

BCB FALL SEMESTER 2024

FA325 The Photo Zine: A Subversive Phenomenon

Seminar Leader: April Gertler

Course Time: Tuesdays: 2 - 5.15pm

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Office Hours: by appointment - please contact me!

Course Description

The concept of a "Zine" (pronounced 'zeen') references small-circulation (typically an edition of 100 or less), self-published works of original or appropriated images and texts, often reproduced using a copy machine / printer / duplicator. Zines, or 'fanzines' can be traced back to the 1940s. They were rooted in the science fiction world initially and were created by fans who created small self-published magazines about the science fiction they loved. Zines famously played a significant role in the punk movement of 1970s as a way to explore subversive topics and ideas around the movement. Zines have continued to be found in many subcultures and have always played a crucial role as a means of communication within those diverse subcultures. They often embrace a "do-it-yourself" ethos, challenging the established norms of professional design and publishing. Zines offer an alternative, confident, and self-aware mode of expression. Photography is an essential component to most Zines. The Zine works as a space for visual story telling, but can also be used to create a preview of an ongoing photographic project. Historically the diversity of photography used in Zines is very wide reaching; from personal photographs created specifically for the inclusion in a Zine to found images from any source.

This class will work with printers, copy machines and a RISO duplicator to create Photo Zines and explore the joys of the limited edition Photo Zine and how it can manifest into an important mode of self expression. We will work with image and text; both using found images and also found text to creating photographs and text specific for the formats we will explore. The class will visit Schikkimikki - a Zine library that has Zines from all over the world in their collection. At the end of this class, each student will leave the class with a small library consisting of both their own Photo Zines and those made by the other students in the class.

Requirements

Students are expected to:

- Use the designated printing times given to each student at the beginning of the semester. If the time is not used, please contact the Professor.
- Be prepared to present artworks / assignments / presentations without reminder.
- Engage in critiques and discussions.
- Initiate appointments with the Professor or arts staff outside of class time when assistance is necessary.

- Always allocate extra time for work preparation and clean-up for independent production.
- Respond to emails and/or text messages from the Professor in a timely manner.
- Inform Professor at beginning of semester if photos of student, artwork, works in progress are NOT to be taken and / or used for Bard College Berlin.
- Remove all artworks, art materials, and any personal belongings before the final inspection of the arts spaces during completion week. Failure to remove works and / or clean spaces used will result in final grade penalization. Donating artworks or art materials (unrequested) at anytime is not permitted and will still be considered student's property that will be expected to be uninstalled and removed.
- Students are expected to purchase 36 exposure Black and White film and photographic paper as needed for class assignments.

Attendance and Special considerations for Fall 2024:

All students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill.

- Attendance of ALL classes is expected.
- More than one absence (that is, absence from one three-hour session per week) in a semester will affect the participation grade for the course.
- Students are expected to attend all off-campus classes punctually, from start to finish. If there is a scheduling/travel conflict, the Professor must be informed in advance.
- Tardiness after five minutes will be considered an absence unless the Professor is contacted at least 1/2 an hour before class.

Policy on Late Submission of Artworks / Presentations

Assignments (artworks, essays, oral presentations) that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (Example: B+ becomes C+). Professor is not obliged to accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late. Where the Professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it must be submitted within two weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than a C.

Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Grade Breakdown

This class is based on the simple principle of doing the best you can in class.

That means; handing your work in on time, coming to class on time, participating in class and cleaning / maintaining the darkroom and finally, being prepared and ready when in class. You will get a written assessment of every assignment you do.

Corita Kent, the artist and former nun wrote a very apt list titled:

10 RULES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

I follow this list quite closely - (see the rest of the list at the end of the document)

Rule Number 7 says; The only rule is work. If you work it will lead to something. It is the people who do all the work all the time who eventually catch to things.

You can fool the fans — but not the players.

Keep this in mind during this class. Although you are needed to be in class to get grades and pass the course — much more importantly you are needed to help make the class what it is. The structure is there for you and you are also part of the structure; your contributions help shape the class.

Assessment

Students are also assessed on their ability to work independently and responsibly. They will be graded on their ability to communicate with the Professor as well as amongst themselves. This also includes their ambition to create artworks as well as their willingness to budget their time for all requirements connected to this class. This assessment also includes preparation, production, and cleaning up of spaces used at P98 at Bard College Berlin. During the semester, all assignments will be graded and commented on. If you feel that you are unsure of your grade and want clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me, I am always happy to discuss.

Anticipated Costs for this Class

Each student will be expected to purchase their own paper - which can include cover stock or other types of paper one might want to use for their Zines in this class. The other costs incurred could be thread (for sewing a Zine together) and the price of photocopying (both black/white and color) the Zine. The costs should not go exceed 50€ for this class.

Materials list

Basic tools for Zine making will be provided to the students during the class. Outside of those materials, specialty papers/threads that the student might want for their Zines will be the costs the students will have to incur themselves.

