

Crafting Contention:

The role of **ZINES** in CONTESTING
MENTAL HEALTH → Knowledge → & practice.



The MadZines research project, funded by Wellcome, is exploring zines created by people with lived experience of madness and distress that include critical or challenging insights – that is, zines that ‘craft contention’ about mental health.

Find out more at www.madzines.org

 @ZinesMad  madzineresearch

 MadZine research



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MADZINES

INTRO



What are MadZines?

- Intro. to Mad Studies
- Madstudies and the IMSJ
- Asylum Magazine
- Graphic Medicine

Who's making MadZines?

With contributions from

- Tamsin Walker at MadZines research
- Lilith Cooper at Take it Back
- Victoria Patten at Hearing the Voice
- Rose Sergent at Drawn Poorly.

Where can I find MadZines?

With contributions from

- Jen Carter at the MHZL
- Nicola Cook at Wellcome Zine Library
- Jac Batey at Zineopolis

With thanks too to Hamilitin Kennedy of IMSJ, Hamja Ahsan of @diycultures, Ian Williams of Graphic Medicine and Kirsty Fife of the Weirdo Zine Fest - as well as to our other MadZine collaborators.

Stephen Fraser - 'How to make friends as an adult'
Rachel Rowan Olive - 'things I tell people happen to my arms' and 'A is for Awkward'
Anon 'a sketch in time'



ARTZINES

WE COLLECT ART-ZINES



ZINES BY FOLK WHO EXPRESS THEMSELVES

↓ VISUALLY



We are looking for zines that are heavily illustrated or more art & design based, known as Art-Zines.



@zineopolis_artzines

Art-zine collection based at the University of Portsmouth in the Illustration Dpt. Curated by Jac



WE ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN VISUAL MENTAL HEALTH NARRATIVES INCLUDING:

- COMICS
- ILLUSTRATED SEQUENCES
- ARTISTIC REPRESENTATIONS
- ART-ZINES
- PHOTO-ZINES



zineopolis.blogspot.com

This zine draws on the many and varied encounters in the first year of our MadZines research project. See back cover to connect with us.

MADZINE Research



MadZines move across a landscape inhabited by zinesters, comic artists, mad scholars, mental health survivors and practitioners and researchers.

WHAT

ARE

MADZINES?

*Mental ill-health
neurodiversity &
psychosocial disability*

*Criticality &
Contention*

MADZINES

Lived experience

Wellcome

zine collection

Wellcome Collection has a growing zine collection to complement and diversify the voices and perspectives of health, illness and wellness in the library

We collect zines around themes of:

Physical health Mental health Patient experiences
Caring for yourself and others medical procedures
Disability sex education Sexuality & gender Sleep Food
pharmaceuticals Death and grieving Healthcare services
Science bodily functions and many, many more...

Search our catalogue online for zines at:
wellcomecollection.org/collections

And visit the library on the 2nd floor of Wellcome Collection,
183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE

We welcome purchase recommendations and donations from
anywhere in the world (in any language)

Email us for more info:
collectionsdevelopment@wellcomecollection.org

who are we? and what do we do?

mental health
zine library

we are the **Mental Health Zine Library**, a small collection of DIY publishing around mental health and all that includes.

we work in partnership with the mental health charity Washington Mind, running creative workshops with young people and exploring how zines can be useful tools to sharing our stories and making connections.

our focus is on archiving personal stories and lived experiences to offer an alternative to the traditional medical model, and share a range of voices in order to capture **the diversity of mental health and it's histories**. whether that's a critical approach to mental health provision, perzines on addiction, poetry collections about anxiety or soft self care guides, we collect it all.

why is it important?

we've been making zines ourselves and running workshops under different projects since 2017, and recognise what a cathartic and healing process it is to put pen to paper and make something. but **hearing each others stories is just as important as writing our own**, and though making zines or being creative isn't for everyone, we think anybody can benefit from them if we make it accessible for those who need them the most.

anyone can submit their zine to our collection on our website, and we are always open to more contributions.

**"thanks for for doing this work of safekeeping our history."
- a zine maker submitting their zine project to our collection.**

@mhzinelib
www.mentalhealthzinelibrary.co.uk

e-mail us at
contact@mental
healthzinelibrary.co.uk

INTRODUCING MADZINES

Zines help people develop and share grassroots knowledge about experiences, conditions and identities that have been marginalised.

These are many kinds.
THIS one's about:



- Not-for-profit, low budget, self-published and/or low circulation publications
- usually created by people with lived experience of mental ill-health, neurodiversity, psychosocial disability and/or other conditions that have been psychiatrised
- that challenge mainstream understandings about mental health



WHAT'S MAD ABOUT MADZINES?

Mental health is a **CONTESTED** issue, talked about in different ways.

Some people understand their experiences as **MADNESS**.

The word harks back to a time before unusual experiences were put in a 'health' or 'medical' box.

The language, of 'madness' may be unfamiliar – alienating even. It's intended to provoke. It lies at the heart of a new and evolving field of scholarship and activism – **MAD STUDIES** – with roots that go way back.

The International Mad Studies Journal

Founded by a psychiatric survivor in Australia, and developed by like-minded people from around the world, IMSF is platform for the sharing of mad knowledge and alternative perspectives on mental health. In addition to peer-reviewed articles, it seeks out unique and unheard voices presented in creative ways through comics, fiction, poetry, and other forms of artistry.

imsj.org



250 owed →

Where to find MadZines

It can be hard to find MadZines. They are usually published locally, in limited print-runs. Here are some places you might seek them out.

