

2021

SOME
POSSIBLE
MINDS
FUTURES

2021

The Museum of Contemporary Art Australia acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the traditional owners of Tallawoladah, the land and waters on which the MCA stands. We extend this acknowledgement to all traditional owners of the lands and waters of the contributors to this project.

Contents

Introduction	2
Bastian Fox Phelan	4
Dulwich Highschool of Visual Arts and Design students	6
Fayroze Lutta	14
Mika Benesh, Naomi Segal, & Ruby PH	16
Safdar Ahmed (Refugee Art Project)	20
Samantha Riegl (Sticky Institute)	26
Vanessa Berry	28
Contributor biographies	32

Introduction

I always knew that the end of autumn in Sydney was approaching when zinesters would fill the MCA with their amazing talent, energy and zines. It was thrilling to see the diversity of approaches, styles, ages and perspectives represented in each zine. Starting from very early on a Sunday morning, zinemakers would set up their stalls in anticipation of the crowds that would soon appear.

What is less visible is the profound sense of community and exchange that has been part of building this event. Since 2008, zines, zinesters and the annual Zine Fair have become a big part of the MCA. They also started to appear in MCA exhibitions, youth-led programs, the MCA Store and other projects. However, zines have historically served as a medium for artists to present political and cultural criticisms in an unfiltered and unrestricted way. What are the implications when zine fairs are held inside a museum? How can arts organisations support DIY ethos and community-led approaches?

Questions of community engagement and collaboration are at the core of ongoing discussions about the civic and social role of museums in the 21st century. Ultimately, this requires an investment in time to build relationships based on trust. I am honoured to have met and worked with many zinesters who have collaborated with us on this program. When zinemaker Bastian Fox Phelan shared with me their personal experience of the MCA Zine Fair in 2016 (see pages 4–5), it was a moment of openness that enabled us to build a new relationship and create a new way of working on a project we both loved. In some ways it truly reflects our mutual passion for zines in the first place, as a generous space where creative individuals can share, swap and create something new together.

When faced with the cancellation of the MCA Zine Fair in 2020 due to COVID-19, we regrouped to see how we could create something that not only supported the local zine community but also dreamt of new possibilities. In conversation with Bastian, 'Some possible zine futures' was created. Sixteen individuals who have been involved in the MCA Zine Fair at different times were invited to envision what the future could hold. Together we asked: What skills do we need to share with others to support and nurture the future of zine making? If we can no longer gather in large numbers, what other forms could zine fairs take? How will issues like ongoing isolation, disconnection, anxiety and socio-economic disparities shape zines in the coming years?

Introduction

'Some possible zine futures' acts as a resource, record and conservation starter for how zines can continue to bring us together. It shares insights, histories and ideas in order to make way for the future to emerge. The future of zines is more than just possible, it is generative and generous.

Yaël Filipovic
MCA Public Engagement Manager

In 2007 when I put on a new zine fair for the Sydney Writers' festival, I was just 20 years old. Baby-faced me had already been immersed in zine culture for a few years: at Belladonna DIY fest, This Is Not Art festival, Adelaide Fringe (later, Format Festival) and on pilgrimages to Sticky. I'd already tried my hand at organising a zine fair and had been fully converted by the radical spirit of zinemaking. Every idea I had was a potential new zine, everywhere I looked I saw spaces that could be filled up with zines.

That zealous devotion to the culture of self-publishing was what prompted me to pitch a zine fair event to SWF. They agreed, and one sunny autumn morning some friends and I decked out a Walsh Bay pier with trestle tables. It wasn't the biggest zine fair I'd been to, or the most successful - zines were not flying off the table, apart from the occasional gust of wind - but it created another opportunity for people to show their work, meet new friends, and engage with curious members of the public. For many, a zine fair is their first encounter with the world of zines.

The way I thought about the events I coordinated then was much like the way I thought of zines: there might be a sequel - a 'Zine Fair II' - or it might be a one-off. I hadn't anticipated that another organisation would take interest in this DIY event, so it came as a shock in 2008 when I discovered that the SWF Zine Fair had moved to the Museum of Contemporary Art. I felt locked out. The zine fair was out of my hands, hidden in the catacombs of a sandstone building at Circular Quay, turning into something else.

I put it behind me, or so I thought. But questions continued to arise. Was the zine fair 'mine' to begin with? Who does zine culture belong to? The MCA Zine Fair was hugely successful - one of the largest zine fairs in Australia - but it was different to what I was used to, because it was coordinated by an established arts institution, rather than the community. Anyone can make a zine, but can anyone organise a zine fair? If the event introduced more people to the medium, did it matter who was behind it?

The MCA Zine Fair continued to grow, and became a significant event to many: to the people who applied and attended year after year; to the people who wandered into the Foundation Hall on a sunny autumn morning, to see what all the fuss was about; to the people who braved the crowds to seek out their zine crush and ask if they wanted to trade. What I thought about this event didn't matter so much - it had outgrown me.

More time passed, and still I thought of the zine fair and my connection to it. Something felt unresolved. I realised that what I needed was to tell my story.

In 2016 I contacted Yael and the Public Engagement team, the people who were, by then, responsible for running Zine Fair. We met, they listened to me, and something began to change. Afterwards we came up with an idea: I would facilitate a panel discussion at the next Zine Fair, discussing the experiences of artists working with arts institutions. After this we met again and hatched another idea: I would come on board as a collaborator. We would work towards a shared vision - more input from the zine community into this community event.

For the next few years, we navigated a unique collaborative relationship, as people both within and outside of the institution, who shared similar values and loved zines. Working with the team allowed me to create new opportunities, through the Zine Symposium, Zine Making Night, and by getting zine community members on the selection committee. I was also able to see the role I could play in the lives of younger zinemakers, how I contributed to the community.

Once again, MCA Zine Fair had transformed itself. Collaboration leads to unexpected results. Perhaps most surprising to me, though, was how I transformed. At one time I had been so unsure of myself, unconvinced that the power of my voice would be enough. My experiences have shown me that one voice is more than enough to make a difference - and many voices together is transcendent.