Starter Zine Kit is checked out to each student at the beginning of the semester and includes the following items (all of which need to be in the Supply bag when returned): **scissors, small scissors for use with the sewing machine, cutting mat, box cutter, glue stick, needles, thread (black and white), 6 bobbins (for sewing machine), metal ruler, seam ripper, and a bone folder**

Copy Shops

Most copy shops can make high quality inkjet prints from files (Copy Clara maybe the best). www.allesclara.de (3 locations in Berlin)

Most DM and Rossmann stores have a small print station - where cheap digital prints can be made from your phone or a file from a USB stick.

Then there are higher quality machine printed photographs from digital files or analog - made on fuji frontier machines.

Pixel Grain and Viertel Vor 8 are 2 labs in Prenzlauer Berg that do higher quality digital and analog prints: -<https://www.fotolabor-berlin.com/>

Pixel Grain is more expensive but I think runs their machines at higher quality settings as the results are better. Pixel Grain also makes analog quality digital printing (lightjet) and archival inkjet. Pixel Grain is (I believe) the highest quality pro photo lab in Berlin.

In Kreuzberg there is a small shop run by a very experienced guy

<https://www.foto-fehling.de/fotolabor-in-berlin-kreuzberg/analog-digital-fotolabor/>
-they do both fuji frontier and hand prints.

Suggested Readings (all readings will be available in the Google classroom folder)

Towards a Self Sustaining Model of Publishing, Marc Fischer

Artists' Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art, Gwen Allen

Booktrek: Selected Essays on Artists' Books since 1972, Clive Phillpot

Search, Compile, Publish, Paul Soulellis

A New Beginning, Rasheed Araeen

Notes from the Underground, Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture,

Stephen Duncombe

What are Zines?

Stephen Duncombe wrote the first scholarly book on zines

(*Notes from the Underground, Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture*, 1997) and described them as:

"Non-commercial, nonprofessional, small circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish and distribute by themselves"

Zines are "scruffy, homemade pamphlets that are filled with rantings of high weirdness and exploding with chaotic design"

FALL 2024 WEEKLY SCHEDULE*

*There may be adjustments to the timing of assignments as course progresses. All students will be informed of any new expectations and/or deadlines.

All Zines in this class will be required to be in an edition of 11 for swapping with each other in the class in addition to contributing to the BCB Zine library (which exists in P98).

September 3: Week 1

Introductions, expectations, rules, Zine examples

Please be prepared to introduce yourself by way of a Zine that you like/love!

In class exercise: Zines made from one sheet of paper!

September 10: Week 2

Starter Zine Kit handed out along with first assignment titled:

Assignment #1 (due September 17): The Self-Portrait Narrative

Go to a photoautomat somewhere in Berlin

(map of various automats in the city: <http://www.photoautomat.de/standorte.html>)

and make a self-portrait photographic narrative that is continuous (4 'scenes' that complete one story line) in the photo booth. A strip is a series of 4 images, so you will have to plan ahead. It will cost €3 for a strip of black and white photographs - bring coins with you.

In class exercise: The Signature!

Presentation on the photographic narrative

Let's look at some Zine samples today as well!

September 17: Week 3

Assignment #1 due! Bring the strip of photographs with you to class.

Critique and discussion about the photographic narrative.

Assignment #2 (due September 24); make a Zine (in an edition of 11) using the photo strips (no text).

In progress review of the Self Portrait Narrative Zine

+ Binding tutorials (spiral binding, sewn binding, staple binding)

+ Sewing machine tutorial

+ What is a colophon?

September 24: Week 4

Assignment #2 due! In class critique

Assignment #3 - Fan Zine! (Due October 15) - create a Zine dedicated to your favourite band (this can be any band at all - your housemates band even), this Zine must include one color component (can be hand coloured or can be a color photo copy or a color photograph inserted) and be in an edition of 11.

This assignment connects to the historical roots of the concept of the Zine.

This Zine must include a 'submission' by someone else about the band.

Best option is to ask a friend to submit something (can be a drawing, poem, article, an interview - whatever you want) or you can find something online to submit.

The credits for the person who's submission you included in your Zine must be given in the colophon.

This Zine must also be 8 pages long (it can be sewn, stapled, or?) = 2 sheets of paper

The size and format of this Zine is up to you.

Also due is a presentation on Fan Zines over the years.

The big question we will address here is :

What is a Fan Zine and what is included in a Fan Zine?

Prepare for your presentation next week!

October 1: Week 5

In-progress review of the FanZine!

You should be ready to show the format of your Zine, basic info about the band, and an idea of the layout.

Presentations today = outline of the 5-7min presentation should include:

+ 10 slides minimum about your band

+ Music sample?

+ biographical background on the artist(s)

+ what type of zines did they make? Or did they make any or do any currently exist?

