Return to the Tangible?
The Photozine in the Digital Age

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Table of contents

List of Figures

Introduction

To collect photographs is to collect the world. Movies and television programs light up walls, flicker, and go out; but with still photographs the image is also an object, light-weight, cheap to produce, easy to carry about, accumulate, store.

Susan Sontag[1]

In the first half of 2014, a mobile library toured across the European continent, stopping in 30 countries and 46 cities. Manned by three passionate youngsters from France (sometimes more, depending on who they picked up along the way), the van carried a collection of hundreds of independent photography zines and books: low-cost and usually self-published publications showing an artist's work, made rather for the love of the craft than for profit. Zines of the Zone, as the project was dubbed, aimed (and still aims) to 'create a European network and generate a public and mobile archive out of these alternative practises [of zine making].'[2] To realise this goal, the organisation was supported by a grant from the European Commission, as well as two regional French grants. Wherever the library stopped, the team organised a pop-up exhibition or took part in an event celebrating and promoting their growing collection, collaborating with local cultural organisations. To date, their online collection amounts up to 896 volumes, but many of them have not been catalogued yet. That such a small team could gather such a large amount of publications, establish such a wide network, and receive financial support of such a prominent institution is remarkable, given the relative obscurity of the publications in the collection and their absence in traditional publishing and distribution ventures. It is the most visible proof of an evolution that has been going on for years among photographers across the European continent, and around the globe.

In our digital age, with its blogs, social media platforms and image sharing possibilities, it appears that photographers are increasingly turning to print to get their message (or rather, images) out. In the past ten years, we have seen an exponential rise in self-published and independent photography books, an evolution that even reached mass-media outlets like *The Guardian* and *TIME*.[3] Photobook

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1   S. Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin Classics, 2008), p. 3.
2   'Zines of the Zone', *Zines of the Zone*, n.d. <http://www.zinesofthezone.net/selfpublishing-mobile-library> (21 October, 2014).
3   See, for example: S. O'Hagan, 'Self-publish or be damned: why photographers are going at it alone', *The Guardian*, 4 June, 2010 <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/jun/04/self-publish-photographers-photobooks> (16 December, 2014) and L. Butet-Roch, 'When Photographers Become Self-Publishing Companies', *TIME*, 4 December, 2014 <http://time.com/3611036/photographers-become-publishers> (16 December, 2014).

and art book fairs started to pop up all over the world, new, independent publishers were set up, and specialised bookshops opened in urban centres. Photography publishing is booming, and in the margins of this trend are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of motivated photographers, pouring their work (or someone else's), time, and effort into small, ephemeral photozines.

FIGURE 1: The online archive of Zines of the Zone.[4]

Zines are a notoriously elusive category of publications, which a number of scholars and practitioners have sought to define in the past. The book *Whatcha Mean, What's a Zine?*, for example, notes that 'zines are cheaply made printed forms of expression on any subject.'[5] On the other hand, *Make a Zine!*, a somewhat similar guidebook for everyone wanting to learn more about zine publishing, focuses more on the non-profit aspect, defining the zine as '[a] short-run periodical produced more from passion than intention to make money.'[6] In the words of Atton: 'the costs incurred [are] acceptable as the price of communication and self-valorization.'[7] These definitions imply their difference from traditional media outlets: you could not publish about any subject in a commercial magazine, and commercial media certainly do have to make profit. While highly individual, zines draw on an extensive history of independent, alternative, and, at times, radical publishing, that started long before the first zines appeared in the 1930s. Over the course of the previous century, they have evolved along with the communities that produced them and new technologies that became available.

Academic interest in zines began in the early 1970s, Atton notes, possibly influenced by one notable study *The World of Fanzines: A Special Form of Communication* by Fredric Wertham, though that source has now become a rare collector's item.[8] Since then, research slowly expanded, but, perhaps

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4   <http://www.zinesofthezone.tumblr.com> (13 January, 2015).
5   M. Todd and E.P. Watson, *Whatcha Mean, What's a Zine?* (Boston, MA: Graphia, 2006), p. 12.
6   B. Brent and J. Biel, *Make a Zine!* (Bloomington, IN: Microcosm Publishing, 2008), p. 12.
7   C. Atton, *Alternative Media* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2001), p. 59.
8   Atton, *Alternative Media,* p. 56; F. Wertham, *The World of Fanzines: A Special Form of Communication* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973).

oddly, it is only a recent phenomenon that librarians are making a case for including (fan)zines in their (academic) collections. In a recent article that investigated the importance of zine collections in libraries, information scientists Tkach and Hank stressed the academic relevance of studying zines, arguing that:

> Zines, as much as monographs, journals, and the like, are and will be important to study, both for their form as examples of contemporary print culture and their content as one of the means by which contemporary political and cultural movements may communicate and disseminate ideas.[9]

Previous research into zines and zine culture has generally focused on the second part of this statement, investigating the use of zines in specific communities. This thesis, on the other hand, will investigate photozines, a recently emerged zine genre, from a publishing and new media perspective. Consequently, I will argue that the contemporary photozine is embedded in two strands of history: that of the (fan)zine, which has known various waves of popularity among different communities since the 1940s, but which many people proclaimed dead when computers—connected to the Internet—entered into our homes, and that of artists' books, more specifically photography books, which have grown notably in popularity over the past decade, and are increasingly becoming valuable collector's items. That these two strands came together, as we will see, was caused by the various changes instigated by the many technological advances that continue to permeate our world, making everyone with access to a computer a possible publisher, and everyone with access to a camera a possible photographer. Whereas at the advent of the digital age, it first appeared that a lot of artists would increasingly rely on the Internet to publish their work, either as a replacement for or an addition to previous publishing platforms, instead we have seen a strong increase in self-published (photography) zines and books. As a result, the photozine is both a testament to the history of alternative publishing, and a product of the society we live in today. In photozines, zines have found yet another way to flourish, and this is happening in an age that has repeatedly challenged the printed page. Research questions that will be investigated are [1] How is the photozine embedded in the history of alternative and photography publishing? and [2] What role does our digital age play in its existence and popularity?

The first chapter will present a short history of the (fan)zine, highlighting its appropriation by different subcultures, first being used to express thoughts on fandom, then as a vehicle for radical thought, to later, in its most popular phase, become a medium to transport virtually any possible message (as Todd and Watson mentioned in their definition of zines on the previous page). I will examine how, throughout these years, the popularity of zinemaking went hand in hand with various technological innovations that aided its creation, and how this has happened again in its most recent appropriation in the twenty-first century by the artist community. The second chapter will discuss the place of the photozine in the rising popularity of photobooks, closely linked to the boom in self- and independent publishing we have seen since the arrival of the digital age. It will also briefly focus on the special position of photobooks in the field of artists' books. A third and final chapter

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9   D. Tkach and C. Hank, 'Before Blogs, There Were Zines: Berman, Danky, and the Political Case for Zine Collecting in North American Academic Libraries', *Serials Review*, 40 (2014), p. 13. A possible reason for why zines are only now slowly being included in libraries is that they are particularly difficult to catalogue. Stoddard and Kiser provide an overview of the benefits and challenges in collecting zines. See R.A. Stoddard and T. Kiser, 'Zines and the Library', *Library Resources & Technical Services*, 48 (2004), pp. 191-198.

will provide concrete examples of how photographers have combined these two seemingly unrelated publishing evolutions: that of the zine and that of the photobook, to come to photography zines. In this analysis I will use five case studies of independent and self-publishers to illustrate my arguments. They have been selected to represent the variety that I have seen in the background, motivation and influences of photozine publishers, as well as in their production methods and scope. Moreover, to keep some geographical consistency, as well as to highlight that this is definitely not just an American phenomenon, I have decided to select only European publishers. Some of these I have been following for years, while others I discovered during my research. Below is a brief introduction of each of the publishers, but they will be discussed in more detail in the third chapter.

1. **Maddi Montero (Donostia/Barcelona, Spain)**, head of Chien Lunatique Editions, a 'small home-made photo zine publisher,' through which she publishes her own work as well as that of others, in low-key, no-frill zines.[10]
2. **Carlos Cancela Pinto (London, United Kingdom)**, a Portuguese photographer, currently based in the UK, who has published various zines, both by himself and in collaboration with independent publishers.[11]
3. **Rebecca Rijsdijk (living a nomad lifestyle, originally from the Netherlands)**, head of Sunday Mornings at the River, a zine and publishing house which aims to 'promote great work for affordable prices in order to make it available to folks like ourselves (the ones with the love for photography & literature but with slightly empty pockets).'[12]
4. **Ludovico Musu (Oristano, Italy)**, a film photographer who shoots mostly in black-and-white. So far, he has self-published four zines, while his work has also been published in a number of other (maga)zines.[13]
5. **Maria Daniela Quirós (Barcelona, Spain)**, a Venezuelan photographer and graphic designer who recently published her first zine.

The decision to start this thesis with a historical overview follows the reasoning of Johanna Drucker, who stressed that we have to be aware of the history of artists' books in order to discuss and criticise it.[14] I believe the same is valid for zines: many people today find out about the zine format online, but they often do not know where these publications come from. Learning about the history of the zine can help us put present evolutions into perspective. Nevertheless, the overview presented here is by no means complete, as it will not go into detail about the various genres that emerged over the past decades. This thesis will provide a more general view, highlighting how zines have evolved along with various technologies and communities. With this approach, I aim to open the way to consider photozines as the next incarnation of the zine format. The story of zines, and the fact that they are indeed not dead, even thriving in this digital age, teaches us an important lesson about the ongoing relevance and added value of printed matter, even when it comes in a form as ephemeral and economically unprofitable as the zine. With the photozine specifically, artists have combined two strands in publishing history to create

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10   <http://chienlunatiqueeditions.tumblr.com> (5 January, 2015).
11   C. C. Pinto, 'About', *Carlos Cancela Pinto*, n.d. <http://www.carloscancelapinto.com/about> (22 October, 2014).
12   R. Rijsdijk, 'About', *Sunday Mornings at the River*, n.d. <http://cargocollective.com/sundaymorningsattheriver/about> (22 October, 2014).
13   <http://www.fabriziomusu.tumblr.com> (2 January, 2015).
14   J. Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books* (New York, NY: Granary Books, 2004), pp. 14-15.

their own format, according to their own rules. That the (photo)zine became such a successful format proves both the power of self-publishing in our digital age, which is becoming increasingly accessible, and the possibility of print to keep reinventing itself.

I will conclude this introduction with an anecdote that clearly illustrates how photozines are slowly bursting out of their little niche corner in the publishing world. In June 2014, the British chain of bookstore Foyles opened a brand-new flagship store on London's Charing Cross Road. The beautifully renovated building houses a large collection of fiction and non-fiction; well-selected, though catered to a mainstream public. Upon entering the shop, however, visitors immediately encounter the photography section on their left-hand side, and the first shelf that they see of that section is not the one containing the big Phaidon and Steidl publications, but two shelves carrying rather inconspicuous publications: one with photobooks by independent presses, and another one specifically dedicated to photozines, even with its own label to guide the public. At the time of my visit, in December 2014, the photozines shelf was well-stocked with zines by the highly productive one-man press Café Royal Books. There were a few other ones too, of which usually just one copy was in stock. These copies looked mostly unsellable, the many wrinkles and smudges proving they had been browsed through by numerous visitors. That a store as large as Foyles would put these publications on such a prominent place in the shop, even before the big photography publishers, and even when a large number of copies would probably not even be sold due to their poor condition, is perhaps one of the most striking signs of an evolution that has been going on since the start of the century, which is clearly not about to stop.

Chapter 1: Tracing back the fanzine

People who make and read zines don't fit easily into demographic groups. They include college students, teachers, home-schoolers, wingnuts with library cards, radical moms, women who identify, dress and pass as men, librarians, cartoonists, comedians, activists, organic farmers, childhood abuse survivors, dumpster divers and squatters, disillusioned middle-class working people, award-winning writers, bored teenagers, sex workers, and many others.

Bill Brent and Joe Biel[15]

The photozines that have been popping up since the turn of the century are the latest addition to a long line of publications that have been dubbed zines. Throughout the years, they have evolved along with various communities that appropriated their format, as well as with new consumer technologies that became available. What remained consistent over those years is that they were (and are) products of the creative expression of people who could not find an appropriate outlet for their thoughts and ideas through mainstream media channels. Whether consciously or not, zines have always been rooted in a desire to become an active participant in the media field, rather than to consume it passively. As a result, zines fall under Atton's vision of alternative media, which are about 'offering the means for democratic communication to people who are normally excluded from media production.'[16]

The present chapter will look at the various waves in (fan)zine history, starting in the United States in the 1920s and passing through a number of subcultures before being appropriated by the artist community in the 21st century. This brief chronological overview aims to reveal some of the defining characteristics of zines, making it possible to analyse which of these have survived in present-day photography zines and thus laying the path for a new addition to zine history. Moreover, in each phase I will highlight the technologies that enabled and sometimes even stimulated zine production in order to reveal the link between new technologies and zine creation throughout the history of the zine. This chapter is divided into four parts, in accordance with four periods in zine history that will serve as an illustration of how different communities have used the zine format, as well as how technology influenced both this appropriation and the format itself. I will start with the birth of the fanzine during

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15   B. Brent and J. Biel, *Make a Zine!* (Bloomington, IN: Microcosm Publishing, 2008), pp. 1-2.
16   Atton, *Alternative Media*, p. 4.

the heydays of science fiction in the first half of the 20th century, cover music zines, most notably in the punk scene, in the 1970s and 1980s, then focus on the widespread popularity of zines and their diffusion into countless genres in the late 1980s and early 1990s, partly instigated by the feminist group riot grrrl, to finally, discuss the (e-)zine in the 21st century, which, according to some, has lost ground in favour of new possibilities for publishing and self-expression offered by digital technology.

I will largely base this analysis on the work of three scholars: Stephen Duncombe, author of one of the most referenced works on zines, mostly reflecting on their political meaning; Teal Triggs, one of the few scholars to research the visual characteristics of zines; and Chris Atton, who studied zines in the context of alternative media. A number of people from the zine scene have also contributed to the literature on zines, mostly writing guidebooks with practical tips for anyone interested in the medium. Often cited are Mike Gunderloy, editor of *Factsheet Five*, a hugely popular metazine (a zine that contains reviews of other zines, which will be discussed later in this chapter), who published a guide on fanzine publishing through his own imprint, and Alex Wreck, author of an ongoing zine that has been running since 1997, who also wrote a guide to zinemaking, *The Stolen Sharpie Revolution*. The fifth edition of her book was self-published in December 2014.[17]

Although it lies outside the scope of this thesis to go into much detail about the entire history of zines, it is important to be aware that on the one hand, (fan)zines were rooted in other evolutions that predate them, and on the other hand, they came to life and evolved along with various other innovative and experimental media forms that developed in the 20th century. Rau has traced the start of zine culture back to the first Amateur Press Associations that popped up in the late 19th century.[18] Triggs, Spencer, and—to a lesser extent—Duncombe have all linked (fan)zines to other alternative movements of the 20th century, including Dadaism, mail art, Fluxus, and Situationism.[19] An essay by mail artist John Held, Jr provides a useful overview of these 20th century avant-garde and underground groups (including zine publishers), the impact of which, he states, has been 'unexpected, unintended and subversively influential.'[20] While most authors focus on the influence of visual arts movements, Spencer is the only one to also include literary influences like the Beat writers of the 1940s and small presses that boomed in the 1950s and 1960s.[21] How tight these links actually were is difficult to establish, and, to my knowledge, there has been no in-depth research into the matter. Moreover, Atton questions the connection between zines and avant-garde art groups, stating that the latter have always retained their

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17   See M. Gunderloy, *How to Publish a Fanzine* (Port Townsend, WA: Loompanics Unlimited, 1988) and A. Wrekk, *Stolen Sharpie Revolution: a DIY Resource for Zines and Zine Culture* (Portland, OR: self-published, 2015). Unfortunately, Gunderloy's guide has become a rare collector's item. The zine resource website *The Book of Zines* does feature a link to a downloadable pdf of the book, but that appears to be broken (the website is not updated anymore). However, a few chapters are still available as pages on the website. See M. Gunderloy, 'How to Publish a Fanzine', *The Book of Zines: Readings from the Fringe*, n.d. <http://www.zinebook.com/resource/gunder.html> (3 February, 2015).

18   Unfortunately, Rau's unpublished history of zines has proven irretrievable, but she is cited in Duncombe, as well as Atton. S. Duncombe, *Notes From Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (Bloomington: Microcosm Publishing, 2008), pp. 54-55; Atton, *Alternative Media*, pp. 55-56. A good overview of these first amateur associations and their link to zine culture can be found in a lecture by professor Lisa Gitelman: L. Gitelman, 'Amateurdom and Its Discontents, Or, What Is a Zine?', *Symposium on Emerging Genres, Forms, Narratives—in New Media Environments*, 19-20 April, 2013 [Lecture] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGEO6li806s> (19 March, 2015).

19   T. Triggs, *Fanzines: The DIY Revolution* (United Kingdom: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2010), pp. 14-15. A. Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture* (London: Marion Boyars Publishers, 2008), pp. 99-112; Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, pp. 39-42.

20   J. Held, Jr, 'DADA TO DIY: The Rise of Alternative Culture in the Twentieth Century', *Fluxus Foundation*, n.d. <http://fluxusfoundation.com/essays/dada-to-diy-the-rise-of-alternative-cultures-in-the-twentieth-century> (25 February, 2015).

