Local Zines, Mini-Comics, and Mail Art Collection

This collection contains an assortment of zines, mini comics, and mail art pieces that were created by artists from the Kansas City region.

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Various artists
Title: Local Zines, Mini-Comics, and Mail Art Collection
Dates: 1999 -- (open ended)
Size: 2 boxes
Location: SC96

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access: Unrestricted access.

Acquisition information: Gift, 2005.

Citation note: Local Zines, Mini-Comics, and Mail Art collection (SC96), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Collection Description

Scope and content note

The Local Zine, Mini-Comics and Mail Art collection is an open-ended collection that continues to grow through donated acquisitions. This collection features works from the 1990s and early 2000s that represent the voices of Kansas City’s subculture scenes, including independent artists, comic creators, and anarchist communities. The content of the collection ranges from works of fiction, poetry, and comics to non-fiction pieces about participation in underground movements such as the local punk scene. What all these publications have in common is that they were independently published, usually hand-assembled, and reflect a voice that is strong, independent, or unique.

The independent, self published nature of the zine and mini-comic empowers the artist to be highly expressive with their message. In some cases, self-publishing is the only viable option for distribution because the product would not be accepted by a conventional publisher. Authors may be forced to choose self-publishing if they refuse to put limitations on their work in order to meet publisher requirements. However, many artists choose to self-publish because they believe strongly in the value of independent media. Throughout the zine and mini-comic collection, one can sense a strongly independent tone that pushes aside the mainstream in favor of something more real, honest, or shocking.

The affordability of zines and mini-comics encourages the circulation of free thought and ideas. Frequently the works are published by way of a copy machine or laser printer and then sold locally for $1-3. A reader might find zines or mini-comics at local coffee houses, independent book and record stores, or comic shops. Sometimes copies are given away for free and distributed within social settings such as a music concerts or informal house parties. This distribution of independent thought and ideas helps perpetuate and honor the underground scenes that the zines are created from. For example, a zine about squatting houses in Kansas City points out that there is an anarchist movement in Kansas City and it empowers people to get involved and continue making progress within the realm of their anarchist identities. Road Kill could be seen as a publication
that helps cultivate and draw attention to the creativity and individual philosophies of people that identify with the Kansas City punk movement.

In this collection, you will find both hand assembled self-published mini-comics, as well as “indie comics”, which are more widely distributed through independent publishing companies. What most of the comics in this collection have in common is that the content might be about every day life or somewhat self-autobiographical. Many of these comics were created by graduates of the Kansas City Art Institute (KCAI). Some of their works were printed with higher quality materials or published through a smaller independent comics company. Still, one can find many pieces in the collection that were hand-drawn and photocopied, also from KCAI graduates, with the same do-it-yourself spirit as zines, which are referred to as “mini-comics”.

Mail art is another type of self-published medium included in the collection. These works are typically created by artists and then exchanged through the postal mail. The sending artist often gets a return piece created by another artist. According to Wikipedia, “mail art is a worldwide cultural movement that began in the early 1960s and involves sending visual art (but also music, sound art, poetry, etc.) through the international postal system”. This collection contains a few mail art pieces created by Kansas City artists.

References
Wikipedia Mail Art article, date of access 12 July 2011.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mail_art

Collection Inventory

Box 1 (Zines and Mail Art)

Art and Words. AR. 2000. A mail art zine sub titled: the Importance of Mental Hygiene (a diary of nerves).


Kansas City Squatter's Handbook. Circa 2008. A guide to squatting vacant buildings in Kansas City, including philosophy, best practices, and further resources for investigation. Produced by the Feral Kat Collective. 2 copies

Neuralgia. No.3. Edited by AR. Fall 1999. A goth compilation zine of poetry and prose edited by AR. Contents include “Entombed” by Alix Caldwell; “Heartland Film Classic Starring Peter Lorre” by Fetters; “Retinal Fetish” by AR; “Salvador Dalai Lama” by David Goth; “Untitled” by Regina; “Transfuse Me” by Tom Hamilton; “Cradle” by David Canada; and “An Episode” by A.M. Olsson. 2 copies


One Shot Deal: Back to Basics. Edited by Jeremy McConnell. 2004. An art zine “taken from the sketchbooks of really proud Americans” who are from the Kansas City, Mo and KS area. Participating artists include Chet Duvenci, David Ford, Rita Brinkerhoff, Davin Watne, Luke Rocha, IKA, Eric Grimes, Glenn North, Tyrone Brown, Brook Waason, Shane Evans, Nathan Kline, Alan Winkler, Quickfix 5er, Lauren Mcentire, Scribe, Gracia Therber, Adrian Halpern, Mott-ly, Aaron Sutton, Phem Niner, Mark Westervelt, Big 10, Syke Steez, Quisp!, Stephen Collins, Yana, Cheryl Hanback, Nomad, and Akihiro Hiranda. 2 copies


Roadkill. Vol 1. Issue 2. 1 October 2008. 2 copies


Roadkill. Vol 1. Issue 7. April 2009. 2 copies


Sochar. No.1. created by Kelamity and Rocco. Not dated. A revolutionary political zine. This issue talks about the “west Memphis three” and includes a recipe for cooking tofu as well as a primitive painting supply recipe.

Box 2 (Mini-Comics)


Free Pulp # 1: Shawn Geabhart’s Bennett. Self-published pulp comic by Shawn Geabhart. Includes a short comic by Bryan Stalder called “Cletus the Fetus”.


Gimme Some Truth! Created by Travis Fox. 2004. This mini-comic is about the author’s thoughts on the bush administration and the 2004 presidential election.

The Invisible Man: A 24 Hour Comic Book. Created by Rob Shamberger. Not dated. This mini-comic was created as part of a 24 Hour Comic book project.


See Dick Die. Created by Duane Cunningham and Michelle Arcand. Not dated.

Skyscrapers of the Midwest. No 1. Created by Joshua Cotter. Summer 2003. This mini-comic is based on the author's childhood experiences. Includes "I'm Not Fat, I'm Just Big-boned;" "Elsewhere in the Cosmos;" "Nobody Likes Me, Everybody Hates Me;" and "We are Already Dead and Going to Grandma's."

Skyscrapers of the Midwest. No 2. Created by Joshua Cotter. Summer 2004. This mini-comic is based on the author's childhood experiences of summer camp and a memorable birthday.


Work. Edited by D. Kubert and Ryan Middaugh. 2003. Subtitled, Comics About Working. Includes "Me. I’m What’s For Dinner" by Josh Cotter; "Work" by Joe Wilper; "Widescreen" by Travis Fox; "Order Up" by Mike Springet; "I Love Work" by Michael Herring; "Worlds of Fun" by Ryan Middaugh; "SuperChuck" by Chuck Irons; "Disquiet" by Daniel Spottswood; "Earnings" by D. Kubert; "All I Really Wanted was Lunch" by Gina Kaufmann; "Passing Time" by Bradley Parker; "In Days of Spiders" by Scott Kaufman; "I Bought a New Pair of Glasses So That Others Would See Me Better" by Scott Kaufman.

Yellow. By Bierley. 2010. From the inside cover, “Just another post-zompocalyptic comedy adventure love story”

Folder 1 (Box 2)


Envelope A (Box 2)

Disquiet. No.3. Created by Daniel Spotwood. Not dated. This mini-comic is about the pressure of setting goals and accomplishing things.

Disquiet. No.4: Created by Daniel Spotwood. Not dated.

Disquiet. No.5. Created by Daniel Spotwood. Not dated. This mini-comic, titled 1000 Ways to Waste your Winter Vacation, is about how time can get away from one during winter break.


Envelope B (Box 2)