

## RESEARCH GUIDE FOR LITTLE MAGAZINES

### Introduction:

This resource guide is firmly rooted in the AAPG Library's own collection of "little magazines," which specializes in the forward-thinking art and aesthetics of small-press publications of the 60's, 70's and 80's. Susan R. Gurney created this collection during the mid-80's while earning her Master's in Library Science. Ms. Gurney was already a librarian at the AAPG Library and built the collection as her thesis project. She emphasized "little magazines" that came directly out of the contemporary art world, particularly the underground art activity in New York and California, in order to better connect this collection directly to the library. Little magazines are also a valuable resource for an art library in that the publication of a little magazine is an artistic statement, thus little magazines may be considered art in themselves.



While this collection is labeled as the "Little Magazine Collection," terms that aim to differentiate between various kinds of underground publications such as "zine," "chap book," or "little magazine" are fluid and subject to continual cultural redefinition. "Little magazines" as a medium can be neither essentialized to one set of characteristics nor universalized to across space and time. Significant advances in publishing over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries such as lithography and the Xerox machine enabled a diverse world of underground publishing to flourish. A variety of groups and unaffiliated individuals engaged in the act of alternative printing for a myriad of purposes, such as the Beats to publish their poetry without restriction or Punks as a forum for punk news, discussion and debate. Throughout this period frenetic, unstructured underground activity resulted in countless variations of terms, graphics and design, levels of aesthetic and printing professionalism and content. A lack of commitment to definitions of underground media forms lead terms such as "little magazine" to be without permanent or lasting definition. "Little magazines" have in fact been associated

with literature and poetry for the majority of the classification's existence and was first adopted to describe the small press modernist literature of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus what was called a little magazine when Ms. Gurney created the collection may have been referred to as a "zine" just a few years later.

Ms. Gurney, however, had excellent reasons for defining our collection as "little magazines" during the span in which she collected this material. She constrained her search to sources from the 60's on that contained as much pure art content as possible, which proved to be a difficult task because a lot of the magazines placed their emphasis on the written word. Ms Gurney also sought materials that were, or at least intended to be, periodicals rather than singular works of art, in order to differentiate them from artist books. While the object of the book was essential to the message, the content rather than the medium took precedence within Ms. Gurney's vision of avant-garde "little magazines." Ms. Gurney researched the modern genre of the little magazine thoroughly, immersing herself in the art world of locations such as Soho in order to collect these fairly ephemeral works. Most significant in the decision to label this collection as "little magazines," people in the art scene during the early 80's were defining their own work as such.

The three decades of artistic growth and major societal as well as pop cultural upheaval in the ever-changing world of avant-garde underground press can be seen in the little magazines within the AAPG Library. Little to no work has been done to enlarge the collection since Ms. Gurney left the library in 1984, and the closed collection now stands as fascinating and multi-faceted print documentation of the 60's through 80's in alternative art spaces. The collection stood as a separate entity from the library with its own card catalog until the early 2000's. It is now in the library's online catalog with "little magazine" as each volume's subject heading.

This resource guide contains a bibliography of "little magazine" indexes and anthologies, as well as secondary history and criticism of the medium. It also includes an annotated list of other collections throughout the United States as well as one in England. While most collections of underground materials have an explicit focus, every collection of underground materials have little quirks and treasures that have just happened to come that library's way and so are

all worth searching through. The resources found in these libraries do vary in accessibility, however, and many collections are not online.

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- Judson, John, and Joanne Judson, eds., *Remember that Symphonies Also Take Place in Snails: The Northeast Anthology, Selections from 25 Years of the Little Magazine Northeast (1963-1988)*, La Crosse, WI: Juniper Press, 1989.
- Kruchkow, Diane and Kurt Johnson, eds., *Green Isle in the Sea: An Informal History of the Alternative Press, 1960-1985*, Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1986.
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- Montag, Tom, "Stalking the Little Magazine," *The Serials Librarian* 1, (1977), 281-282.
- Perkins, Stephen, "Alternative Art Publishing: Artist's Magazines (1960-1980)." *The Book of Zines: Readings from the Fringe*, <http://www.zinebook.com/resource/perkins/perkins5.html>.

Phillpot, Clive, "Art Magazines and Magazine Art," *Artforum* 18, no. 6 (February 1980), pgs. 52-54.