+ Share with us your favourite Zine they made - can be a double page spread, or the concept for the Zine, etc If they don't have any Zines, show us what you plan on doing in your Zine.

October 8: Week 6

Progress critique and work time on Assignment #3

October 15: Week 7

Assignment #3 due! - in class critique

and Introduction of Assignment #4 - The One Topic Zine! (Due November 12)

Choose one topic that is of interest to you, make a series of photographs (or find photos) (at least 8, but better 10 photos) of this topic: it can be anything from man hole covers to egg cups, basically whatever you can think of that has caught your attention/interest/fascination Sequence the photos and create a Zine - this Zine is meant to be image based only.

Zine must be 8 pages long (using 2 sheets of paper folded), zine must include at least 8 photos. Zine edition must be 11.

FALL BREAK: October 21 - 27

November 5: Week 10

In class progress review on assignment #4 is due today.

November 12: Week 11

Please Note: This class meets at WIRWIR studio, Stuttgarter Str. 56, 12059 Berlin-Neukölln

We will be discussing how the Riso machine works during our meeting at WIRWIR

Assignment #4 - The One Topic Zine! DUE today!

November 19: Week 12

Assignment #6 - The Riso Zine! (Due December 3)

The Zine content is up to you!

It can be a "perzine" - personal zine about you and your people

It can be a political exclamation about your belief system

It can be a meditation on one idea

It can be whatever you want it to be!

But it must be a minimum of 8 pages (2 sheets of paper).

We will be using the Riso duplicating machine for this assignment.

November 26: Week 13

***ARTSEEN submission DUE today! (See below for details)**

December 3: Week 14

Critique of **Assignment #6** at WIRWIR coupled with early dinner!

December 10: Week 14: install for open studio!

***ARTSEEN submission information!**

***Please make a one A4 page featuring image(s) of your artwork, with your own layout / page design.

The zine will be printed in Portrait format on A4 paper with a plastic spiral binding on the left side.

The official size of A4 is 210 x 297mm.

Considering the 5mm white border on each side, the true workable size of your page is 200 x 287mm. Keep in mind while designing your page that the holes punched for the binding will intrude at least 1cm into the left side of the page.

The final design should be saved as either PDF or JPG.

The resolution or print quality should be 300 dpi.

The page* **MUST** include your name.

In addition to: work(s) title, date, materials, and size

The typical art caption info might appear like this:

Artist Name, "Title," 2024, Silver gelatin print, 20 x 30 cm

Or this:

Artist Name

"Title" 2024

Silver gelatin print

30 x 20 cm

This will be considered as part of your Final Grade.

Please email me (sooner rather than later) if you have any questions or need any help with designing your page.

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*If you are unclear as to how to do this; you can scan your desired image that you want to submit with your phone (using an App scanner) and then open the document in PREVIEW - you can add a text box on your image there and add the relevant information.

IMMACULATE HEART COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT RULES

- Rule 1 FIND A PLACE YOU TRUST AND THEN TRY TRUSTING IT FOR A WHILE.
- Rule 2 GENERAL DUTIES OF A STUDENT:
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR TEACHER.
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS.
- Rule 3 GENERAL DUTIES OF A TEACHER:
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR STUDENTS.
- Rule 4 CONSIDER EVERYTHING AN EXPERIMENT.
- Rule 5 BE SELF DISCIPLINED. THIS MEANS FINDING SOMEONE WISE OR SMART AND CHOOSING TO FOLLOW THEM.
TO BE DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A GOOD WAY.
TO BE SELF DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A BETTER WAY.
- Rule 6 NOTHING IS A MISTAKE. THERE'S NO WIN AND NO FAIL. THERE'S ONLY MAKE.
- Rule 7 The only rule is work.
IF YOU WORK IT WILL LEAD TO SOMETHING.
IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO DO ALL OF THE WORK ALL THE TIME WHO EVENTUALLY CATCH ON TO THINGS.
- Rule 8 DONT TRY TO CREATE AND ANALYSE AT THE SAME TIME. THEY'RE DIFFERENT PROCESSES.
- Rule 9 BE HAPPY WHENEVER YOU CAN MANAGE IT. ENJOY YOURSELF. IT'S LIGHTER THAN YOU THINK.
- Rule 10 "WE'RE BREAKING ALL OF THE RULES. EVEN OUR OWN RULES. AND HOW DO WE DO THAT? BY LEAVING PLENTY OF ROOM FOR X QUANTITIES." JOHN CAGE
- HELPFUL HINTS: ALWAYS BE AROUND. COME OR GO TO EVERYTHING. ALWAYS GO TO CLASSES. READ ANYTHING YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON. LOOK AT MOVIES CAREFULLY OFTEN. SAVE EVERYTHING-IT MIGHT COME IN HANDY LATER. THERE SHOULD BE NEW RULES NEXT WEEK.