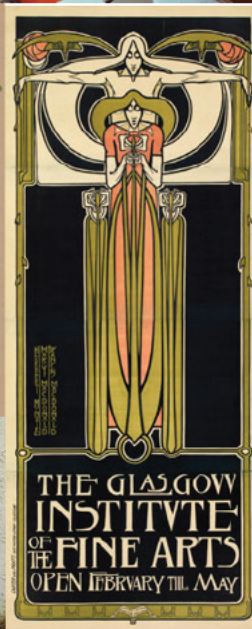
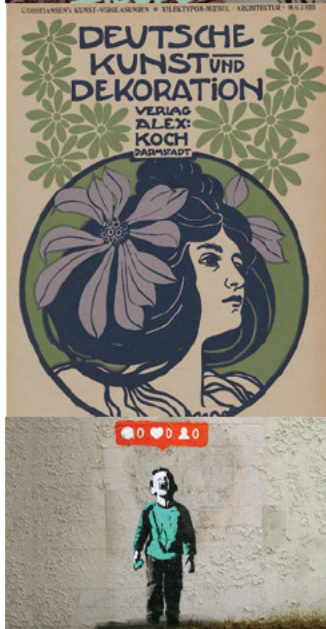


The Adaptation of Countercultural Magazines to the Digital Age

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Abstract

This research thesis investigates the adaptation of countercultural arts magazines to the digital age.

Countercultural magazines generally give a voice to lesser known and less established artists. To understand the background and context of such publications, the literature review establishes the status of countercultural magazines and explains how they have been affected by the digital age. The works of visual theorists and critics are studied to understand how the media transmitted art to consumers and how it compares with the online context. Zine making and independent publishing are also studied, to provide a perspective on grassroots types of publishing and to understand their values. The impact that digitisation and social media has had on media consumption will then be discussed, along with the impact of algorithms, to understand how the media has changed since its arrival. Using social network analysis, opportunities for networking online amongst grassroots movements is also discussed. The research seeks to understand the effects that social media has had on artists, countercultural publishing and cultural consumption, in order to offer some insight on the challenges and opportunities for countercultural publications to adapt to an online context. The research uses constructivism to study archives and uses interpretivist and phenomenological research methods to engage with artists, cultural journalists, artists, and zine makers, to understand how cultural media operates in the current context. It explores how artists, writers, and editors themselves adapt to the digital age by conducting workshops which discuss the challenges posed by the internet and how this affects them. Workshops enabled exploration of archival arts publications, to find learning from elements that could be beneficial to artists, journalists, or countercultural publications if purposed for today. The historical material is compared with modern material to find how the internet has affected cultural media, while finding how it can most effectively adapt to it. Workshops involve input from artists, cultural journalists and zine makers from across Ireland and the UK.

The research finds that there are persistent issues relating to power structures between more mainstream culture and counterculture. Social media plays a large part in this, as the internet now makes shorter, less considered, shareable work more viable due to the existence of algorithms. This has been to the detriment of some forms of art and writing. The research also identifies that online spaces cater for many mediums on their platforms and can reproduce other mediums in a manner which was not possible before which means that there is now a greater range of reproducibility possible. Grassroots and countercultural movements can use it to their advantage and create a more democratic forum than anything which existed before. Social media can also be used to the benefit of these movements. However, the research also finds that importance is still placed on physical objects and spaces, and that online spaces create an ephemerality with regards to payment. The research seeks to understand what importance online spaces hold, and whether there are ways in which publications can counter prevailing trends, use more considered

methods to display work online, and allow works to be fully appreciated in the same manner as the physical. The internet presents a large opportunity for countercultural movements and publications to network and reach areas that may not have been possible before, and therefore use the platforms provided by digital platforms to their advantage.

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Declaration

I, Kilian Thomas McCann, declare that this submission of full thesis for the degree of Master of Research (M.Res) meets the regulations as stated in the course handbook. I declare that this submission is my own work and has not been submitted for any other academic award



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Glossary

The **fin-de-siècle** (from the French for 'turn of century') was a historical, political, and artistic period which began in the 1890s and was strongly associated with art-nouveau and modernism.

The **avant-garde** are painters, writers, musicians, and other artists whose ideas, styles, and methods are very original or modern in comparison to the period in which they live.

Collectives are a group of artists working together to achieve a common objective.

Cultural journalism is an umbrella term for the media's reporting and debating on culture, which includes the arts, popular culture, culture industries and entertainment.

Counterculture is a culture with values and mores that run counter to those of established society.

Grassroots is type of movement or campaign that attempts to mobilize individuals to take some action to influence an outcome, often of a political nature and grassroots culture is often used to encompass more than 'amateur'. Although amateur may have connotations of being less than 'professional', grassroots denote a more activist, broader remit, also including 'community' arts. For the purposes of this study, I take grassroots activity to mean any self-governed, amateur, arts-based activity undertaken by formal or informal groups or organisations undertaking activity on a regular (rather than one-off) basis.

Mass culture are cultural products that are both mass-produced and for mass audiences. Examples include mass-media entertainments—films, television programmes, popular books, newspapers, magazines, popular music, leisure goods, household items, clothing, and mechanically-reproduced art.

Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Declaration	iv
Glossary	v
1 // Introduction	1
1.1 // Motivation	2
1.2 // Research Aims and Questions	2
1.2.1 // Research Questions	2
1.3 // The Covid-19 Pandemic	3
1.3.1 // The city of Cork and it's place in the research	4
1.4 // Structure of the Thesis	4
2 // Literature Review	5
2.1 // The cultural magazine and the zine, what are they?	5
2.2 // Alternative publications and DIY culture today	7
2.2.1 // DIY Scenes, purposeful concealment and community	8
2.3 // The opportunity for networking in creative eco-systems	9
2.3.1 // Ways that the internet is being used and the opportunities it presents	10
2.3.2 // How social media can create social networks	11
2.4 // Chapter conclusion	16
3 // Methodology	17
3.1 // Epistemology	18
3.2 // Theoretical Perspective	19
3.3 // Methodology	20
3.4 // Methods	21
3.4.1 // Workshops	21
3.4.2 // The selection of workshop materials	22
3.5 // Modes of analysis	31
3.5.1 // Analysis method	32
3.6 // Recruitment	34
3.7 // Evaluative Process	36
3.8 // Ethical Considerations	37
4 // Fieldwork	39
4.1 // Workshop Layout	40

4.1.1 // Part One	40
4.1.2 // Part Two	41
4.1.3 // Part Three	42
4.2 // Participant reaction and engagement with material	43
4.3 // The Impact of Covid-19 and the use of Zoom	43
4.4 // How the workshops went	46
4.4.1 // Workshop One	46
4.4.2 // Workshop Two	46
4.4.3 // Workshop Three	46
4.4.4 Workshop Four	47
4.5 // Evaluative Process	47
5 // Analysis and Discussion	49
5.1 // The 'clean'-ness of the online vs the messiness of zines	50
5.2 // The Importance of the Physical Object	52
5.2.1 // Gatekeeping at the bottom and the top	53
5.3 // Qualities of In-Person and Digital Connections	55
5.3.1 // Challenges to the quality of journalism	56
5.3.2 // The effects of algorithms and SEO	57
5.4 // Do we need to rethink the online and use design to alleviate the issues?	58
5.4.1 // Grabbing the user's attention	58
5.4.2 // Maintaining the user's attention and slowing them down	59
5.5 // Intentionality with design elements	62
5.6 // Chapter conclusion	65
6 // Validating the findings with Cork-based artists	66
6.2 // How Has Social Media Affected Artists?	67
6.3 // New potential for connectivity	68
6.4 // Is the quality of journalism declining?	69
6.5 // How can things be slowed down?	70
6.6 // Chapter conclusion	71
7 // Conclusion	73
7.1 Research Questions	74
7.2 Research Limitations	75
7.3 Future Research	75
References	76
Image sources	83

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Social network analysis of the fin-de-siècle	12
Figure 2 - Social network analysis of modern arts scenes	12
Figure 3 - Research methodology using Crotty diagram	17
Figure 4 - First issue of The Studio, cover designed by Aubrey Beardsley	24
Figure 5 - First issue of Cocorico, cover designed by Alphonse Mucha	24
Figure 6 - Cover of The Dublin Magazine from 1924	24
Figure 7 - Cover of Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration from 1900	24
Figure 8 - Wendingen cover from 1919	25
Figure 9 - An Claidheamh Soluis cover from 1902	25
Figure 10 - Page from The Magazine, used in the workshops	25
Figure 11 - Cover of Araf zine, used in the workshops	27
Figure 12 - Cover of Sonic Cyberfeminisms, used in the workshops	27
Figure 13 - Cover of Sandwich Zine, used in the workshops	27
Figure 14 - Cover of the Queen's Head, used in the workshops	27
Figure 15 - Example of Vice's homepage	29
Figure 16 - Example of District's homepage	29
Figure 17 - Example of Aesthetica's homepage	29
Figure 18 - Example of Hot Press' homepage	30
Figure 19 - Example of Off Licence Magazine's homepage	30
Figure 20 - Research analysis method used	33
Figure 21 - Participant locations	35
Figure 22 - Social network mapping of Cork's arts infrastructure	36
Figure 23 - An overall view of the workshops	39
Figure 24 - A zoomed-in image of part one	40
Figure 25 - A zoomed-in image of part two	41
Figure 26 - A zoomed-in image of the online publications	42
Figure 27 - A zoomed-in image of the discussion prompts	42
Figure 28 - The workshops in July 2021	44

Figure 29 - The workshops in October 2021	45
Figure 30 - Workshop and participant notes	49
Figure 31 - An example of a 'clean' and 'shareable' Instagram post	51
Figure 32 - District's Instagram page with examples of 'shareable' content	51
Figure 33 - A 'messy' zine format	51
Figure 34 - Wendingen front pages	58
Figure 35 - Pallas Projects homepage	60
Figure 36 - Off Licence Magazine	60
Figure 37 - Image from Sonic Cyberfeminisms	61
Figure 38 - Image from Aesthetica	61
Figure 39 - Image from Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration with selected colour	63
Figure 40 - Issue of Cocorico with a unique title designed by an artist	63
Figure 41 - Issue of Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration with dividers and borders	64
Figures 42 and 43 - Issue of Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration with drop caps	64

1 // Introduction

Countercultural arts publications and collectives have existed in different formats since the 1960s, and arguably since the fin-de-siècle. They have been integral in providing a platform for lesser known and more experimental artists. They exist in tandem with more mainstream media, and often offer an alternative viewpoint. Examples existed in the 1890s, growing in popularity since the 1960s, and can be found in most cities across Ireland and the UK. They have been important in spreading the ideals of art nouveau, arts and crafts, Celtic revival, punk, indie and other styles, and have also been quite DIY in their approach and their format. This thesis discusses countercultural arts publications and styles, investigating their position within the digital age of today. This thesis will focus on countercultural magazines which typically deal with art and music.

The popularity of social media has grown exponentially over the past decade: Facebook has 2.85 billion users, YouTube has 2.29 billion users, WhatsApp has 2 billion users, Instagram 1.38 billion users, and Twitter has 397 million users (Statista 2021). Nowadays, social media and media applications are a primary news source for young people: 55% of US adults get their news through social media (Suciu 2019), and 50% of UK adults sourcing news from social media in 2019 (Ofcom 2019) though this number recently dipped (Ofcom 2020). This research argues that countercultural journalism has also been affected by a shift, and the consumption of art and music has changed dramatically since its emergence. This field of research remains sparse, and this thesis aims to explore some of the issues and opportunities faced by countercultural publications, collectives, and artists within this new digital era.

This research is an interpretivist and phenomenologically informed exploration of the interrelation between the medium of countercultural media, the wider world of cultural journalism, and its place within the wider world of the internet. It will look at the experiences of participants, who produce forms of art, artists, musicians, journalists, and zine makers. This thesis seeks to understand how the internet has affected the medium of cultural journalism and how art is consumed from the participants' own perspectives.

This research is realised through workshops in which cultural magazines from the fin de siècle and zines are observed and discussed, and are compared with their modern, digital equivalents. The focus of the workshops is understanding whether there is a method through which grassroots arts movements and countercultural publications can take advantage of the new opportunities provided by digital and social media and find whether there are preferred methods to present and discuss artworks, music, fiction, and events online. Experiences of social media, how art and music are now distributed, and the effects of the internet are discussed in the second part of the workshops.

This research investigates the issues artists face of oversaturation, algorithms, PR related journalism and the new opportunities that arise for growing their networks. It recommends methods for using these to the advantage of countercultural publications and artists and provides

ideas on how to create a positive space for grassroots artists, musicians and publications to exist online alongside an already existing, controversial infrastructure.

1.1 // Motivation

I am deeply interested in art, music, culture, and the countercultural perspective that art can offer, challenging the status quo. For my undergraduate degree in sociology, I completed a final year research project about the past and present music scenes in my home city of Cork. While completing this research, I was particularly impressed by the mediums through which the music scene presented itself – national music magazines, punk zines, and word of mouth. I found that the mediums through which collectives, musicians and artists communicate today are extremely different to those I came across in my research project, with the modern scene relying heavily on social media promotion and discussion. I wondered whether countercultural art consumption was prevalent amongst the youth of today, to what extent social media has reduced or transformed such experiences of art, and how it could be of greater benefit to the artist, countercultural magazines, and countercultural movements, leading me to this research project.

1.2 // Research Aims and Questions

1.2.1 // Research Questions

Primary research question:

How has digitisation and social media has affected countercultural arts media and movements?

The primary aim of this research is to understand the effect that the internet has had on countercultural media and how it shares art. To do this, this thesis will discuss cultural publications as well as the effects of social media. It will explore how artists use social media, which methods exist for sharing work online, and whether artists are satisfied with the way the arts are currently presented online, in both arts magazines and on social media.

Research Subquestions:

1. What opportunities have counter-cultural publications like zines offered artists and what are their key characteristics?

The study of historical publications and archival material offers us a perspective of how selected cultural publications operated and displayed art in the past, the study of zines offers us a perspective on alternative publishing methods, and the study of online publications, some countercultural and some more mainstream, shows us what currently exists. This is useful to understand the manner through which culture was and is displayed, and possibly repurposing identified historical publishing styles, and the research will investigate the feasibility in doing so.

2. How can grassroots arts movements and countercultural publications take advantage of the move to digitisation?

The research will focus somewhat on what digitisation can offer grassroots cultural movements

and collectives. Negotiating internet culture is trickier for grassroots and countercultural movements without sustained public funding and support received by mainstream and established media. This research aims emphasise the accessibility of grassroots culture by improving how mainstream cultural media integrates them. This is done through gaining an understanding of grassroots publishing and seeing how adaptable it is to an online format.

1.2.2 // Objectives

1. The study will identify how the internet and social media have generally affected the dissemination of grassroots art and counterculture.
2. The study will do a selection and comparison of design elements which existed in cultural magazines, in order to see which of these elements could enhance a modern publication from the point of view of the artist.
3. The study will explore and understand the diverse experiences artists, musicians, journalists and zine makers across Ireland and the UK have had while engaging with social media and cultural publications.
4. The findings of the study will be validated through comparisons with the experiences of artists in Cork.

1.3 // The Covid-19 Pandemic

The research took place during the Covid-19 pandemic. Initially the researcher was based in Cork, Ireland, before moving to Glasgow in September 2021. Fieldwork took place over Zoom and on Miro, a whiteboard sharing platform.

