rio community. If a zine has not been “checked out” by a user in over two years then the zine will be removed. The discarded zine will first be offered to other zine libraries in the New York City area. If no other zine library wants the title, then the zine will be added to the aforementioned “Zine Sale Box.”

Due to the rarity of many zines and general lack of funds, the library cannot replace zines that are in need of repair. Also, due to the limited space available to the Zine Library, we are not able to store unused zines.

VII. Reconsideration/Removal

If a user disagrees with the inclusion of a specific zine, said user may appeal to the library to reconsider the inclusion of the title. The library will first try to resolve the situation informally through a conversation between the complainant and a zine librarian. If the complainant is still not satisfied, they may complete and submit a copy of the attached form to a zine librarian.

Upon receiving a reconsideration form, the librarians will hold a meeting, either in person or virtually, to review to the request. The zine librarians will read the zine in question, so that they may better consider the strengths and weaknesses of the material as a whole. Librarians will also be sure to recall the collection development policy, specifically the section regarding intellectual freedom. Once the zine librarians have made a determination through consensus, they will send an email stating their decision to the complainant. The library will keep a record of the complaint and the decision regardless of outcome.

Reconsideration Letter:

While the ABC No Rio Zine Library does have selection criteria in place, we recognize that not everyone will agree with the materials eventually chosen for inclusion. If you strongly feel that a particular title should be reconsidered, please fill out the proceeding form and submit it to a zine librarian.

For further information regarding the reconsideration process, please see our collection development policy.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Your Connection to the Community: _____

Title of the work in question: _____

Author (if available): _____

Did you read the zine in its entirety? If not, which parts did you read?

To what in the zine do you object (please be specific)?

Can you see any merit to the zine?

Are there any additional sources you would suggest we use when reconsidering the zine?

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