21   Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, pp. 84-99.

link to 'high art', unlike (fan)zines, which are definitely 'amateur' publications.[22] Nevertheless, these groups of artists did succeed in creating alternative systems for communication and expression that existed alongside more mainstream outlets, much like in the case of (fan)zines, and the fact that they share a historical time frame, as well as produced comparable publications, suggests that some mutual inspiration could have taken place.

The early days: science fiction

The story of zines goes back to the first half of the 20th century, in the uncertain transition to the recently brought to life consumer culture, from, as Duncombe puts it, 'older, more participatory models of culture.'[23] During the 1920s, following the rise of capitalism, there was a notable rise in publications focusing on niche topics in the United States. One of these topics was a newly emerged literary genre that would soon become wildly popular: science fiction. In 1926, Hugo Gernsback, an American immigrant from Luxembourg who is credited for coining the term science fiction, started publishing *Amazing Stories*, the first ever science fiction magazine, with a feature that would directly contribute to the birth of a network of fans, and later to fanzines, notes Duncombe.[24] The back of the magazine housed a section with reader's letters, which were printed along with the addresses of the sender. Passionate about the new genre in fiction, readers would quickly bypass writing to the magazine, and instead write directly to other fans. From this, a network of fans developed, which was later formalised in the Science Correspondence Club (SCC), with many similar clubs following soon.[25]

Having this formalised network made it possible for fans to shift from one-on-one letters to duplicated booklets featuring various stories and commentaries, that would be sent out to subscribers. In 1930, the SCC published *The Comet*, the first of such publications and today recognised as the first fanzine.[26] The lo-fi magazine consisted of ten loose sheets of paper (held together with a paperclip), written in typescript and decorated with hand drawn images. Its contents reveal some foundational elements of fan culture and (fan)zines: on the fifth page the editors call for everyone not interested in paying for the zine ($3 for the year 1930) and being an active part of the community to immediately revoke their membership.[27] Moreover, the publication ends with an essay in which the editors ask their readers to send in any feedback, which will help them with their goal of 'extending knowledge to laymen.'[28] *The Comet*'s editors wanted to foster an active community that exchanged stories and discussions, but at the same time were struggling to keep their fanzine economically viable.

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22   Atton, *Alternative Media*, p. 56.
23   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 113.
24   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, pp. 113-115. Another large contributor to science fiction fandom was a club founded in 1934 by the owners of magazine Wonder Stories (Gernsback being one of them): the Science Fiction League. Its scale, with thousands of members and chapters across the United States and the United Kingdom, was unseen. See S. Perkins, 'Science Fiction Fanzines', *The Book of Zines: Readings From the Fringe*, n.d. <http://www.zinebook.com/resource/perkins/perkins2.html> (24 November, 2014).
25   Wertham, whose book is only available in a few libraries in Europe, also discussed this. See Perkins, 'Science Fiction Fanzines'.
26   M. Ashley and R.A.W. Lowndes, *The Gernsback Days: A Study of the Evolution of Modern Science Fiction from 1911 to 1936* (Holicong, PA: The Wildside Press, 2004), pp. 180-182.
27   A scanned PDF of the first issue of *The Comet* is available in the online archive of James Halperin, an American author and entrepreneur. His collection mostly contains comics from the 1950s and 1960s, but also includes this very first fanzine, as well as a few other zines. All items are logged online with a photo and metadata, and some publications have also been digitised. See R. A. Palmer and W. Dennis (eds.), *The Comet*, 1 (1930) <http://www.jhalpe.com/img/Items/Comet_1.pdf> (24 December, 2014).
28   Palmer and Dennis (eds.), *The Comet*, 1, p. 9.

In terms of production, fanzine editors would generally use the cheapest production and duplication tools available to them. So-called master zines, or originals, were usually duplicated by making carbon copies, or by using mimeograph machines, spirit duplicators, or hectographs. Langley describes the laborious and time-consuming process of mimeographing, perhaps the most popular duplication method in the early days of fanzines:

> Producing a mimeographed zine started with retyping the contributions, on manual typewriters, onto eye-straining wax stencil sheets. It required strong fingers, clean typewriter keys, and, for preference, a high-intensity lamp. If the typewriter didn't have a special stencil setting, the typewriter ribbon had to be disengaged manually (because typing a stencil wasn't typing onto the page, it was using the typewriter keys to cut holes in the stencil sheet). The final layout of the zine had to be considered even before the typing started, as the typists had to remember to leave assigned space for artwork when typing up the masters. [...] Errors were a bitch to correct and involved steps like physically cutting the error out of the stencil, typing a correction on another stencil, and using stencil cement to attach the corrected bit where the error had been. [...] The early [mimeograph] models were hand-cranked (electric models appeared later, for those who could afford them). The mimeo drum had to be filled with ink, then the stencil masters were fastened to the drum (one master page at a time). The paper (special "pulp" paper was needed, as regular bond paper could not absorb the ink) was cranked through and slip-sheeted as it came out (putting a piece of paper between each freshly printed page, to prevent smearing). Once the first side of the page was printed and dry, the stack of half-printed paper was put back into the machine, to print on the other side.[29]

After duplication, the copied pages would be collated and bound, which was usually done with staples. Fanzines were generally distributed via the networks of science fiction fan clubs. If it was an independent fanzine, copies could be obtained by writing to the editor(s), who often had 'a fairly idiosyncratic approach to who [received] copies, with some fanzines not for sale and some for exchange only.'[30] Indeed, many fanzines were given away for free or exchanged for other zines. This barter system would remain a widespread practice throughouzine history. Making fanzines took time and effort: Langley mentions that the time between the first call for contributions and the actual printing of it could easily span one to two years, with 'speedy zines' taking from six months to a year to produce.[31]

Other media genres, such as comics and cartoons (in the 1950s) and science fiction television series and movies (in the 1970s) underwent the same treatment as that of science fiction: after a network was established, either via niche magazines or from another fan network, readers started communicating directly to one another through fanzines to bypass the commercial, curated magazine and create their own publications.[32] Both in science fiction and in comics fanzines the 'scene' existed both of amateur and professional writers and editors, and everything in between.[33] Through writing and editing fanzines, some fans would later get similar jobs in more commercial environments. This was the case for one of the editors of *The Comet*, Raymond A. Palmer, who went on to work for *Amazing Stories*,

29   Langley, 'The Times They are a'Changing'.
30   Perkins, 'Science Fiction Fanzines'.
31   Langley, 'The Times They are a'Changing'.
32   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 114. Star Trek, Star Wars, Doctor Who, and Planet of the Apes are all examples of series with widely known fan bases. See Triggs, *Fanzines: The DIY Revolution*, pp. 15-18.
33   Triggs, *Fanzines: The DIY Revolution*, p. 7-8.

and many other magazines later in his career.[34] This suggests that it was not possible or desired to publish fanzines for a living. Most fanzines breathed unprofessionalism in their aesthetics and tone. The fan community even had a different word to for commercial magazines: 'prozines'. The notion of (deliberate) unprofessionalism was deepened in the punk era, which will be discussed in the next part of this chapter.

As fan culture grew, more and more people started publishing their fanzines alone, thus avoiding the formalisms of fan organisations. Atton notes that the straightforward format of (fan)zines 'encouraged readers to become editors themselves,' turning the fanzine network into a horizontal structure of readers/writers.[35] This rise in editors caused science fiction fanzines to peak in the 1960s and 1970s.[36] Jenkins has suggested a possible explanation for the popularity of fanzines, noting that fans needed an outlet for their thoughts on the shows they enjoyed so much, and their attempts to interpret this content were met with disapproval from the producers, who saw 'any deviation from meanings clearly marked forth within the text' as 'a failure to successfully understand what the author was trying to say.' In order to be able to 'speak back, […] defend their own taste and reconceptualise their own identities,' a community of fans turned to producing their own material in order to interpret and discuss the object of their fannish interest, using whatever material they could get their hands on.[37] The zine format was perfectly suited.

Science fiction and other fanzines were the result of an intimate community, bridging physical distances in order to discuss and interpret niche interests that were difficult to express in traditional media outlets or friend and family groups. In producing a fanzine, it could be that one person functioned as a writer, editor, graphic designer, binder, printer, and/or distributor. Unlike with commercial magazines, editors expected that subscribers took on an active role, giving feedback and submitting contributions. This notion was deepened with the introduction of the concept of 'Do-It-Yourself' that went hand in hand with the next phase of fanzines.

Growth: music zines and the birth of DIY

In the 1960s, some science fiction and comics fans started publishing rock-and-roll fanzines, celebrating a music genre that was popular among American and British youths. These publications grew in popularity and quickly spread to other genres, including pop, country, and classical music.[38] Not much later, people started publishing on a wide variety of topics. In this decade, many artists and free thinkers had discovered alternative publishing as a way to spread their ideas, and, as I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, a few authors have remarked how the diffusion of fanzines into

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34   D. Fitch, 'Some Comments, History & Opinionations Concerning Fanzines & 'Zines', *The Book of Zines: Readings From the Fringe*, n.d. <http://www.zinebook.com/resource/fitch.html> (26 November, 2014); F. Pohl, 'How to Publish a Fanzine', *The Way the Future Blogs*, 2011 <http://www.thewaythefutureblogs.com/2011/11/how-to-publish-a-fanzine> (26 November, 2014).

35   Atton, *Alternative Media*, p. 23.

36   Triggs, *Fanzines: The DIY Revolution*, pp. 15-18. The size of one avid fan's collection sheds some light on the amount of fanzines that circulated in the US and UK: James L. Hevelin, who passed away in 2011, had collected nearly 10.000 throughout his lifetime. His collection is currently being digitised by the University of Iowa. See K. Bontrager, 'Science fiction fanzines to be digitized as part of major UI initiative', *Iowa Now*, 17 October, 2014 <http://now.uiowa.edu/2014/10/science-fiction-fanzines-be-digitized-part-major-ui-initiative> (5 February, 2015).

37   H. Jenkins, 'Television Fans, Poachers, Nomads [1992]', in K. Gelder and S. Thornton (eds.), *The Subcultures Reader* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 507.

38   Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, p. 154.

other areas of interest was inspired by the popularity of underground presses and mail art projects. [39] 'Consequently,' notes Wright, 'the fanzines produced outside of fantasy/science-fiction fandom became much less fan publications, and much more of a mongrel breed of publication all their own.'[40] It is in this transition that the zine, at least partly, lost its fan aspect, as the wide number of subjects being discussed in zines could not account for fandom alone, both Wright and Atton argue.[41] However, fan culture remained and was even expanded in what Jenkins calls 'media fandom,' a group of television series and film fanatics. Moreover, elements of fandom seeped through in the new music zines.[42]

Like science fiction fanzines, music zines were non-commercial, which opened an entirely new perspective on the music industry. Zine editors did not have to attract advertisers like commercial magazines did, so they could write about whatever and whoever they wanted to write.[43] According to Duncombe, music fanzine writers asserted 'their own right to speak authoritatively about the music they love[d], making the culture theirs.'[44] But regardless of this participatory notion, these zines remained underground and unknown to the wider public, a relatively quiet form of resistance against traditional publishing outlets deciding what one should or should not like. Rock-and-roll fans may have formed a subculture, but not a counterculture. This changed when in the 1970s, 'a new breed of music fans [...] took the form of the fanzine to the next level,' notes Triggs.[45] They were part of a group that would directly fight the mainstream, with at its core a new music genre: punk.

Demotivated by the economic and political situation of the mid-1970s, young people in the US and UK had lost faith in the system, which, they felt, no longer represented their needs and desires. They were against corporatism, against the mellow 'peace & love' attitude of the hippies and against the commercialisation of rock music.[46] Punk offered them 'a chance to establish some sense of control over their own lives.'[47] This sentiment resulted in the birth of Do-It-Yourself (DIY), a mentality that would characterise the entire scene, and which later became a popular concept far outside the punk scene. The term DIY originated earlier in the twentieth century in the hardware sector, and it continues to play a big part in people's home improvement projects today. For Duncombe, 'doing it yourself is at once a critique of the dominant mode of passive consumer culture and something far more important: the active creation of an alternative culture.'[48] It was a way to be responsible for your own cultural (and other) consumption, instead of waiting for someone else (often a commercial venture) to produce something for you. Luvaas similarly stresses this notion of adopting a proactive mentality, stating that:

'[f]or those of us who adopt it as a way of life, DIY means taking our lives into our own hands, assuming responsibility for our own success, and dictating the terms of our own commodification. (...) It is an adjective,

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39   Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, pp. 99-111.

40   F. Wright, 'The History and Characteristics of Zines', *The Book of Zines: Readings From the Fringe*, n.d. <http://www. zinebook.com/resource/wright1.html> (6 January, 2015).

41   Atton, *Alternative Media*, p. 54. There appears to be no agreement on the use of the terms fanzine, zine, or 'zine, though the latter is generally denounced for referring to its longer version magazine, as zines are quite the opposite of these commercial publications. Triggs continuously speaks of fanzines, even when talking about personal zines or zines on other non-fannish subjects, while Spencer only speaks of fanzines when discussing their science-fiction origins.

42   H. Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture* (New York, NY/London: Routledge, 1992), p. 1.

43   Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, p. 155.

44   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 115.

45   Triggs, *Fanzines: The DIY Revolution*, p. 18.

46   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 47.

47   Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, p. 156.

48   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 47.

a verb, and perhaps most of all, an imperative. Go out and do it yourself! (...) Don't wait for opportunity to come your way! Don't waste your time with intermediaries!'[49]

Punk fans felt the need to take matters into their own hands, provinding 'insider coverage' of a new genre that was not discussed in the established music press (and since punk resisted the mainstream, this was not particularly desired by its fans).[50] Punk zines mostly circulated within the punk scene, being distributed at concerts and in alternative record stores.[51] Like in science-fiction fanzines, they often featured readers' letters, enabling discussion and reflection, and as such, Triggs states, they became 'vehicles of subcultural communication' with an important role in the building of the punk identity and community.[52]

To match their radical ideas, a new aesthetic was developed, inspired by the individualistic and rebellious values of punk music. Triggs describes this aesthetic as following:

> When punk arrived in the UK, a politics of resistance translated into a subcultural graphic language manifest in the use of "threatening" ransom note lettering, anarchist symbols, underpinned by an intentionally "shocking" and aggressive use of swear word and slogans, intentional misspellings and incorrect use of punctuation.[53]

The result of this style and the speed of their production, Hebdige notes in his 1979 work on youth subcultures, left an 'impression of urgency and immediacy, of a paper produced in indecent haste, of memos from the front line.'[54] Next to cutting-edge reports on new bands, punk zines would also add an explicitly political dimension to the medium, resulting in a combination between art, in the form of a new, DIY, aesthetic, and politics.[55] In a way, the notion of DIY had always existed in fanzines and zines, but punk's bold 'graphic language of resistance,' as Triggs calls it, turned DIY into a value to life by.[56]

The new aesthetic was made possible by the availability of new technologies, Langley reports: in the mid-1970s, offset lithography was introduced, which moved the printing process out of the hands of zinemakers, as offset printing was mostly done by professional print shops.[57] These shops were easier to get by than mimeograph machines, which often had to be borrowed from local churches or libraries. The outsourcing of the printing process combined with the availability of print shops for offset made printing a zine much more accessible. Moreover, it was around this time that mechanic typewriters became more and more affordable, which dramatically speeded up the writing process. The quality of offset was generally much better, and it also introduced the popular possibility of reduced printing, which gave publications a sleeker look. However, the technique also had some downsides. Since it had to be done professionally, an offset zine was often more expensive than a mimeographed one.

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49   B. Luvaas, *DIY Style: Fashion, Music and Global Digital Cultures* (London/New York, NY: Berg, 2012), pp. 5-6.
50   S. Perkins, 'Punk Zines', *The Book of Zines: Readings From the Fringe* (n.d.) <http://www.zinebook.com/resource/perkins/perkins2.html> (7 January 2015).
51   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 15.
52   TT. Triggs, 'Scissors and Glue: Punk Fanzines and the Creation of a DIY Aesthetic', *Journal of Design History*, 19 (2006), p. 70.
53   Triggs, *Fanzines: The DIY Revolution*, p. 157.
54   D. Hebdige, *Subcultures: The Meaning of Style* (New York, NY/London: Routledge, 2002), p. 111.
55   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 72.; Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, p. 154; Triggs, *Fanzines: The DIY Revolution*, p. 45.
56   Triggs, *Fanzines: The DIY Revolution*, p. 46.
57   Langley, 'The Times They are a'Changing'.

Moreover, because of the graphic or extreme content of some zines, some editors were met with grave disapproval or downright refusal by these printers. In an essay of her experience with Star Trek fanzines, Resch remembers bringing her first slash zine to a print shop in the early 1980s:

> Once I finished *T'hy'la* #1, I needed to get the zine in print and that would require finding a new printer. If I took *T'hy'la* to the printer I'd been using for my genzine, he'd have a heart attack...[58] It was, I admit, a bit difficult to go in there for the first time. I was a bit...embarrassed. After all, I was asking them to print explicit art of naked men doing sexual things with each other.[59]

With mimeography, any artwork had to be handdrawn on the original, master zine. Offset printing introduced the option to easily reproduce and appropriate other imagery, often from mainstream media. This practice became widespread with the introduction of the consumer photocopier.[60] And photocopy technology did more than just that. 'The photocopier opened up a new avenue for cheap, quick reproduction; it was fast, clean and mostly reliable,' Atton notes.[61] Moreover, the production process could return to the full direction of the editor, if he had access to a photocopy machine at home, a local library or at work, though many zinesters still had their publications printed at a copyshop. The photocopier broke through in the 1980s and 1990s, leading to an exponential rise in zines, which will be discussed in the next section.

