

Event Title: Women of Color Zines: DIY Culture as Counter-Storytelling

Event Description: The event will be moderated by Tonya Jones, founder of PDX Women of Color (WOC) Zine Collective. The panel will feature WOC zinesters who will discuss how participating in do-it-yourself (DIY) culture can be an act of resistance and liberation. Zine culture provides an opportunity for WOC to tell their stories/truths their own way, including (and not limited to): writing, art/comics, rants, collage, etc.

Event Category: Non-fiction

Event Organizer & Moderator

Tonya Jones: Tonya Jones is the founder of the Women of Color (WOC) Zine Collective in Portland, Oregon. Jones started the group to provide a space for WOC creatives in the predominantly white city. The collective has self-published fifteen issues. Tonya also teaches zine classes at her city's community college.

Event Participants

Cicely Carr: Cicely Carr recently resigned from teaching high school English to open her bookstore, makerspace, literacy center, and small press called Kindred Creatives Art and Literary Press. She calls herself a creativepreneur because of her love for writing and creating but also needs to pay those bills.

Emilly Prado: Emilly Prado is a writer and educator based in Portland, Oregon. Her debut essay collection, *Funeral for Flaca*, has been called, "Utterly vulnerable, bold, and unique," by *Ms. Magazine* and is out now with Future Tense Books. She is a Blackburn fellow at Randolph MFA and moonlights as DJ Mami Miami.

Sabrina Sims: Sabrina Sims is a Afro Puerto Rican woman and artist. She makes mini books called zines on a wide range of topics including

friendships, being femme, and being chronically ill. She is also the organizer of the in-the-works Bronx Zine Fest and a collaborative zine about Black hair.

Opening Remarks and Housekeeping Announcements

Good afternoon, and welcome to “Women of Color Zines: DIY Culture as Counter-Storytelling.” Thank you everyone for joining us today. My name is Tonya Jones, I am the founder of Portland, Oregon’s Women of Color (WOC) Zine Collective. I am joined by three brilliant women of color zinesters: Cicely Carr, Emily Prado, and Sabrina Sims. I’d like to clarify what a zine is before we get started. It’s easy to assume, coming from a place like Portland, that everyone knows what a zine is. The zine scene is integral to Portland’s do-it-yourself (DIY) culture. As a matter of fact, the height of zine popularity was in the early 90’s in the Pacific Northwest. This can be attributed to Riot Grrrl which was a feminist , punk rock genre. The Riot Grrrl Movement was ignited by young women musicians wanting to speak out on misogyny and sexism in the punk community. Their DIY zines were a way to resist and give voice to their experiences. The zines were often given out during their shows. So, what’s a zine? A zine is a take on the word “magazine.” It is a booklet of self-published work. A zine can be made individually or as a collective. It is usually small circulation. It is common for zines to be inexpensive to make or purchase. Our discussion today will focus on women of color using the medium of zines to explore their creativity and write about their lived experiences. Now, I will let the panel introduce themselves starting with Cicely Carr....

Participant Initial Remarks:

Cicely Carr: For me, I began the Zine journey at a young age, around 9 years old. I had a big sister from Big Brothers and Sisters, and she introduced it to me. Fast forward, I travelled to DC, New York, and other East Coast places where Zines were the thing to do to remove censors and share your voice.

I came back inspired to create a zine publication to spotlight creative

BIPOC voices. Getting your works seen as a BIPOC can be very challenging and I wanted to be one way to elevate those voices and works of art.

Why Zine Making?

- Collaboration- People come together from all different backgrounds to participate in a single outcome/goal and that is the idea of what community should be. Collaboration
- Your Voice Your Story- People have a story to share, advice, and more and creating a Zine either for self or others will inspire and empower those in so many ways. Maybe they share a similar story and needed to connect in a way. Maybe someone needed the encouragement to share their voice and seeing others do it in a creative way is inspiring.

Why The DIY?

- Not many people are afforded the opportunity to be connected to huge publishers or the funds needed but the cool thing is that Zines are so impactful they don't need it.

Emilly Prado:

Sabrina Sims:

Moderator Questions

1) How did you learn about zines? What resonated with you about DIY art making? What was the first zine you made?

2) I recently came across this quote: "Zines are not a new idea. They have been around under different names (Chapbooks, pamphlets, flyers). People with independent ideas have been getting their word out since there were printing presses." In the context of women of color, how have we historically used alternative forms of media to tell our stories?

3) Why is counter-story telling essential to the wellness of women of color? What zines have you created or read that were empowering/encouraging to you?

4) What do you think is the future of zine culture? Will zines continue to have a presence on the literary scene? Particularly, what do you envision for women of color DIY storytellers?