The initial research proposal involved visits to physical archives and zine collections across Ireland and the UK. Unfortunately, access to zine archives was very limited, due to a lack of collection digitisations. The researcher intended to access more historical punk zine collections such as the Cork Zine Archive and the Manchester Metropolitan University punk zine collection, as well as physical collections of other archives in Glasgow and in Ireland, but access to these was limited due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, several archives were also under copyright restrictions. This affected the framing of the workshops, with the fin-de-siècle publications taking up a larger portion of the workshops than intended by the researcher.

The workshops were also intended to have a wider range of participants. Initially, the hope was to have physical workshops in different locations. This was in order to gain an understanding of the contextual differences which may happen in different cities. However, the pandemic did allow for a good geographic spread of participants, as the online element allowed for participants from different areas to have conversations which may not have been possible had the workshops not been online.

1.3.1 // The city of Cork and its place in the research

Cork, a city of 250,000 people on the south coast of Ireland, is the researcher's hometown. It is also where a significant amount of the research took place – a move to Scotland was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and so more than half of the research took place here. This meant that for a significant period, the researcher had little access to physical libraries, and was limited to online access publications for much of the year, but also availed of access to physical copies of books from the libraries at University College Cork and Crawford College of Art and Design provided by peers. This also meant that the researcher worked within his own, familiar context for much of the year. It was not until September 2021 that the researcher became familiar with the materials available in Glasgow School of Art and was able to work tangibly within another context. That said, Cork maintained an importance in the research, with the Cork Zine Archive being intended as an important source of workshop materials (Glasgow Zine Library was used instead) and Cork artists being interviewed in the validation section of the research.

1.4 // Structure of the Thesis

This research presented through this 22,000-word thesis, along with references and appendices.

Chapter one introduces the research and sets out the research context.

Chapter two reviews the literature relevant to the research, identifying the context of cultural journalism and the internet, the element of grassroots vs establishment, and the challenges that art and culture faces on the internet.

Chapter three identifies the theoretical position of the research as constructivism, following an interpretivist and phenomenological methodology.

Chapter four sets out the fieldwork and describes the methods to be used in the research for data collection and analysis.

Chapter five analyses the collected data and discusses the research findings.

Chapter six concludes the research, sets out its limitations, and identifies opportunities for future research.

2 // Literature Review

The following chapter sets out the literature review for the research. The first section contextualises the countercultural magazine and explains the parameters of what publication this research is discussing. The literature review will analyse the different types of cultural media, the hierarchy between mass culture and counterculture, the importance of physical objects and spaces, the effects of social media and online spaces, and the opportunities they present. The last sections identify and argue that the online spaces can allow these inequalities to be overcome and that there is the opportunity for grassroots publications to garner success online. It will explore the aesthetics of fin-de-siècle magazines and pose the question of whether these can be replicated online and whether they present useful methods for presenting work. These set the context for the research and present the issues that the thesis explores in the latter chapters.

2.1 // The cultural magazine and the zine, what are they?

This thesis will explore countercultural forms of 'cultural' magazines; used to refer to the worlds of creative expression. Traditionally this term was used for 'elite' forms of literature, music, art, and theatre, though the scope has broadened in recent years (Hodkinson 2011). From the 1960s onwards, counterculture and grassroots movements generated alternative, 'not for profit' print and publications produced by amateurs using basic technologies, consciously infused with notions of autonomy and anti-specialism (Baines et al. 2018). They recorded the history of the music scene ignored by the mainstream (Robinson 2018). Forms of alternative, D.I.Y publishing also exist within subcultures; zine making is assumed to have originated in England amongst punks, through the use of photocopiers (Baines et al. 2018). The variation between cultural publications, in terms of circulation and content, can be quite vast, and this vastness creates many inequalities within the art world and the art journalism world which has persisted into the digital age.

Historically, there has been a disconnect between what is newly created and what is considered 'good art' – there has been a tendency to emulate classics and brush over alternative or new art (Wagner 1849, Simmel 1997, Bourdieu 1993). Sociologists have also identified a hierarchisation of the art world. (Weber 1958, Adorno 1970, Bourdieu 1993). The art critic John Berger wrote in 1960 that it is particularly difficult to be a good artist due to this (1960). Film and radio no longer needed to present themselves as art, as they were now industries and business (Adorno and Horkheimer 2012) based around hero structures (Mulvey 2013). The proliferation of so-called "chart music" (Steininger and Gatzmeier 2019, p. 167), large record labels, celebrity and the micro-celebrity or influencers (Gronlund 2014) accentuate the difference between mainstream and grassroots or avant-garde, pronounced in most sectors of the arts industry and accompanied by the development of a commercially mass produced 'mass culture', offered for passive consumption (Bennett 1995). Today, this contrast can be seen with cultural magazines through Vanity Fair, Vice, and Aesthetica, which each have an international focus, in opposition to smaller publications like Four Four, District, and Offie Mag, which have localised, countercultural focuses in Dublin and

Brighton. The readership and exposure of the latter publications is much lesser than the former, even in their home cities.

Fin-de-siècle publications formed a pre-modern vanguard which left an imprint on the nature of periodical publishing, and inspired newsprint and type to act as “weapons in the war against complacency” (Heller 2003, p. 31). Fin-de-siècle movements such as art-nouveau were short-lived and exuberant, its practitioners aligned themselves with natural objects, ancient icons and contemporary meanings, rejected traditional publishing mannerisms, and chose instead to use quirky, ornamental typefaces which would be intertwined with images (Heller 2003). This emphasised the artists’ work and offered the reader a greater sense of what the work was about. They also emphasised a rejection of mainstream literary culture and placed an emphasis on the moral basis of art, believing that they were providing a basis for initiating a new era in art (Knight 1996).

The existence of counterculture or contraculture in opposition to elements of mass culture also began to become noticeable in the 1960s and 1970s. The writer Raymond Williams believed that there was clearly something that could be called alternative to dominant culture, and that its’ degree of existence is a matter of variation, dependent on the society and its’ degree of openness (Williams 2014). Stuart Hall identified that youth subcultures could be identified by their possessions and objects (1996). Underground and countercultural magazines can go against the curve as they can represent minority groups more freely and with less pressure from the status quo, and a 1976 study found that, at the time, ‘dominant’ cultural magazines do not change their views or values significantly whereas underground countercultural publications do (Spates 1976). In the 1980s, the term ‘culture jamming’ began to emerge, which involves radical artists who adopt socio-political issues as their primary focus and directly confront the rigidity and hierarchical superiority of art institutions (Darts 2004). Feminist writings and magazines have also made an impact in countering dominant, then-mainstream ideas about gender and hierarchy, allowing new interpretations of feminism to emerge and demonstrating that magazines were reflecting a mood of enquiry, re-establishing the position of the woman (Forster 2010).

Zines also follow a countercultural narrative and speak to, and for, an underground culture. They are independent and localised, based on the ethics of D.I.Y and making your own culture, countering an era marked by rapid centralisation (Duncombe 2008). Emerging from 1960s England, they are not-for-profit and frequently produced by amateurs using basic technologies (Baines et al. 2018), made by “extremely creative people taking control of their work and putting it out there for the world to see”, with short press runs, made from materials not designed to withstand heavy use (Weddle 2018, p. 2). Zines are generally hand-made, or hand drawn, can have an ‘unprofessional’ appearance, tend to be quirky, and individualised (Piepmaier 2008). Zines bore influence within their own cultural milieux, tracing an alternative cultural dialogue while being hidden from the mainstream media’s coverage of pop and youth culture (Worley 2018). The D.I.Y sentiment of the punk movement and the belief in self-expression were important factors in their proliferation, and

anyone who wanted to make one could do so (Martin 2016). They also played an integral part in the emergence of the indie pop subculture of the mid-1980s, which was eventually picked up on by the mainstream music press of the day (Dale 2018). In this pre-internet era, it was also a way for aspiring journalists to make a name for themselves, and many future journalists were in the fanzine network, ending up in NME and Sounds (Martin 2016). In Ireland, social media and websites now fulfil the role that they would have held (Ryan 2021). Zines were therefore an integral part in maintaining alternative cultures, while also aiding the emergence in popularity of certain genres and creating a new generation of writers despite very much being countercultural and localised, and they continue to do so.

2.2 // Alternative publications and DIY culture today

In modern times, the human experience is far more visual than ever before (Mirzoeff 1999), while the everyday aesthetic experience is an often overlooked but important space where our attitudes, knowledge and beliefs are shaped (Duncum 2001). The 'visual event' between the viewer and viewed is embedded within social, political, and economic contexts, and thus the visual culture educator can show their students the complicated forces behind the aesthetics and imagery of the familiar (Darts 2005). Similarly, cultural magazines can use their platform to educate their readership on the meanings that are hidden behind the aesthetics being displayed on its platforms. Niche media is orientated towards geographically dispersed sub-groups of the population that share characteristics and interests, and specialist youth magazines can play a role in constructing youth style and bringing together music groupings and feeding a range of identities (Hodkinson 2011).

There are various forms of alternative publications across Ireland and Britain. Publications such as HOAX, Vestoj, Off Licence, and others offer a perspective on different aspects of alternative culture. Vestoj is a fashion journal which deals with the production, consumption and analysis of garments as though they are a piece of art and fit them into contemporary culture (Grau 2011). HOAX is an online publication which aims to support the artists they work with rather than profit from them and resist and subvert the power structures within art (HOAX 2022). Off Licence Magazine is a publication based in Brighton which hosts events and is an online platform for underground music, photography and culture across the UK (Tye 2019) who have managed to bridge the gap between the Brighton and South London hip hop scenes through the popularity of their shows and writing about talent from both areas (Ward 2022). Manchester arts collective Studio SCUM, which operates as a platform for independent creatives, a term which it uses quite liberally: writers, artists, performers, to name a few, publish a zine named FILTH (Ronan 2021).

On a more globalised scale, Aesthetica describes itself as a "worldwide destination for art and culture" and has a global readership of 400,000 (Aesthetica 2021). Some publications, such as Vice, were founded to be countercultural, and have become somewhat mainstream, becoming referred to as an empire of "pretend radicals" valued at \$4 billion, and has joined the realm of mass culture, with some of their videos on YouTube garnering up to 12 million views (Flynn 2017).

This bears the question of whether countercultural that they represent, can or desire to reach a higher level of exposure within their respective societies, and adapt adequately to the rising dominance of the digital platforms where more mainstream publications already have a strong presence. It also raises the question of how and when counterculture should be supported or can support itself on digital platforms, what methods can be used to strengthen an online presence, and how social media can help countercultural collectives develop and sustain organically. This empowered independence assumes the potential for counterculture to flourish in the online environment and allows people who take interest in their activities and work to access them more easily.

Glasgow has an active alternative publishing scene – it hosts the only bookstore in the UK with an open submission policy, The Good Press (Caslini 2021), and a zine library with an annual zine fest. Both these places forge international connections in the publishing scene – Good Press receive submissions from all over the world and treat each submission equally on social media (Caslini 2021) and also print a monthly open submission newsletter called The Paper (Good Press 2022). The Glasgow Zine Library welcomes internationally renowned speakers and workshop leaders each year and hosts a zine fest which typically welcomes 50-80 zine makers (Glasgow Zine Library 2022). The 2021 zine fest, which was held online due to the pandemic, hosted zine makers from across Britain and Europe (Glasgow Zine Library 2021). The publishing scene in Glasgow therefore seems to be well connected and uses the internet and social media to its advantage and are largely self-funded. Therefore, these publications and facilities are largely independent and engage in the same type of self-publishing spoken about with fanzines.

2.2.1 // DIY Scenes, purposeful concealment and community

Grazian (2013) argues that in post-industrial cities, music scenes are distinctive as they place themselves in peripheral neighbourhoods and are crucial in the development of these areas as well as being fixtures of urban culture. In these music scenes, microscenes have emerged which are DIY-based and created in opposition to the dominant music industry, involving small groups of digitally networked participants. Indie promoters increasingly use social media to publicise their events and recruit promising acts, and microscene promoters use it to build a solidarity around their DIY events (Grazian 2013). In Glasgow a DIY music scene exists which uses methods of motivated concealment and a lack of exposure to maintain ‘relative autonomy’ in the network, as the D.I.Y ethos is in conflict with what is considered ‘unethical’ practices on the part of local music promoters (Chrysagis 2016). Although DIY musicians perceive printed materials to be ineffective for promoting events, they have additional value in the battle for publicity and urban visibility – although commercial promoters dismissively place their posters on top of DIY ones (Chrysagis 2016). Social media is used as the primary tool to promote local music events, and some would be announced very close to the day of the event if not on the day itself, while word of mouth would still be used as a primary method of getting crowds to the events. Online presence contributed to visibility; the last-minute element contributed to obscurity (Chrysagis 2016). Similar exists in

Dublin, where there are underground scenes which exist as subsections of other scenes and privilege intimacy and do not crave visibility in a way that the Dublin indie scene does – it exists on a translocal basis and resists infiltration (Jones 2021). Eileen Hogan argues that the Cork music scene operated on a basis of “parochial capital”, as the city’s relatively small population of 220,000 shapes a strong sense of community. This leads to much praise between performers and positive relations within the scene, and social status is strongly determined through the artist’s deployment of cultural capital, a capacity to enter and participate in the scene is therefore strongly dependant on their dispositions to community and the city (Hogan 2021). In Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, there is a sense of community within the scene through merchandise which bands create, such as t-shirts, to build up symbolic capital within a scene (Burns and Threadgold 2018). There are therefore scenes which value their invisibility, such as some DIY scenes in Glasgow and Dublin, and while they use social media, prefer to remain obscure. In Cork, while the scene does not value the same obscurity or exclusivity, it remains a space where personal connections are valued and expressed more visibly over networked social media connections.

2.3 // The opportunity for networking in creative eco-systems

The creative industry saw an increase in exposure with the promotion of the ‘creative economy’ by the New Labour government in the late 1990s, to make Britain more ‘competitive’ on the international scene. The popularisation of the ‘creative economy’ led to a series of ‘Mapping Documents’, which highlighted the number of jobs in each sector and laid out plans for them. Critics found that the study failed to acknowledge the difference between businesses that created intellectual property value through creative talent of individuals from typically small and undercapitalised microbusinesses, and companies which benefitted from exploitation and ownership of intellectual property from typically multinational conglomerates. Both were classed as the same type of ‘creative industry’ (Newbigin, 2021). Some found the idea of the ‘creative economy’ to be quite dubious, since the jobs involved were quite different from one another (Tremblay 2011). Arguably, this indicates how some of the creative industries can be perceived as grassroots, and sometimes countercultural, since it does not fit well within policy or legal definitions in order to receive governmental recognition or support. Grassroots movements, therefore, are self-reliant, and networking is a key way they can effectively spread and broaden their horizons, without too much financial strain.

Creative hubs are an important aspect in these communities also, by pooling support and development services. This widens the range of talent that can be aided by these hubs and allow a network to grow. Microbusinesses based around the arts can benefit from this and network with others to become a visible, productive unit (Morton et al. 2019). Arts collectives play into this role as being a hub where artists work together and network, and magazines can also act as a visible hub in which this sort of networking takes place.