- Bastian Fox Phelan, 2021

The Future of Zines

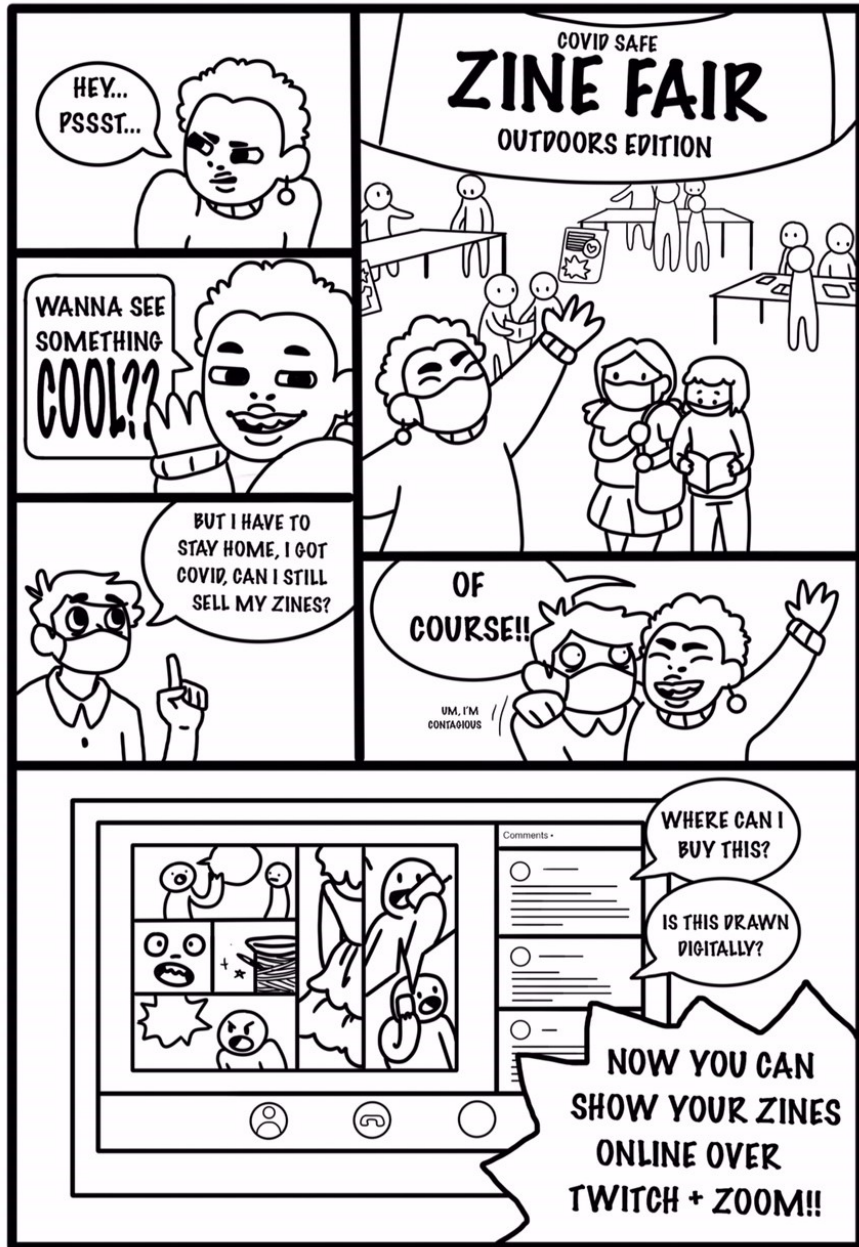
In a post-pandemic world, the production of Zine Fairs can be reimagined now in preparation for the future. Although drastic unforeseen changes have been experienced, society can remain connected with the Zine Fairs of the future. During the pandemic, many people had limited access to economic resources that restricted some creative outlets. Yet, zines continued to provide an opportunity for artists and writers to communicate their interests in a profitable light. Remaining connected with Zine Fairs of the future is beneficial for the zine community to develop and inspire emerging artists. This can be implemented through innovative ideas such as the Zine Trail app, Co-Vivid Zine, and biodegradable zines through supermarket earnings and advertisements.

The implementation of the Zine Trail app incites awareness of public accessibility. This enables people to book online through the app that advertises the zine fair via links and QR codes to the website. The Zine Trail also features a blog section in the same app that provides instant reviews from each zine store, replicating an online exhibition. As the utilisation of technology increased during the pandemic, many people were easily influenced by the activities and trends posted on social media. It is clearly evident that social media is a crucial platform to support human connectivity for Zines to be inculcated. The social media platforms will include previous zines made, time-lapse of creating zines, zine tutorials and a contact option for other aspiring zine creators to access further information. Platforms such as Youtube, Twitch and Tik-Tok have become increasingly popular, which allow videos, live chats and discussions from zine creators to be accessible and to inspire younger audiences. The Zine Trail app booking is a successful form for a Zine Fair that meets the Covid precautions of 1.5m social distancing allowing people to stay connected to zines fairs locally and globally.

Co-Vivid Zine encompasses projections, augmented and virtual realities that can be displayed at events such as Vivid Sydney. Vivid Sydney provides the opportunity for intricate forms of art to be accessible and communicated to thousands of people. The format of zines can be displayed through the projection of short animated films on buildings and interactive demonstrations of zine constructions. Additional AR and VR capabilities integrating zines can be titled 'Quaran-zine', allowing zine creators to discuss their work within an interactive projection for viewers. This will include Multi-users in a 3D Virtual World Zine Fair and enter the Virtual Zine Fair as Avatars. The significance of a post-pandemic world would allow for crucial advancement for society to be exposed to zine creation via virtual space.

Zines have access through loyalty programs at supermarkets that can encourage people to spend more during shopping while receiving a free zine template. These zines can be biodegradable and can be supplied to stores that provide customers with zines when people spend a certain amount of money. Local businesses can use the earnings as an advertisement tool to inform potential consumers of their contact details, prices and deals. This zine-making template can be inculcated through personalised gifts, which can enable audiences to learn and adapt the art/writing style of a 'homemade' publication.

Therefore, Zine Fairs of the future in a post-pandemic world can utilise public events that thrive from creativity and provide access to a greater audience. Evidently, through the Zine Trail app, Co-Vivid Zine and biodegradable zine templates can be easily accessible and promoted. This informs and educates individuals about the nature of zines and establishes the culture within social media to allow society to continue to remain connected with Zine Fairs across the world.