Pindell, Howardena, "Alternative Space: Artist's Periodicals," *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 8, no. 4 (Sept.-Oct. 1977) pgs. 96-109.\*

Pollack, Felix, "The World of the Little Magazine," *Arts in Society* 2, (1962), 52.

Thomas, Susan E., "Value and Validity of Zines as an Art Form," *Art Documentation* 28, no. 2 (2009) pgs. 27-38.

Walker, John. "Periodicals Since 1945." *The Art Press: Two Centuries of Art Magazines*. Trevor, Fawcett and Clive Phillpot eds., London: The Art Book Company, 1976. 45-52.

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\*These works are located in the AAPG Library.

### **Collections of Little Magazines:**

#### **Above Ground Zine Library**

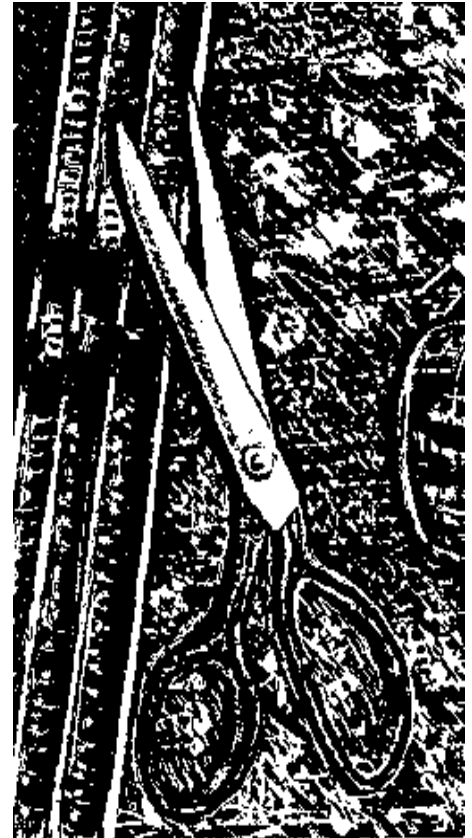
Iron Rail Book Collective  
511 Marigny St.  
New Orleans, LA 70117  
Contact:  
Phone: (504) 948-0963

The Iron Rail is a volunteer-run not-for-profit collective that functions as a library, bookstore and community space with a commitment to providing the city of New Orleans with alternative literature and information. The Aboveground Zine Library appears to function as an archive of punk rock and regional political organizing history with the Iron Rail as its host. However, the library also contains "self-published newspapers, chapbooks, periodicals, and pamphlets. This painstakingly catalogued and curated collection covers sixty-some years and multiple continents. It includes political broadsheets, personal 'zines, subcultural newsletters, hobbyist publications, music scene 'zines, DIY manuals, experimental art publications, and more." The library also has a commitment to accessibility and is open to the general public.

<http://ironrail.org/>

#### **American Art Museum/National Portrait Gallery Library (AAPG Library)**

Victor Building, Room 2100  
750 9th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
Contact: [AskaLibrarian@si.edu](mailto:AskaLibrarian@si.edu)  
Telephone: (202) 633-8230  
Fax: (202) 275-1929



The AAPG Library, within its extensive selection of art serials, contains a collection of over 160 "little magazines." The collection has its focus in the arts from the 60's through 80's, but also contains poetry small press periodicals as well. The library contains a small selection of secondary sources and reference materials, and the collection can be accessed easily online by searching with the subject heading "little magazines."

<http://sirisi-libraries.si.edu/>

### **Browne Popular Culture Library at Bowling Green State University**

204 South Church Street  
Bowling Green, OH 43402-2815  
Contact:  
Phone: (413) 372-2450

The BPCL contains an impressive roster of serials titles ranging from 1950 to 1989 in their “Alternative and Underground Press Collection” including several arts titles. Their online catalog contains many helpful resources such as a list of supplemental materials that give an introduction to the collection through its own primary sources and annotated bibliography to the underground press. This library also possesses other fascinating collections of pop cultural material like fanzines, comic books and dime novels.

<http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/pcl/page38839.html>

### **Charles E. Young Research Library at UCLA**

Dept. of Special Collections Room A1713  
University Research Library, Box 951575  
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1575  
Contact:  
Phone: (310) 825-4988  
Fax: (310) 206-1864  
Email: [speccoll-paging@laibrary.ucla.edu](mailto:speccoll-paging@laibrary.ucla.edu)

The special collections department contains a collection of little magazines dating from 1920 to the present, which are in the process of being digitized. The library also contains much secondary material to support the collection.