2.3.1 // Ways that the internet is being used and the opportunities it presents

According to Caroline Ann O’Sullivan, the digital age has changed how younger musicians interact with scenes and venues. In Dublin, for example, she observed that younger people do not put the same importance on ‘scenes’, venues and gigging, rather the emphasis was placed on connection. Their breakout performances were placed on being in the right place at the right time and bypassing established club nights through contacting venue owners directly, and access to gatekeepers could be arranged digitally (O’Sullivan 2022). Ciarán Ryan argues 21st century zines tend to be somewhat niche and underground within the overall music scene, as social media and websites now fulfil the role that they would have held (Ryan 2021) through the popularity of their shows and writing about talent from both areas (Ward 2022).

The internet is also prompting the development of commercial websites orientated towards music scenes, as well as even smaller-scale and narrowly orientated ‘micro’ or DIY media. The internet has transformed the DIY media landscape and allowed easier communication between grassroots movements. Social media has also changed the way communities communicate with one another, with diary-style blogs and journals becoming more prolific and the social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram allowing users to interact on their own terms with a hand-picked set of friends (Hodkinson 2011, 2016). 91% of art galleries actively use social media as a promotional tool for their business (Hiscox 2017). Cultural media can pick up on this and allow for greater interaction between grassroots movements and the public, while also allowing greater proliferation of grassroots movements in a way that is honest to the craft of the artist and allows them to maintain their identity. Not much research has been done into the topic of art and social media as it is a relatively new and current phenomenon (Belanche et al. 2021, Suess 2020). However, several examples of the role that the internet plays can be seen put into practice in different places. Some areas use a creative directory for artists, such is the case with Tottenham, and Made by Tottenham has profiles of local creative people on its platform (Made by Tottenham 2022). Bristol has the DIY Arts Network, which is an independent gathering of arts organisations and freelance creatives (Theatre Bristol 2022). In Brighton, local publication Off Licence Magazine hosts events and is an online platform for underground music, photography and culture across the UK (Tye 2019), and have managed to bridge the gap between the Brighton and South London hip hop scenes.

Many cities struggle to maintain venues, and in Cork a key venue for alternative acts in the city, the Kino, shut its doors in 2021 (Greenwood 2021), although the venue operators The Good Room still maintain another venue in the north inner city (O’Driscoll 2021). The 343 in Belfast shut its doors permanently in September 2022 (The 343, 2022), while in Norwich, OUTPOST Gallery is a gallery and with an affordable studio complex (OUTPOST 2022), but unfortunately redevelopment means that the complex its situated in will be demolished (Concrete Magazine 2022). In Glasgow, Transmission, a contemporary art gallery run by artists founded in 1989, received funding from Creative Scotland until 2018, when it was dropped from the list of regularly funded organisations

(Sharrat 2018). In Dublin, property development has had a detrimental impact on artistic spaces, with commentators arguing that the city is entering cultural collapse and has been since 1984, and announcements of new hotel developments which would affect important cultural landmarks led to public outcry and a campaign named 'Dublin is dying' (McCormack 2021). People who run alternative and independent events, which are not necessarily commercial, are being squeezed out, with the city amid a space crisis, as much of the spaces which artists would have used are being redeveloped (Crawley 2019).

Some organisations have emerged in response to this, such as Pallas Projects, which aims to provide artists with affordable studios in the city centre and addresses the necessity for providing a space for artistic production and exhibition, via an alternative art methodology and a DIY ethic. It does so "with the backdrop of an unwillingness of developers to allow for the provision of a long-term cultural aspect to the regeneration of city-centre areas throughout the boom years" (Pallas Projects 2022, pallasprojects.org/about). In Edinburgh, Rhubaba lost their primary exhibition space in Leith, in which they had a ten-year presence, in 2021 (Rhubaba 2022). Despite the lack of physical spaces, their online spaces have allowed them to maintain the continuity which is lost when the physical space ceases to exist. In Sheffield, the Lughole was a DIY punk co-operative and venue which aims to provide facilities and support for people making music. Although closed, as of 2021, they planned to re-emerge and rely on volunteers and local music lovers (Exposed 2021). Online spaces allowed them to maintain a presence and continuity with their older spaces in the absence of the physical space.

2.3.2 // How social media can create social networks between scenes, artists and consumers

In 2016, Instagram announced that feeds would be reordered suggesting that algorithmic ranking would be introduced to the platform's main feed. Algorithms play a large part in news media, and they are friendlier to large publishers than it is to small publishers, especially on Facebook (Peterson-Salahuddin and Diakopoulos, 2020), who own Instagram. The social capital gained from the platform is sometimes used to gain access to financial resources (Cotter 2018) It has become an important site for the sale of artworks themselves (Fleming 2014) and artists are now using the platform to sell their art to collectors directly (Goetzmann 2018). Instagram has developed a sense of celebrity culture which revolves around flattening out coverage of celebrities' personal lives and making them public matters (Gronlund 2014) and digital influencers and micro-celebrities now represent a new category of 'opinion leaders' and can be described as a type of microcelebrity (Belanche et al. 2021). This style of social media has also infiltrated the art world. 'Infinity rooms' exist where people queue to capture selfies, (Martin 2021), and so-called 'selfie-factories' are becoming more common. It is debated whether, in these places, the photos taken are a souvenir of the experience, or its' *raison d'être* (Kwun 2018), as the selfie-led nature of the art leads people to ponder whether it is the spectator's desire to fit into the practices endorsed

by social media (Martin 2021). There are cases of some pop-up events that have been widely successful in their digital reach, generating 840 million total social media interactions (Kwun 2018).

Instagram has been used by many young people around the world to display their photography and share their ideas and experiences (Manovich 2017). Many street artists have embraced the interconnected practice that social media brings and use it to document their processes and share their work (Martin 2021). There are examples where UNESCO related initiatives have used digital reproductions as a way of sharing collections to in a digital format (Aguerre 2020). On Instagram, a curator can also be virtually accompanied as though their followers are with them, as they can use social media to share behind-the-scenes content from their institutions, or sharing talks, panels, screenings and performances. Live streaming is another method used by artists to engage with their followers in real time (Fisher 2018). Instagram has also been seen to be useful for galleries in aiding their visitors achieve a deeper meaning of artworks through extending the dialogue between them on social media, leading the galleries to create a type of re-curated visual journal which promotes an exhibition to an audience (Suess 2020) This has affected visitor numbers, as in the UK, a study found that 55% of people travel to a gallery based on images seen on Instagram (Wright in Suess 2020).

Social media has transformed how creative work can be shared and has also been considered an effective mechanism for cultural diffusion and is used to convey styles and trends. A study on Instagram by Kang et al. (2019) found that:

- ✘ Instagram is the most popular social media format amongst artists, with 94% of artists using the medium.
- ✘ The main motivation for using social media is to share and sell artworks and to connect with artists.
- ✘ Engagement with other artists is a positive that artists find with social media, which can open new opportunities and creative development.
- ✘ Social media has democratised the art experience and has made citizen curation possible, eliminating the didactic relationship between museums and audiences.
- ✘ Social media also allows for an interactivity and playfulness that is rare in conservative institutions.
- ✘ However, Instagram also allows for quick, superficial interaction where people make judgements based on intuition, with these bite size images only acting as an entry point to the art experience.

Instagram can be an extremely useful medium that may not be getting exploited enough. However, it's increasingly algorithmic nature may be making it more difficult to use. Artists and countercultural publications need to understand and work around this or to work it to their advantage.

Another issue which has become prevalent in the past few years, that of 'clickbait', particularly

when discussing news stories. This term of derision has come to be used for attention getting, deceiving, and disappointing online content of an inferior quality which uses headlines as a means of collecting clicks (Molyneux and Coddington 2020). These forward-referring headlines are primarily used for soft news content and postpone what a story is about with the purpose of creating curiosity and response (Nygaard Blom and Reinecke Hansen, 2015). Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is another issue which faces websites and online spaces, and is encouraged and described by Google below:

Search engine optimization (SEO) is often about making small modifications to parts of your website. When viewed individually, these changes might seem like incremental improvements, but when combined with other optimizations, they could have a noticeable impact on your site's user experience and performance in organic search results. [Google 2022, <https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide>]

These above two cases have affected how websites operate.

Similarly, algorithms shape what gets viewed and how. Instagram shares few details about how its algorithm works, but usually function with many users unaware of their presence, while structuring online experiences (Cotter 2018). The negatives of this algorithm were discussed in a podcast by The White Pube, an art criticism blog, with artist honor ash stating:

I mean I think that the thing that underlies all of it, to me, is that the priority there isn't for people to actually see what their friends are sharing. It's to keep people looking at stuff on Instagram. So the platform kind of has an incentive to just keep burying things and keep showing you random things that you think are interesting or annoying or will keep you scrolling basically, like that's their motivation. So anything that is not explicitly buying into that kind of motive is going to have a hard time in that environment. [honor ash, The White Pube Podcast, 27/11/22, <https://thewhitepube.co.uk/podcasts/instagram-has-ruined-art/>]

In particular, algorithmic ranking determines who and what gains visibility on social media. By establishing the conditions by which social media users are seen, algorithms serve to prescribe participatory norms by using disciplinary apparatuses (Cotter 2018). Marketing researchers believe the Instagram algorithm offers opportunities for businesses is to increase audiences, which means increasing prospective customers while also detecting market conditions, so that online marketers can respond directly to strategies and reach a larger audience (Sri Darma 2019). The algorithm, therefore, creates frustrations for those who seek out artworks without distraction, while those involved in business and marketing see opportunity.

In some cases, hashtags are used to connect with other artists in a particular movement or to be shared on a larger account, and such happens with street art (McDowall and de Souza 2018). Instagram reorientates the curatorial form from being exclusively based in arts institutions and places it within online discourses (Fisher 2016), and this allows for easy access to works from outside one's immediate circle. Social network analysis and cultural ecology can also inform

us in noting possible connections that can be made. The idea of a cultural ecosystem was first coined in 2004, and the idea of complex networks characterised by emergent behaviours and connectivity became apparent with the emergence of digitally mediated social networks (Dovey et al., 2016). It is important for grassroots movements to stay connected and support each other, and this can be done through sharing work through alternative media. An age where communication is constant and where people can be connected efficiently on social media makes this process easier. The connections made between networks and cities can enhance communication in the arts and allow like-minded people to form a network. The networks created in the fin-de-siècle period created a distinctive era of aesthetics, with these magazines and their content acting as important transmitters of art in this period. It can be historically seen with the fin-de-siècle scene of the turn of the century, when social networks formed between artists and publications in different cities, exhibited on page 15. Cultural publications in the fin-de-siècle acted as an important junction of different mediums, with collaboration acting as a mobilisation between artists and creating a new aesthetic and artistic language (Verna, 2015). In America, small circulation magazines adopted a countercultural viewpoint and united themselves through a disdain of sanitised mainstream literary culture, and their creators believed that their contribution to the arts would be recognised as initiating a new era of artistic expression. These connections, and many more, are an example of how networking can enrich cultural scenes and creative ecologies. An in-depth discussion of these networks can be read in Appendix A, with a simplified graph demonstrating these connections in Figure 1.

Artist hubs need a visible space in which to revolve a community around, and venues have an important role in the creation and maintenance of a scene. However, they take a lot of work to create, they need low-cost spaces to maintain them, ideally non-profit community spaces, along with record stores, studios, labels, and fanzines. They also need an audience to support them (O'Connor 2002). This is equally important for art as it is for music. Physical studios, venues and locations are important as they form a nucleus around which artistic communities can develop. Appendix A discusses examples of these types of spaces and the networks they maintain in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Manchester, North and South London Yorkshire, and Brighton, with the graph providing a simplified mapping of these networks in Figure 2, on page 15.

Figure 1 - examples of connections between publications at the fin-de-siecle

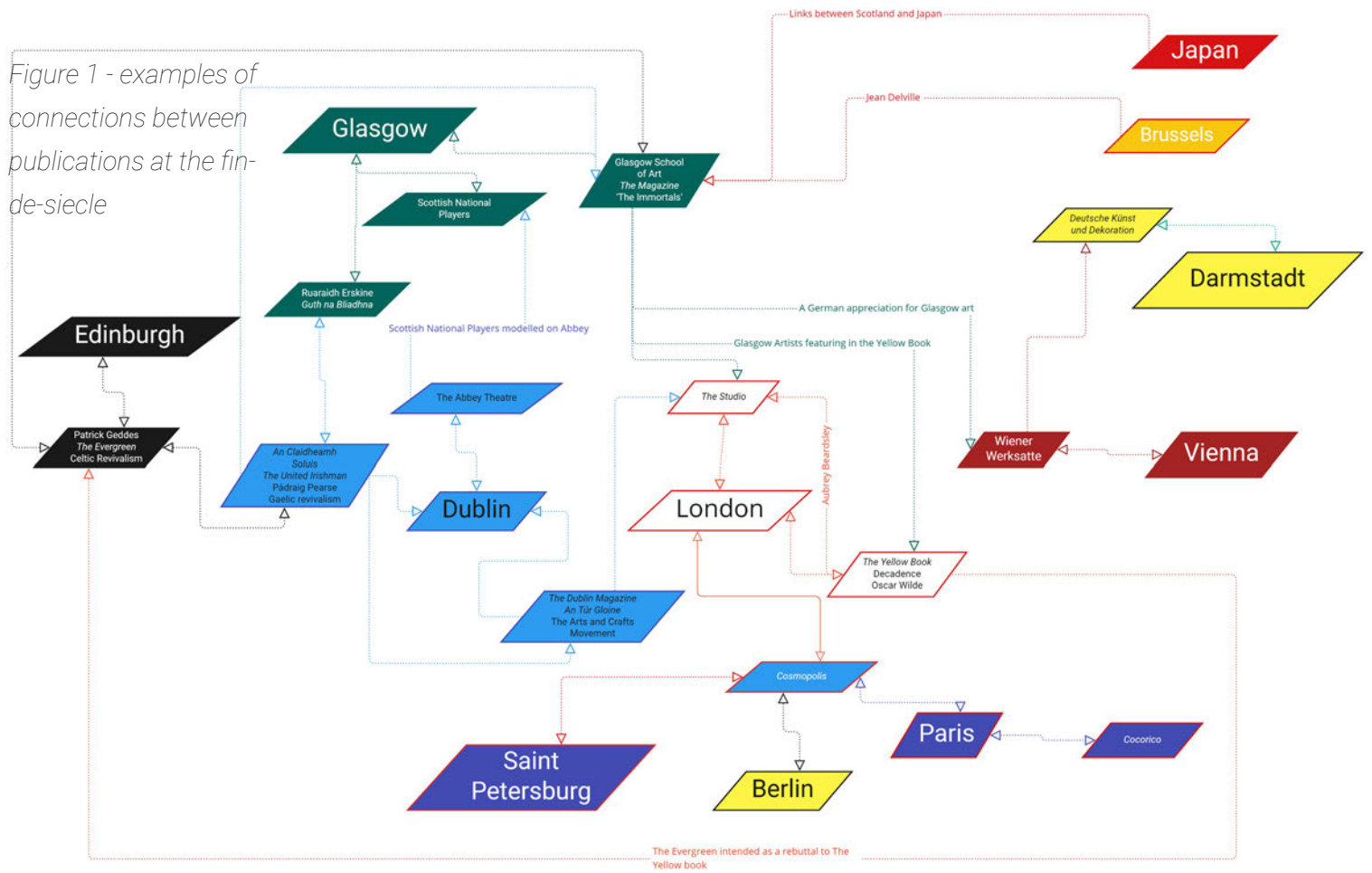
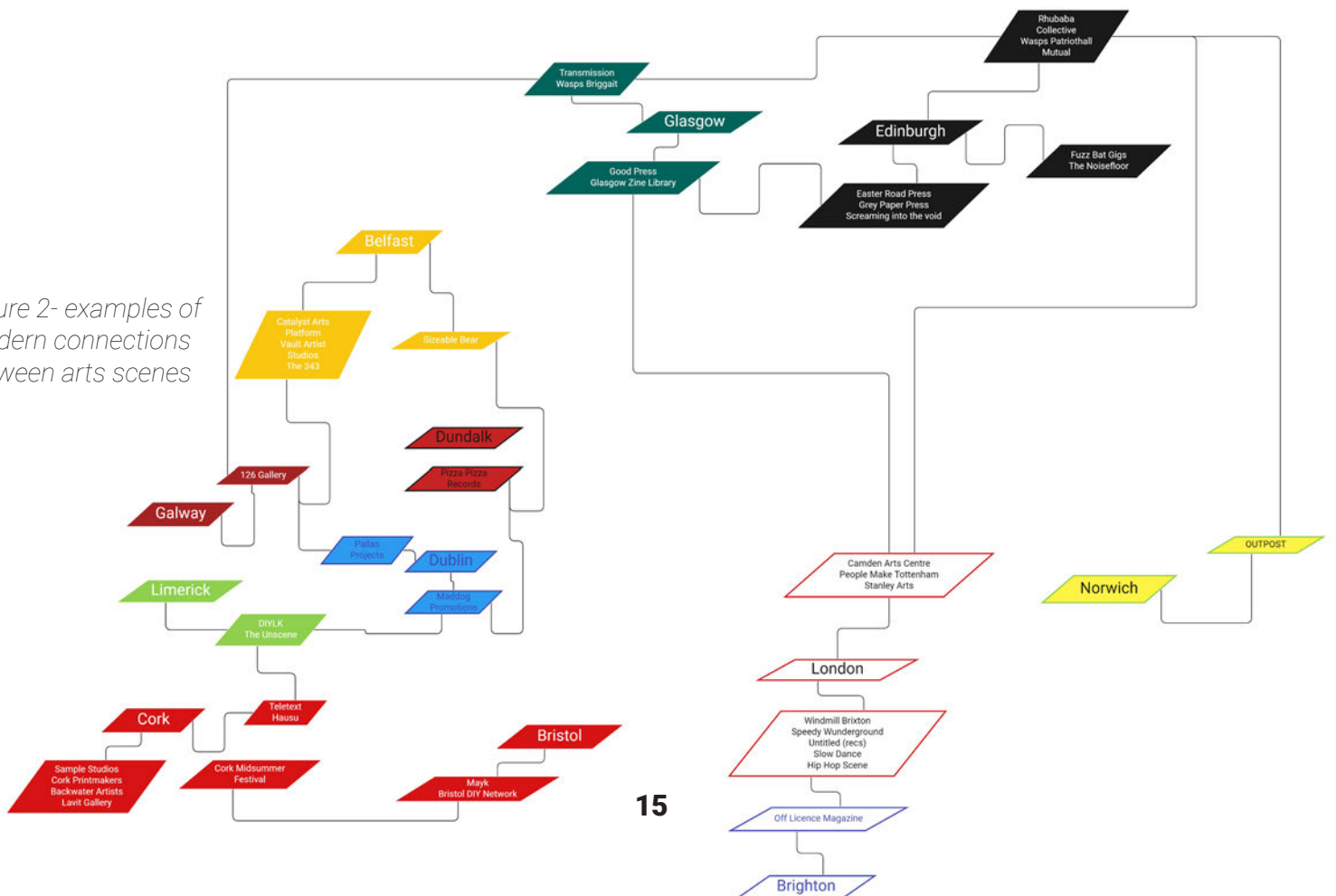