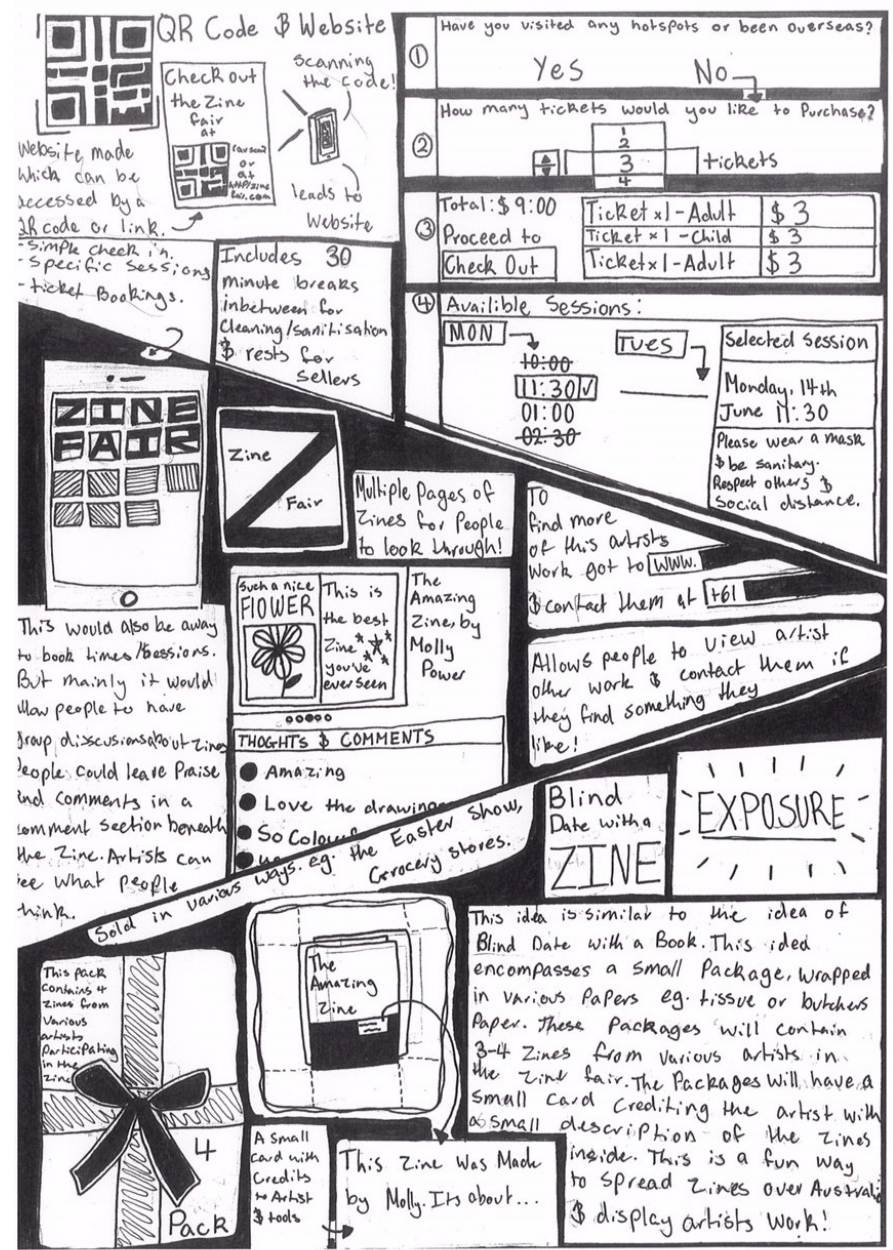
Genevieve (Year 11)



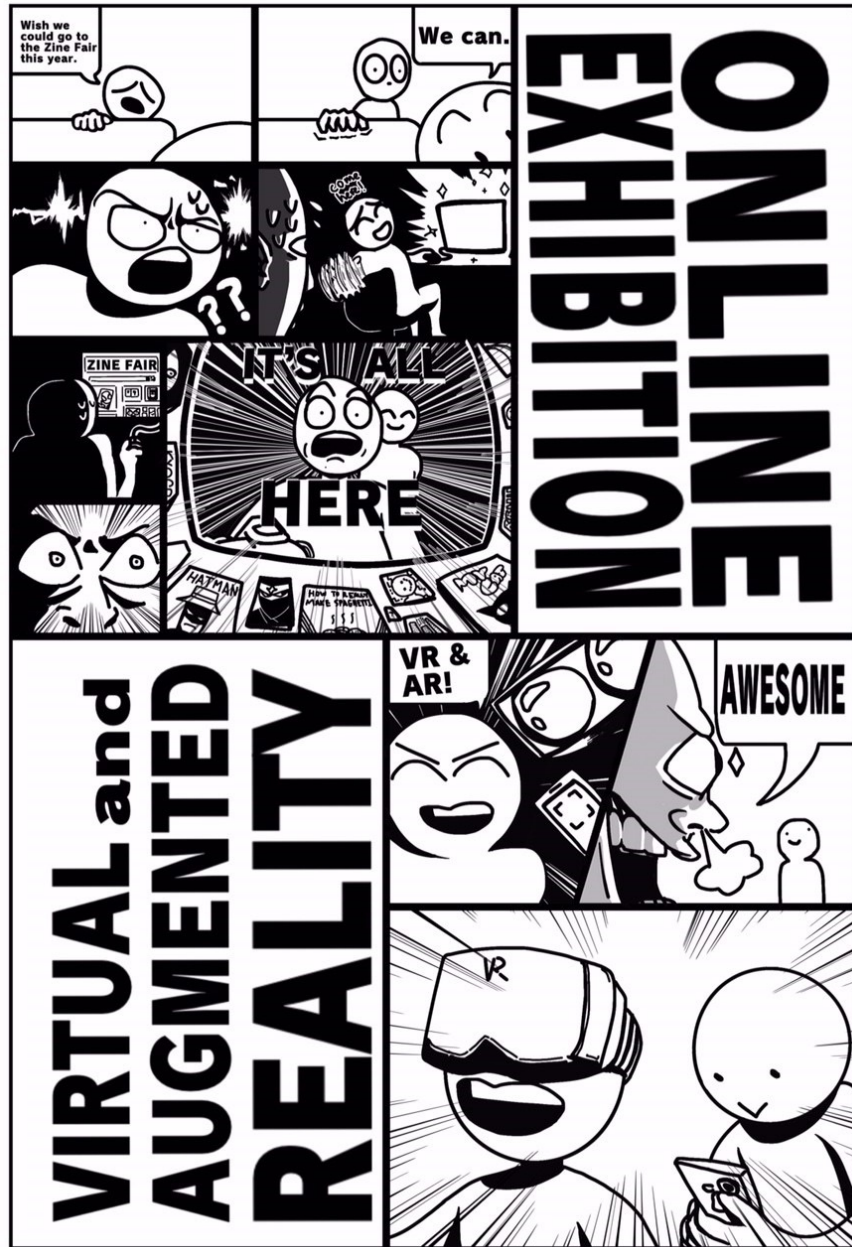
Holly (Year 10)