Two notable early zines from this period are the British *Sniffin' Glue* and its American counterpart *Punk* (see Figures 2 and 3 on the next page). *Sniffin' Glue* (1976-1977) was, like many zines, a one-man effort, created by Mark Perry, who was perhaps the first to discuss the changing atmosphere among British youths in print. Perry encouraged his readers to follow his example and take matters into their own hands by writing: 'All you kids out there who read 'SG' don't be satisfied with what we write. Go out and start your own fanzines.'[62] *Punk* (1976-1981) was created by John Holmstrom and Ged Dunn with the aim of documenting the New York punk scene, inspiring many others in the city to do the same. Its aesthetic was clearly inspired by Holmstrom's training as a cartoonist, featuring bold, colourful drawings and titles.

Fanzines did not just thrive in the underground, as underground culture was quickly converted into a trend by the workings of capitalist society. 'Like punk itself, fanzines moved from positions of independence to rapid co-option into the mainstream,' Triggs notes.[63] Its aesthetics were adopted by various fashion houses, magazines and musicians, and for many, punk was over as quickly as it began.[64] Below the surface, however, the punk mentality continued (and continues) to live on in various other music genres and subcultures. Punk turned DIY into a lifestyle and showed that anyone who wanted could get their word out, unfettered and uncensored.

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58 The term genzine is generally used to refer to zines written for the general public, so without any explicit content. See 'Genzine (glossary term)', *Fanlore*, n.d. <http://fanlore.org/wiki/Genzine_(glossary_term)> (7 April, 2015).

59 K. Resch, 'My 30 Years in Star Trek Fandom', in S. Butler and J. Sinclair, *The Celebration Zine* (West Hills, CA: K/S Press, 2005). Parts of this essay were reprinted on *Fanlore*: 'My 30 Years in Trek Fandom', *Fanlore*, n.d. <http://fanlore.org/wiki/My_30_Years_in_Trek_Fandom> (7 April, 2015).

60 Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, pp. 104-105.

61 Atton, *Alternative Media*, p. 38.

62 Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, pp. 158-160.

63 T. Triggs, 'Scissors and Glue: Punk Fanzines and the Creation of a DIY Aesthetic', p. 72

64 Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, p. 168.

FIGURE 2 (LEFT): Cover of the third issue of *Sniffin' Glue*.[65]
FIGURE 3 (RIGHT): Cover of the first issue of *Punk*.[66]

Explosion: riot grrrl and the metazine

The 1980s saw the reinvention of the free market, as promoted by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. Trigss explains: 'along with this new financial liberation came the concept of selling a lifestyle, [...] consumption became cultural practice, and fanzine producers both capitalized on this and critiqued it mercilessly.'[67] Zines continued to document changes in the music scene, covering the emergence of post-punk, rave, and grunge, and also commented on the conservative administration and increasingly invasive capitalism. As more people had access to the technology to produce zines (mainly photocopiers, typewriters, and later desktop publishing), other genres quickly gained popularity, such as perzines (personal zines), fashion zines, thrift zines, sports zines and consumer zines.[68] By the start of the 1990s, however, many of zines and zine writers had seeped into the mainstream, and commercial enterprises discovered the spending power of this group of alternative youths, capitalising on them by publishing zines as part of their marketing campaigns.[69] Down in the core of the scene, however, there was a great suspicion of these so-called sell-outs.[70] Two evolutions

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65   M. Perry, *Sniffin' Glue*, 3 (1976) <http://www.bl.uk/learning/images/21cc/counterculture/large8679.html> (7 January, 2015).
66   J. Holmstrom and G. Dunn, *Punk*, 1 (1976) <http://www.punkmagazine.com/images/vault_images/punk_01/punk01cov-230x300.gif> (7 January, 2015).
67   Triggs, *Fanzines: The DIY Revolution*, p. 87.
68   M.A. Ferris, 'Resisting Mainstream Media: Girls and the Act of Making Zines', *Canadian Woman Studies*, 4 (2001), p. 51.
69   Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, p. 172.
70   Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, p. 186.

specifically contributed to the rise in popularity of zines during this period: the foundation of the riot grrrl movement and the formation of a wide, international, cross-subject network of zinesters that followed, as we shall see, from a new zine that would review other zines.

Like in the punk age, a new wave in the alternative music scene went hand in hand with a rise in zine production. Over the course of the 1980s, female punk members had grown unhappy with the position of women in the punk scene, and these sentiments were crystallised in riot grrrl, a movement founded in 1991 in Washington, D.C. that was (and still is) inspired by the punk ideology and third-wave feminism. Duncombe explains riot grrrl as 'a network of young women linked by zines, bands, and their anger.'[71] These women felt they had been left out of the punk scene, with men dominating zine production and band membership, and wanted to communicate with their peers on their own terms. Riot grrrl members used the medium of zines as a way to express their feelings about the patriarchal society, the punk scene, and other personal experiences and opinions. The opening line of the riot grrrl manifesto expresses this desire to talk about the things that mattered specifically to these women: 'BECAUSE us girls crave records and books and fanzines that speak to US that WE feel included in and can understand in our own ways.'[72] However, next to resisting the mainstream, riot grrrl zines also used and appropriated it. Like with punk zines, magazine articles and columns were copied and pasted in the zines, but, as Triggs argues, 'unlike the readers of girls' magazines, the riot grrrl producers are in a proactive position of empowerment.'[73] They took the mainstream and turned it into something of their own, just like punk did years earlier. Duncombe notes that riot grrrl members used zines as 'a forum for self-expression' and quotes a line from the riot grrrl manifesto that follows Duncombe's vision of zinemaking in its entirety: 'BECAUSE we must take over the means of production in order to create our own meanings.'[74]

Another contributor to the exponential rise in zine production in the 1980s and 1990s was the introduction of metazines. Zine culture had by now become so extensive that there was a need for some sort of organisation. Mike Gunderloy provided just that in his *Factsheet Five*, a zine that reviewed other zines. The metazine was founded in 1982 and each issue contained alphabetic listings of all the zines that people had sent to Gunderloy to review, printed along with their price and ordering information. Additionally, *Factsheet Five* contained articles, interviews and columns on the zine scene.[75] Figure 4 on the next page gives a sample of the diversity of zines featured. Word quickly spread on Gunderloy's project, and his (physical) mailbox was inundated with new zines. 'You'd have to see it to believe it. It was as if Mike were a one-man Google back in the 1980s,' a writer commented.[76] For Spencer, the importance of *Factsheet Five* is undeniable, as it caused zine writers to be 'distinctly aware of each other on a much larger scale.'[77] Soon enough, however, Gunderloy became so overwhelmed that he eventually quit and sold his zine in 1991, after having published 44 issues. Its new owner, R. Seth Friedman, decided to no longer feature every zine that was sent in, but instead make his own selection.

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71   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 71.
72   Riot Grrrl, 'Riot grrrl is…', in S. Duncombe (ed.), *Cultural Resistance Reader* (London/New York, NY: Verso, 2002), p. 178.
73   Triggs, *Fanzines: The DIY Revolution*, p. 132.
74   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 72; Riot Grrrl, 'Riot grrrl is…', in S. Duncombe (ed.), *Cultural Resistance Reader* (London/New York, NY: Verso, 2002), p. 178.
75   'Factsheet Five', *ZineWiki: The Independent Media Wikipedia*, 1 December, 2011 <http://zinewiki.com/Factsheet_Five> (26 December, 2014).
76   D. Sauter, 'The Beatles in Factsheet Five Magazine', *Unarchy, and a varietie of motley thoughts… from Donald's head*, n.d. <http://www.donaldsauter.com/beatles-factsheet-five.htm> (24 February, 2015).
77   Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, p. 33.
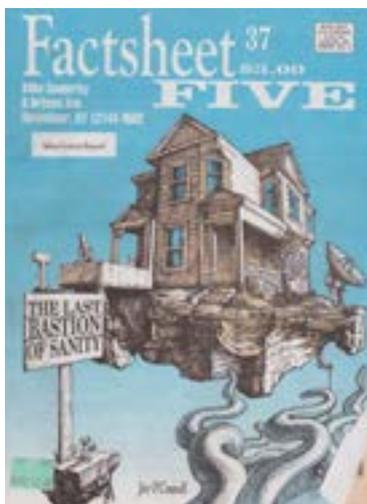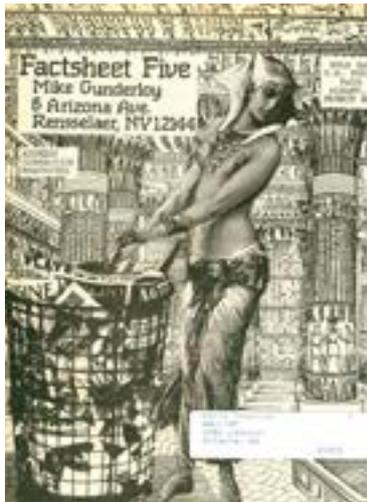
THE 1990 NEW MOON DIRECTORY ($3.75 from Eric L. Watts, 346 Carpenter Dr. #51, Atlanta, GA 30328-5030): This is an annual zine tracking all of the amateur press associations that Eric can find info on, nearly 200 in all (not all still in existence). Whether you want to discuss comics or sex or Star Trek or nothing in particular, NMD can link you up with a group of friendly folks interested in doing the same. (D-37r/MG)

NEWS & LETTERS Vol. 35 #8-9 ($2.50/yr from 59 E. Van Buren #707, Chicago, IL 60605): A Marxist-Humanist tabloid, which constantly lays out the correct line for the faithful. #8 opens with the war in the Mideast, which of course "demands total opposition". Later on they excerpt some of their guru Raya Dunayevskaka's writings on war and how to stop it. (T-12t/MG)

THE NEW SETTLER INTERVIEW #53 (75¢ from PO Box 730, Willits, CA 95490): The lead article in this alternative agricultural lifestyle zine is on a fellow who uses bacteria from horse-manure to compost toxic waste. Then there's a feature on a couple who raise Maples. Loaded with scientific and practical detail, along with ecocentric verse and fiction, this is, as regards its specialised topics, a very superior product. (T-56t/JR)

NEWS FROM JOY BEFORE THE STORM #8 ($1? from Benedictine Tapes, W179 N8587 Village Ct. Suite 8, Menomonee Falls, WI 53051-2679): Gently subversive collection of pungent & left-critical news & opinion items culled from the mainstream media; the highlight was a long letter some girl penned in study-hall in 1943, xeroxed in full, which was mildly amusing. Some more original material might make this one take shape. (S-10/JR)

NEWSLETTER WITH NO NAME Vol.3 #1 ($6 yr. from R.K.West consulting, PO Box 8059, Mission Hills, CA 91346): APA for Mensa-related persons, full of (in the light of that disclosure) explicable articles, e.g., dividing your estate fairly by assigning, or subtracting concern-points for your heirs. Best dibs on the grave-goods to the highest scorer. Heartless. (S-8t/JR)

THE NEWS OF THE WATCHMEN Sept. 1990 (Donation from Universal Church of God, HC 67 Box 135, Mount Ida, AR 71957): End-times apocalyptic Christian argument. In the September issue they explain why we *can* know when the end is near, and that it is here. They also print the text of a letter they sent to George Bush, letting him know God's demands for the USA. Weird and wild. (D-34r/MG)

NEWS OF THE WEIRD #3-4 ($8/7 issues from Chuck Shepherd, PO Box 57141, Washington, DC 20037): More fun and frolics from the nation's foremost collector of strange clippings. #3 includes stories (all true) of deranged church maintenance men, a candidate listing his occupation as "alleged white-collar racketeer", and thousands of flying condoms, among other things. (S-4t/MG)

FIGURE 4 (ABOVE): Sample page from *Factsheet Five*, issue unknown (source suggests it dates from 1991).[78]

FIGURE 5 (TOP LEFT): *Factsheet Five* under Gunderloy, issue 20 (1986).[79]

FIGURE 6 (MIDDLE LEFT): *Factsheet Five* under Gunderloy, issue 37 (1990).[80]

FIGURE 7 (BOTTOM LEFT): *Factsheet Five* under Friedman, issue 55 (1995).[81]

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78   M. Gunderloy (ed.), *Factsheet Five,* unknown issue (1991?) <http://gwiep.net/wp/?p=3539> (3 March, 2015).

79   M. Gunderloy (ed.), *Factsheet Five*, 20 (1986) <http://livingarchive.doncampau.com/feature_articles/the-handmade-tale-by-kathleen-mcconnell> (3 March, 2015).

80   M. Gunderloy (ed.), *Factsheet Five*, 37 (1990) <http://livingarchive.doncampau.com/feature_articles/the-handmade-tale-by-kathleen-mcconnell> (3 March, 2015).

81   R.S. Friedman (ed.), *Factsheet Five*, 55 (1995) <http://livingarchive.doncampau.com/feature_articles/the-handmade-tale-by-kathleen-mcconnell> (3 March, 2015).

For Duncombe, this marked the end of '*Factsheet Five*'s hallowed tradition of zine egalitarianism.'[82] Regardless, *Factsheet Five* was incredibly popular—its print run went from 50 in the first year to a staggering 16,000 in the final year (1998)—prompting Friedman to start selling space to advertisers.[83] *Factsheet Five* entered new, commercial pathways, which was clearly reflected in its layout, as can be seen in the difference between Figures 5 and 6 and Figure 7 on the previous page. Duncombe feels ambivalent about these changes, stating that:

> Seth succeeded in both keeping Factsheet Five afloat and introducing it to new audiences, but only by adopting rules of mainstream media and culture. The result is mixed. As a consumer catalog that opened up the world of zines to people who had never seen a zine before, it was a success; as representing a culture born in opposition to the mainstream consumer culture, it was an abomination. (…) Rather than a tale of good and evil, the transformation of Factsheet Five from zine to magazine or, rather, catalog underscores the difficulties of trying to break out of a subcultural ghetto into a larger society dominated by capital.[84]

The evolution of *Factsheet Five* can be used as a general example of the influence of mainstream culture on zines and vice versa. On the one hand, the mainstream can help in getting new audiences to zines who would otherwise not have discovered them, but it can also result in mainstream outlets taking over elements from zine culture and aesthetics, reducing it to a fashion, much to the dismay of zine editors. To illustrate this ambigious relationship, Duncombe quotes the editor of a lesbian sports zine turned glossy, who turned to advertising in order to reach a wider audience in the hope that it might help other struggling teenagers.[85] Similar is the story of *Maximumrocknroll*, one of the first punk zines, whose editors decided to become professional in order to contribute to some much-needed variation in the offer of music magazines.[86] *Factsheet Five* may have been a 'sellout' in a somewhat narrow vision of zine and underground culture, but it did succeeded in establishing a network between different (groups of) zinesters, which greatly facilitated distribution. Combined with the continued spread of copy machines, this network lead to an exponential rise in zine production in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with an estimated 20.000 to 50.000 copies circulating by the mid-1990s.[87] In the words of Spencer:

> Though the zine had been an underground phenomenon of the late 70s it seemed even more relevant in the 90s. It was at this point that the zine found its ideal audience. Most people now had access to a photocopier and networks were already in place, and at last the rest of society began to understand what the word 'zine' meant.[88]

This boom in zines also fostered the rise of dedicated zine distribution centres, called distros, which became more widespread, especially in the United States, and also played an important role in '[linking] the community together,' Spencer adds.[89]

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82   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 168.
83   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, pp. 168-169.
84   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 170.
85   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 172.
86   Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, pp. 145-146. The independent (maga)zine is still published monthly. See <http://maximumrocknroll.com> (12 April, 2015).
87   R.S. Friedman, in J. Peder Zane, 'Now, the Magazines of 'Me'', *The New York Times*, 14 May, 1995 <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/05/14/weekinreview/ideas-trends-now-the-magazines-of-me.html> (10 April, 2015).
88   Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, p. 145.
89   Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, pp. 36-37.

Demise? The zine in the 21ᵗʰ century

It would appear that the introduction of the consumer computer, connected to the worldwide web, nullified the need to create zines. The digital age provides a plethora of publishing opportunities, open to anyone with access to a computer and a basic level of digital literacy, available cheaply or even for free. Digital technologies that could replace communication on paper were introduced gradually. First, there were electronic bulletin boards and e-mail, later blogs and social media, all allowing people to quickly and easily exchange ideas, thoughts, or creations, regardless of their location. As a result, in being an open platform for (relatively) free discussion and expression, online communication channels have taken over a number of the inherent characteristics of zines. *Fanlore*, a fandom wiki platform suggests that the World Wide Web in particular can be compared to (fan)zines, stating that 'in the absence of any other solid medium, print fanzines are a record of what everyday people around the world were thinking and discussing before the Internet.'[90] Important differences are the incredible speed of communication, its fairly low cost, and, the fact that online, the so-called long tail of the Internet has made it easier than ever to find people with similar interests, regardless of how niche they are.[91] Consequently, online content can reach a possible audience that far exceeds that of often hard to discover and even harder to find paper zines. The early days of the Internet saw the introduction of a new, digital, zine format: the e-zine, and even though a group of dedicated zinesters stayed true to the paper format, it does appear that the 'traditional' p-zine, produced in roughly the same way as in the pre-Internet days gradually disappeared. However, the format was quickly picked up by a new group of youngsters: artists, and they have again moulded the zine according to their specific context.