Figure 2- examples of modern connections between arts scenes



2.4 // Chapter conclusion

The first section contextualises cultural publications and zines, and the second section discusses the context within which countercultural publications and zines work. The internet and social media offer new opportunities to share work, and the reproduction of art along with the ability to use different methods to share work mean that the internet is less closed off than television, radio and the media. Social media accentuates these opportunities; however, the power structures have persisted into the modern age and social media maintains this sense of hierarchy as well, with algorithms dictating how work is done. Social media allows for networking and the creation of networking hubs, with an ease of communication now possible between collectives, artists, galleries, microbusinesses and so on, and now grassroots collectives can communicate more effectively than was previously the case. This can be built on, and new magazines can be informed by older publications when considering ideas for sharing an artist's work and can maintain the values and aesthetics of their predecessors while using modern methods of networking and using social media effectively.

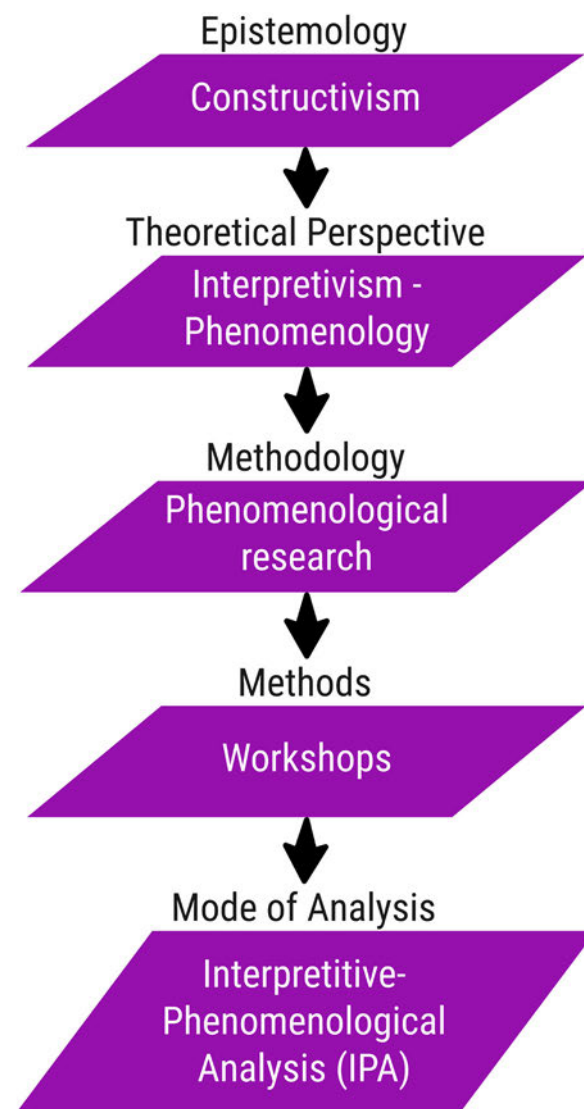
3 // Methodology

This project is an interpretivist and phenomenologically informed exploration of the interrelation between the countercultural or grassroots practitioner, the medium of cultural journalism, and the recent advent of the internet. The following chapter offers the epistemological reasoning and methodological position of the thesis.

The work of Michael Crotty offers a simple framework to provide a grounding for epistemological and theoretical positions. His chart of the four elements of social research (1998, pp. 2-5) is used here to demonstrate the methodology that this project will undertake (see figure 3).

In the following chapter, the reasoning for each position will be explained. The methodology will be based around the experiences and perceptions of those involved in art, music, or cultural journalism. The epistemology of constructivism, based around the experience of the individual, will be the basis of the methodology. The theoretical perspective will stem around the views and experiences of the participants, and their idea of what works and what doesn't work. Therefore it

Figure 3 - research methodology using Crotty diagram



will therefore be based around interpretivism and phenomenology. The methodology will follow phenomenological research, the method will involve workshops.

3.1 // Epistemology

The epistemology that the research will follow is constructivism, which argues that meaning is made of a phenomenon within the experience of the individual. It views humans as participants who actively generate and transform the patterns which surround them (Reich 2009, p. 40). John Dewey discusses how humans interact with their surroundings in *How We Think* (1910), in which he states that generally, humans observe at a glance, but that something controversial will lead to further enquiry (1910, p. 102). He also states that through judging confused data, seemingly incoherent or disconnected facts can link together through a peculiar feeling or indescribable impression (1910, p. 111), and that the acquisition of definiteness and coherency occurs from practical activities (1910, p. 122). The basic framework in which John Dewey's conception of communication (Vanderstraeten 2002, p. 235) comes through co-operation or participation, participation that requires that one actor responds to the actions of another, which secures the relationship between the organism and the environment in terms of action (Vanderstraeten 2002, p. 235, p.240). Dewey develops this concept of experience and perception in relation to art and aesthetics in *Art as Experience* (Neubert 2009, p. 23). Dewey also had a 'democratic vision' in relation to design, framed as a specific process of sustained experimental research aimed at social policymaking, with citizens as core contributors. Community has an important part in democracy, as general ethical means emerge through deliberation, with community-based democracy seen as a mirror to that. This democratic vision offers an ideal system where citizens are empowered to contribute, identify concerns and new needs, and allow for institutional reform where necessary (Dixon et al. 2021, p. 4). Constructivism is therefore a relevant epistemological approach for social sciences and the arts and humanities. It does not underestimate the constructivist side of human knowledge and is able to explain the mutual interrelation among ideas. It allows for very broad interdisciplinary approaches, considering discursive diversity and the social and cultural contexts of constructions. It does not restrict methodological approaches to narrow procedures of looking for truthful claims, rather it explores methods in the interrelations of constructions and practices in cultural contexts. It takes the viabilities of human practices, routines and institutions as a starting point for the discussion of successes and failure, usefulness, beauty or ugliness of construction and methods (Reich 2009, pp. 45-6). Since this research investigates perceptions of cultural magazines, digital media and the perception of these phenomena, and their effects on countercultural and grassroots art, constructivism is the most appropriate epistemological framework. The fieldwork will entail the in-depth observation of magazines, and constructivism is the most appropriate epistemological framework to allow this to take place.

3.2 // Theoretical Perspective

The research will be based around the views and experiences of the participants on the of cultural journalism from the past, and their experiences with art and culture within social media and the internet. In deciding the theoretical perspective, multiple theories were considered with the intention of finding which is best suited to the analysis of culture. Mixed method research was considered as it offers mixing of qualitative and quantitative data, use of surveys (Cresswell in Schrauf 2016, p. 7), and overarching general comparative theme. It has been previously used for the study of culture in a comparative analysis of cultural groups using a social interactionist approach (Schrauf 2016, p. 168). However, its use of quantitative data was deemed inappropriate for this research, and as it comes under the constructivist epistemology, statistics will not be used. Positivism is a more scientific approach, using scientific method to understand the issue at hand (Crotty 1998, p. 20). It was decided that the research approach would come from the interpretivist and phenomenological theoretical perspectives. These perspectives are based around the interpretations of the actor. A person's interpretation of certain events or things can change their perception of the event (Davidson 1982, p. 225), while the existence of the thing or event is required for the thought to occur (Mölder 2010, p. 84). The interpretivist perspective, therefore, allows for the reaction of the interpreter to an agent be understood and analysed by the researcher in relation to the agent, or thing, observed. However, it can allow for an interpreter to come to different conclusions, possibly catering to their biases, while following the same method correctly (Thorpe 2019, p. 3,366). The researcher must therefore be conscientious of the biases of the interpreter. Hermeneutics refers to the interpretation of a given text, speech, or symbolic expression (Gadamer 1989, pp. 295-6), and works to understand how to separate the prejudices that an interpreter may have. The researcher may not be conscious of these prejudices themselves and therefore cannot separate them from the prejudices that enable understanding. As the research involves workshops based around the interpretation of archives by the participants, this theoretical framework will be relevant for taking that approach.

Phenomenology is a philosophic method for questioning, and its difference with other forms of research is that it studies the world as it is ordinarily experienced (Van Manen 2014, p. 29, p. 65). The philosophers Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945), Martin Heidegger (1962) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1989) are mainly responsible for this theoretical perspective. Phenomenology is based around reflective methods of writing and aims to open possibilities for creating formative relations between being and acting, who we are and how we act. Merleau-Ponty believed that once perception is understood as being an interpretation, this provides a starting point for all consciousness beyond it. Analytical reflection breaks with the outside world as it works through inner consciousness (1945), other systems of thought failed to articulate the richness of everyday experiences, and that the route to knowledge is based in perception (Andrews 2019, p. 86). Gadamer believed that practice, rather than theory, was what led people to truths (Van Manen 2014, pp. 69-70), using phenomenology, a person who is trying to understand something does not resign

themselves to accidental fore-meanings or assumptions but to understand what the text is trying to teach them (1989, p. 269). Jacques Derrida believes that the phenomenologist returns to what it is they are observing and is modest in their observation of the object before them (1967, p. 194). Some research within the field, such as that of Kang et al., used mixed quantitative and qualitative research methods to systematically study the interaction between artists and followers on social media (Kang et al 2019). Cotter's (2018) study of Instagram influencers employed thematic analysis to explore influencers' conscious interactions with Instagram's algorithmic architecture. These studies, however, were based on a realising a numerical result rather than a qualitative result. The researcher aims to understand the perspectives of each participant, consider how each perspective contrasts, and make a series of suggestions.

3.3 // Methodology

Participatory Action Research (PAR) was considered as a methodology of the research. This methodology is based around conversation and the sharing of perspectives and ideas, and it emphasises the ways in which there are multiple perspectives and uses them to make sense of reality and change it (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013, p. 3). However, it involves immersing the participants in the research and involving them more deeply than this research intends, whereas the phenomenological approach is more nuanced and in line with the constructivist epistemology. Adam Suess (2020), who's research was considered the most closely aligned to this thesis, used an interpretivist methodology, as well as grounded research methods, using geotagging and hashtagging. However, it differs from this research as it sought more concrete and overarching perspective on social media and art galleries, using hashtags and geotags as concrete evidence, while this research seeks the perspective of those affected by those measures. This can differ from person to person and leaves this research with more nuanced evidence.

Interpretivism and phenomenology were therefore chosen as they allow for the researcher to conduct the methodology with a focus on the relationship between the participant and the materials provided by the researcher. The thoughts and interpretations of participants on these materials and on their experiences with the internet will be the primary focus of the methodology. The analysis of their responses will be used to understand what is offered by the historical material, to understand the influences of the internet from their experience, and to understand their perspectives on the changes to cultural journalism. The aspects deemed most important to the conduct of the research and fieldwork were to be conscious of potential interpretative biases and separating the biases from the interpreter, which comes with interpretivism, and to question the documents, using reflective methods to find a meaning from the text or image or document, which comes through with phenomenology. This then fits into how the researcher interprets how participants view the documents, as he has to be conscious of the biases, but overall, aim to find how they perceive them and be aware of each perspective and bias to come to a conclusion. Interpretivism and phenomenology were therefore chosen as they allow for the researcher to conduct the methodology with a focus on the relationship between the participant

and the materials provided by the researcher. The thoughts and interpretations of participants on these materials and on their experiences with the internet will be the primary focus of the methodology. The analysis of their responses will be used to understand what is offered by the historical material, to understand the influences of the internet from their experience, and to understand their perspectives on the changes to cultural journalism.

3.4 // Methods

The methods comprise of workshops with practitioners, cultural journalists and musicians across Ireland and Britain. The workshops were based around the perceptions of the participants regarding the design and content of cultural publications. A wide geographical and disciplinary spread of participants was chosen in order to understand perspectives on the issue from different countries and see if any major differences exist, this is discussed later in the chapter.