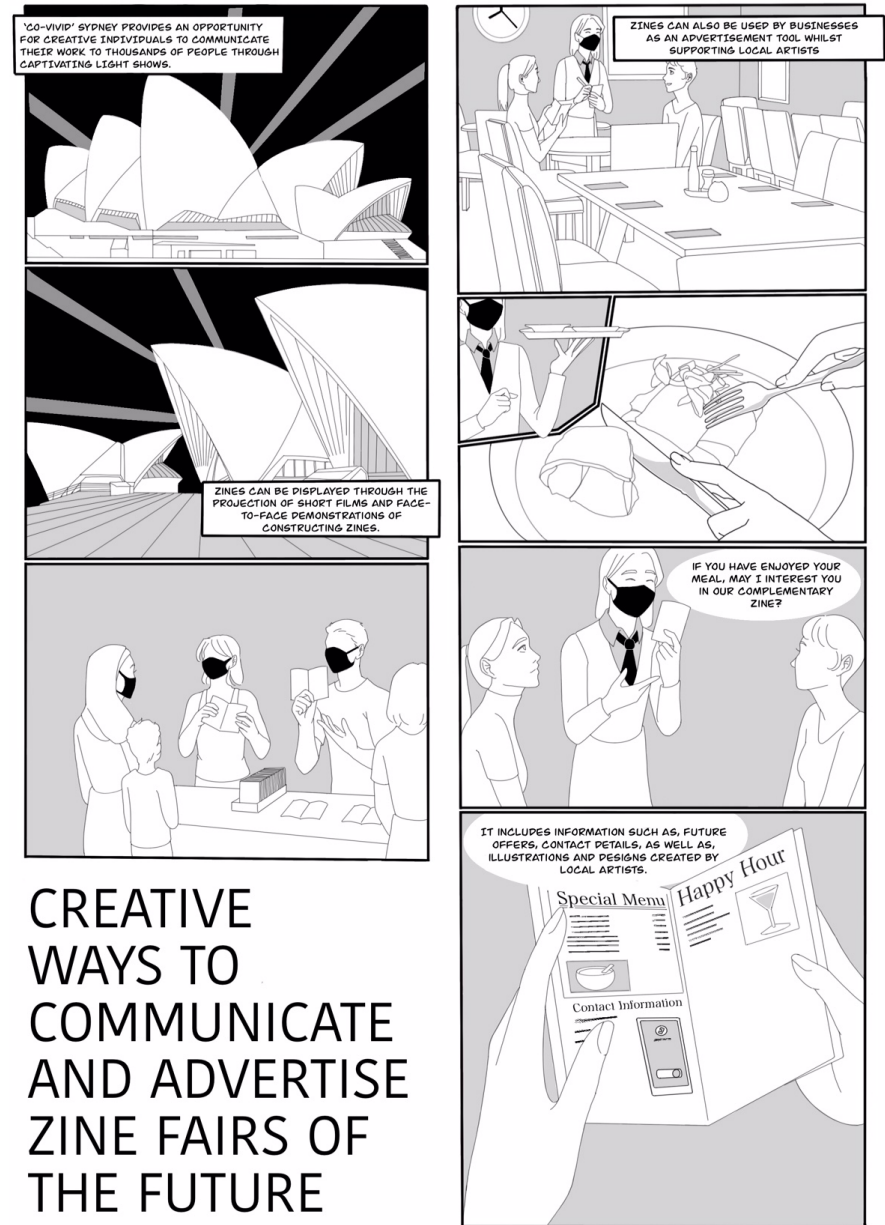
Zoe (Year 8)



Molly (Year 8)



Luc (Year 11)



Stella (Year 10)

Speaking Truth to Power

As long as there are writers there will be zines. The avenues such as zine fairs can make up a large component of a zine makers concept to create a zine with a definitive deadline and due date in mind. I am sure I am not alone in staying up into the early hours saddle stitching trying to not accidentally prick myself and inadvertently bleed and leave my DNA on the innards of one of my creations.

Zine fairs are a great way to sell and meet your readers and casually see not only my zine friends and peers but many fellow artists, writers and poets I have met over the years and students that I have taught in art workshops all over Sydney. Zines are the real zineiest and incubator and zine fairs are where fashion and trends start and are on display to be disseminated.

Zines themselves come and go into the art cycle but to those dedicated and excited to make zines there will always be a way to disseminate their work. I'm still a true believer in hard copy with zines yet with the rise of NFT the concept keeps inherent in zines that it is limited edition. To some extent the move towards digital is also there as a means of promoting online for hard copy. The most powerful zines I've found are at Sticky Institute

In Melbourne and Jura Bookstore on Parramatta Rd, Petersham. There is an agony in not being able to connect or contact or find other copies of some gem in a zine series or zine maker, hopefully a thing of the past. There is the retail apocalypse as it's known however zines and their makers aren't motivated by money. Ultimately zines are passion projects the energy and time that goes into producing original content is a labour of love.

Covid was a time when people were working less if at all and confined to the domestic sphere. With time on their hands and nothing but their creativity zine makers like all other artists and writers would of been comfortable to have the time to create.

A zine whether made elaborately or a quick scribble with a pen to churn out a dozen pages is always a sign of the present day. My zines about Sirius and Westconnex were an expression of the community struggle with governmental forces and decisions that were to the detriment to the local community and echoed in many detrimental acts of the government at the time.

As a zine maker I felt a call of duty with Disconnex zine to find out not only what had happened but what was coming even though an unwinnable battle. I'm glad I fought back with an exhibition and four zines in

total calling upon Clever Moore and Jenny Leong, poets and activists to be photographed and interviewed.

My zine launch was an exhibition at GAFFA Gallery featuring politicians poets and a cellist. There were two broadcasted radio interviews with 2RRR and Eastside Radio a newspaper interview with the Inner West Courier and a write up in the Telegraph and Art Almanac.

A motion was made at Inner West City Council against Westconnex for the noise and vibration effects against the people in Camperdown based on my findings within the zines. All sides and members Labor, Liberal Greens and Independent voted unanimously and it was from the contents of the zines. In the end the zines were about capturing the collective anguish and turmoil if the community to be remembered to state that we had tried to fight back to a government that would not listen. However I sold most of my stock at the MCA Zine Fair.

That's why it saddens me there is no MCA Zine Fair 2020 & 2021 because it's a means to disseminate and tell truth to power in the halls of a noted institution. It will come back one day insha'Allah but for the time being zine makers will still find a way a how and a means to share their work or keep it incubating until the next MCA Zine Fair.