The transition of zines to the Internet started in the early 1990s, when the arrival of democratic computer technology prompted many zinesters to publish their zines online rather than on paper. Stripped from their recognisable format and DIY lay-out, e-zines, especially the ones that did not follow out of p-zines, were perhaps even more difficult to define than their tangible counterparts. For zinester Jerod Pore, the intentions were more important than the form, as he stated that '[l]ike the paper-based zines, we call them zines if they have passion and quirkiness and personality and aren't out to make a profit. You know'em when you see'em.'[92] At this time, search engines were still in their infancy, which made these first adopter e-zines very difficult to find. In 1992, on a quest to spread zine and e-zine knowledge, Pore set up *alt.zines*, an online zine newsgroup that gathered all sorts of meta information on zines and zine making. A year later, John Labovitz started *E-Zine List*, a website that catalogued all e-zines Labovitz could find, following the spirit of Gunderloy's *Factsheet Five*. He defined e-zines—equally vaguely as Pore—as zines that are 'distributed partially or solely on electronic networks like the Internet.'[93] This definition only seems to make sense when discussing past p-zines that turned into e-zines. If the zine started online, it seems that it was generally classified as an e-zine if the editors gave it that classification. E-zines came in all sorts of formats: from simple text files stored on an ftp server to websites with articles, online journals, and e-mail newsletters. Labovitz' *E-Zine List*

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90 'Zine', *Fanlore*, n.d. <http://fanlore.org/wiki/Zine> (24 December, 2014).

91 The long tail is a term popularised by Chris Anderson, who argues that in the digital age, it is better for businesses to offer less of more objects, as good search and recommendation algorithms can connect people to items or information tailored to their specific needs or interests. See C. Anderson, 'The Long Tail', *Wired*, October 2004 <http://archive.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html> (29 November, 2014).

92 J. Pore, 'Jerod Pore's FAQ', *The alt.zines DMZ*, 13 November, 1995 <http://altzines.tripod.com/jerod.html> (16 January, 2015).

93 J. Labovitz, 'About the E-Zine-List', *John Labovitz' E-Zine-List*, n.d. <http://web.archive.org/web/20140424170919/http://www.e-zine-list.com/about.shtml> (16 January, 2015).

was updated until 2005, and in the meantime, many other e-zine websites and newsgroups had popped up online, some of which even exist today. Jerod Pore, for example, was the editor of a digital version of *Factsheet Five*.[94] Such e-metazines were similar to their paper equivalents, with the obvious benefit being that they could be updated constantly, and could be searched using keywords.

For a glimpse into this brief period in Internet history, the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine is a useful tool to track down e-zines that were listed on *E-Zine List*. One such example is *Furious Green Thoughts* (1995-1998), 'a quarterly electronic magazine presenting "unconvetional"(?) material on politics and social (and un-social) matters.'[95]
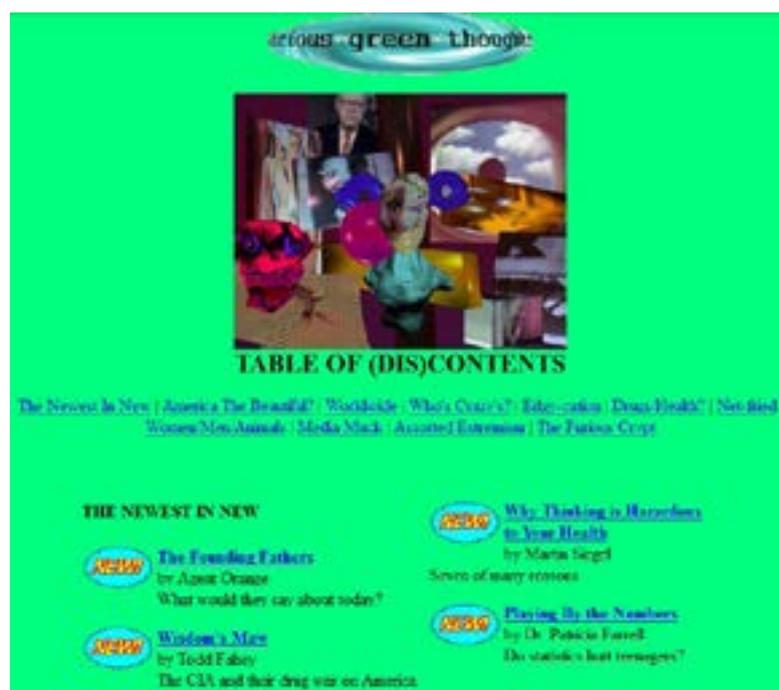

FIGURE 8: Screenshot of the e-zine *Furious Green Thoughts*, retrieved using the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine.[96]

Regardless of efforts to make e-zines retrievable in an age before Google, they remained relatively below the radar. Since the arrival of Web 2.0, blogs and social media sites appear to have taken over as the main outlets for vernacular publication and discussion for most people, though they arguably lack the charm of a personally designed and coded webpage dedicated to a specific, niche interest.[97] Moreover, social media platforms eliminate the need of editors, as everyone can contribute (or not) as they wish—assuming that they are not censored by either the platform owners or national governments. This makes for a more equal discussion, though it also allows anyone to vent their frustrations, on-topic or not. Finally, such online publishing is, or can at least feel, a lot more public than writing for a zine that has an edition of 50 copies.

Perhaps these arguments contribute to the fact that people are still publishing p-zines today. In 2008, Duncombe published a new edition of his study on zines with a new (albeit brief) chapter titled 'Do Zines Still Matter?', in which he observes that:

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94   An example of this is *Broken Pencil*, a website and magazine for independent arts and zines that was founded in 1995. See <http://www.brokenpencil.com> (3 March, 2015).

95   L.N. Clarke and S. McLaughlin, 'Who and What is Furious? (AND WHO CARES?!)', *Furious Green Thoughts* (n.d.) <http://web.archive.org/web/20041010232048/http://furious.com/mission.html> (16 January, 2015).

96   L.N. Clarke and S. McLaughlin, *Furious Green Thoughts*, n.d. <http://web.archive.org/web/19990417210633/http://furious.com/toc.html> (3 March, 2015).

97   A. Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print: The Mutation of Publishing since 1894* (Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2012), p. 98.

> More than a decade later [after first publishing his book], zines are still being published and my definition, I think, still holds: zines are the creative outpourings of an underground world that passes below the radar of most people.[98]

Indeed, one glance at the last chapter of Triggs' *Fanzines* proves that p-zines are still abundantly present in the digital age.[99] But if the Internet has largely taken over the role of the zine, why still publish? For Duncombe, making zines in the digital age is 'merely an exercise in nostalgia,' suggesting that their value as a powerful and fairly direct communication channel has somewhat diminished, and people are now publishing zines to reminisce about a long gone, pre-digital age.[100] Jenny Freedman, librarian at the Barnard Zine Collection in New York, does not agree: she sees intrinsic value in the p-zine format that cannot be reproduced digitally. In an essay titled 'Zines are not Blogs', Freedman names a number of characteristics that make blogging inherently different: blogs can be published immediately, they can be changed or removed at any time, and they allow interactivity: all elements that do not hold true for static, printed zines. Moreover, blogs can never fully be called one's own, as bloggers usually rely on a platform that allows them to publish their articles. These platforms have the power to remove anything that might be in violation with their terms and conditions. 'Part of what makes zines what they are and what makes them so great is the total freedom not afforded to, but taken by the zinester,' she adds, rephrasing Duncombe's thoughts on zines in the punk age.[101]

Being the result of a nostalgic act, Duncombe finds that the layout of contemporary zines does not differ heavily from the look of photocopied zines in the 1980s and 1990s. Spencer similarly notices that 'many individuals remain deeply committed to the zine aesthetic.'[102] Both authors were seemingly not aware that, while a dedicated community was and still is committed to publishing zines that look similar to those of previous decades, a new group had discovered the zine format: artists. Triggs, two years after Spencer, does mention this, noting that recent zines appeared to look sleeker and more like artists' books. In the last ten years, the artist community has picked up the zine format, adapting it to their aesthetics and needs with the technology available to them, with the result that their publications look quite different from twentieth-century zines.[103] There is a strong emphasis on the zine as a tangible object, which might be the result of an increased importance given to the notion of 'tactility', with zinesters using letterpress and screen printing techniques. As a result, Triggs argues, '[t]he immediacy offered by earlier cut-and-paste and photocopied zines was replaced by a more intentional and time-based act of making.'[104] This completes Freedman's argument above that zines in the digital age are deliberately not immediate. Many zines today show careful attention to binding, paper, and

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98   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 209.

99   Triggs, *Fanzines: The DIY Revolution*, pp. 205-247. The mane examples in *Fanzines* prove that a lot of paper zines still continued or even started during the transition to a digital, networked society, with zines covering topics such as how-to guides, being queer, veganism, personal issues, fashion, comics, art, feminism, and so on.

100   Duncombe, *Notes From Underground*, p. 210.

101   J. Freedman, 'Zines Are Not Blogs: A Not Unbiased Analysis', *Barnard Zine Library*, n.d. <https://zines.barnard.edu/about/notblogs> (2 January, 2015).

102   Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, p. 186.

103   But even in this group, inspiration is still drawn from pre-digital zines. For example, photozine publisher The Photocopy Club, based in Brighton and London, publishes art, but its aesthetics and approach have definitely been inspired by punk. See <http://www.thephotocopyclub.com> (8 April, 2015).

104   Triggs, *Fanzines: The DIY Revolution*, p. 206. With this quote in mind, it is interesting to reread Freedman's arguments on why zines are not blogs, as she mentions that immediacy is an inherent characteristic of blogging, while, indeed, in the 1970s and 1980s music scene, zines were one of the first channels youngsters would turn to if they wanted to read about new music.

printing methods. Librarian Laura Schwartz agrees with Triggs that the notion of tactility has become increasingly important, as 'everything that we deal with is digital and electronic,' making us long for things that are tangible, and thus, perhaps, more meaningful.[105] In the same article, zinester Michael Sieben sums up the position of the zine in the digital age as following:

> The Internet appeared and blogs sort of took over the role of zines for a time, but they've had a comeback in the hands of artists and designers. They are still used to share people's personal ideas, but I think there's a new generation of makers who are finding the idea of making a physical publication on their own really refreshing after years of working with computers.[106]

Does this mean that the rebellious undertone has vanished in artist zines, and that they are, perhaps, also created from a (false?) sense of nostalgia to a pre-digital age? It might be a bit more complex than that. In 2004, Rauch predicted that the 'momentary infactuation' with online publishing might soon dwindle, causing zinesters to 'reevaluate and revalue print'.[107] As a result, echoing Freedman and Triggs, Cramer argues that 'zines are made because they are not blogs.'[108] They are certainly not old-fashioned, like some people might suggest, or 'retro', but, rather, an answer to the digital age. 'They [...] exist in the frame of the Internet as something they choose to be not, or choose to be an alternative to,' Cramer notes in an essay titled 'Analog Media as (Anti-)Social Networking'.[109] This is symptomatic of what Ludovico calls 'post-digital publishing' in which, to paraphrase Cramer, artists revert to print because it is more succesful in conveying a message than a digital equivalent.[110] It is not just a sense of longing for something tangible that drives these people, but, rather, the conviction that blogs, or other forms of online publication, simply do not succeed in transferring their ideas. This does not mean that contemporary zines are made by Luddites, it is quite the opposite: they are a direct result of digital media, having been produced because of and using digital technologies. The notion of a post-digital society will be discussed in more detail later, but it is good to keep it in mind before starting the next chapter.

A considerable part of this group of contemporary zinemakers is made up by photographers, who appear to have discovered the zine format as a good, easy, or quick way to get their work out. In *Zine Soup*, a 2009 collection of international zines, one photozine editor mentions that 'what makes zines a worthwhile endeavour in our digitised world is that you really have to put time and thought into them for them to be any good at all.'[111] Whether photozines are, as Sieben, Schwartz, Triggs, Cramer and this

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105   This longing for the tangible could also explain the recent popularity of vinyl records and analogue photography. E. Dearman, 'UT alumnus Michael Sieben leads zine talk', *The Daily Texan* (5 March 2014) <http://www.dailytexanonline.com/2014/03/05/ut-alumnus-michael-sieben-leads-zine-talk> (9 January 2015).

106   Dearman, 'UT alumnus Michael Sieben leads zine talk'.

107   J. Rauch, 'Hands-on Communication: Zine Circulation Rituals and the Interactive Limitations of Web Self-Publishing', *Popular Communication*, 2 (2004), p. 167.

108   F. Cramer, 'Le parole a... Florian Cramer: Post-digital Aesthetics', *Jeu de Paume*, 1 May, 2013 <http://lemagazine.jeudepaume.org/2013/05/florian-cramer-post-digital-aesthetics> (27 February, 2015).

109   F. Cramer, 'Analog Media as (Anti-)Social Networking', in J. Funke, S. Riekeles, A. Broeckmann (eds.), *Proceedings on the 16th International Symposium on Electronic Art* [Conference Proceedings] (Berlin: Revolver Publishing, 2010), p. 230 <http://www.isea2010ruhr.org/files/redaktion/pdf/isea2010_proceedings_p22_cramer.pdf> (22 March, 2015).

110   A. Ludovico, 'Post-Digital Publishing, Hybrid and Processual Objects in Print', *post-digital research*, 21 December, 2013 <http://post-digital.projects.cavi.dk/?p=637> (8 April, 2015); Cramer, 'Le parole a... Florian Cramer: Post-digital Aesthetics'.

111   A. Martinez, in E. Alsbo, M. Clausen, S. Højbo, *Zine Soup: A Collection of International Zines and Self-Published Art Books* (Copenhagen: TTC Gallery, 2009), p. 147.

particular photozine editor suggest, influenced by a new-found longing for tangible objects and spurred by our increasingly digital environment is difficult to establish, and I will return to this in the third chapter. In any case, since photography and photography publishing have quite an extensive history, it seems safe to assume that fanzine history cannot account for the birth photozines alone.

This chapter has sought to outline how, throughout seven decades zine production has adapted to new technologies that became available to the wider audience. What began as cheap, simple, mimeographed publications dedicated to niche fan subjects grew out to be an easily adaptable medium for large communities of youngsters that evolved along with consumer technology. Whether they were published by science fiction fans, punks, LGBT people or teenage girls, zines were always a platform for free, uncensored expression, and practically anyone who felt left out by mainstream media could find their voice in zinemaking. When more people had access to the World Wide Web, it appeared that paper zines would eventually die out, but this has not happened, though things have changed. Whereas zines used to sypmbolise immediac, supported by an unpolished, DIY aesthetic, they now appear to do the exact opposite: offer a moment of undistracted focus, drawing attention to its materiality. As we will see in the third chapter, with contemporary zines, the digital and the tangible work alongside each other, in a symbiosis of sorts. The next chapter will look at how digital technology influenced the photography and photobook world at large, resulting in a book in self-published photobooks. This evolution can serve to explain why photozines in particular have appeared so extensively.

Chapter 2: The golden age of the photobook

We've got to stop thinking of ourselves as photographers. We're publishers.

John Stenmayer[112]

The previous chapter looked at the history of the zine, from its fandom origins, through its role as a vehicle for political thought in the 1970s punk scene and its eventual explosion into various genres in the 1990s, to its challenged position at the start of the digital age. It discussed how by creating zines, and thus circumventing traditional, mediated outlets, zinesters took on an active role in the field of cultural production, and how throughout the decades, zines evolved along with the technology that was available to their creators. The arrival of blogs and social media since the turn of the century have (re)introduced the concept of DIY to the masses. New and affordable technologies made it easier than ever to create custom objects, and the World Wide Web provides platforms for sales, promotion and discussion of handmade goods. In the digital age, Jenkins' notion of participatory culture, which he first researched in the context of fan culture, has gained a much wider reach.[113] As Kuznetsov and Paulos found in their investigation of online DIY platforms, '[a]ccessibility and decentralisation [have] enabled large communities to form around the transfer of DIY information, attracting individuals who are curious, passionate and/or heavily involved in DIY work.'[114]

This shift can be witnessed all across the media field, with previously passive consumers of information taking on a more active role, much like in zine culture. In the digital age, Rosen argues, 'the people formerly known as the audience' have been enabled to take control over their media consumption.[115] In the publishing field specifically, access to online production and distribution models, combined with cheap digital printing and the possibility of print-on-demand, which requires no upfront investment, sparked a boom in self-published works. Through self-publishing, photographers in particular appear to have found a way to experiment with the format of the book, in an ongoing quest for the optimal way to transfer their (artistic) vision. As a result, many critics have declared the present

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112 J. Stenmayer, in S. Mayes, 'Toward a New Documentary Expression', *Aperture*, 214 (2014), <http://www.aperture.org/blog/toward-new-documentary-expression> (10 February, 2015).

113 Jenkins has researched this broadening of participatory culture as a result of media convergence. See H. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture* (New York, NY/London: New York University Press, 2006).

114 S. Kuznetsov & E. Paulos, 'Rise of the Expert Amateur: DIY Projects, Communities, and Cultures', in A. Blandford, *Proceedings of the 6th Nordic Conference on Human-Computer Interaction: Extending Boundaries* [Conference Proceedings] (New York, NY: ACM, 2010), p. 2.

115 J. Rosen, 'The People Formerly Known as the Audience', *Pressthink*, 27 June, 2006 <http://archive.pressthink.org/2006/06/27/ppl_frmr.html> (11 April, 2015).

time as the (new) 'golden age of the photobook.'[116]

It is quite difficult to estimate the scope of this evolution, as a lot of books are advertised and sold solely through the websites of the photographer or independent publisher behind the work, and these are not always easy to track down. One collection can serve as an illustration of both the number of and variety in photobooks out there. The Indie Photobook Library is a collection founded in 2010 by Larissa Lecleir, which accepts all self-published and independently published photobooks, a policy similar to that of *Factsheet Five*. Since its inception, Lecleir has gathered over 1,700 independently published books and zines.[117] If this number does not seem like all that much, it is worth considering that Lecleir asks photographers to send her a (free) physical copy of a usually fairly limited print run, so that they can travel with her to talks and exhibitions. As a result, it seems safe to assume that the actual number of self-published photobooks out there is actually much higher.