3.4.1 // Workshops

Workshops involve methods similar to zine making and will be done on the whiteboard sharing site Miro. Zine making methodologically sits within the participatory and creative turn and involves a qualitative and post-qualitative work hybrid which brings together art and social science. It opens up group dynamics between the participants and the researcher and is a generative creative method (Watson 2019). Participants are given historical material to assess and take from those materials what they deem to be positive practices for the display of art in cultural publications. As part of the workshops, eight publications from the fin-de-siècle were initially selected by the researcher, along with four zines, to be observed by the participants. In the second set of workshops, the selection was rethought, and two of the fin-de-siècle publications were omitted and replaced by a selection of websites to be observed and commented on by the participants. The fin-de-siècle publications and the zines were chosen to answer the first research subquestion of 'What opportunities have counter-cultural publications like zines offered artists and what are their key characteristics?' and the first research objectives. They were included in the first part of the workshops, and the researcher went through each publication with the participants, discussing aspects of each one which may be relevant today. The publications were selected for their historical importance and positions within their scenes, their unique designs, their inclusion of different mediums and art forms, and their connections to other magazines. Some of the archives, along with their history, can be consulted in the appendices. Upon a rethinking of the structure of the workshops, two publications were omitted from the second round of workshops which took place in October 2021, (The Yellow Book, The Evergreen) and five websites were added to the third part of the workshop. The omitted publications did not provide the researcher with any insights in the same way the other publications did, and the inclusion of websites was considered more useful by the researcher.

In the second part of the workshops, the researcher and participants discussed how the internet has affected culture journalism and grassroots culture, and how the internet can cater for

them in a more positive way. Zines were included in this part, and observation of their content generated discussion on the position of zines and grassroots publishing in relation to the internet. This led naturally into the discussion of the internet and grassroots culture in general. The zines included archives which were available online, through the Glasgow Zine Library, and other which encountered by the researcher when searching online. The publications and their descriptions can be consulted in the appendices.

The third part of the workshops were mainly discussion based, with the researcher asking participants about their experiences with the internet and with cultural journalism in this context. In the second round of workshops, which took place in October 2021, five websites were added to the workshops to be observed by the participants in a similar manner to the zines and archives. Their inclusion was to gather their observations on modern publishing, how websites are set up, and how art is written about. The third part also included discussion on how the internet has changed consumption and affected certain art forms.

How the participants interpret the archival material is important, as their perspectives as artists, journalists or practitioners would give the researcher an idea of the possible usefulness of some elements, using an interpretivist position. In the second part, the participants discussion is important as they can share perspectives on their experiences with the internet with each other. This allows for reflective conversation through which the researcher can understand how the internet has affected and changed journalism and how art creation and consumption works. It also allows the researcher to contrast perspectives between different practices and follows a phenomenological position.

3.4.2 // The selection of workshop materials

The materials used in the workshops were selected based on research done towards the beginning of the project. My initial interest in magazines emerged from studying some archives when working on a previous project for my undergraduate degree, and I was struck by how well magazines of the past promoted artists. In contrast, today, it appears to me that artists need to self-promote much more. This is touched on in the literature review, with Chapter 2.4 describing in detail the effects that social media have on spaces and social networks. Chapter 2.3.1 describes the continuing importance of the physical venue, and Chapter 2.5 describes the aesthetics which older, fin-de-siècle publications had.

The latter section describes how fin-de-siècle publications formed a pre-modern vanguard which left an imprint on the nature of periodical publishing, and inspired newsprint and type to act as “weapons in the war against complacency” (Heller 2003, p. 31). Some of the publications rejected traditional publishing mannerisms, such as classical typography, and chose instead to use quirky, ornamental typefaces which would be intertwined with images (Heller 2003), emphasising the artists’ work and offered the reader a greater sense of what the work was about. (Knight 1996). The older publications used in the workshops were chosen for the following reasons:

- ✘ The Studio was a publication which emphasised the artists' work. It depicted the artist as a creative labourer or a skilled worker, a powerful social moral and economic agent, a producer of commodities, rather than a solitary, isolated, romantic figure, and challenged artistic hierarchies and popular late-Victorian ideas about art and artists (Delyfer 2010)
- ✘ The Magazine was a publication which used stylised motifs, with a common use of the 'Glasgow rose', ravens and plants (Burkhauser 2019). This gave The Magazine a distinct identity and style and which also helped shape and spread the idea of the 'Glasgow style'.
- ✘ An *Claideamh Soluis* was created to provide a space for Irish-language writings to be published (Le Roux 1932) with the eventual goal of providing a basis for Gaelicisation in Irish literature and education (O'Leary 1994).
- ✘ The Dublin Magazine, however, had different aims which included "aesthetic reconstruction [...] towards fostering the creative side of the national individuality" (Dublin Magazine, 1926). It primarily used longform and shared short stories.
- ✘ *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* was a monthly German publication edited by the Darmstadt, Hesse based Alexander Koch. It was described by The Architectural Review in 1899 as being "on the lines of The Studio [...] to further the new style of art in Germany" (p. 263). Founded in 1897, it became the voice of the Art-nouveau movement (University of Heidelberg 2021). Editions were roughly three hundred pages long, however one edition would cover four months. From 1905 onwards they regularly featured the works of the Wiener Werkstätte, who worked in close collaboration with Charles Rennie Mackintosh (Brandstätter 2006).
- ✘ *Wendingen* was a Dutch magazine based around architecture and design. Based in Amsterdam and under the editorship of Theo van de Wijdeveld, it was an important propagandist for the architects of the Amsterdam School (Woodham 2022). The magazine was unique in its design, with a square format, heavy paper and Japanese binding, was roughly forty pages long, and featured unique covers (Wakeford 2008).

As described in the literature review, though these publications all had different ways of displaying work and favoured different types of work, their intention to culturally influence their surrounding societies and their ways of doing it makes them important and worth exploring more deeply. The idea of using older ideas to inform or create new ones is not uncommon, and in 2022 Cork band Pretty Happy made a documentary about the history local punk scene through the seventies and eighties, describing their ideas and values. This documentary was screened with a live performance by them intertwined, creating a linear narrative of Cork punk history from the past until the present (Power 2022). With similar intentions in mind, my study of older publications, their key players, and the artists which featured in their publications aimed to find whether anything could be re-learned or repurposed from them. Like Pretty Happy, I think that older things can provide a reference point for new ideas, and that in terms of presentation, sometimes the answer to the question already exists. I had initially hoped to use significant materials from the Cork Zine Archive, an archive



4 Figure 7 - Cover of Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration from 1900



5 Figure 4 - First issue of The Studio, cover designed by Aubrey Beardsley

6 Figure 5 - First issue of Cocorico, cover designed by Alphonse Mucha

7 Figure 6 - Cover of The Dublin Magazine from 1924





Figure 8 - Wendingen cover from 1919

Figure 9 - An Claidheamh Soluis cover from 1902

Figure 10 - Page from The Magazine, used in the workshops

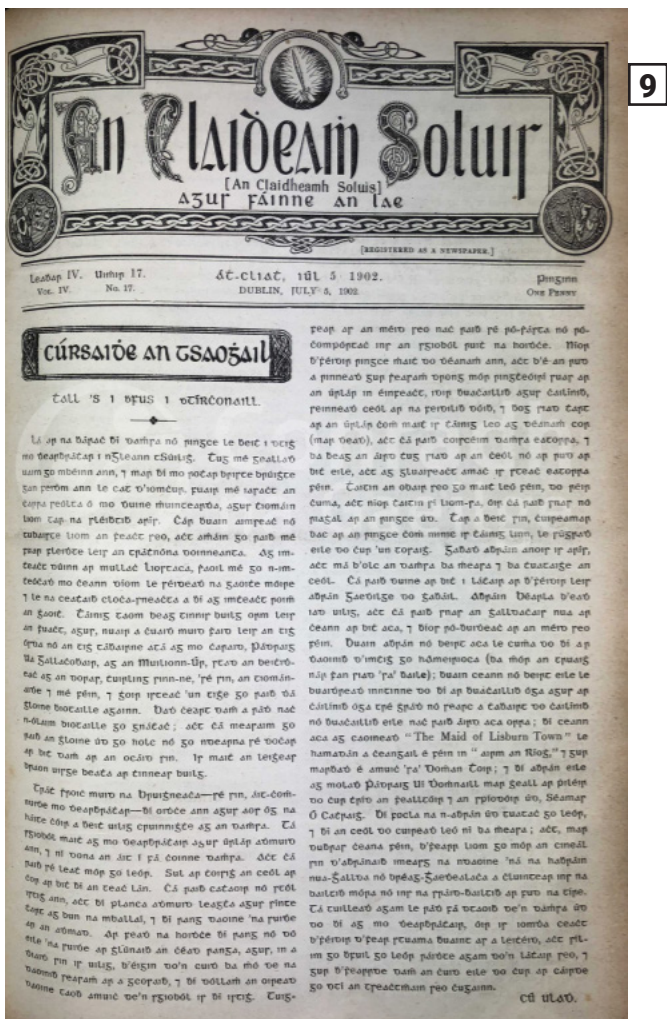
Page 27

Figure 11 - Cover of Araf zine, used in the workshops

Figure 12 - Cover of Sonic Cyberfeminisms, used in the workshops

Figure 13 - Cover of Sandwich Zine, used in the workshops

Figure 14 - Cover of the Queen's Head, used in the workshops



of local punk from the seventies through to the nineties, however the archive was not made accessible to me. The concept of counterculture which I set out in the literature review, and the connections made between publications, influenced the selection and provided a lens through which the fieldwork was viewed.

The story of zines discussed in Chapter 2.1 informed many of the choices for zines and online publications. Zines are described as:

- ✘ Being independent and localised (Dunscombe 2008).
- ✘ Made by “extremely creative people taking control of their work” (Weddle 2018, p 2).
- ✘ Are generally hand-made, or hand drawn, can have an ‘unprofessional’ appearance, tend to be quirky, and individualised (Piepmeier 2006).
- ✘ Bear influence within their own cultural milieux, tracing an alternative cultural dialogue while being hidden from the mainstream media’s coverage of pop and youth culture (Worley 2018).

These are values which appear to be somewhat shared with fin-de-siècle publications, in that they value creativity in a similar way. Fin-de-siècle publications and zines can offer an insight into original manners which were used to display art in cultural publications and an insight into how to spread alternative ideas, and they could offer a basis for alternative publications to work from. Some of the fin de siècle methods were innovative in their time and created the base for cultural magazines to work from, but the internet has not taken from it so much. Zines and some fin de siècle publications were primarily designed by artists, which indicates that they were designed in a way which allows the art to flourish within the publication, while others were created with the intention of creating a place where local art and culture can be consulted or revived. The manners through which this was done can be useful to consider when creating an online publication. The zines also aimed to ignite discussion on the communities they represent, and how social media and digitisation has affected them.

The zines selected were all taken from the Glasgow Zine Library’s online archive and all date from the last twenty years. Punk zines would have been a useful tool in the workshops, and their inclusion would have been of great value and could have provided a more linear movement from the older to the newer, however, there are no online zine archives which include them. What was available worked, however, as zines have maintained the same values through the years, and modern zines offer a contemporary contrast to the online publications. The zines used in the workshops were:

- ✘ Araf, a zine by Araf Collective, a non-profit London-based collective which provided a platform for emerging artists, musicians, writers and filmmakers.
- ✘ The Queen’s Head, a Glasgow based literary zine with a focus on British and Irish writers and unusual, ‘eclectic’ fiction. It featured a mix of short stories, art, and poetry.
- ✘ Sonic Cyberfeminisms, a London based zine based around an ongoing project in London which explores the relations between sound, gender and technology.

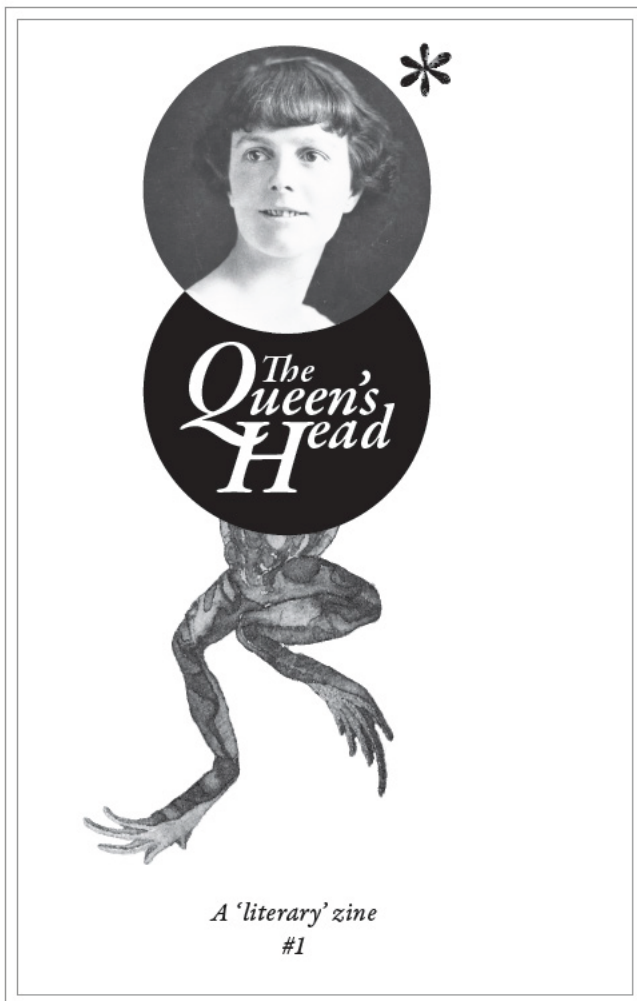
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12



14



13



✘ Sandwich Zine, an online international indie zine, with contributors mainly based across the United States. It features photography, art, interview and poetry.

The online material was selected with the intention of understanding the difference between larger and smaller online publications, and the differences between their display of work and their use of content. The intention was to understand the participants views on these publications and their content. They were selected based on their size and popularity:.

✘ Vice is a New York-based Canadian-American magazine focused on lifestyle, arts, culture, news and politics, founded in 1994 in Montreal, Canada as an alternative punk magazine.

✘ Aesthetica, a “worldwide destination for art and culture” (Aesthetica 2021), based in York, and features “in-depth features foreground today’s most innovative practitioners across art, design, photography, architecture, music and film” (Aesthetica 2021).

✘ Hot Press, a Dublin based music and politics magazine, founded in 1977, founded by and under the continued editorialship of Niall Stokes.

✘ District, a Dublin-based online cultural magazine with a focus on music, art, food and entertainment culture in Ireland.

✘ Off Licence Magazine, or Offie Mag, is an online hip-hop magazine based in Brighton, England based on common values, integrity, and “trying to keep it real, really” (Offie Mag 2021).

They were chosen to find qualities and flaws each participant would find in the publication. The use of social networks to compare the with social media of today’s age and discussing the potentiality which exists on those forums was a key concept for the direction through which some of the fieldwork took place. My own perceptions of the publications themselves also led to their selection, as I also found them to be aesthetically interesting in their display of artistic work, and phenomenological research was used to find whether these perceptions were shared. The use of longform in others was another aspect which is also less prevalent today, and the aesthetics, formatting and methods used were discussed in penultimate section of the literature review. The intention was to bring these publications to artists, musicians and cultural journalists and find whether there was anything which could be taken from these publications which could be beneficial to the current climate. Even if the aesthetics were found to be useless, discussion would arise within the workshops with the positions of zines alongside social media, or the way art is displayed on social media, or how modern publications discuss art. Phenomenology helped to frame this logically and understand the artist’s perspective. The publications therefore chose the publications based on their interesting aesthetics, use of content, historical importance, and ability to create discussion. My belief of tying the old and new together to create something original or interesting was a driver in much of the selection.



