



MANLY COLLECTING ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS OF TODAY FOR RESEARCHERS OF TOMORROW

Artists' books and zines are fast becoming prominent art forms around the world, and Manly Library has taken the opportunity to commence a collection of these and to therefore be at the forefront of this movement, creating a resource that will forever capture this moment in our social and artistic history.

Artists' books and zines reflect their local communities, often in very unique ways, so it is important for libraries to collect them as part of the cultural history of the local region. Manly Library is the first public library in New South Wales to establish an Artist's Book collection.

Artists' books are used as a medium for self-expression, often using cross-disciplinary media. They may be constructed from a range of materials, varying from felt to metal, cardboard to wood, handmade paper to ceramics. Whatever the technique and material, the 'book' encompasses and embraces concepts associated with the fine arts.

A 'zine' is also an independently created publication, containing anything from personal experiences and stories to political ideologies or photography. Artists' books and zines offer all spectrums of ideas and unfiltered interpretations of the world that we might not otherwise be able to access.

Manly Library is collecting artists' books and zines from a range of sources, including individual artists, local artists, and established artist book distributors and publishers. We are also collecting works by young Australian art students. This collection is extending the role played by our library in the community and is supporting emerging young artists and local established artists in the community while also promoting these emerging and stimulating art forms. The project also focuses on one of the strengths of a library: representing vitality, creativity and relevance to the community. Through this project we recognise a link to the past coupled with aspirations for a stimulating future.

The Manly Library artists' book and zine collections represent in a visual medium an important aspect of the intellectual activity of the people in our community. From its commencement the collections have become an important way of understanding and interpreting the literary, social, political, and cultural experience of our area, with the added dimension of international zines and artists' books and works from across Australia.

We believe this collection, and the collecting of other alternative press materials helps ensure balanced and diverse collections, as well as enabling us to secure primary source material for scholars today and in the future. Having their work available at the public library is providing exposure for zinesters and book artists. It is a way of getting a message out and sharing ideas with others using these most approachable of formats. Artists' books and zines also introduce library users to less 'processed' or less mainstream media, to which they might not previously have had access.

"Artists' books and zines reflect their local communities"



Someone Somebody Run
by Gwen Harrison and
Sue Anderson

We are pursuing several strategies to make the artists' book and zine collection accessible to as wide a public as possible. Foremost among those strategies is detailed original cataloguing. The bibliographic records have descriptions of physical characteristics, subject matter and creators. There will be free-form descriptions using general tags allowing searching on keywords. In addition, the type 'artists' book' or 'zine' is part of the catalogue record allowing searchers to browse each specific collection. The zine collection is available for loan, whilst the artists'

book collection is a reference collection. The artists' books are however accessible online using the 'flipping book' format through the library website. This provides access for people who are not able to visit the library in person and preserves the original works of art by minimising handling.

We have already purchased some outstanding materials and we are encouraged by the interest in our project. We are now planning an Acquisitive Artist Book Award at Manly and growing our popular zine collection in the future.

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PS: Just as INCITE went to press, Manly Library announced they will be hosting a travelling exhibiton of artists' books and zines titled Happily Ever After: Alternative Destinies in Contemporary Feminine Narrative from December 3rd to January 29th 2012. The exhibition features over 70 national and international artists and the library will also be hosting a series of events during the exhibition, including chats with the artists, workshops and demonstrations. For more information, visit the council website at www.manly.nsw.gov.au.