This chapter will discuss the rise in independent photobooks that started in the first decade of the new millennium. It seems that this evolution is the second half of the story of contemporary photozines, since, as we saw at the end of the previous chapter, photographers were the most recent group to appropriate the format of the zine, thus injecting new life into it. I will first investigate the position of photobooks in the publishing field, exploring if and how we can consider them as artists' books. This will provide a framework to consider photobooks and photozines together. Next, two sections will shed more light on the role of new, accessible and democratic media in the photobook field. I will first elaborate on how the digital age enabled the public, in this case photographers, to self-publish their own work, and finally, I will briefly explain how digital technologies have transformed photography as a whole. The third and final chapter will then discuss in more detail the evolution of the photozine as a result of fanzine history and developments in photobook publishing.

In the following analysis I refer to both self-publishers and independent publishing houses, as in the photography scene the lines between these are often blurry. Many independent publishers work with very small teams: Little Brown Mushroom (St. Paul, Minnesota, founded in 2008), for example, has a team of five people, while Akina Books (London, founded in 2012) is run by a couple. Moreover, some independent publishers are one-man-enterprises: The Velvet Cell (London/Taipei, founded in 2011), is mostly run by photographer Eanna de Freine, who also publishes his own work. On the other hand, some photographers who self-publish without an official imprint work together with a team. An example of this is the successful book *Afronauts* (2012), for which photographer Christina de Middel gathered a small production team. In summary, whether a book is published under the label 'self-published' or under the name of a small publisher does not necessarily have much impact on the publishing process. What is more important is that these publishers all work quite differently from traditional (art) publishers, as will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

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116   For example, this statement was the motive behind a 2012 exhibition in The Cleveland Museum of art, which was the first 'to focus on the impact of print-on-demand publishing on contemporary photographic practice.' See 'DIY: Photographers & Books', *The Cleveland Museum of Art*, n.d. <http://www.clevelandart.org/events/exhibitions/diy-photographers-books> (7 February, 2015).

117   L. Lecleir, 'About the IPL', I*ndie Photobook Library*, n.d. <http://www.indiephotobooklibrary.org/about-the-ipl> (22 December, 2014).

The photobook as artists' book

Photobooks have a long tradition in the publishing field, yet they occupy a confusing position.[118] It can be helpful to investigate if we can consider contemporary photobooks as artists' books, as this might have important implications for their definition and *raison d'être*. In her seminal work on artists' books, Drucker notes that artists' books 'use structure and format as part of the content, rather than merely as instruments for delivering meaning in an effective or eye-catching way.'[119] In other words, the content of an artists' book enters in a conversation with its form, in order to investigate the 'bookness' of the work, a term which Drucker explains as 'its identity as a set of aesthetic functions, cultural operations, formal conceptions, and metaphysical spaces.'[120] Since the format is part of the artists' book as a complete, independent artwork, these pubilcations are impossible to translate to other media forms. As Carrión describes it: the book is an 'autonomous space-time sequence.'[121] This definition goes beyond simply making a 'beautiful' book that shows attention to typography and material, but rather turns the book into the work of art itself. Consequently, books that simply contain images of artworks (and/or text) that use the book as a medium for presentation but do not engage with the formal structure of the book, for example monographs, cannot be considered as artists' books.

Artists' books draw on various strands of publishing history, argues Drucker, including those of independent literary publishing, early twentieth-century experimental publishers, and the *livre d'artiste*: the 'beautiful', deluxe book mentioned above, with which it is often confused.[122] This complex history makes it difficult to pinpoint specific elements that grant a book this special status.[123] There is no checklist that can establish if a book is an artists' book, and some books balance on the boundaries. Indeed, Drucker's definition is intentionally vague, aiming to uncover 'a zone of activity', rather than a black-and-white definition that might exclude certain works.[124] This is particularly the case for photography books, which Drucker considers as a 'crossover form.' Her examples include famous works like Robert Frank's *The Americans* (1959) and Walker Evans and James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941).[125] These books play with the format of the book in terms of sequencing, juxtapositions, movement and other artistic experiment, but were published through commercial pathways, thus with the aim of making money. Nevertheless, Drucker concludes that, as 'they broke with the formal conventions of earlier book production,' these photobooks can still be considered as artists' books, though with a trade audience.

While Drucker focuses on artists' books as 'a field which emerges with many spontaneous points of origin and originality' that covers the whole 20th century, Parr and Badger, and with them many others, are stricter in their definition. They consider one book, a photobook, as the first 'true' artists'

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118 Parr and Badger have spent years researching the photobook, which resulted in three impressive volumes that document and categorise photobook history from its beginnings in the 19th century. The latest volume, published in 2014, came to existence after the rise in popularity of independent photobook publishing. See M. Parr and G. Badger, *The Photobook: A History, Volume I* (London: Phaidon Press, 2004); M. Parr and G. Badger, *The Photobook: A History, Volume II* (London: Phaidon Press, 2006); M. Parr and G. Badger, *The Photobook: A History, Volume III* (London: Phaidon Press, 2014).

119 Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, p. 62.

120 Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, p. 14.

121 U. Carrión, 'The New Art of Making Books', in J. Lyons (ed.), *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook* (New York: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985), p. 31.

122 Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, pp. 4-15.

123 J. Drucker, 'Beyond Velveeta', *The Bonefolder*, 2(1), 2005, p. 10 <http://www.philobiblon.com/bonefolderBonefolderVol2 No1.pdf> (26 December, 2014).

124 Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, p. 1. Also see D. Higgins, 'A Preface', in J. Lyons (ed.), *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook* (New York: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985) p. 11.

125 Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, pp. 62-63.

book: Eduard Ruscha's *Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations* (1962).[126] Ruscha's most famous work excels in its discreteness, with a title that simply describes the contents of the book: 26 black-and-white photographs of 26 gasoline stations along the way from Los Angeles to Oklahoma City. What was so distinctive about Ruscha's books was that their design aimed to 'neutralize the physical and structural features of [the book] by making them as conventional and inconspicuous in material terms as possible.'[127] As Parr and Badger describe, Ruscha 'did not employ photography as a medium to be savoured for its formal, picture-making qualities, but as a system, a language or mnemonic that described an idea or event.'[128] Other photographers started doing the same, including Christian Boltanski, Sol LeWitt, and Hans Peter Feldmann.[129]

Ruscha's work falls under what Drucker calls 'democratic multiples': a somewhat charged term that draws on notions of affordability, access and reproducability. As technological advances created new tools for the printing and production of books in the 1960s, more and more people, like Ruscha, turned to the book format as a platform for exhibition. Democratic multiples were produced with as few intermediaries as possible, in order to stay close to the artist's original, individual idea, and to retain a close link with the audience.[130] In that sense, many considered them as the truest form of artists' books. The democratic multiple came to life in an era that was characterised by a high belief in societal change. However, its high production costs and the difficulty to find an audience, have caused the medium to fail, Drucker argues.[131] In her essay 'The Myth of the Artists' Book As A Democratic Multiple', she outlines what Carrión declared in 1979, Phillpot in 1989 and Cauley in 1990: the field of artists' books had become much like the institutionalised art world they were trying to fight.[132]

Regardless of her doubts about the democratic multiple, Drucker closed her essay by saying: 'Artists' books have failed to find a place as a democratic art form, at least up until now. But in the future—?'[133] Indeed, it appears that a lot of contemporary (independent) photobooks fit quite well in the vision of the democratic multiple: they are self-published and thus have fewer intermediaries, they are generally sold at affordable prices, and as they are sold online, they are in theory available to everyone. The World Wide Web has solved the difficult problem of distribution, possibly making the democratic multiple more democratic than ever. In any case, it is important to consider these independent photobooks as a class entirely different from other photobooks that most people are used to seeing. Perhaps a visual representation can clarify this issue. If you were to imagine a scale going from a publication being a trade book to it being an artists' book, photography books would be then found on all different levels. Towards the trade side of the scale, you would mostly find catalogues, monographs, and other works published by large, commercial companies. On the artists' book side you would then expect to see the works that question or engage with the format of the book, 'establishing new parameters for visual, verbal, graphic, photography, and synthetic conceptualization of the book as a work of art.'[134] Inbetween there would be all sorts of works that incorporate to a greater or lesser extent this notion of

126   Parr and Badger, *The Photobook: A History, Volume II*, pp. 131-132.
127   Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, p. 75.
128   Parr and Badger, *The Photobook: A History, Volume II*, p. 133.
129   Parr and Badger discuss work of these artists and others along with various spreads from their books. See Parr and Badger, *The Photobook: A History, Volume II*, pp. 134-167.
130   Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, pp. 69-88.
131   J. Drucker, 'The Myth of the Artists' Book As A Democratic Multiple', *ArtPapers*, 21 (1997)', pp. 10-13.
132   S. Cauley, 'Bookworks for the '90s', *Afterimage*, 25 (1998), pp. 12-13.
133   Drucker, 'The Myth of the Artists' Book As A Democratic Multiple', p. 13.
134   Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, p. 63.

investigating the book format. This blurriness of boundaries fits with Drucker's idea of artists' books as a field, rather than a clearly delimited category, but perhaps it is also the symptom of a new 'breed' of publishing. This is acknowledged by White, who rightfully remarks that 'the historical concept of the artist book is rarely if ever acknowledged by those who are independently producing and publishing books and related media using online networks and multi-nodal communities.'[135] White proposes the use of 'independent publishing', which I have also used in the introduction, as a more neutral and inclusive term to describe this new generation of publishers.[136] Publishers also tend to use this term to describe their work.

The transformation of (self-)publishing

The advent of the digital age has shaken up the publishing world, sparking an intense discussion among publishers, authors, and readers about the possible end of the book. Florian Cramer has called this discussion an 'ideological debate', with in one camp the 'new media evangelists', and in the other one 'people (usually from a fine-art or graphic-design background) who feel passionately about the tangible, material qualities of print.'[137] It is remarkable that this latter group has been publishing more printed matter than, perhaps, ever before, and this might not always be understood by others who strongly believe in the power of the digital.[138] In his study on the changes to the book industry in the digital age, Thompson warns for hasty conclusions and stresses that the changes in the publishing field are more of a 'quiet revolution.'[139] Twenty years after the introduction of the World Wide Web (and ten years after the publication of Thompson's study), it is undeniable that print still takes up an important, though perhaps somewhat changed, position in our lives, and that there is still room and desire for innovative approaches to printed matter. The boom in self-published photobooks is just one proof of that.

In his PhD dissertation on self-published photography books, Douglas Spowart remarks that 'digital technology brought about the emancipation of printing and publishing, positioning the book as a vehicle for personal communication and the flux for a new paradigm in photography, that of self-publishing.'[140] In other words, self-publishing a book, or even starting an independent publishing house, has become a much more viable and accessible option in the digital age, in terms of finance, production processes and distribution models. Moreover, publishing alone gives the author of the work an unprecedented freedom in the decision-making process. Print-on-demand (POD) services like

135   T. White, 'The Evolution of Artists' Publishing', *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America*, 33 (2014), p. 228.

136   White, 'The Evolution of Artists' Publishing', p. 229.

137   F. Cramer, in Ludovico, Pos*t-Digital Print*, p. 162.

138   A lecture of New Media professor Jay David Bolter in the Stedelijk Museum ended with a striking example of Cramer's dichotomy. In January 2015, Bolter discussed the remediation of the photography book in the context of an exhibition in the museum about contemporary photography projects that engage with the book format. In the discussions panel afterwards, one member of the audience asked the present artists why they had all chosen such a 'retro' approach, and whether this was a deliberate decision. The artists all agreed that they did not look at media as retro or contemporary, rather, for each project they embarked upon, they researched the best possible way to present it to the public. Bolter settled the difference in viewpoints by explaining that remediation can go in all directions, and does not necessarily have to constantly move forward. J.D. Bolter, 'On the Move: Image-Text-Print-Screen', *Stedelijk Museum*, 18 January, 2015 [Lecture].

139   J.B. Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age: The Transformation of Academic and Higher Education Publishing in Britain and the United States* (Cambridge/Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005), p. 405.

140   D.R. Spowart, *Self-publishing in the digital age: the hybrid photobook* [PhD thesis] (Brisbane, James Cook University: 2011), p. 106.
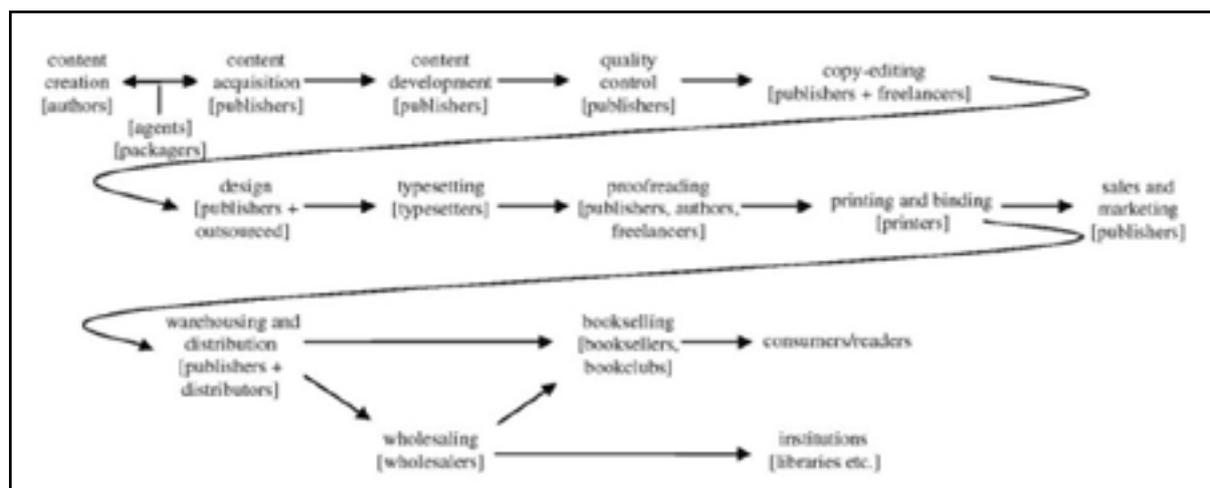
FIGURE 9: Thompson's publishing value chain.[141]

Blurb and Lulu have provided a broad public with an easy and cheap framework to self-publish and sell their work, though they might fall short in providing a complete distribution framework, as the audience of these platforms is very diverse, while photobooks themselves are quite niche.[142] As the books are printed on demand, no upfront financial investment is needed, though of course, the work has to be finished before being able to sell it (and before knowing for sure if it will sell). But even beyond these services, the accessibility of professional desktop publishing software has provided photographers with the tools for producing books, and it seems that most photographers prefer to have the control over the design and production offered by these tools, which have much more options than POD services. All the more so because the World Wide Web provides endless resources for information and inspiration, while at the same time functioning as platforms for distribution and promotion.

To see how self-publishing put the control back into the hands of the author, it can be helpful to look at Thompson's 'publishing value chain', which outlines all the steps in the traditional publishing process in which value is added.[143] When comparing this schedule to the practice of self-publishing, we can quickly see that this process, while going through more or less the same steps, works quite differently.

First of all, in self-publishing, the different roles outlined in the chain can be taken up by one single person with the right skills and expertise (or the willingness to experiment). Photographers who are used to working with graphic software should be equipped with the right technical skills to also use it for bookmaking purposes, and there are plenty of resources that will assist someone in do-it-yourself printing and binding techniques.[144] In some cases, it might be desirable or necessary to outsource one aspect, such as the design, printing, or binding. Nevertheless, in this case the self-publisher will still retain his decision-making power, with the added benefit of being able to pick someone specifically for the job. Computer technology also made it possible to take care of all but the final step of the creation stage (from content creation to printing and binding) in one single, digital environment. Sending files

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141 Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age*, p. 21

142 Moreover, these print-on-demand services, with limited design options, have opened an ongoing discussion in the photography scene, with on one side those who embrace its democratic price and ease of use, while on the other side those who wonder whether this ease of use and generic design makes it impossible to engage fully with the format of the book.

143 Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age*, p. 21.

144 In an introduction to the photobook prodcution process, Spowart suggests using Adobe Photoshop, a programme many photographers are familiar with, to design book spreads. See D.A. Spowart, 'Looking Good in Print', *Better Photography*, 73 (2013), p. 56. Regarding the material side of bookmaking, artist Keith A. Smith has written several guides on this process, focusing on various types of binding. See <http://www.keithsmithbooks.com> (3 February, 2015).

back and forth is extremely fast and relatively straightforward (considering both ends are working with the same software, or the file is converted to a more static digital format, like PDF), and as there are only few people involved, the steps become a lot more flexible, making it easier to go back to a previous stage to change something.[145]

Once the book is finished, the digital environment provides platforms and tools which have drastically simplified promotion and distribution (and, in the case of crowdfunded projects, financing). These tools can be grouped under the moniker of Web 2.0, a term that has become somewhat vague as a result of its overuse, but which online photography promotor Andy Adams interprets (referencing Wikipedia) as 'web applications that facilitate participatory information sharing and collaboration on the World Wide Web.'[146] Moreover, the open nature of the Internet links to Anderson's notion of the long tail, which states that the World Wide Web has made it possible to cater to even the smallest niches. In the words of Anderson: '[t]he PC made everyone a producer or publisher, but it was the Internet that made everyone a distributor.'[147] In the pre-digital age, even if someone had a book ready and printed, getting it from concept to final, sold product really required expertise that was generally only available through a publishing house. That this can now, quite easily even, be done by the photographers themselves, plays a large part in the popularity of self-publishing.[148]

In terms of sales, marketing and promotion, most artists have a personal website which outlines their recent projects, while they use social media to keep in touch with their audience and other self-publishing photographers to discuss and promote their work. This is facilitated by a number of people and projects that actively promote the independent photobooks. Perhaps one of the most informal examples are a number of groups on Facebook, most notably the PhotoBook group (7.359 members) and the Flak Photo Books group (5.248 members).[149] In these groups, using the interface of Facebook, members can post any photobook-related information. The Flak Photo Books group was set up by Andy Evans, who runs Flak Photo, 'an online photography channel that presents the work of artists, curators, bookmakers and photo organizations to a global audience.'[150] In 2009, Adams organised a cross-blog discussion about the future of the photobook.[151] Somewhat similar is Self Publish, Be Happy (SPBH), an 'organisation […] that collects, studies and celebrates self-published photobooks through an ongoing programme of workshops, live events and on/offline projects.'[152]

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145 On a side note, computers have eliminated the need for a separate step for typesetting, and the layout of the text is generally done by the designer. Or, in the case of books that are mostly, or only, text-based, the typesetter also takes care of the design. See Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age:*, pp. 409-410.

