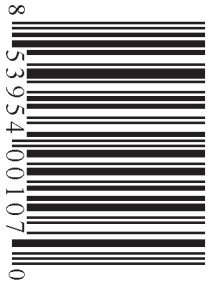


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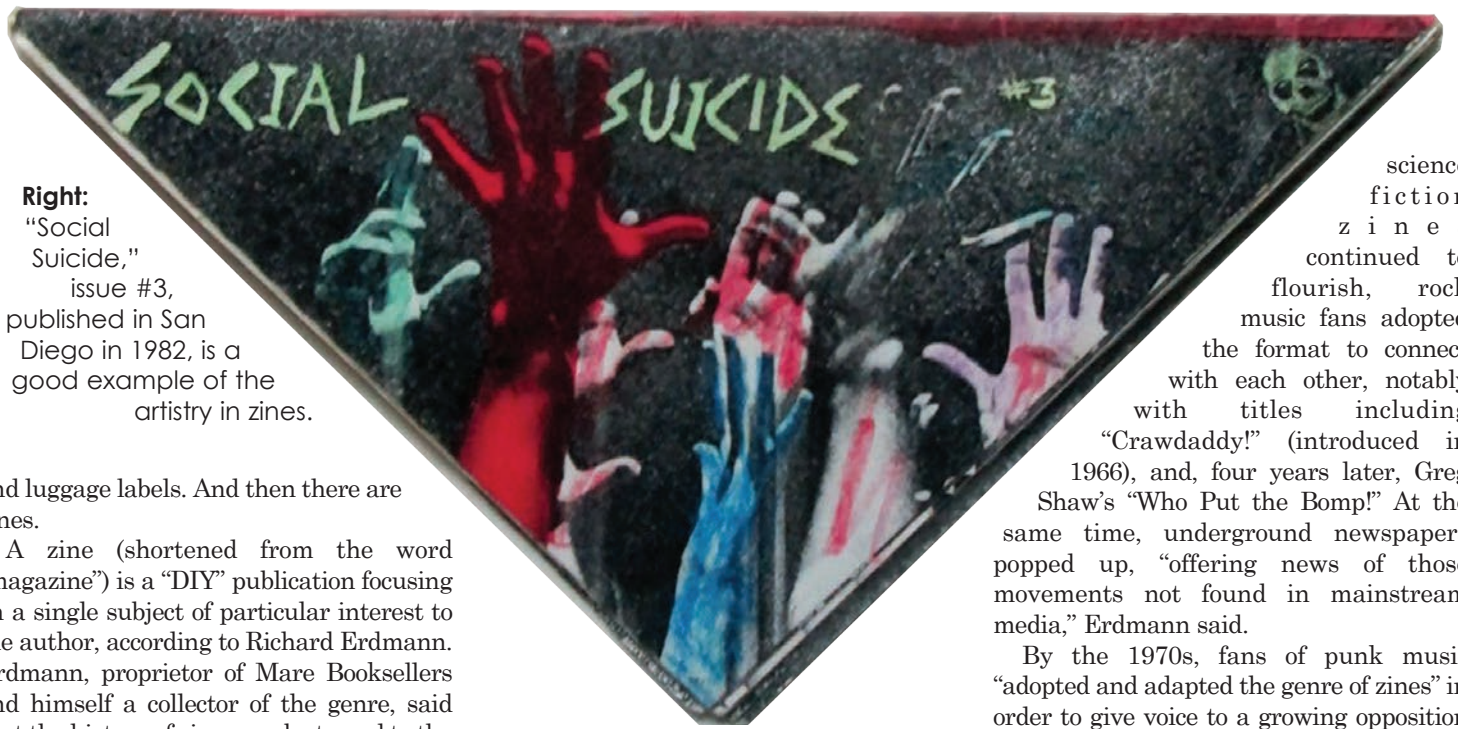
From the back room to the public spotlight: 'Zines are hot'

BY BARBARA MILLER BEEM

The Chicago Daily Tribune with the errant "Dewey Defeats Truman" headline. The November 29, 1963, issue of "Life" magazine with a black-bordered cover. Farrah Fawcett's unforgettable pin-up poster. From the start, iconic examples of newspapers, magazines, and posters such as these have been recognized as something to save, stored away for future generations. Meanwhile, countless other issues of newspapers, magazines, and the like have been destined for the trashcan. But in the world of collecting, the perception of what is worth keeping is expanding, particularly when it comes to the printed word.

"Today, ephemera is much more than just tomorrow's garbage," Udo Goellmann explained. Seemingly everyday items have come to be regarded in a new light, valued because they "provide a unique insight into history." Speaking for AbeBooks, Goellmann pointed to increased interest in such items as theater programs and letters, postcards

Below: Issue #13 of "Ripped and Torn" (1978), a well-known UK zine.

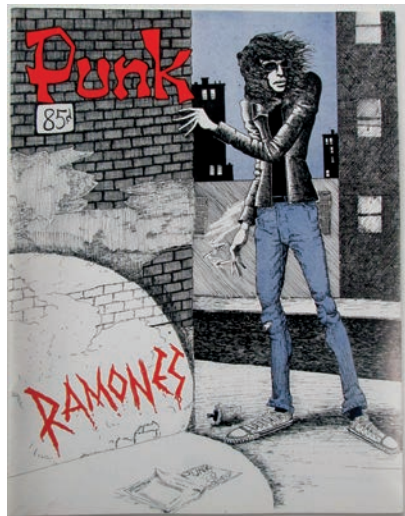


Right: "Social Suicide," issue #3, published in San Diego in 1982, is a good example of the artistry in zines.

and luggage labels. And then there are zines.

A zine (shortened from the word "magazine") is a "DIY" publication focusing on a single subject of particular interest to the author, according to Richard Erdmann. Erdmann, proprietor of Mare Booksellers and himself a collector of the genre, said that the history of zines can be traced to the early- to mid-20th century; at that time, small-batch zines catered to a core

Below: An illustration of Joey Ramone is on the cover of issue #3 of "Punk," dated April 1976.



group of fans of science fiction and fantasy writing. Over the years, zines evolved, and by the 1950s, the folk music scene was the subject of a number of these self-published

issues. At the same time, collections of political writings called samizdat publications were hand printed and quietly distributed among dissidents living behind the Iron Curtain.

Then in the 1960s, as

Left: The last issue of "Sniffin' Glue," published in London in 1977, included a flexi disc record inside. Images courtesy of Mare Booksellers.

science fiction zines continued to flourish, rock music fans adopted the format to connect with each other, notably with titles including "Crawdaddy!" (introduced in 1966), and, four years later, Greg Shaw's "Who Put the Bomp!" At the same time, underground newspapers popped up, "offering news of those movements not found in mainstream media," Erdmann said.

By the 1970s, fans of punk music "adopted and adapted the genre of zines" in order to give voice to a growing opposition to what they perceived to be the commercialization of rock music. It was not unusual for political opinions to be mixed in with news about punk bands, Erdmann added. Just as many zines had taken on an edgier point of view, so did their "look," with cut-and-paste techniques and an increased use of hand lettering. This resulted in "a Dadaist art aesthetic."

Zines continue to be published to this day. In addition to fanzines (which focus on specific artists or forms of entertainment), the genre provides for people who are marginalized by society "a means of expression, communication, and community not found (or allowed) in mainstream media or culture," said Erdmann.

Just as the subject matter of zines has evolved since their inception nearly a century ago, so has the manner in which

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