Life

Gynaecological Violence Is More Common Than You Think

VALERIA ROCCA 12.16.22



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Features / December 8, 2022

Aesthetica



Aesthetica Magazine

Aesthetica is a worldwide destination for art and culture. In-depth features foreground today's most innovative

HOT PRESS



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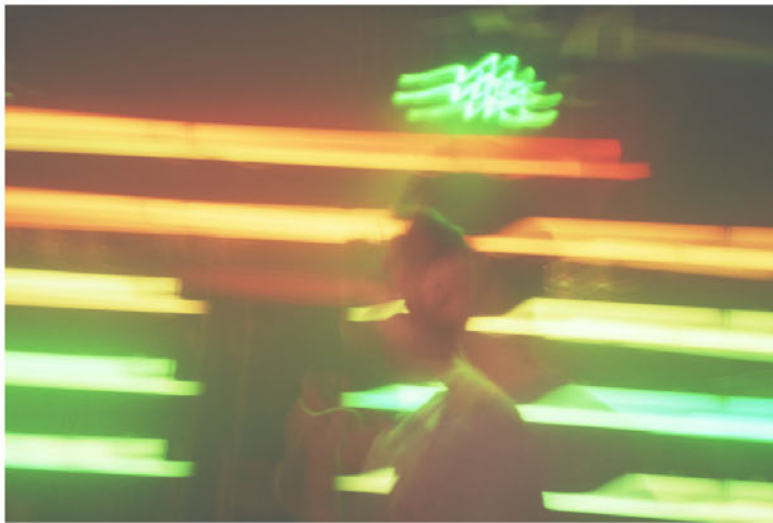
NEWS MUSIC CULTURE PICS & VIDS OPINION LIFESTYLE & SPORTS SEX & DRUGS COMPETITIONS SHOP



Privacy

OFFIE MAG

Music of the Month: March 2022



The best new underground music releases this month, as picked by Offie Mag, featuring Pink Siifu, Ebi Soda.

Page 29

Above

Figure 15 - Vice homepage

Figure 18 - Hot Press homepage

Figure 16 - District homepage

Figure 19 - Off Licence Magazine homepage

Figure 17 - Aesthetica homepage

3.5 // Modes of analysis

The analytical framework follows interpretative and phenomenological analysis (IPA). Principally based around how research participants deal with their social world (Smith and Osborn 2007, p. 53), it is based around:

- ✘ Understanding the experience of the participant, the close analysis of their claims, the identification of patterns, commonality and nuances, the organisation of the data in a way that allows it to be traced right through the process, and the reflection of one's own perceptions, conceptions and processes (Smith et al. 2009, p. 89). This leads to an understanding of the different perspectives which may exist in relation to a particular topic
- ✘ The manner in which data is usually collected using this method is through direct interviews (Smith and Osborn 2007, p. 57), although Smith also stated there is no right way of conducting IPA and it provides a guide for the researcher to work from (Smith et al 2009, p. 80). Several iterations of IPA have emerged to deal with multi-perspectival studies and focus groups (Smith and Nizza 2022, p. 68-9). The former retains IPA's connection to phenomenology but focuses on building on the analysis of multiple perspectives, rather than homogenous perspectives that IPA usually seeks (Larkin et al. 2019, pp. 184-5). As with the first point, the multi-perspectival approach is preferred for this research as there was a wide range of participants, of different nationalities and disciplines, who took part in the workshops. The fact that the data is being collected through workshops, a method similar to focus groups, differs from the traditional IPA method, however as stated this has been developed on and there are IPA methods which reflect this type of data analysis. Focus groups are considered important to this research the group dynamic, with the material, can invite discussion on topics which the researcher may not be completely aware of but participants are, making for a richer collection of data. IPA has evolved to make the analysis of this type of data possible.
- ✘ IPA involves the immersion of the researcher in the data through the reading and re-reading of the transcripts, in order to provide a complete analysis of the participants perspective (Smith et al. 2009, p. 82). It necessitates a strong familiarity with the transcript, followed by more interpretative note taking which understands why the participant has these concerns and understanding the context that the participant comes from (Smith et al. 2009, p. 80). As the transcript is analysed, the researcher comments on similarities, differences, echoes in the participant results to find if a common theme emerges from each experience. As emerging themes develop, the researcher finds commonalities and contrasts within each experience and develops connections between experiences, through the development of common themes (Smith et al. 2009, p. 84, p. 91).

This allows the researcher to understand the data in the most honest and accurate manner. It also allows the researcher to understand the experiences of the participants more deeply and understand the core of the issues that the research questions ask. It suits this research as it

3 // Methodology

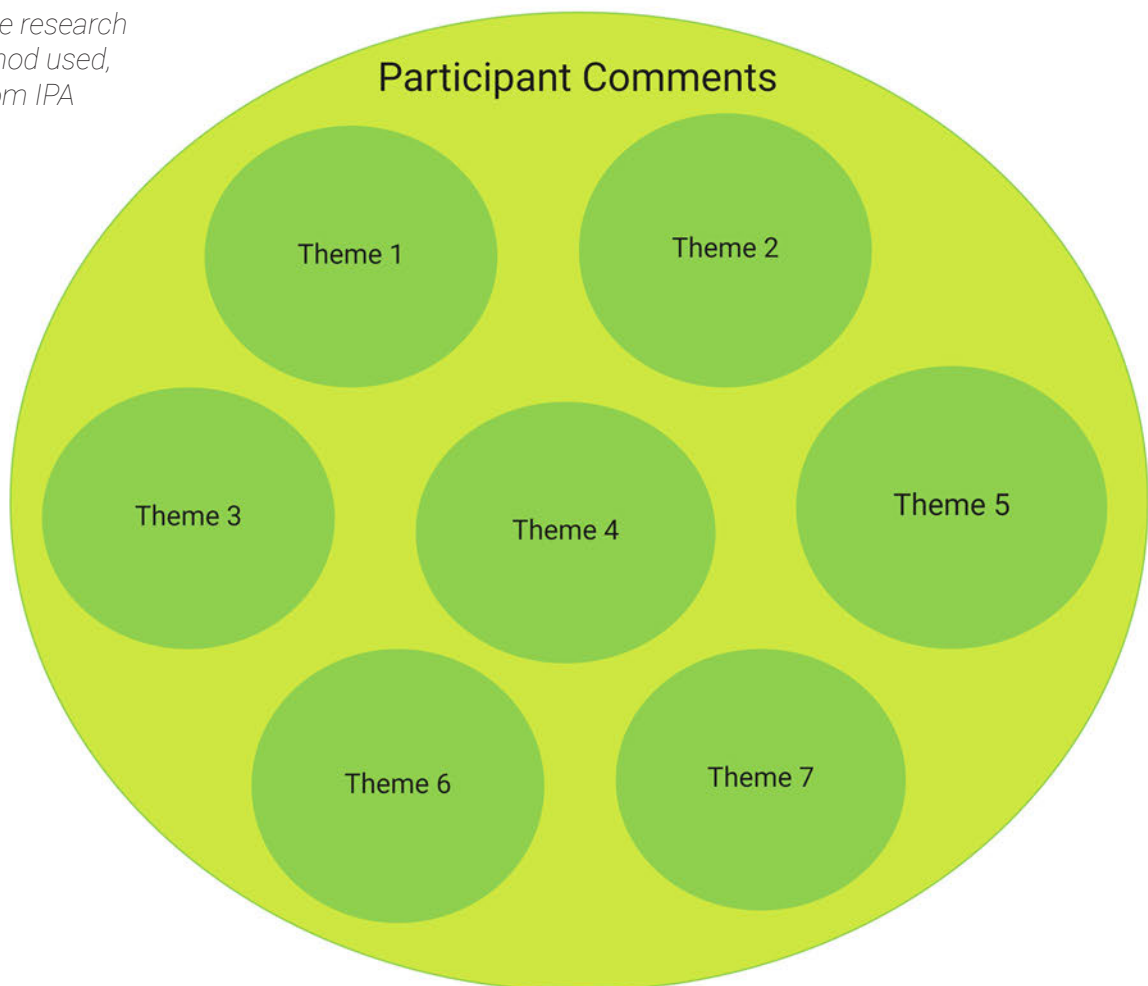
seeks to understand the experiences and interpretations of the participants.

3.5.1 // Analysis method

As mentioned previously, several iterations of IPA have emerged to deal with different types of research methodologies. Although the approach of IPA favours each participant being analysed on their own terms, and then comparing cases (Smith and Nizza 2022, p. 31, p.51), there are developments on the original approach which deal with multi-perspectival studies and focus groups (Smith and Nizza 2022, p. 68-9), retaining IPA's connection to phenomenology but focuses on building on the analysis of multiple rather than homogenous perspectives. (Larkin et al. 2019, pp. 184-5). The analysis that this entails can be complex, and tends to move from the personal, "outwards", moving from a particular to an overall view (Larkin et al. 2019, p. 190). The latter, the use of IPA for the analysis of focus groups, has also emerged in the past twenty years. Tomkins and Eatough (2010) argue that the flexibility of IPA has led to its combination with focus groups recently being explored more. Some researchers believe the group, rather than the individuals, merit being the units of analysis (pp. 244-5), which is usually considered a risk in IPA (Tomkins and Eatough 2010, p. 247). They then used IPA analysis in their own focus group-based research. To do this, they separated each individual's comments in a "top-down" process, with notes which described the "gist" of the individual, separating the individual from the group context. This was followed by a "bottom-up" process, where each individual's comments were combined into themes, which would cover each individual's sense of a particular point. This comprised of a thematic/interactive sense making activity, eg. Conversations between individuals. These would then be mapped and numbered (Tomkins and Eatough 2010, p. 250). The researcher used this as a basis to conduct the analysis of the findings. To understand the perspectives of the participants, the workshops included an introductory ice breaker where participants discussed their background and brought along their favourite magazine. This allowed the researcher to understand where the participant's perspective comes from and what potential biases they may have. The researcher would then listen over the transcript with these biases in mind, making comments on the tone/language of each individual, break them into themes, and make notes of when participants would discuss with each other through the transcript. The themes were then put together with each participants' view placed within them. This is demonstrated in the graph on the following page (Figure 15).

	DATE: 30/07/2021			
	Belfast Journalist Comments	Reflective Comments	Leeds Journalist Comments	Reflective Comments
Theme 1				
Theme 2				
Theme 3				
Theme 4				
Theme 5				
Theme 6				
Theme 7				

Figure 20 - the research analysis method used, developed from IPA



3.6 // Recruitment

The purpose of this research is to understand the challenges faced by cultural journalism and artists in the digital age. Therefore, the recruitment targeted cultural journalists and artists across Ireland and the UK. A diverse range of participants was sought, as the research endeavoured to understand the commonalities and differences across geographic and disciplinary arts communities, to counteract the situational factors of the arts community as a whole. The recruits included:

- ✘ A Belfast-based cultural journalist, who is head of content at a Dublin-based Irish cultural magazine, known in the document as Belfast journalist. Selected for his extensive knowledge of the sphere of cultural and music journalism in Ireland.
- ✘ A Leeds-based cultural journalist, trained in Manchester, known in the document as Leeds journalist. Selected for his knowledge of cultural and music journalism in England, to contrast with Ireland.
- ✘ A curator at a Scottish zine library, known in the document as Zine library curator. Selected for his extensive knowledge of zines and the publishing scene in Scotland.
- ✘ A Glasgow-based musician and artist, from Leeds, who has been involved with arts collectives in Liverpool, known in the document as Leeds creative. Selected for his extensive knowledge of countercultural art and music across Britain.
- ✘ A Glasgow-based cultural journalist and zinemaker, known in the document as Glasgow journalist. Selected for her knowledge on zine making, her experience as a cultural journalist, and her knowledge on the zine making and countercultural arts scene in Scotland.
- ✘ A Dublin-based cultural journalist who, at the time of enquiry, wrote for a mainstream cultural magazine but now writes for an Irish national newspaper, known in the document as Dublin journalist. Selected for her knowledge on how more mainstream publications operate, to contrast with countercultural ones.
- ✘ A Cork-based artist, trained in Edinburgh, who specialises in Internet culture, known in the document as Cork artist. Selected for her knowledge on internet culture and the arts scene in Ireland and Scotland.
- ✘ A Berlin-based artist, writer and zinemaker, previously based in Glasgow, known in the document as Berlin writer.
- ✘ A Glasgow-based writer, poet and zinemaker, known in the document as Glasgow poet.
- ✘ A Glasgow-based writer and zinemaker, known in the document as Glasgow writer.

The latter three participants are all involved in the production of the same zine and were selected for their knowledge on zine making and the Glasgow publishing scene. They were also selected due to their knowledge on adaptation and compatibility between zine making and digital formatting, which they have experience with through the publication of an online version of their zine.

Figure 21 - participant locations



3.7 // Evaluative Process

There was then an evaluative process in which the researcher engaged with artists to validate the findings and whether they fitted with their experiences. These were done using interviews with three artists from Cork who have experience using social media. Cork has personal significance to the researcher, with it being home and also being the place where major portions of the research took place. The choice of validating within a specific geographic area was to test whether the findings had accuracy within a specific artistic community. The researcher would share a statement articulating a finding and the interviewee would discuss the truthfulness of that statement with regards to their own experiences and engagement with the topic. This was done in order to understand further the experiences of artists with regard to social media and cultural journalism and identify whether there is any truthfulness to the findings, in their experience. This knowledge of the scene was used to identify participants. Cork, as well as being the hometown of the researcher, it is a mid-sized city with many artists, is localised in a relatively isolated area. It is the third largest city in the country, and the Irish city furthest from Dublin. This means that Cork is a regional and mercantile city (Keohane 2006) and this creates an historically inward-looking music scene described as featuring “Corkonian exceptionalism”, which has a disdain for a Dublin-centric national media (Hogan 2016, p.3), but also a cultural scene which also looks globally due to its port, historically being a junction of Irish and global cultures (O’Regan 2018).