146 A. Adams, in S. Mayes [moderator], 'The Future of Photobooks', *Publish Your Photography Book*, 4 June, 2011 [panel discussion] <http://www.andyadamsphoto.com/photobooks> (5 February, 2015).

147 C. Anderson, *The Long Tail: Or How the Future of Business is Selling Less of More* (New York, NY: Hyperion Books, 2008), p. 55.

148 This shift has opened up a somewhat existential debate in the publishing field about the role, or, in Thompson's words, 'added value' of the publisher. Thompson provides a useful insight in the functions of the (traditional) publisher, but it should be clear that in the field of artistic, or creative production, there is a lot more flexibility than in the more rigid academic publishing field he uses as a context. As a result, it does appear that, especially for publications with a smaller print run, these functions can all be carried out by the artist himself. See Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age:*, pp. 24-26.

149 Groups on Facebook are communities focused on a specific interest, hobby, topic… They can be either open (anyone can see the content, but only members can contribute) or closed (you can only see the content and contribute when you are a member). See <https://www.facebook.com/groups/flakphotobooks> (3 February, 2015) and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/photobookgroup> (3 February, 2015).

150 A. Adams, 'Participating with artists to promote their work online', *Flak Photo*, n.d. <http://flakphoto.com/about> (3 February, 2015).

151 M. Johnson and A. Adams, 'The Future of Photobooks: A cross-blog discussion', *Resolve*, n.d. <http://blog.livebooks.com/special-projects/the-future-of-photobooks-a-cross-blog-discussion> (3 February, *2015*).

152 'About', *Self Publish, Be Happy*, n.d. <http://www.selfpublishbehappy.com/about> (3 February, 2015).

Its blog features self-published books that have been selected from submissions. One major issue in presenting and promoting paper books online is that there is no possibility to browse through them, a step in the purchasing process that is perhaps especially important in the case of artist's books, in which materiality plays a main part. To substitute this, a common practice is to either provide photographs of spreads, or a video shot in bird's eye of someone browsing through the book.[153] Videos in particular reveal whether the book has any inserts, things that fold out, and other structural features. The issue of discoverability is tackled by *The Independent Photobook*, a blog run by Hester Keijser and Jorg Colberg. Without any curation (unlike the various review blogs), *The Independent Photobook* lists 'books or zines that cannot be bought via Amazon or commercial chain book stores,' and that have not been released through Blurb, as these books can be easily found on the websites of these publishing services.[154] Anyone who sends in the data of a book that complies with their requirements (for example, it has to be available for purchase), will see his work included on the website.

Moving on to the next two steps: distribution and bookselling, self-publishing photographers often take care of their own distribution, selling their books via their personal website and reaching out to bookstores personally to find stockists.[155] Independent photography and art bookshops, both offline as online, are growing along with the number of independent photobooks. Examples of these are Donlon Books (London, 2008), Tipi Bookshop (Brussels, 2012), and PhotoQ (Amsterdam, 2013)[156] All of these shops also have an online webshop, while there are other webshops that are not counterparts of brick-and-mortar shops. This makes it much easier to obtain, say, a nearly sold-out book from the other side of the world.

A few words are to be said about the consumers/readers of self-published photobooks. Since many these publications are generally not available through mainstream outlets (through the Foyles anecdote in the introduction suggests that this is slowly changing), people who want to buy independent photobooks will often have to do a bit of work themselves. This is where review blogs and virtual communities come in play. In the case of Facebook or other platforms that readers might already be a member of, most of the work is done when joining a group or clicking a follow button, as from then on, posts about photobooks will simply be added to their information feed. It also helps that photobook stores are popping up in urban centres worldwide, so that potential buyers can see and feel the book before purchasing. It is also important to remember that, even though the photobook scene is relatively open, particularly when compared to the more closed, membership-based (fan)zine community, it seems that many people who buy independent photobooks are often themselves photobook makers, and in even more cases, photographers. Douglas Stockdale, for example, is a photographer, artists' book maker, and owner of *The PhotoBook*, a blog about (self-published) photobooks.[157] Collectors like Stockdale are quite invested in the community, and thus will not have any problems with going to a faraway bookshop or doing their research before buying. Increasingly, however, independent photobooks are finding their way out of this niche and into the mainstream, a trend that has been

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153 For example, Andrea Copetti of the Tipi Bookshop does this for some of the books Tipi sells (some already have videos provided by the artist). The videos are then embedded on the book info page in the Tipi webshop, but you can also see them at Copetti's Vimeo channel. <http://vimeo.com/tipibookshop> (3 February, 2015).

154 <http://theindependentphotobook.blogspot.com> (4 February, 2015).

155 I am leaving out wholesaling as most independent photobooks generally do not work with wholesalers, only in the case of print-on-demand books.

156 Stockdale keeps a list of bookshops specialised in photobooks on his blog. See D. Stockdale, 'Book stores for photobooks', *The PhotoBook*, n.d. <https://thephotobook.wordpress.com/resources/book-stores> (3 February, 2015).

157 <http://thephotobook.wordpress.com> (3 February, 2015).

recognised by people in the scene as a possible challenge for the content of these books.[158] Time will tell whether these books will be able to reach a broader public, and how this will affect the format.

This brings us to the final step in Thompson's value chain: institutions. Established institutions, particularly, but not exclusively photography museums, are paying more attention to the photobook.[159] The number of photobook and artists' book fairs and festivals has been steadily rising in the past decade, while established photo fairs cannot be imagined without an important emphasis on the photobook.[160] Lecleir's Indie Photobook Library (IPL), mentioned earlier, serves as the first archive that collects self-published and independent photobooks. The IPL encourages discussion about self-publishing trends, reflection on the works that have been included in the collection, and 'scholarly research to be conducted years, decades, and centuries to come.'[161] Its online catalogue lists a cover photo of each book (alongside Lecleir's laptop for scale), plus metadata such as contributors and/or collaborators, dimensions, type of printing, where it was printed, its price, and a category. Lecleir often gives lectures on the collection and the books take part in various events and exhibitions. The most recent important step towards the institutionalisation of photobooks as an independent art form was the opening of the Photobook Museum in Cologne in 2014. Strongly against the wall that stands between art and audience with the use of exhibition boxes, the museum aims to be 'a vibrant public space that educates a broad audience about the form, content and function of photobooks.'[162] We might consider the open approach of the Photobook Museum, and, especially, the IPL, as the legacy of DIY culture and self-publishing history.

We are seeing now that the photobook scene is coming closer to a well-rounded and mature part of the book and photography industry, with its own platforms, protagonists, and institutions to support the activity of a dedicated community of photographers and book artists. Like Drucker said about the democratic multiple in the 1970s and 1980s, their organisation might mimic that of other, more established, parts of the art world, but this has not diminished the popularity of the photobook format and the experimentation with which some artists have approached the medium, as well as their attempts to reach wider audiences.[163] For example, the vernacular photography project *Preston Is My*

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158 See, for example, this summary of an online discussion on the future of photobook consumption: T. Walker, 'Future of Photobooks Discussion: How should photobook CONSUMPTION evolve in this decade?', *Resolve*, 6 January, 2010 <http://blog.livebooks.com/2010/01/future-of-photobooks-discussion-how-should-photobook-consumption-evolve-in-this-decade> (5 February, 2015).

159 Tate Modern has been paying more attention to the photobook as a medium for artistic exploration in its exhibitions, events and bookshop. For example, in 2012 Tate Modern hosted a discussion on recent evolutions in photography and the photobook. Events can be browsed by searching for the term 'photobook' on Tate's website. <http://www.tate.org.uk> (5 February, 2015). Foam, the Amsterdam-based photography museum, dedicated its project space &Foam to the photobook for nearly three months in 2013. See 'Books &Foam', *Foam*, 5 March, 2013 <http://www.foam.org/press/2013/books-foam> (5 February, 2015).

160 For example, the FotoBookfestival Kassel had its first edition in 2008, with photobook scholars Martin Parr and Gerry Badger as members of the board (among others). The festival hands out two awards: one for a completed project and one for a dummy. <http://www.fotobookfestival.org> (5 February, 2015). Paris Photo, which started in 1997, introduced its Paris Photo-Aperture Foundation Photobook Award in 2012. 'Paris Photo-Aperture Foundation PhotoBook Awards 2012', *Aperture*, n.d. <http://www.aperture.org/pbr/paris-photo-aperture-foundation-photobook-awards-2012> (5 February, 2015).

161 L. Lecleir, 'About the IPL', *Indie Photobook Library*, n.d. <http://www.indiephotobooklibrary.org/about-the-ipl> (22 December, 2014).

162 'A museum for the 21st century', *The PhotoBookMuseum*, n.d. <http://www.thephotobookmuseum.com/en/museum/concept/21-century> (5 February, 2015).

163 Moreover, it can be argued that the growing number of stakeholders in the photobook world helps with the much discussed issue of discoverability. See, for example, B. O'Leary, 'Context, Not Container', in H. McGuire and B. O'Leary, *Book: A Futurist's Manifesto: Essays from the bleeding edge of publishing* (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, 2012), pp. 15-26.

Paris (2009-present) consists of a series of cheap print publications that the editors actively tried to disseminate amongst Preston's inhabitants, in an attempt to 'engage with an audience beyond the art world.'[164]

In summary, the evolution of the contemporary photobook has been facilitated by democratic production methods on the one hand, which gave photographers complete freedom over their project, and an ongoing conversation online on the other hand, that inspires, promotes, and questions the current photobook scene. In a book that examines the influence of self-published books and zines on contemporary media and design, Klanten summarised the activity of the scene as following:

> [T]he small print scene nurtures a flexible, yet resilient network, loosely modelled on the decentralised nature of the World Wide Web itself. While there are several nodes of high activity—key players, or distributors as well as respected blogs, press, trade fairs, etc.—protagonists on either side of the spectrum are free to make their own connections.[165]

This freedom brings us back to the fundamentals of self-publishing: to have as much artistic control as possible in every aspect along the way. Moreover, even with a tangible result, the popularity of independent photobooks and other artists' books is a contemporary media phenomenon rooted in recent technological developments. As Cramer has it, 'it would be wrong to dismiss this development as merely another 'retro' trend.'[166] Rather, it is a token of what Ludovico and Cramer call 'post-digital print culture—a culture in which the false dichotomy of 'print' versus 'electronic' (which has haunted us since McLuhan) is suspended.'[167]

The transformation of photography

Digital technology has transformed how we create, consider, and experience photography, in a manner that somewhat resembles the changes that happened in the field of self-publishing: on the one hand, the process behind taking a photograph has been completely digitised, and on the other hand, publication, promotion and discussion are all happening online (as well as offline). Inherently different, however, is that the previous section discussed the popularity of self-publishing paper (photography) books, in which the digital process led to a tangible object. With (digital/digitised) photography, however, we are talking about a much wider phenomenon, in which most photographs that are taken never find their way to print. Below I will briefly discuss the convergence between photography and digital media, highlighting specific characteristics of this evolution that might have contributed (directly) to a change in photography culture and (indirectly) to the popularisation of the print photography book and zine.

In the past few decades, new technologies have brought the entire photographic process into one device: the digital camera. Cameras are now computers, and, Bate stresses, 'computers are now cameras,' a reversal that is perhaps more successful in uncovering the possible implications of this

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164   A. Murray, 'The Poetic Archive: Photography, Everyday Life and the Tactic of Self-Publishing', *The Blue Notebook: Journal for Artists' Books*, 6 (2012), p. 26 <http://clok.uclan.ac.uk/4959/1/The_Poetic_Archive_Essay.pdf> (30 December, 2015).

165   R. Klanten, A. Mollard and M. Hübner (eds.), *Behind the Zines: Self-Publishing Culture* (Berlin: Gestalten, 2011), p. 5. Also see Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print*, p. 153-156.

166   Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print*, p. 162-163.

167   Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print*, p. 163.

shift.[168] Before, a photographer had to buy a roll of film, shoot it up, send it to a lab or develop and print himself, before the work could then be distributed. Because shooting with film always came with a certain level of unpredictability, several shots were often required, and the selection and editing process was a laborious task. With digital photography, however, you can pick up your camera (or smartphone), shoot an image, immediately review it, re-shoot if desired, and distribute the work over the Internet within minutes. The speed of the photographic process has increased drastically.[169] Changes have occurred in every step in this process, which have all impacted photographic culture as a whole. For photographer Jason Evans, for example, the introduction of the review screen eliminated the serendipity that could occur with film photography, making photographers 'more likely to delete immediately anything that doesn't look like a picture we formally recognise—that is, photography that looks like photography as we used to know it.'[170] Moreover, as Ritchin warns, accessible software (in terms of cost and in the skills that are required to use it) have turned post-processing into a popular option, with possibly serious implications for the long-hailed credibility of photography: '[t]o photograph becomes the initial research, an image draft, as vulnerable to modification as it has always been to recontextualization.'[171]

Online, through personal websites and social media, professionals, and, perhaps even more so, amateurs, have more options than ever to display their work. When combined with the ubiquity of digital (smartphone) cameras, photography 'become[s] an essential tool in the navigation and documentation of daily life.'[172] The old function of photography as a memory aid has been replaced by 'formative, communicative and experiential uses', Van Dijck argues.[173] As a result, with so many people taking photographs, the boundaries between amateur and professional are blurrier than ever, and Ritchin notes that it might be the former group who are taking a more innovative approach to the new opportunities they are confronted with.[174]

For most of us, the screen has become the major source of photographic imagery, even though some critics argue that 'seeing an image on an uncalibrated monitor is hardly a substitute for experiencing a book or print as the artist intended.'[175] Moreover like with music and newspapers, we now often watch photography image by image, rather than look at a series as a whole.[176] We are inundated by images from various different sources on a daily basis, and it seems to be increasingly difficult to give value

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168   D. Bate, 'The digital condition of photography: Cameras, computers and display', in M. Lister (ed.), *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture* (New York, NY/Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 79.

169   However, Bate rightly reminds us that both Polaroid photography and on-location film processing, as well as one hour developing that was popular and accessible to most in the years before the shift to digital, have been used throughout the previous century as (relatively) instant options for reviewing photography. See Bate, 'The digital condition of photography: Cameras, computers and display', p. 82.

170   J. Evans, 'Online Photographic Thinking', in C. Cotton and A. Klein (eds.), *Words Without Pictures* (New York, NY: Aperture, 2010), p. 44. Along the same line, Bate notes that 'there is a growing sense of a visibly common or generic look to DSLR (Digital Single Lens Reflex) photographs,' as a result of using the same cameras, lenses and settings in a controlled, computerised machine. See Bate, 'The digital condition of photography: Cameras, computers and display', p. 80.

171   F. Ritchin, *After Photography* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), p. 34.

172   S. Murray, 'Revisiting Flickr', in M. Lister (ed.), *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture* (New York, NY/Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 167.

173   J. Van Dijck, 'Digital photography: communication, identity, memory', *Visual Communication*, 7 (2008), p. 71.

174   Ritchin, *After Photography*, p. 130.

175   A. Adams, 'Photo 2.0 – Online Photographic Thinking (Revisited)', in J. Carruthers (ed.), *Right Here, Right Now: Exposures From the Public Realm* (Derby: Quad, 2011), pp. 69-70.

176   Ludovico, Pos*t-Digital Print*, p. 60. This content atomisation is promoted by social media sites, which tend to favour posting one image over a series.

to them. In 2014, a report by Meeker estimated that a whopping 1,8 billion photographs were shared online *each day*.[177] This chaos caused Johnston to argue that the screen cannot be the final destination of photography: '[t]he Internet is a junk heap. It's every frame that comes back from the drugstore. It's the contact sheet, the raw material, the unsorted mass. The first draft.'[178] To deal with this mass (or mess?), Johnston calls for a selective editorial process. His words are reminiscent of Andrew Keen's commentary on user-generated content and other Web 2.0 phenomena, which, Keen argues, have led to a decline of quality of content.[179]

Perhaps surprisingly then, digital photography has not replaced analogue photography, and indeed, even in the midst of large film factory closures, we are witnessing today that even the so-called digital natives have found their way to film, while some older practitioners have never left the medium.[180] Moreover, smartphone apps like Instagram and Hipstamatic mimic low res film photography effects in order to give it a distinguished, 'cult' look.[181] Some scholars, including Evans, acknowledge that '[b]oth systems offer distinct possibilities,' placing the two side by side, instead of on some sort of strict chronological timeline that goes from analogue to digital.[182] What is curious, though, is that it appears that even most analogue photography will sooner or later find its way to the online, thus also converging with the digital realm, as though a photograph, any photograph, needs to be digitised in order to exist.