@the_urbaniste



My writings drawings and images during covid were all about trying to battle and find light in darkness. This piece of writing by Albert Lin encapsulates my sentiments of that time:

"I've tried yelling truth in power.
I've tried channelling anger into action.
Speaking truth in power
And using my voice.

All I have to show for it is a cough and a hoarse throat.

I was not made to display that rage.

To bottle up that wet anger inside me.

Fastening and fermenting until it explodes.

I was made to calmly talk through my feelings.

To gently detour around anxiety minefields.

To sit with emotions and process.

But my voice was made to whispering prayers to the stars.

It was made for sweet nothings and murmured good nights.

For humble truths and quiet embraces.

And even with my hushed tones.

I am certain that I can say everything.

I will still make my voice heard."

Dreaming Zine Futures

A resource on emerging & alternative zine-making practices, distribution methods, and communities.



Making Zines

Zines (and other handmade and self-published media) emerged from marginal communities as a way to materialise and circulate ideas - while bypassing the protocols of formal outlets like publishing houses, magazines or academic journals.

Zines are a great medium for personal or niche topics, their capacity to be shaped into something entirely unique to the maker is boundless. Zines do not have to be palatable or marketable to mass audiences.

...Did you know?

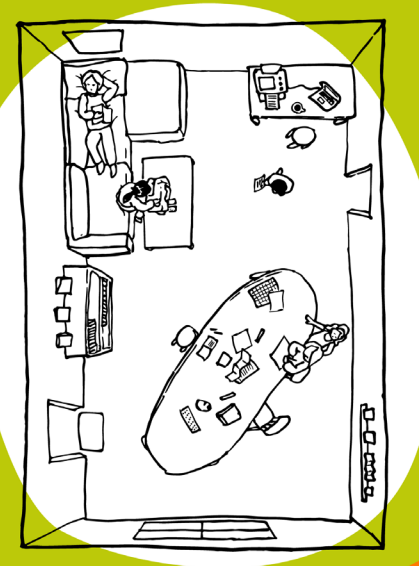
Print media, writing and publishing have always existed in formats outside of dominant media outlets. "Zines" first emerged as early as the 1930s as a format for fans make work about their favourite media. During the punk era of the 1980s, zines became a medium for independent publishing and small circulations.



Screen reader, colour and printable versions of this resource are available to download via the MCA Website www.mca.com.au

This version is the colour image version. 14/04/2021

This resource was produced on unceded Aboriginal Land. Our respects to elders and communities past, present and emerging.



Trading

Trading has always played a part in zine events and practices. It's important to approach a new trade with respect. Trades should always be between items of equal and mutual value. You can always say no to any trade.

Distribution

Zine fairs are major events in a zine-maker's calendar, but there are many alternative forms of distributing zines. Especially in mid- and post-pandemic times, we are becoming oriented towards lower-contact forms of sharing what we make with each other.

You could try distributing via...

- ★ A Patreon or similar subscription service (like Katy Plummer)
- ★ A zine library initiative at a local business or library etc.
- ★ An online platform like Gumroad
- ★ A vending machine (ACT Zine Emporium, Zine-O-Matic),
- ★ An interactive installation/exhibition
- ★ A lucky dip or chance distribution

...OR
an entirely different kind of
activation or happening...

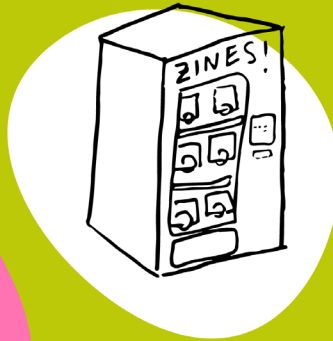


**By Mika Benesh
Naomi Segal & Ruby PH**

Finding Space

Reach out to nonprofit galleries, community & council spaces, arts venues & studios. Some venues may charge a fee for renting the space - consider how this will impact your costs.

You can apply for a grant or other funding, crowdsource, or ask participating artists a small amount - \$5-10. Consider accessibility and layouts of your space, and how you will source tables and chairs for the event if applicable.



Community

While zine fairs and conventions are often annual events sporting huge market halls/expo layouts, smaller events don't require as much planning and resources. That means they can then be run more frequently - allowing for a steady stream of opportunities to nourish different communities all year round.

Although zine fairs are vital opportunities for artists to generate income from their work, we should also encourage other programs - like zine libraries, reading groups, art installations and workshops - that do not prioritise the marketability of the zine. For example a potluck zine-making workshop like Zine Dreams emphasises being curious, experimental and connected with one another.



Communication

Not everyone has internet/social media. Try promoting your event through snail mail, email, flyers, posters, notice board and word of mouth.

Remember

Zines are not beholden to institutions. It's amazing when institutions and organisations provide events, venues, funds and other resources to support zine communities, but you can put on a zine program just about anywhere, with or without external support by keeping it small.



Fund Raising

Identify a local grassroots fundraising campaign or organisation to donate funds to. Keep things simple by donating all proceeds, rather than figuring out a percentage.

Communicate clearly to makers that all proceeds will be donated. You can encourage makers to contribute old stock, rather than making new work for the event.

Create a streamlined process you will gather funds with on the day, and communicate this with participating zine makers and the event space/venue.

Accessibility

Accessibility is a critical factor to consider in your planning. As a further reading have a look at the resources provided by orgs like Arts Access Australia and Accessible Arts. People who are marginalised often use zines as a medium to share experiences and find community. Make sure your event is safe for all. No racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia or transphobia.

Large zine fairs can be overwhelming for many. Stallholders onsite all day, patrons & anyone experiencing noise and social related anxiety. Quieter programs offer a more accessible way for people to engage deeply with makers and their work. Consider letting patrons know in advance if the event could be overwhelming or loud. Allocate a quiet space away from the bustle for folks to step away to recharge if they need.

By Mika Benesh
Naomi Segal & Ruby PH

FRUSTRATION by Batur

My name is Batur
I am a refugee from
Afghanistan.



I fled to the UK.
I was there for 4
years before they
deported me back
to Afghanistan.



I came to Australia
I was in the
community for 4 months

Suddenly they put
me in the Villawood
detention centre.



They accused me of going to jail in the UK for 4 years but
this never happened



The reason you
are here is
because you
went to jail.

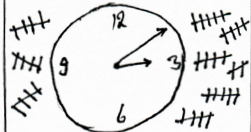


It's absolutely
wrong: I have
never been in
jail! I was
studying for
4 years.

I showed them my
college certificates
& letters from the
Refugee Council.



