A discussion with Tessa Stubbing, Library Assistant

*Just to start this off with a disclaimer that all the information below is to the best of my knowledge; there may be gaps from the time periods I wasn’t directly involved with the collection*

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**How did the Library's Zine Collection begin?**

Auckland Libraries’ zine collection started off as the Cross Street Studios Zine Library. Cross Street was an artist run gallery and studio space in Newton, which closed down in 2010.

We had been casually sourcing zines at Cross Street from various zine events (such as Kraftwerk, Kraftbomb, Wellington Zinefest and later Auckland Zinefest). People also donated zines from their own collections when the word got out that we were looking to expand; in the beginning we sourced zines through donation only.

By the time the zine collection made its way to Auckland Libraries, it was 300+ strong.

**How did it come to the library from Cross Street?**

In 2010 after Cross Street closed down, myself and other collective members Tes and Nick looked into options to make the collection more available to the public – we thought it would be such a shame to have these zines sit in a dusty box somewhere and not be used! So we approached a couple of art spaces around the Central City, and also Auckland Central Library.

We met with Karen Craig (the then Team Leader of Readers Services) and Dr Greg Morgan about the possibility of it becoming part of the library’s offering. They were keen, but obviously there were a lot of technical things to consider with a new collection. Would they be catalogued? Would they be for loan? Was there demand for this type of collection? What kind of budget was available to maintain this new collection? So initially the collection was introduced on a trial basis to see how things would go, and had a modest launch in 2011.

Wellington Libraries was also a case-study at the time as several years earlier (I believe 2007) they launched their own zine collection, which very quickly became lendable to the public.

**Were the zines always available for loan?**

No. When the zines were introduced to Auckland Libraries it was reference only. Only later after extensive cataloguing work by my colleagues did the collection become available for loan. Now the majority of the collection is available to request and borrow across the Auckland region, just like any other book.

**Are all the zines available for loan now?**

No. The zines that are in Sir George Grey Special Collections are in library use only.

There are some zines that are a part of the Ground Floor collection that have been assessed as read only as well, for reasons such as size or if we are unable to attach any distinct information to the catalogue records (ie title, author) etc. These read-only zines rotate on and off the shelves on a roster.

All zines that are lendable must also be able to be returned through the library’s return slots, which as you can imagine, may cause damage to the smaller or more delicate items.

The only other zines that are unavailable are those that are yet to be processed/catalogued.

**How is it decided which zines will be kept in Special collections?**

This is a question for Georgia. My understanding is it is zines that are of ‘significant cultural importance’ by local zine makers?

**How does the library decide which and what zines to collect and how does it acquire those zines?**

We would love to purchase every zine but unfortunately we do not have the budget for that! So unfortunately we have to be selective with what we purchase at this point. We travel to local zine festivals (ie Auckland Zinefest and associated events). Our zine librarian Hamish Noonan ultimately makes the call on the day as to what we can afford and what we are lacking in our collection.

We don’t have an official policy on what zines we collect, but personally I prefer zines made by local zine makers.

We also still accept donations; information for donating is on our website www.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/zines

**Tell us about how Auckland Zinefest got started**

When I was a teenager there were a couple of zine events in Auckland called ‘Small Print’ run at the time by Moira Clunie (from Moon Rocket Distro) and a committee, but these events stopped around 2005.

During my time at Cross Street I felt we were missing out in Auckland, since Wellington Zinefest had been running annually for several years at this point. I reached out to members of the zine community to see if we could launch something up here.

The first zinefest I was involved in was in 2009 and had 15 stalls. It was very DIY with no budget and we didn’t know what we were doing. We instantly declared it a success and it has been running annually ever since, though I am no longer a part of the team.

**What sort of role does the library play with Zinefest?**

Since 2012 the Central City Library has teamed up with the Zinefest team to provide some kind of relevant offering, such as kids zine-making workshops, zine maker talks, art workshops, comics workshops etc. We have also taken our zines off-site and to promote the collection to those who may not know about it, or know it is lendable. Basically we love zinefest and want to support them and the local zine community in any way we can :)

**What else can you tell us about the Library’s zine collection?**

Auckland Central Library is not the only library with zine collections, though it is the largest. I believe the South Auckland Research Centre has a small but growing collection of its own? But I am not very familiar with this collection.