The changes that continue to disrupt the photography field are plentifold, and it is impossible to discuss them all here. One important takeaway is that our whole approach to photography is arguably influenced by the many images we see on a daily basis, the speed at which we experience them, and the possibilities we have to make our own photographs. In this light, perhaps we can explain the popularity of photobooks as a response to the overwhelming number of photographic imagery that we are confronted with online, which becomes like a blurry stream of information in our heads, almost impossible to unravel. The finite, tangible book can offer a moment of undivided attention. It can also be the case that photographers are confronted with so many online portfolios, photography blogs and e-journals, in which amateurs and professionals are displayed alongside each other that they find it difficult to distinguish themselves from the masses, and they see print as a way to do just that. Or maybe, photography has always been inherently linked to a tangible, paper object, and the recent democratisation of self-publishing has simply made possible a wish that was always in the back of every photographer's mind. In this case, the Internet can indeed function as a first draft, while the final work, with a set sequence, and predetermined paper and print quality, as the ultimate presentation of a photographic work. The third and final chapter will return to some of these questions in an attempt to explain the present popularity of the photozine format.

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177   M. Meeker, in P. Kafka, 'Look at This! We"re Uploading and Sharing a Staggering 1.8 Billion Photos a Day', *<re/code>*, 28 May, 2014 <http://recode.net/2014/05/28/look-at-this-were-uploading-and-sharing-a-staggering-1-8-billion-photos-a-day> (12 April, 2015).

178   M. Johnston, 'The Future of the Photo Book', *The Online Photographer*, 15 December, 2009 <http://theonlinephotographer.typepad.com/the_online_photographer/2009/12/the-future-of-the-photo-book.html> (3 February, 2015).

179   A. Keen, *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet is Destroying our Culture* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2008).

180   For example, The Impossible Project has been successfully producing film for Polaroid cameras since its foundation in 2008, after the Polaroid company decided to quit their analogue activities. See <https://www.the-impossible-project.com> (19 February, 2015).

181   M. Lister, 'Introduction, in M. Lister (ed.), *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture* (New York, NY/Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 11.

182   Evans, 'Online Photographic Thinking', p. 43.

Chapter 3: The case of the photozine

Do it yourself is our motto, but it does not mean that we are anti-Internet. We are nomadic-geek-punks, neo-pirates with an open-source library.

Zines of the Zone[183]

The previous two chapters aimed to explain two different phenomena: first, the use of (fan)zines over the course of the twentieth century as a vehicle for subcultural and radical communication in a conscious act of cultural production, and secondly, the changes that new media brought to photography and self-published photobooks, influencing how we experience photography. This third and final chapter will link the first two chapters together by arguing that photozines are, like the self-published photobook, instigated by the various changed brought by a digital, networked world, which inspired young artists to pick up the flexible format of the zine. As a result, the photozine can be considered as a hybrid between the independent photobook and the 20th-century zine. As we will see, this goes against a statement from 1998 by Zweig, who argued that 'more factors separate artists' books from zines than link them.'[184]

The appropriation of the zine format by the photography community will be investigated by seeking out the defining elements of photozines and testing them to the work of a sample of five photographers and small-press publishers. These publishers have been selected to represent the variety that can be seen in photozines, with some publishers staying very close to the DIY ethos, and others going for a more professional aesthetic; some full-time photographers, others with other occupations; some with a personal approach, others with a more conceptual one, etc. These publishers took part in an interview to learn more about their background, thoughts on publishing, and how they work. A list of questions was sent to the participants, and follow-up e-mail conversations provided more detail and insight. I was previously familiar with two out of the five publishers featured, for the other three I looked up publishers I did not yet know, aware of my bias as a contributor to the photozine scene. To find them, I roamed youth photography blogs like *Nope Fun*, and social media channels, particularly Tumblr, searching on the keywords 'zine' and 'photozine.'[185] I specifically selected only publishers based in Europe, as I want to show that this is not just an American or Anglo-Saxon phenomenon, as might

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183   A. Bocchetto and V. Abenavoli, 'These Books Are Made For Walking', *Akina Books* <http://akinabooks.com/these-books-are-made-for-walking> (26 November, 2014).

184   J. Zweig, 'Artists, Books, Zines', *Afterimage*, 26 (1998), p. 5.

185   <*http://nopefun.com*> (8 April, 2015).

appear from the history of zine publishing. For similar reasons I have attempted to highlight photozine publishing activity outside of the United Kingdom. With many publishers operating from small towns, without a fixed location, or with various bases, it seems that for these publishers, geographical boundaries borders have lost some of their meaning.

This chapter starts with an introduction of each of the featured publishers, providing the necessary background to consider and envision their publications. After that follows an analysis that combines strands of zine history with recent developments in the new media landscape, highlighting the position of the photozine as a crossbreed between the independent photobook and the zine.

Sunday Mornings at the River, London (est. 2012)

http://sundaymorningsattheriver.com

FIGURE 10 (LEFT): *A Story To Share* by Roberto Rubalcava (2015), € 12,50.[186]
FIGURE 11(RIGHT): *Sunday Mornings at the River* issue 3, edited by Rebecca Rijsdijk (2015), € 12,50.[187]

Sunday Mornings at the River (SMatR) is the name of both a zine and a zine publisher founded in the Netherlands by photographer Rebecca Rijsdijk. The first issue of the zine was published in collaboration with another photographer, after which Rijsdijk continued the project alone, though she is currently looking to expand the project and add more people to the team. The address of SMatR is based in London, though Rijsdijk's living situation can be described as that of a digital nomad. With a few boxes of personal possessions that she left in an attic in the Netherlands, she works on SMatR and other projects from her computer while moving around and travelling. To date, there have been six SMatR publications: three editions of the zine dubbed the same name as the publisher, which features the work of several artists, and three photozines dedicated to a series by one photographer. There is a distinctive style in all of these works, with heavy emphasis on nature and travel. The photographs show careful attention to atmospheric lighting, while the use of analogue film provides slightly faded colours, as can be seen in Figures 10 and 11. The focus on nature is also reflected by the photographs of the zines, which are portrayed along with branches and flowers.

SMatR is active on a number of social media platforms. The main link of SMatR directs to a Tumblr site which, alongside a link to the online shop and a page with updates, features an online exhibition of photographs in the same signature style as the SMatR publications. The images are presented in various sizes and on various positions to make for a non-standard viewing experience. Next to their own site hosted on the Tumblr platform, a page with social media links refers to accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter (though that last link appears to be dead). Unlisted is a SMatR 'pool' on Flickr, a group to which members of the photography platform can submit images.

Finally, apart from the printed publications, SMatR has an additional offline outlet: various events have been organised to promote publications, and Rijsdijk and her zines also take part in art fairs.

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186 R. Rubalcava, *A Story To Share* (London: Sunday Mornings at the River, 2015) <http://www.sundaymorningsattheriver.com> (9 April, 2015).
187 R. Rijsdijk (ed.), *Sunday Mornings at the River #3* (London: Sunday Mornings at the River, 2015) <http://www.sundaymorningsattheriver.com> (9 April, 2015).

Carlos Cancela Pinto, Surrey

http://carloscancelapinto.com

FIGURE 12 (LEFT): C. Cancela Pinto, *Natureza, Luz, Homem* (Girona: Bad Weather Press, 2013), € 5.[188]
FIGURE 13 (RIGHT): C. Cancela Pinto and M. Ustymenko (eds.), *Adventitious Volume 1* (self-published, 2013), £ 5.[189]

Born and raised in Portugal and currently based in Surrey, Carlos Cancela Pinto works as a geologist and spends his free time photographing. To date, his work has been featured in eight photozines. Three of these were self-published publications, made in collaboration with another editor (who was different for each of these publications), one of which is featured in Figure 13. Five other zines were published by small, independent publishing houses: three features alongside the work of other artists and two solo publications, both with Bad Weather Press (an image of one of them is featured in Figure 12).

Cancela Pinto's photographic style is comparable to that featured in the zines and on the website of Sunday Mornings at the River: a strong focus on nature, reinforced by the use of film photography and natural lighting, with a penchant for light leaks and other flaws that highlight the analogue photographic process. Recurring subjects are sand, water and rocks, most of which appear to belong to his native country of Portugal. Pinto's most recent publication, *Bright on 30*, tells the story of a very hot day on the Brighton Pier.[190]

Regarding the use of social media, Cancela Pinto is active on Tumblr and Flickr, which he uses to post new work. He also uses his personal Facebook profile to keep in touch with photographers and post updates about his work. His website is hosted on Cargo Collective, a portfolio platform tailored to visual artists. Like in the case of Tumblr and other social media platforms, users can also follow the work of other Cargo users.

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188   C. Cancela Pinto, *Natureza, Luz, Homem* (Girona: Bad Weather Press, 2013). <http://www.badweatherpress.com/en/naturezaluzhomem.html> (9 April, 2015)
189   C. Cancela Pinto and M. Ustymenko (eds.), *Adventitious Volume 1* (self-published, 2013) <http://cargocollective.com/Adventitious> (9 April, 2015).
190   C. Cancela Pinto, *Bright on 30* (Girona: Bad Weather Press, 2014).

Chien Lunatique Editions, Barcelona (est. 2014)

http://chienlunatiqueeditions.tumblr.com
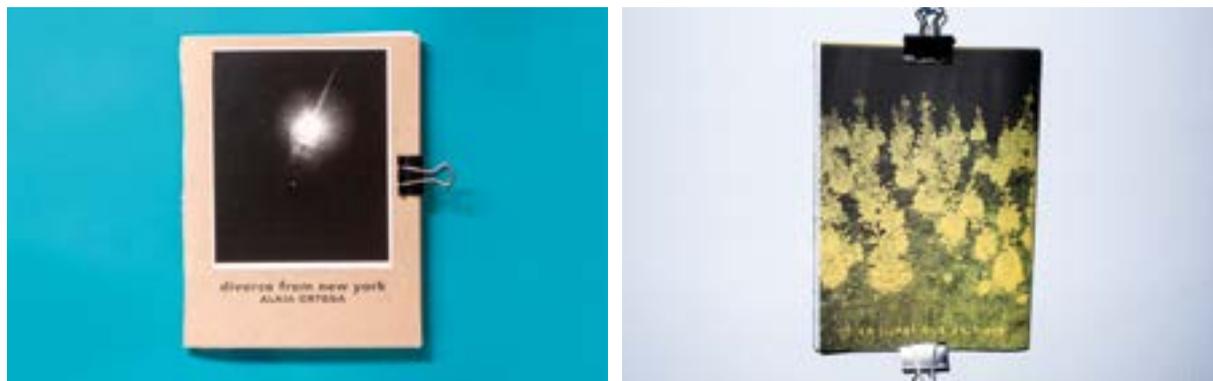
FIGURE 14 (LEFT): A. Ortega, *Divorce from New York* (Barcelona: Chien Lunatique Editions, 2015), $ 4.[191]
FIGURE 15 (RIGHT): M. Montero, *Madriz* (Barcelona: Chien Lunatique Editions, 2014), $ 5. [192]

Chien Lunatique Editions is a one-woman publishing house ran by Maddi Montero. It all started when last year, some friends of Montero's organised a self-publishing fair in her hometown of San Sebastián. Montero decided to take some projects of hers and pour them into a zine format, leading to a collection of homemade, photocopied publications. 'For no special reason,' she decided to publish them under the moniker of Chien Lunatique Editions, a name inspired by French 'beware of the dog' signs.[193] Later she also started publishing the work of her friends. As Montero got more into zinemaking, she invested in a printer so that she could make the publications by hand, at home, experimenting with different materials and techniques.

The aesthetics of the Chien Lunatique Editions zines are reminiscent of 1980s and 1990s photocopied zines. Most of them are done in black and white, the only text being the title, artists and a reference to the publisher. *Divorce from New York*, displayed above in Figure 14, features a cover image that Montero glued by hand on each copy. Other zines, like *Madriz* (Figure 15), have a cover that is printed on coloured paper. Montero does not seem to hide the fact that they are hand made: not everything is as straight and clean as with a professionally printed and bound publication, but DIY is Montero's motto, so the flaws become part of the appeal. The rawness of the publications reflects the photography in them: highly personal photographs in an unpolished snapshot-style.

The website of Chien Lunatique Editions is hosted on Tumblr, and there also is a Facebook page and Instagram account.

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191 A. Ortega, *Divorce from New York* (Barcelona: Chien Lunatique Editions, 2015) <http://chienlunatiqueeditions.tumblr.com/post/112141837837/divorce-from-new-york-by-alaia-ortega-five> (9 April, 2015).

192 M. Montero, *Madriz* (Barcelona: Chien Lunatique Editions, 2014) <http://chienlunatiqueeditions.tumblr.com/post/102723896162/04-madriz-by-maddi-montero-b-w-inkjet> (9 April, 2015).

193 M. Montero, March, 2015 [Interview].

Fabrizio Musu, Pisa
http://fabriziomusu.tumblr.com

FIGURE 16 (LEFT): F. Musu, *A Forest Volume IV* (self-published, 2014), € 8.[194]
FIGURE 17 (RIGHT): F. Musu, *This Is Nowhere* (self-published, 2014), € 6.[195]

Originally from the Italian island of Sardinia, Fabrizio Musu is currently based in Pisa, where he devotes his free time to his photography and publishing projects. So far, this has resulted in six zines: four published in the ongoing series *A Forest* (the fourth edition can be seen in Figure 16), and two independent works (of which one features several photographers), all in black and white. Musu started publishing after he was stuck with a series of photographs that he wanted to find an outlet for, other than the World Wide Web. After some consideration, he decided to take the plunge and pour them into a publication, which resulted in the first volume of *A Forest*. Doing everything himself with no prior publishing experience, Musu recognises today how much he has learned about the process since that first publication.

Unlike many other photozines, most of Musu's publications are printed in a landscape format, evenly framing his—mostly—landscape photographs. His work is layered, featuring desolate places, dead birds, discarded needles, abandoned buildings. In *A Forest*, these enter in a conversation with each other in a play of form and function that happens through deliberate juxtapositions on each spread. The zines in this series also come with their own soundtrack on a CD attached in the back of the zine, composed by his friends Lomino and Enrico Ruggeri based on Musu's photographs. In the third volume of the series each of the 30 CD's was hand-painted by Francesco Scarponi.

As in the case of Maddi Montero and Rebecca Rijsdijk, Musu's website is also a Tumblr site, and he keeps another one for more blog-like updates. He also is active on Flickr and uses his Facebook account to keep up with fellow photographers and post links to his Tumblr sites.

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194 F. Musu, *A Forest Volume IV* (self-published, 2014). <http://fabriziom.bigcartel.com/product/a-forest-vol-iv> (9 April, 2015).
195 F. Musu, *This Is Nowhere* (self-published, 2014). <http://fabriziom.bigcartel.com/product/this-is-nowhere> (9 April, 2015).

Maria Daniela Quirós

http://mariadanielaquiros.com

FIGURE 18 AND 19: M.D. Quirós, *Others' Still Lifes* (self-published, 2014), € 10.[196]

Trained as a graphic designer, Maria Daniela Quirós discovered the medium of photography in an introductory course at university. She started learning analogue photography, but then switched to practise with digital technology. Today, she shoots mostly with film, but admits that some projects are better carried out with digital cameras. Quirós discovered photozines after having moved from her native country of Venezuela to Barcelona, where her favourite bookshop, Kowasa, sold them. In 2014, she decided to self-publish her own zine, so that she could be 'close to the whole process,' from concept to printed publication.[197] The result is *Others' Still Lifes* [sic], which documents a building Quirós briefly worked in, where on another floor, art classes were being taught. After each class, all the furniture and easels would be rearranged, and artworks in progress were left behind. Intrigued by seeing these anonymous objects move around, she decided to capture them on film and publish them.

Quirós set up an online shop on BigCartel, a site that allows people to easily set up and design a webshop, to sell her zine. She also has a personal website, which is currently under construction, and keeps a visual journal on Tumblr. Apart from that, Quirós uses Twitter and—to a lesser extent—Facebook to post updates about her work.

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196   M.D. Quirós, *Others' Still Lifes* (self-published, 2014). <http://mariadanielaquiros.bigcartel.com/product/others-still-lifes> (9 April, 2015).
197   M.D. Quirós, March, 2015 [Interview].

The photozine as a hybrid

At first glance, the publications of these five publishers look quite different from twentieth-century zines. Their design is sleek and simple, with limited interventions by (typo)graphic elements. Several covers are made up of a full bleed image and the title of the work, in various cases even without the name of the author. Most of the publications have various page layouts, guiding the reader's eye and pace. The print jobs are done professionally (except for the zines of Chien Lunatique Editions, as Montero prints the zines herself at home) and of a high quality. This more high-end and clean look is arguably because in the digital age, people have much easier access to professional design software and other production tools. In fact, this was already the case at the dawn of the digital age, when the first zines came out that were made with desktop publishing software. In a time where the prevailing aesthetic was of a handmade, cut-and-paste quality, this change was not well-received. As Duncombe recalls:

> Back in the 1980s and 1990s there was a strong suspicion of any zine that appeared too 'slick'. The irony was that this was the time in which it got easier and easier to produce something that looked slick without being commercial via home computers and desktop publishing. So you had this odd phenomenon of people using publishing software and then going back over it with pen or photoshopping pictures so they looked as if they had been pasted in by hand. Sort of a simulacra of authenticity.[198]

Neutral and inconspicuous, the aesthetics of the photozines featured in this thesis appear to have lost the overt political message transferred through the 'graphic language of resistance' of punk zines in the 1970s and 1980s, as discussed by Triggs, that left its traces in the more personal zines from the late 1980s and 1990s.[199] A possible explanation for this shift is that contemporary photozines are vehicles for artistic expression, rather than subcultural communication. As a result, design inspiration is probably pooled from different sources than in the previous decades. Moreover, as Duncombe mentioned, it is now simply much easier to produce a sleek-looking publication.