After 6 months
they then asked me
to do my own
Police
clearance!



After 4 months, I
gave it to them

I proved it to them
but still I am in
detention.



I have waited for
11 long months.

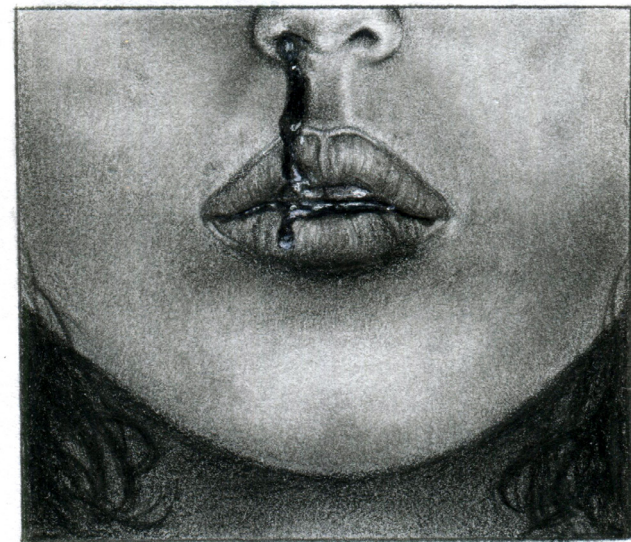
1.



29-1-19

2.

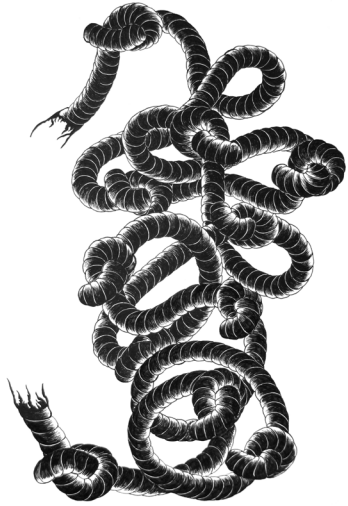
Life



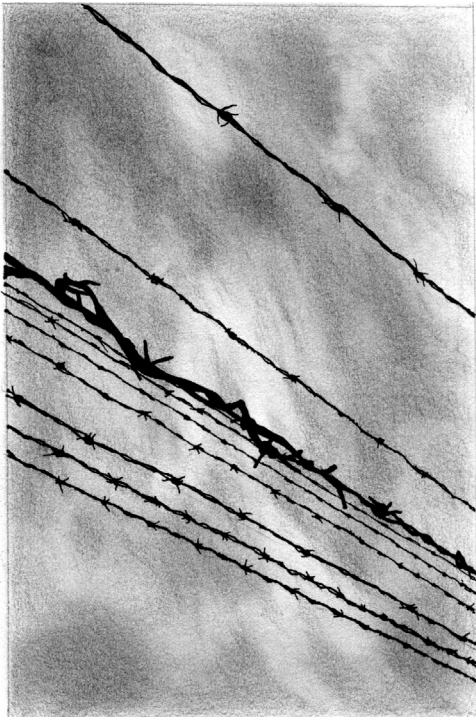
9-2-18

3.

Life



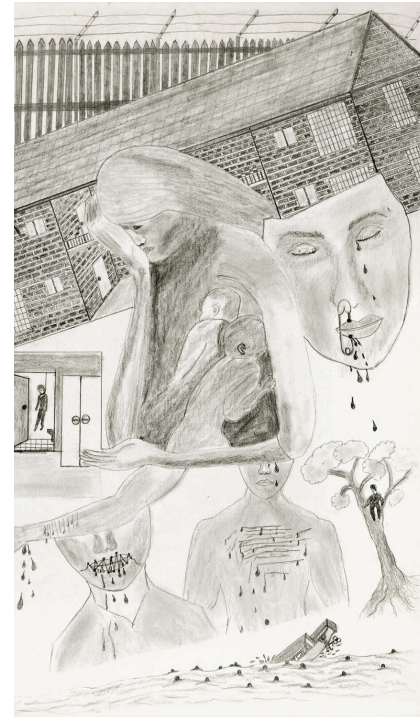
4.



5.



6.



7.

Refugee Art Project

Refugee Art Project is a small, volunteer run, not-for-profit community art organisation dedicated to supporting people of an asylum seeker or refugee background through art workshops and collaborations. Our organisation began visiting the Villawood Detention Centre in early 2011 and we currently have a studio at the Thirning Villa artist space in Ashfield, Sydney.

Our group has engaged with people who came to Australia by boat from Indonesia, seeking protection from such countries as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, the Kurdish regions of the Middle East, Syria, Sri Lanka and Myanmar. In a spirit of collaboration, artworks are curated and shown in public exhibitions, online and in our zines, of which we've made 11 so far.

The zines contain drawings, cartoons, comics, poems, writing and interviews mostly from people who are trapped in Australia's punitive system of refugee deterrence, whether they are locked up in Sydney's Villawood detention centre or otherwise waiting in the community on a temporary visa without permanent protection. All have been subjected to the legal limbo and uncertainty that our government enforces on people whose only fault was to come here seeking protection.

A real highlight of our zines are the comics and cartoons that were drawn in Villawood between 2011-2016. They are mostly made by people who had never attempted comics before and describe the daily challenges and humiliations of life in that environment. For me they are historical documents, describing experiences that most Australians have no conception of.

A powerful zine features the drawings of Murtaza Ali Jafari, who had never made art in his life before coming into detention. I remember seeing his first ever drawing (of a boat on a lake) and realising he had his own style and way of putting things onto the page. Over the following months his work became more graphic and refined. He once said that when he draws with clean lines he feels like his heart is clean, and it's a description I've never forgotten. He went on to make some stunning images, which was deeply inspiring to witness.

In 2016 a number of drawings and zines were featured in the exhibition, *Telling Tales: Excursions in Narrative Form*, at the MCA. The public reaction to that exhibition was overwhelmingly supportive, and seemed to confirm the relevance of what we've done over many years.