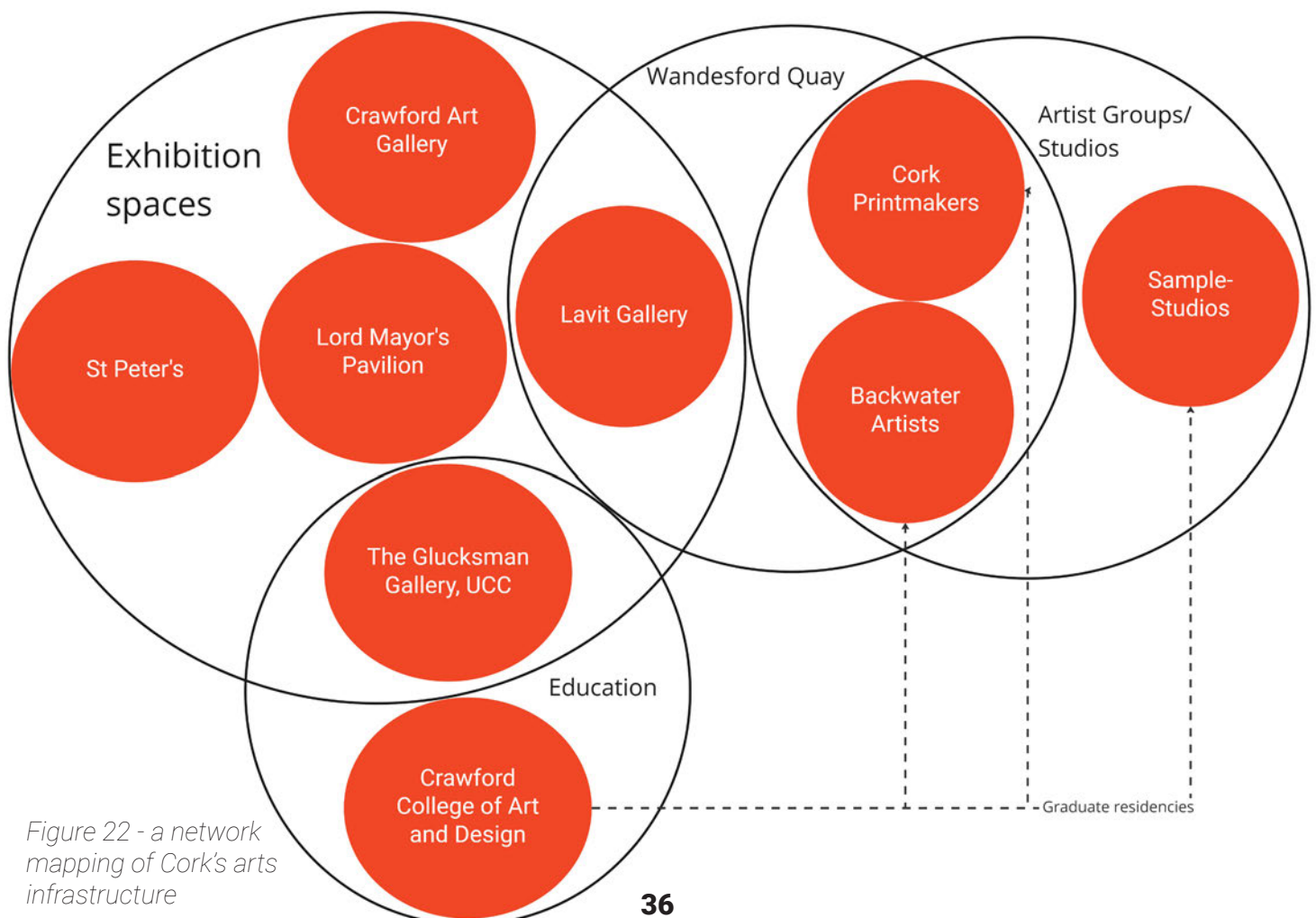


Figure 22 - a network mapping of Cork's arts infrastructure

These details may be cause to some of the issues/phenomena that the researcher sees, rather than them being national/British issues. The artist community in Cork is quite tight knit, with a good arts infrastructure and solid connections between education and the artistic scene (see figure 16). It cohabitates the city alongside the music scene, sometimes collaborating through the creation of band merchandise, gig posters and album covers. In fact, one of the participants, Artist A, was previously a member of a collective which includes musicians and artists. It was also undertaken whether to understand whether the Cork arts scene itself would have affected the researcher's biases going into the research, and whether some of the issues the researcher means to understand are Cork-specific problems. It should also be noted that two of the artists were previously known to the researcher through mutual friends, and that the third artist had taken part in the workshops as Cork artist but was not previously known to the researcher. The participants were:

- ✘ Artist A, a graphic designer and illustrator with a degree in Visual Communications from Munster Technological University. She was previously involved with an arts collective of Cork-based musicians and artists, and does lots of designs for local band merchandise.
- ✘ Artist B has a BA in Fine Art and an MA in Art and Process from the local art school, the Crawford College of Art and Design. She is also involved in curation and has put on exhibitions featuring local artists.
- ✘ Artist C, who had taken part in the workshops as Cork artist. She has a BA from Edinburgh College of Art and specialises in internet and meme culture. She also has an artist's residency in the Uilinn Arts Centre in Skibbereen, County Cork.

This worked with the interpretivist and phenomenological nature of the research, and the IPA methodological analysis, which seeks to understand the experiences of those who the research affects the most. Many of the answers also did not have a consensus, however each participant has a different viewpoint and that is recognised within the methodology and the methodological analysis used.

3.8 // Ethical Considerations

The research is centred around the interpretations and experiences of the participants regarding culture journalism. Their reflections on the historical material, their experiences with the internet, and their views on the effects the internet has had are the main concerns the research involves. It is the researcher's responsibility to make sure that the appropriate steps are taken to gather the data are taken to engage with participants, and to gather, handle, store personal and research data, and to disseminate subsequent research findings. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and regulations regarding social distancing, the fieldwork was conducted online via Zoom, a video conferencing application, and Miro, a whiteboard sharing app. Participants would be contacted via email and were sent an information sheet with thorough information on the workshops and how their data will be stored, and a consent form in which they would give permission to the

researcher to use their data. Gatekeepers would be used in the case of contacting members of collectives who would relay information about the project to members of the collective and gauge interest and receive Participant Information Sheets for those interested.

Participants were members of the public involved in the arts scene or cultural media across Ireland and the UK. Some of the participants were contacted following recommendation from peers at my host institution. All participants were anonymised. Some of the data sourced in the thesis may be subject to copyright. Guidance and permissions were sought on this where needed.

4 // Fieldwork

This research was conducted with the intention of answering three research questions, with the principal question being:

How has digitisation and social media affected countercultural arts media and movements?

This had two subquestions:

What opportunities have counter-cultural publications like zines offered artists and what are their key characteristics?

How can grassroots arts movements and countercultural publications take advantage of the move to digitisation?

The following chapter will explain how the fieldwork sought to answer these research questions and the objectives of finding elements in archives which could be repurposed, understanding how the internet has affected the consumption of artworks, exploring how social media has affected this consumption and understanding how the changes have affected grassroots culture. It will explain how the workshops were set up, how they sought to understand the perspectives of the participants, and how they set to answer the research questions.

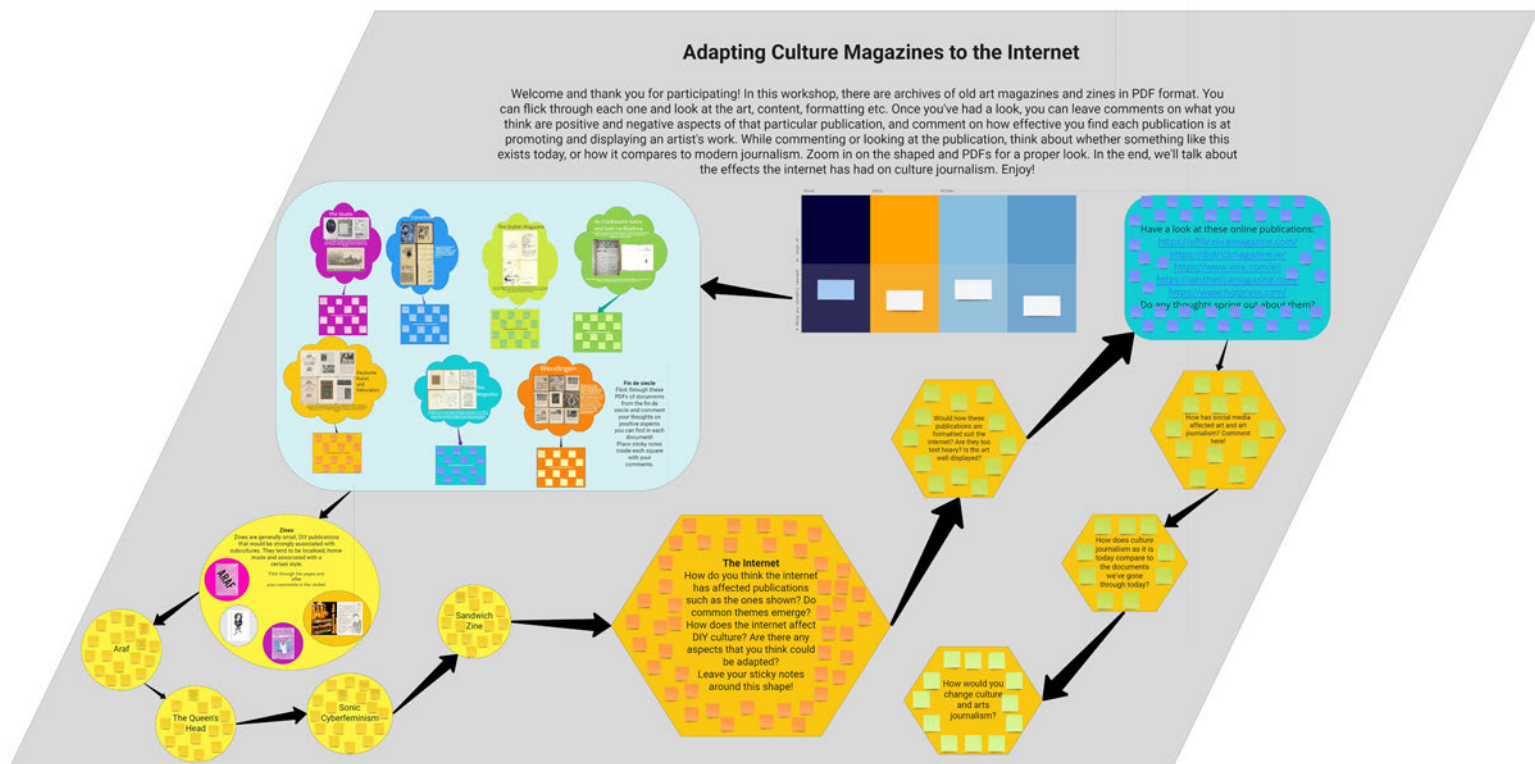


Figure 23 - an overall view of the workshops

4.1 // Workshop Layout

4.1.1 // Part One

- ✘ In the first part of the workshops, participants were asked to read through the first group of publications, take note of how the art is displayed, what content is included (short stories, poetry).
- ✘ Participants were asked to observe these works with the internet in mind, compare them with online publications, and comment on aspects that are now uncommon but would fit well in an online context.
- ✘ The goal of this part was to understand how practitioners today perceive historical publications and find elements which may have been lost with time and could be positive additions to an online context.

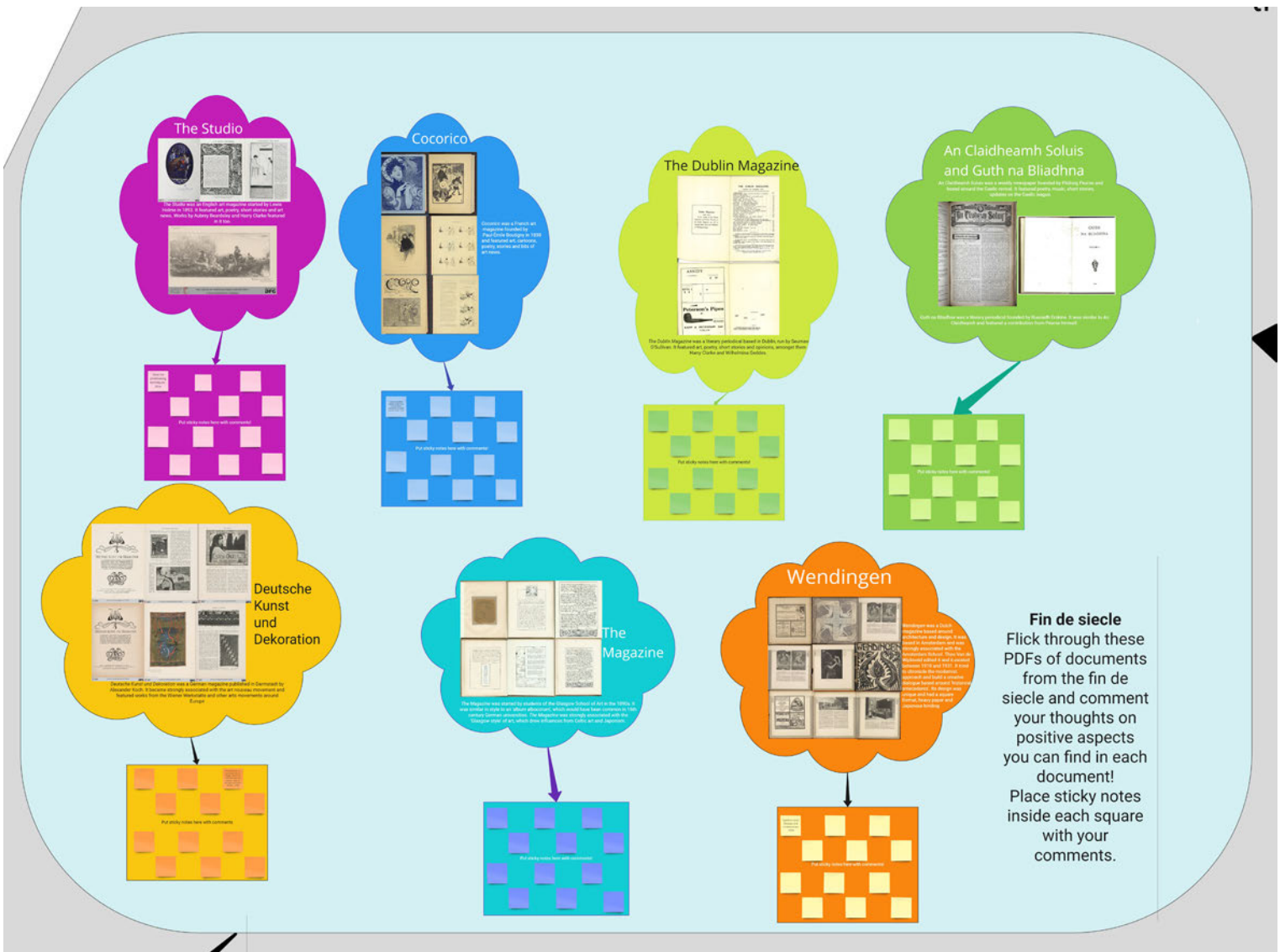


Figure 24 - a zoomed-in image of part one of the workshop

4.1.2 // Part Two

- ✘ The zines were used to the same effect; to prompt discussion on their content and formatting and how they compare to online publications, and to prompt discussion on how the internet has affected zine making and grassroots culture.
- ✘ The researcher used this part to compare zines with online publications and ask whether or not zines could be adapted to an online context.
- ✘ This led into a wider discussion on whether zines can exist online, and what equivalent can exist if not.