Other aesthetic differences with zines from the previous century are the different formats, use of different papers and stocks in contemporary photozines. While previously, the format of a zine was often decided by the technology used to produce it, and the materials consisted in whatever editors could get their hands on, it appears that these photozine editors are more deliberate in their decisions, the result looking more inspired by the artists' book tradition than by zine history. For instance, for the covers of his landscape format zines, Fabrizio Musu uses a special paper, coated on one side, that has a microscopic maze pattern embossed into it. The pattern is barely noticeable at first sight, but immediately grabs the reader's attention when holding the zine. Maddi Montero uses a cheaper technique that also highlights the fact that she makes each zine by hand. Her latest zine, *Divorce from New York*, has a cardboard cover, with a photograph glued onto it.[200] Because they are cut out by hand, none of the edges are completely straight or aligned, but the final design still looks balanced and intentional. The SMatR zines, on the other hand, distinguish themselves with their sewn binding, in comparison with the more conventional saddle-stitching that holds the other photozines together.

198   S. Duncombe, in Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*, p. 197.
199   T. Triggs, 'Scissors and Glue: Punk Fanzines and the Creation of a DIY Aesthetic'.
200   A. Ortega, *Divorce from New York* (Barcelona: Chien Lunatique Editions, 2015), an image of the cover can be seen in Figure 14 on page 42.

Such interventions in layout, format and material could easily be given the negative label of efforts to 'beautify' the publication.

Another element borrowed from artists' books, all of the publishers featured in this thesis bring out their zines in editions, with sizes going from 30 to 250. Numbered by hand, this transfers notions of exclusivity and uniqueness, going firmly against the idea, or ideal, of the democratic multiple, infinitely reproducible and accessible to all, as discussed by Drucker and White.[201] However, the interviews paint a slightly different picture. The publishers stated that they would reprint their zine if there was enough interest, with Musu adding that he was already struggling to sell each copy of his editions of 30, to 50 copies. Pinto, on the other hand, has a second edition of his zine *Natureza, Luz, Homem* out with Bad Weather Press, which was published in February 2014, a year after the first edition.[202] Still, all publishers mention that numbering the publications makes them feel special and unique. The fact that they will reprint if possible suggests that numbering photozines is not a matter of creating an exclusive, limited object, but rather to again reinforce their materiality.

A third way in which these photozines appear to relate to artists' books is the way the layout of the photographs makes use of the space of the page, with photographs in different positions and sizes to guide the reading, or rather, viewing, pace. This is a subtle way of relating the content of the book with its form, an essential element of artists' books according to Drucker, and an interpretation of Carrión's notion of the book as a 'sequence of spaces.'[203]

These examples position the photozine next to the independent photobook, which sometimes appears to be the big brother of photozines: it has similar, minimalistic aesthetics and experimentation regarding format, binding and material—quite a bit more than is the case in pre-digital zines, it seems. What then remains of the 'original' zine, the one that circumvented traditional outlets in the empowering act of doing things oneself, often using the medium to transfer dissident opinions? Even though photozines mostly transfer artistic ideas rather than political ones, its publishers still are very conscious about publishing them themselves. In the words of Montero: 'I got kind of bored of waiting for something to happen, so I decided that I had to do it myself.'[204] This attitude is very reminiscent of the DIY mentality in the punk age. Moreover, close to no profit is made by the artists featured in this thesis. For example, Musu's only goals is to 'not lose money.'[205] Quirós stresses that profit brings the publication into an entirely different realm, stating that 'the principal intent is to share your work. Seeking profit could change the concept of photozines/zines.'[206]

In summary, the photozine appears to be a hybrid between the self-published photobook and other zines that preceed them. For some, it can serve as a stepping stone towards publishing larger, more expensive works, but that does not imply that they would stop publishing photozines. As Rijsdijk

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201 On a side note: Ruscha regretted numbering the first edition of *Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations*. He later reprinted the work in an edition of 500 an another edition of 4,000 copies, unnumbered. See C. Phillpot, 'Books by Artists and Books as Art', in C. Lauf and C. Phillpot (eds.), Artist/Author: Contemporary Artists' Books (New York, NY: Distributed Art Publishers Inc., 1998), pp. 33-34; Drucker, 'The Myth of the Artists' Book As A Democratic Multiple', pp. 10-13; T. White, 'From Democratic Multiple to Artist Publishing', *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America*, 31 (2012), pp. 45-56.

202 The zine is currently still available for sale on the website of the publisher. C.C. Pinto, *Natureza, Luz, Homem* (Girona: Bad Weather Press, 2014).

203 U. Carrión, 'The New Art of Making Books', p. 31.

204 Montero is also the only publisher who really does everything herself, printing and binding included. Montero, March, 2015 [Interview].

205 F. Musu, March, 2015 [Interview].

206 M.D. Quirós, March, 2015 [Interview].

says, 'I want to let the content determine the final product.'[207] When compared with photobooks, photozines are more immediate, offering photographers the possibility to quickly circulate (part of) a series. A book, on the other hand, requires a lot more time and money, which arguably changes the editing process. The next section will look more closely into the possible reasons why these artists have chosen an analogue medium in an increasingly digital society.

'Digital natives' with a love for the 'analogue'[208]
The five photographers/publishers that were interviewed were born between 1978 and 1988. All of them had early access to computers, some also to the Internet, admitting that this influenced their current work as photographers and publishers. As Pinto testifies:

> My family bought a new computer in 1996 with a thing called modem which you could connect to a telephone line... and with that you could access an endless source of information (that was how it was advertised). I took advantage of that, I remember spending the evenings and weekends looking for images and information of my favourite bands and artists. At the time, there were no specific sites for photography (maybe a few, but without Google at that time, who knows?), but the major museums and galleries were starting to showcase some of their collections online.[209]

This early exposure to new media made that Pinto and the other publishers could be classified as the first generation of what Prensky has called 'digital natives': youngsters who 'think and process information fundamentally differently.'[210] In the case of these publishers, that does not only mean that they feel comfortable in a digital environment, but also that they were and are keen to learn new technical skills, such as designing software. In the words of Prensky: 'they have experienced so much of digital devices and interfaces that their use comes natural to them.'[211] For example, Rebecca Rijsdijk from SMatR made her first magazine at the age of 12, soon switching to the computer to produce them:

> I remember as a kid of twelve, that I created my own magazines with pencil and paper. After that I started creating them on the computer with no knowledge about publishing or editing or anything, I just did it because it came naturally.[212]

How much the early access to and use of new technologies actually influenced her aptitude for working with different software is difficult to measure, and there has been criticism to the exaggerated and dividing term 'digital native', which Prensky himself has abandoned in favour of the, perhaps equally

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207   R. Rijsdijk, February 2015 [Interview].
208   I have put analogue between quotation marks, as Cramer reminds us that the term is a 'colloquialism', generally used to refer to 'systems that do not transmit or store information by coding it into countable, discrete entities.' See Cramer, 'Analog Media as (Anti-)Social Networking', p. 230.
209   C.C. Pinto, March, 2015 [Interview].
210   M. Prensky, 'Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants', *On the Horizon*, 9 (2001), p. 1 <http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf> (20 March, 2015).
211   M. Prensky, 'Digital Wisdom and Homo Sapiens Digital', in M. Thomas (ed.), *Deconstructing Digital Natives: Young People, Technology and the New Literacies* (New York, NY/Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), p. 17.
212   Rijsdijk, February 2015 [Interview].

loaded, 'digital wisdom.'[213] In the case of these photozine publishers, their aptitude for new technology was arguably reinforced by their backgrounds in photography (and, in the case of Maria Daniela Quirós, graphic design), which generally requires a fair amount of technical knowledge. Moreover, the term leaves out any social media skills. In this light, perhaps it is more useful to use White and Le Cornu's less restrictive 'visitors and residents' metaphor, in which visitors take a more utilitarian approach to the Internet, while the residents:

> see the Web as a place, perhaps like a park or a building in which there are clusters of friends and colleagues whom they can approach and with whom they can share information about their life and work. A proportion of their lives is actually lived out online where the distinction between online and off–line is increasingly blurred.[214]

This is exactly how Pinto, Montero and Musu report finding out about photozines: while browsing the Internet and social media websites (Tumblr, in the case of Montero) like they do so often, they stumbled on self-publishing photographers. This prompted them to read more about their work and eventually to create their own publications.[215] But why on paper? As Montero mentions that she finds publishing herself to be faster, why not opt for online publishing, the fastest (and cheapest) option of all? Montero admits that online, she can reach a much wider audience than offline, but she nevertheless feels like something is missing, stating that: '[w]hen I see them [zines] online I feel like I'm missing something, almost like it would be an online preview of a zine I could have in my hands.'[216] All publishers mention the importance of experiencing art in the tangible world, referring to tactile experiences as leafing through a booklet, carrying it around to open on different places, and being able to touch it. According to Ludovico, the tangibility of a printed object evokes strong, 'instinctive' feelings of attraction, that are (as of yet) simply impossible to replace by pixels on a screen.[217] The focus of these publishers on materiality can serve to explain the aesthetic choices made in the design of these zines, highlighting their classification as printed and bound objects, as discussed in the previous section.

An extension of our publishers' longing for materiality can be found in their preferred method of shooting photography, as four out of five of them admitted they prefer shooting on film, rather than using an easier, cheaper, and faster digital camera. Only Montero prefers a simple digital point-and-shoot, preferring its speed, though she does add that she sometimes shoots on film, too.[218] Musu and Rijsdijk have a different approach, as both prefer to work more slowly, referring to the notion of craftsmanship to explain their choice for the analogue and tangible.[219] Their choice for either film or digital is perhaps somewhat reflected in their photographic style: Montero's is more immediate and snapshot-like, while Rijsdijk and Musu's photography has a calmer and thoughtful aesthetic.

213   M. Prensky, 'Digital Wisdom and Homo Sapiens Digital', p. 17. An overview of research challenging or denying the existence of a digital native/digital immigrant dichotomy can be found later in the same book: S. Benett and K. Maton, 'Intellectual Field or Faith-Based Religion', in M. Thomas (ed.), *Deconstructing Digital Natives: Young People, Technology and the New Literacies* (New York, NY/Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), pp. 169-185.
214   D.S. White and A. Le Cornu, 'Visitors and Residents: A new typology for online engagement', *First Monday*, 16 (2011), n.p. <http://firstmonday.org/article/view/3171/3049> (20 March, 2015).
215   Pinto, March, 2015 [Interview]; Musu, March, 2015 [Interview]; Montero, March, 2015 [Interview].
216   Montero, March, 2015 [Interview].
217   Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print*, p. 68.
218   Montero, March, 2015 [Interview].
219   Musu, March, 2015 [Interview]; Rijsdijk, February, 2015 [Interview].

Using film photography to shoot and printing your work on paper is often regarded as a 'retro' or nostalgic act. This was most notably argued by Reynolds, who investigated the retro trend in the music scene in his book *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to its Own Past*, stating that '[t]he avant-garde is now an arriere-garde.'[220] Caused in part by the fact that the Internet gives us access to more information about history than ever before, retromania stands in the way of true innovation and progress, Reynolds says. However, Cramer finds that this is too quick a judgment. Even if the end product is material, and, therefore, apparently 'retro,' practically every step in the zinemaking process is digital: the production, promotion and communication all take place in a virtual environment, using software and social media tools.[221] It is not the case that the Internet arrived and zinemakers happily switched from one platform to another. Rather, through seeing the effects of a connected world, especially since Web 2.0, a new community who had no or hardly any previous experiences with zines, took up the format as a conscious reaction, using 'print as a form of social networking which is not controlled by Google, Twitter or Facebook.'[222] This notion can be questioned, as they do use these platforms for the communication surrounding the offline zines, but it is interesting food for thought. In a networked society, bringing something out of the digital can be considered as an act of resistance to the increasingly prescriptive conditions of the online world. In that sense,

> shooting with a medium format camera on film (…) is just as much an anti-mainstream media attitude. [...] Vinyl and cassettes have thus become post-digital media. They exist today only because they compensate for deficiencies of digital files—deficiencies that are both aesthetic and social, since tangible media are means of face-to-face interpersonal exchange. Exactly the same is true for the booming media of artistic printmaking: zines are made because they are not blogs, artists' DIY books are printed because they are not web sites or PDFs.[223]

Following this line of thought, contemporary (photo)zine culture is precisely that: contemporary. The avant-garde continues to look ahead, moving the zine in ever-new directions.

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220 S. Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to its Own Past* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011), p. xx.
221 F. Cramer, in Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print*, p. 162-163.
222 F. Cramer, in Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print*, p. 163. Also see Cramer, 'Analog Media as (Anti-)Social Networking', pp. 230-231.
223 Cramer, 'Le parole a... Florian Cramer: Post-digital Aesthetics'.

Conclusion

We are living in an era of 'posts': postmodern, post-photography and post-digital... these are all terms that were repeatedly used in some of the works referenced in this thesis. While such terms are often so overused by the media that they end up hollowed out, the notion 'post-digital' can help in understanding changes in contemporary print culture. The term was introduced in 2000 by Kim Cascone, an American composer who works primarily with computers. Cascone noticed that more and more musicians were deliberately incorporating digital errors in their music, and decided this was a sign of a new, 'post-digital aesthetic.'[224] It is the result of the stagnation of the so-called digital revolution, which has caused musicians to stop looking forward to what else will be new, and instead, settle down, and look around to see what they can work with. 'It is an approach to digital media that no longer seeks technical innovation or improvement, but considers digitization something that already happened and can be played with,' Cramer adds.[225] As a result, the 'old versus new', or 'analogue versus digital' dichotomy was challenged, leading musicians, as well as photographers and other creatives, to look forward as well as backward for inspiration, using whatever tools and production methods work best to convey their message. As Bolter has argued, media forms mutually influence and shape each other through remediation.[226] In the words of Ludovico: 'there is no one-way street from analogue to digital; rather, there are transitions between the two, in both directions.'[227]

Digital technologies and online platforms have put media production in the hands of what used to be a passive public, bringing the notion of participatory culture back to the forefront. 'Rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules,' Jenkins notes.[228] Through YouTube videos, Instagram photography feeds, blogs, Snapchat channels, profiles on Facebook and Twitter, and so on, can now reach wide audiences. It is debatable whether this will eventually overthrow the media industry, but, in the words of Gross, '[e]ven with the power law dictating that a miniscule fraction of "prosumers" ever reach an audience larger than their immediate circle, the top-down tyranny of the media has been effectively challenged.'[229]

This thesis has sought to contextualise the current popularity of the photography zine format. The first chapter revealed that the photozine is embedded in a history that can be traced back to the publication of the first zine in 1930. Over the years, zines have constantly taken new directions, as new

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224   K. Cascone, 'The Aesthetics of Failure, "Post-Digital" Tendencies in Contemporary Computer Music', *Computer Music Journal*, 24 (2000), p. 12.
225   Cramer, 'Le parole a... Florian Cramer: Post-digital Aesthetics'.
226   J.D. Bolter, and R. Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), p. 5.
227   Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print*, p. 153. Also see Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, pp. 5-6.
228   Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, p. 4.
229   L. Gross, 'My Media Studies: Cultivation to Participation', *Television & New Media*, 10 (2009), p. 67.

technologies arrived and different communities appropriated their format as a vehicle for subcultural communication. Science fiction fanzines introduced the concept of a network that revolved around a niche interest and was the foundation for an active discussion and interpretation of stories, movies, and television series. Punk zines deepened the notion of 'doing it yourself', actively promoting it as a motto to live by. The wider dissemination of zines among a plethora of subjects in the 1990s proved that its possibilities for personal expression were endless. Finally, the Internet (and blogs, more prominently) took over some of the functions of zines: for example, those of exchanging information and personal expression, though a dedicated community still continued creating zines. When self-publishing became a popular option, as a result of new, accessible tools for production and distribution, notably in the field of photography, this inspired young artists to again appropriate the format of the zine and turn it into yet another new direction, moving away from their communicative role, and deeper into the artistic realm. The second chapter offered a number of possible explanations to the origin for this photobook boom, focusing on how technology has changed the way we consider both publishing and photography. Digital technology has turned everyone with access to a networked computer into a potential publisher of both online and offline material, while smartphones and cheap high-end cameras have brought photography to the public in a much larger scale than ever before. Pre-digital photography has always appeared in print before it could be appreciated by the people, and printed photography is quite different from photography on a screen, which could, at least partly, explain why self-publishing has become particularly prominent in the photography world.

That the zine has managed to live on, even thrive, well into the digital age, can serve as a proof of the resilience of printed matter, and our intricate relationship with tangible, paper books. Moreover, we can even consider photozines (as well as independent photobooks) as a direct result of the digitisation of society. Without the ready networks and accessible technology, and without the digital realm to react to, they would almost certainly not have thrived in the way they do today. 'In the post-digital condition, "old" and "new" media no longer exist as meaningful terms, but only as technologies of mutual stabilization and destabilization,' Cramer adds.[230] Artists 'are intentionally overlapping and connecting genre types', White says, and it seems as though this ongoing practice will continue to puzzle media theorists, possibly challenging our conceptions of new (and 'old') media.[231]

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230   Cramer, 'Le parole a... Florian Cramer: Post-digital Aesthetics'.
231   White, 'The Evolution of Artists' Publishing', p. 228.

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