People need to remember just how counter-discursive and transformative zines can be. When you open one you might encounter voices and perspectives that are ignored by the hegemonic powers which run our political systems and the commercial media. Whilst they exist in a small market, circulating in an exchange economy in which you are happy to

Refugee Art Project

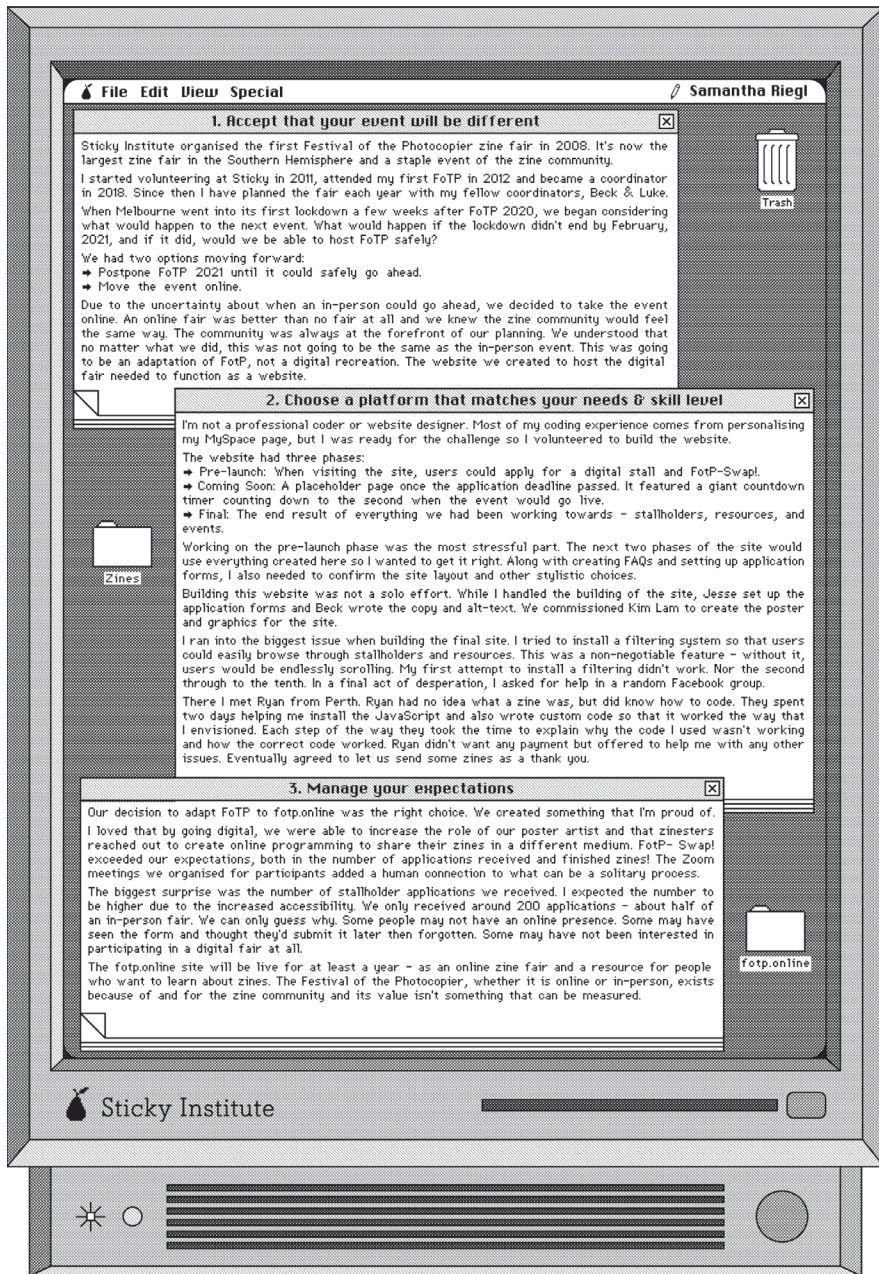
merely break even on costs, I think anyone can and should make a zine. If the voice is authentic, it will reach people. Some of our zines are included on reading lists in various university courses around the world.

Our most recent zine features the work of Tabz A, who is a young woman living in Villawood with her entire family. She has been displaced her whole life, and was drawing from childhood, developing an idiomatic, manga-influenced style with dark and sometimes horrific themes.

She designed and laid out the zine, and we hope it acts as a portfolio and opportunity for her to advance an art career in the future. What's interesting to me is that her drawings are extremely detailed but minute in scale (sometimes just a few square cm), which speaks to the process of making something in an environment where space and privacy are in short supply.

I hope her work gains exposure and the public are outraged she ever had to go through youth and adolescence in the unnaturally prison-like environment of a detention camp.

1. Batur '*frustration*', pen and ink on paper.
2. Tabz A, '*Aspects*', pencil on paper.
3. Tabz A, '*Aspects*', pencil on paper.
4. Murtaza, '*Knots*', pen and ink on paper.
5. Tabz A, '*Aspects*', pencil on paper.
6. Murtaza, '*Bird*', pen and ink on paper.
7. Mohammad '*Villawood*', pencil on paper.





Making Zines Together: zine pasts and futures

When I made my first zine in 1996 I didn't expect it to be life changing. Teenage-me dropped off copies of the first issue of Psychobabble at record stores with few expectations. But soon letters and zines started to arrive in the post, mentions of my zine appeared in other zines, and I found myself part of a community.

It was a happy surprise for someone who had spent her young life feeling out of step with the world. Through zines I met punks who played in bands, shy suburban teenagers who were self-publishing superheroes in secret, and a network of activists and writers who wrote bravely and candidly about their lives. We sent each other letters, met up for picnics and gigs, wrote zines together, and began friendships which continue to this day.

A collective force underlies zine culture. It is one of subversion and imagination, built on a desire for connection and exchange. While zine-making can intersect with the arts 'industries', it is ultimately undetermined by them. As I often say at the start of workshops, zines whatever you want them to be. Serious, secret, weird, silly, confronting, awkward, joyful, all and any of these things. They are whatever you want to make or express or have readers know. Zine culture and zine fairs are the same: there is no set way they have to be within the constraints of what they inherently are, and can be readily reimaged as times change.

Connection and experimentation are motivations that have carried zine makers through times when there was doubt about the survival of the medium (early 2000s: will the internet kill zines? No one knew, we just kept making them), through the periodic flares of mainstream media interest that seem like they might change the profile of zines (no matter the exposure they remain consistently subcultural), and through debates over the place of institutions in zine culture (Sydney's Other Worlds zine fair began in 2014 as a boycott of the MCA Zine Fair). Most recently, pandemic quaranzines and online zine fairs have been motivated by this same spirit, and I have no doubt this will go on to inspire whatever the next iteration of zine culture turns out to be.

Zines are enduring because they're made for the love of it and bring about meaningful exchanges of creative work and information with others. The community has been kept strong by its members determining their own roles, whether that be organising zine fairs, running a store or distro, teaching workshops, giving advice to new zinemakers, setting up a zine library, or simply reading and recommending and providing encouragement.