Etsy and Zine distros

Etsy is a good source of MadZines – our collaborator, Rachel Rowan Olive sells her zines that way:

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/RachelRowanOlive>

There are numerous zine distros. See here for example:

<https://thankubody.com/collections/mental-health-zines>

Zine fairs and festivals

These take place all over the UK and worldwide and increasingly online. Hard to list, because they come and go, but the **Weirdo Zine Fest** privileges radical and marginalised voices and is one to look out for.



Contact: Kirsty Fife k.fife.12@ucl.ac.uk

Zine libraries, archives and collections

Hamja Ahsan, of @DIYcultures, has one, and here are others that contain MadZines. . .

WHERE

CAN I FIND

MADZINES?



ASYLUM: THE RADICAL
MENTAL HEALTH MAGAZINE

Asylum is a quarterly magazine for free debate, open to anyone with an interest in psychiatry or mental health.



It was through researching the Asylum archive, in the Wellcome library, that MadZines first came to our attention. Asylum shares common features with MadZines and has produced four Comics issues

SUBSCRIBE AT ASYLUMMAGAZINE.ORG

ZINES

Zines make use of images and text, comics, cartoons and picture-writing.

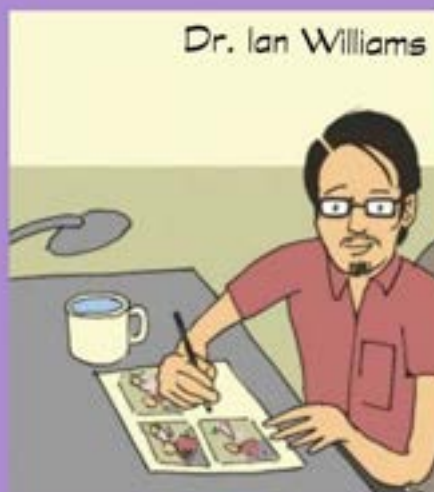
They differ from comics but have a long association.

ZINES ARE
MORE D.I.Y

GRAPHIC MEDICINE

Graphic medicine sits at the intersection of the medium of comics and the discourse of healthcare. It's a community of academics, health carers, authors, artists and fans of comics and medicine.. Use of the word 'medicine' in its title points to the therapeutic potential of comics

- 'medicine' as panacea rather than profession. Graphic Medicine events increasingly include Mad zinesters. Listen to our podcast about MadZines and Graphic Medicine here:



<https://www.graphicmedicine.org/new-podcast-episode-mad-zines/>

Drawn Poorly is a zine project that started in 2017.

Drawn Poorly

It began as a way to connect ill and disabled people from all over the world through artwork, writing and photography submitted to the zines.

There are now seven zines ranging in themes from 'Identity' to 'Nature' to 'Diagnosis'.

In addition to zines, there have also been workshops and collaborations with artists and organisations to provide accessible and supportive opportunities for ill and disabled creatives.

The core aims of all Drawn Poorly projects, are to platform the experiences of ill and disabled creatives, connect people and reduce isolation. Mental health is a key part of the project: both in providing space for work focussed on mental health conditions and how living with health conditions and disability can impact mental health.



Instagram/Twitter: @DrawnPoorlyZine
www.DrawnPoorlyZine.co.uk

hearingvoices seeingvisions

MAKING ZINES

WITH

LIV WYNTER

In September 2021 a series of zine making workshops took place to explore experiences of hearing voices and seeing visions. They were facilitated by artist Liv Winter and attended by people aged 16-25 with lived experience of voice-hearing.



The digital zines made at the workshops will be shared on <https://understandingvoices.com/>

The project is a collaboration between Voice Collective and Hearing the Voice. For more information contact victoria.patton@durham.ac.uk

WHO'S

MAKING

MADZINES?



ZINE AND HEARD: Tamsin's PhD

<https://madzines.org/tamsin-walkers-phd-research/>

Some of us are rarely heard



Survivors are consulted according to agendas set by others and then invited to perform as case studies.



Can zines do something different?



TAKE IT BACK

LILITH COOPER // WWW.LILITHJOYCECOOPER.COM // @LILITHJCOOPER

Take It Back is a participatory zine making project, centred around a workbook-zine and (hopefully) leading to a library of zines made. It started as an idea in 2017, and grew from a desire to facilitate a creative space for people to explore their experiences, and think reflectively and critically about how, where and why they might share them. It builds on my work as a zine maker and artist, which increasingly overlaps with my work as a zine librarian and my PhD research which looks at the Wellcome library's collection of zines about health.



We are asked to 'tell our story' in lots of different places and in each of these settings it serves a different purpose. Telling a story, to me, means structuring our experiences into a form that is coherent, that makes sense to other people, that is linear, with a beginning, middle and end. A story is often the only way that lived experience is allowed a seat at the table. When the word 'story' is used to both describe and prescribe the form we recount our experiences in, it is often to contrast the knowledge of people who are survivors and service users, with the knowledge of doctors, psychologists and nurses. That doesn't mean I don't think we tell stories about our experiences, or that thinking in terms of stories isn't useful in understanding the bigger overarching narratives that, for example, the media or political parties have about mental health. What it means is that I think we don't only tell stories; Take It Back is born from a belief in the multiplicity of ways of exploring and communicating our experiences. So one of the things I'd like Take It Back to do is create time and space to process, explore and experiment. What comes out of this might well be a story, but I'd like that to feel like a choice, one option amongst many for how we communicate our experiences and knowledge. The workbook zine includes contributions from Emily Winthrop, Natasha Natarajan, Jacq and Luna Tic. Take It Back has been commissioned and supported by Unlimited, supporting Disabled artists, with funding from Creative Scotland



WWW.TAKEITBACKZINE.COM

UNLIMITED