<http://www.library.ucla.edu/specialcollections/researchlibrary/index.cfm>

<http://www.oac.cdlib.org/>

### **Civic Media Center**

433 S. Main St.  
Gainesville, FL 32601  
Contact:  
Phone: (352) 373-0010  
Email: [coordinators@civicmediacenter.org](mailto:coordinators@civicmediacenter.org)

The Civic Media Center is a non-profit that functions as an event space for various progressive and radical groups in the Gainesville area as well as an alternative library. Their online catalog is running though currently not complete. Art periodicals from the 60’s through 80’s can be found in the collection though it appears generally to be a mixed bag.

<https://www.civicmediacenter.org/>

### **Merrill-Cazier Library at Utah State University**

3000 Old Main HI  
Logan, UT 84322  
Contact:  
Phone: (435) 797-2663  
Email: [library.help@usu.edu](mailto:library.help@usu.edu)

This library contains a core “Beat Poetry Collection” that has been augmented with a huge influx of little magazines. This relatively new “Little Magazine and Periodical Collection” deals primarily with the literary underground of the mid-20th century.

[http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=lib\\_present](http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=lib_present)

<http://library.usu.edu/menu.php?menu=2>

**New York State University at Buffalo Library**

The Poetry Collection  
420 Capen Hall  
Buffalo, NY 14260-1674  
Contact:  
Phone: (716) 645-2917  
Fax: (716) 645-3714  
Email: lpo-poetry@buffalo.edu

Within the “Poetry Collection” in special collections at the UB Library exists a comprehensive selection of little magazines both past and present. Many little magazines from the 60’s through 80’s dealing with the arts are reside in the collection.

<http://library.buffalo.edu/pl/collections/littlemagazines.php>

**San Francisco Public Library**

100 Larkin Street  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
Contact:  
Phone: (415) 557-4560  
Email: Andrea Grimes at agrimes@sfpl.org

The San Francisco Public Library is an excellent resource for little magazines from the 1960’s through the present, librarians actually beginning the collection in 1966 as the San Francisco Renaissance was thriving. The “Little Maga/Zine Collection” can be found in Book Arts & Special Collections and specializes in the Bay Area underground scene.

<http://sfpl.org/>

<http://sflib1.sfpl.org/search~S1?/dlittle+magazine/dlittle+magazine/1,189,606,B/frameset&FF=dlittle+magazines&3,,9>

**University College London Library**

Special Collections Library Services  
140 Hampstead Road  
Camden London NW1 2BX  
Contact:  
Phone: 020 7679 5197  
Email: spec.coll@ucl.ac.uk

This library contains little magazine, alternative press and poetry store collections in special collections. The “Little Magazines Collection” includes many American titles and holds an extensive number from a wide span of time, with the 1960’s as its focus. This library also contains a small reference section to the little magazine collection as well as some history and criticism.

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/Library/special-coll/litmags.shtml>

**University of Iowa Library**

Special Collections  
100 Main Library  
The University of Iowa

Iowa City, IA 52242-1420  
Contact:  
Phone: (319) 335-5921  
Fax: (319) 335-5900  
Email: [lib-spec@uiowa.edu](mailto:lib-spec@uiowa.edu)

The Special Collections department at the U of I contains many valuable collections of underground materials, including the “ATCA (Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts) Periodicals and Zines Collection.” The serials and zines dating back to the 1960’s, this collection concentrates in the arts and the majority of periodicals within are art related or have artistic merit.

<http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/spec-coll/resources/ZineResources.html>

### **University of Wisconsin at Madison Library**

Memorial Library  
728 State Street  
Madison, WI 53706  
Contact:  
Phone: (608) 262-3193

Contained in the special collections department in the Memorial Library, the “Little Magazine Collection” began in the late 50’s and is still growing today. This library has a particularly broad understanding of the level of professionalism (or lack there of) that define little magazines, and the collection includes both academic quarterlies and amateur single-sheet issue magazines. The primary focus of the collection is poetry though broad range of topics are represented, and the collection is only partially accessible online.

<http://memorial.library.wisc.edu/collections/littlemags.html>

### **Other Helpful Guides for Underground Materials:**

<http://www.operationphoenixrecords.com/archivespage.html>

<http://www.zinebook.com/resource/libes.html>

<http://www.undergroundpress.org/zine-resources/infoshops-zine-libraries/>

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