For all the excitement of the crowd at a major zine fair, there's also a contentment in the quiet bonding that comes with hanging out with a friend, making a zine together or alongside each other. There's a satisfaction in running a zine workshop and seeing people try it out for the first time, as there is in anticipating a new zine from a favourite longtime zinemaker. Initiatives like the Refugee Art Project, in which zines give voice to refugees in detention on their own terms, highlight the potential of zines to challenge political repression through the small-scale and personal. The longevity and popularity of Sticky, Australia's stalwart volunteer-run zine store, attests to their enduring ability to change the lives of makers and readers for the better. Zine culture is a powerful space of personal and collective empowerment, made up of all of these connections and the new ones yet to come.

Contributor biographies

Bastian Fox Phelan is a writer, musician and zine maker from Mulubinba Newcastle, Australia. Bastian has been making zines since 2004 and has coordinated several zine fairs, including the first Sydney Writer's Festival Zine Fair, which went on to become the MCA Zine Fair. Bastian has been the MCA Zine Fair Advisor and Creative Collaborator since 2018. They are part of a dreampop duo Moonsgn. Bastian's first book, a memoir about hair and identity, is forthcoming from Giramondo.

Dulwich High School of Visual Arts and Design is a specialist Visual Arts and Design public high school in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Our school has a strong history of success in all academic areas and we take pride in delivering high-quality education with a creative focus in a caring and supportive learning environment. Our students have the unique opportunity to study Visual Arts and Design in a specialist stream at the highest level. They also have access to learn from expert educators, practicing artists, industry professionals and leading creative thinkers. In addition to our comprehensive curriculum, we offer academic design enrichment classes for high potential and gifted learners with extensive extracurricular programs in the arts, design, music and sport. Our highly experienced teachers are committed to creating opportunities for all learners to thrive and succeed.

Fayroze Lutta is a writer, poet, art activist, zine maker, designer, artist, urban planner and workshop facilitator. Her work is infused with many of her interests, including socio-spatial politics and displacement, with a lot of her writing being about "architecture, alienation, anomie and love in Sydney." Fayroze has facilitated workshops at many notable art institutes such as the AGNSW, MCA, City of Sydney Council Spaces and Campbelltown Art Centre just to name a few.

Mika Benesh is an artist / writer / designer working on unceded Gadigal and Dharug lands. Broadly speaking, their practice traces relationships between cultural institutions, spirituality & theology, archives, queer / trans lives & movements, and white supremacy. A finalist of the 66th Blake Prize, Mika is interested in facilitating emerging & marginal Jewish ritual practices through Judaica-object design. As well as writing, Mika works in jewellery and object design, graphite, zines, print, and book making, and textiles. Some spaces, organisations and publications which have presented Mika's work include AIRspace projects, the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, the National Association for the Visual Arts, Tributary Projects and the Lifted Brow. Currently, they're a New Voices Fellow in partnership with the Institute for Jewish Spirituality.

Contributor biographies

Naomi Segal is an artswoker who makes zines, comics, installations, and collaborative projects while based on the unceded lands of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples (Blue Mountains, NSW). Their practice is invested in non-masterful and vulnerable forms of making and being with one another. Counter to the ideal of an artist being self-sufficiently skilful, Naomi embraces non-mastery as a conduit to more inter-reliant and collaborative processes of artmaking. She is also committed to diasporic / queer subjectivities and illegibility – with a particular attentiveness to practitioners emerging from Asian histories. In addition to exhibiting in galleries, Naomi has shown work at the MCA Zine Fair, Other Worlds Zine Fair and Singapore Art Book Fair, and organises the zine-and book-making potluck called Zine Dreams. Their illustrations have appeared in Voiceworks Magazines and Asymptote Journal.

Ruby PH Always Changing. Always Bold. Ruby PH is a multidisciplinary art director and communicator located in Darlinghurst, Gadigal Country. Their work is driven by a desire to cut through the expectation and connect deeply with people. Ruby works on intentional creative projects that prioritise transformation and growth at every step. They believe creative practitioners should use every available medium and wish to spend their career discovering all of them. They prefer to join projects as early as possible to consult and direct, and later utilise their tactical skills as projects roll out. Ruby loves sequential systems, collections, architecture, problem solving and tending to their houseplant collection.

Refugee Art Project is a not-for-profit community art organisation dedicated to supporting people of an asylum seeker or refugee background through art workshops and collaborations. The organisation began through facilitated art workshops in the Villawood Detention Centre in 2011 and is now based in the Thirning Villa studio in Ashfield, Sydney. The organisation has engaged with people who came to Australia seeking protection from such countries as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, the Kurdish regions of the Middle East, Syria, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar. In a spirit of collaboration, artworks are curated and shown in public exhibitions, online and in self-published zines. The intention is to facilitate the agency and self-expression of people of an asylum seeker or refugee background, to deepen public understanding about the refugee issue and the realities of Australia's detention regime.

Contributor biographies

Safdar Ahmed is a Sydney based artist, academic and educator. He works primarily in the mediums of drawing and comics, focusing on issues of representation and belonging regarding language, religion and culture. He is a founding member of the not-for-profit community art organisation Refugee Art Project, for which he conducts regular art workshops with people of an asylum seeker and refugee background in their studio at Thirning Villa, Ashfield. Safdar is also a member of eleven: a collective of contemporary Muslim Australian artists, curators, and writers. His first graphic novel, *Still Alive*, is now available through Twelve Panels Press.

Samantha Riegl is an artist and zinester based in Melbourne, Victoria. She completed her BFA (Photography) at the Victorian of the Arts in 2012. She has been volunteering at Sticky Institute since 2011 and became a co-ordinator in 2018. She likes to make things, visit tip shops and build websites. Her most recent project is Zine Station, a repurposed snack vending machine that now dispenses zines.

Vanessa Berry is a writer and artist with an interest in the urban environment, memory, archives, and objects. She is the author of the award-winning *Mirror Sydney: an atlas of reflections*, a collection of essays and hand-drawing maps that investigate the city's marginal places and undercurrents, based on the *Mirror Sydney* blog. Her new collection of essays and illustrations, *Gentle and Fierce*, will be published by Giramondo in 2021. She has been a zinemaker since 1996 and her autobiographical zine series *I am a Camera* has just celebrated its 20th year of publication. Vanessa's zines and illustrations have been exhibited at major Australian galleries including the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and National Gallery of Australia. She is a Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Sydney.

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.
Re-printing, self-distribution, sharing and swapping encouraged.

Presented in association with Sydney Writers Festival 2021