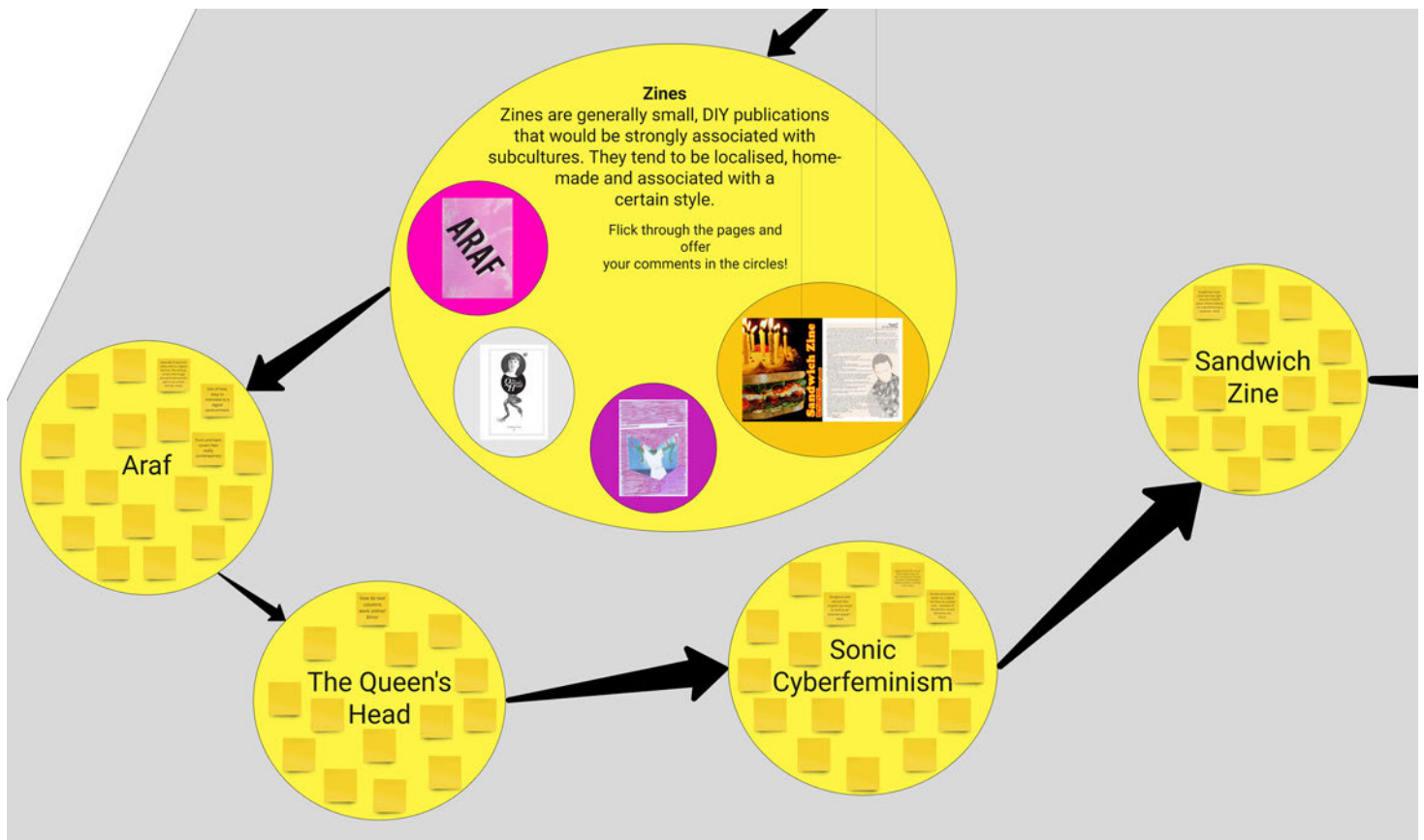


Figure 25 - a zoomed-in image of part two of the workshop

4.1.3 // Part Three

- ✘ The third part focused on the internet and how it has affected cultural journalism and the consumption of art and culture. Participants observed several online publications and commented on their presentation and content.
- ✘ Discussion was focused on how modern publications present art, how social media has affected art, and how social media and the internet can be used to promote and display culture, along with issues and challenges.
- ✘ During the third part of the discussion, the researcher used some (time dependent) of the following questions as leads into discussion – the questions did not form a strict framework, rather they were intended as broad guide for the researcher depending on what was being said by participants.

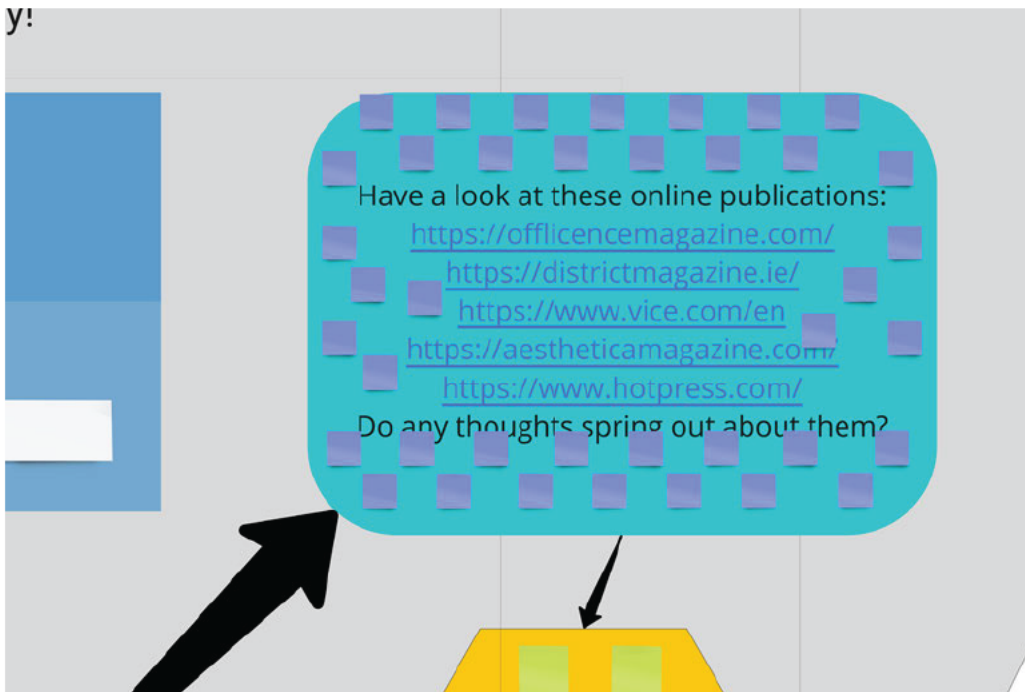


Figure 26 - a zoomed-in image of the online publications used

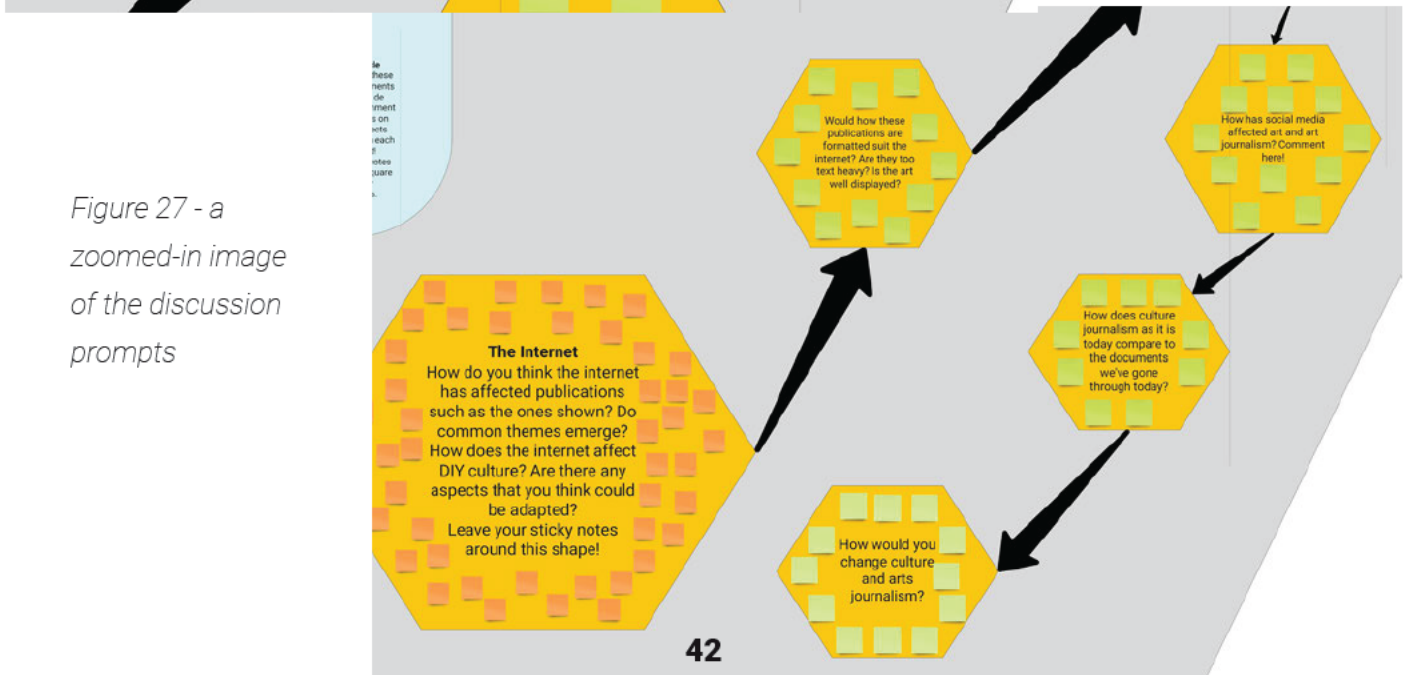


Figure 27 - a zoomed-in image of the discussion prompts

4.2 // Participant reaction and engagement with material

Workshops One and Two had included two fin-de-siècle publications which were later removed by the researcher – The Yellow Book and The Evergreen. These were removed as the researcher had noticed that there was very little engagement with these publications from the participants. Upon reflection and analysis of the data gathered from the first two workshops, the researcher decided to include websites in place of these publications. These would instigate discussion on the websites and how online magazines operate. Workshop One had included a Glasgow based-communist zine with short stories, named Spaghetti for Brains, which the researcher had gathered from the Glasgow Zine Library with the other zines. However, this zine contained offensive language which went unnoticed, and was removed after this workshop to minimise any offense caused to participants.

Certain participants engaged with certain types of material differently to others. In the first workshop, the participants had not engaged with the material so much, providing most of the data in the second part of the workshop. In workshop two, the participants engaged with the materials thoroughly and offered their thoughts on the design of the materials and how it fits with modern social media. In workshop three, the participants engaged with the materials quite substantially, while in workshop four, some participants engaged more with the first half while others engaged more with the second.

4.3 // The Impact of Covid-19 and the use of Zoom

All this research took place in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the researcher based in Cork, Ireland, for over half the duration of this project, before moving to Glasgow in September 2021. The researcher was limited to online access publications. All the fieldwork took place over Zoom and on Miro, a whiteboard sharing platform. Initially, the hope was to have physical workshops in different locations. This was in order to gain an understanding of the contextual differences which may happen in different cities. However, the pandemic did allow for a good geographic spread of participants, as the online element allowed for participants from different areas to have conversations which may not have been possible had the workshops not been online. The lack of physical, tactile materials in the workshops made it difficult for the participants to get a total sense of the materials and their materiality and aesthetics, while the fact that it all took place online added to the lack of inter-personality which may have taken place, had physical workshops occurred.

Adapting Culture Magazines to the Internet

Welcome and thank you for participating! In this workshop, there are archives of old art magazines and zines in PDF format. You can flick through each one and look at the art, content, formatting etc. Once you've had a look, you can leave comments on what you think are positive and negative aspects of that particular publication, and comment on how effective you find each publication is at promoting and displaying an artist's work. While commenting or looking at the publication, think about whether something like this exists today, or how it compares to modern journalism. Zoom in on the shaped and PDFs for a proper look. In the end, we'll talk about the effects the internet has had on culture journalism. Enjoy!

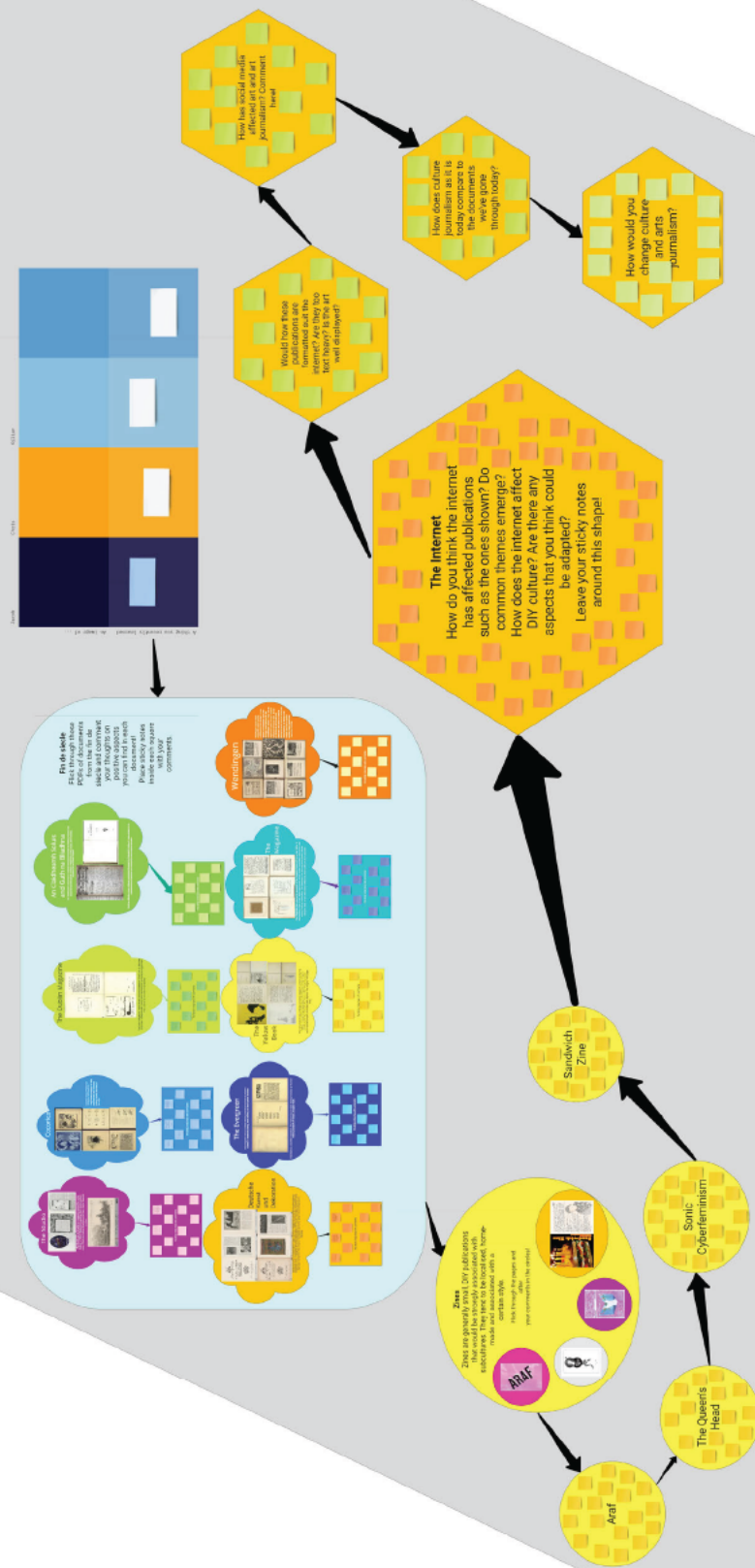


Figure 28 - The workshops in July 2021

Adapting Culture Magazines to the Internet

Welcome and thank you for participating! In this workshop, there are archives of old art magazines and zines in PDF format. You can flick through each one and look at the art, content, formatting etc. Once you've had a look, you can leave comments on what you think are positive and negative aspects of that particular publication, and comment on how effective you find each publication is at promoting and displaying an artist's work. While commenting or looking at the publication, think about whether something like this exists today, or how it compares to modern journalism. Zoom in on the shaped and PDFs for a proper look. In the end, we'll talk about the effects the internet has had on culture journalism. Enjoy!

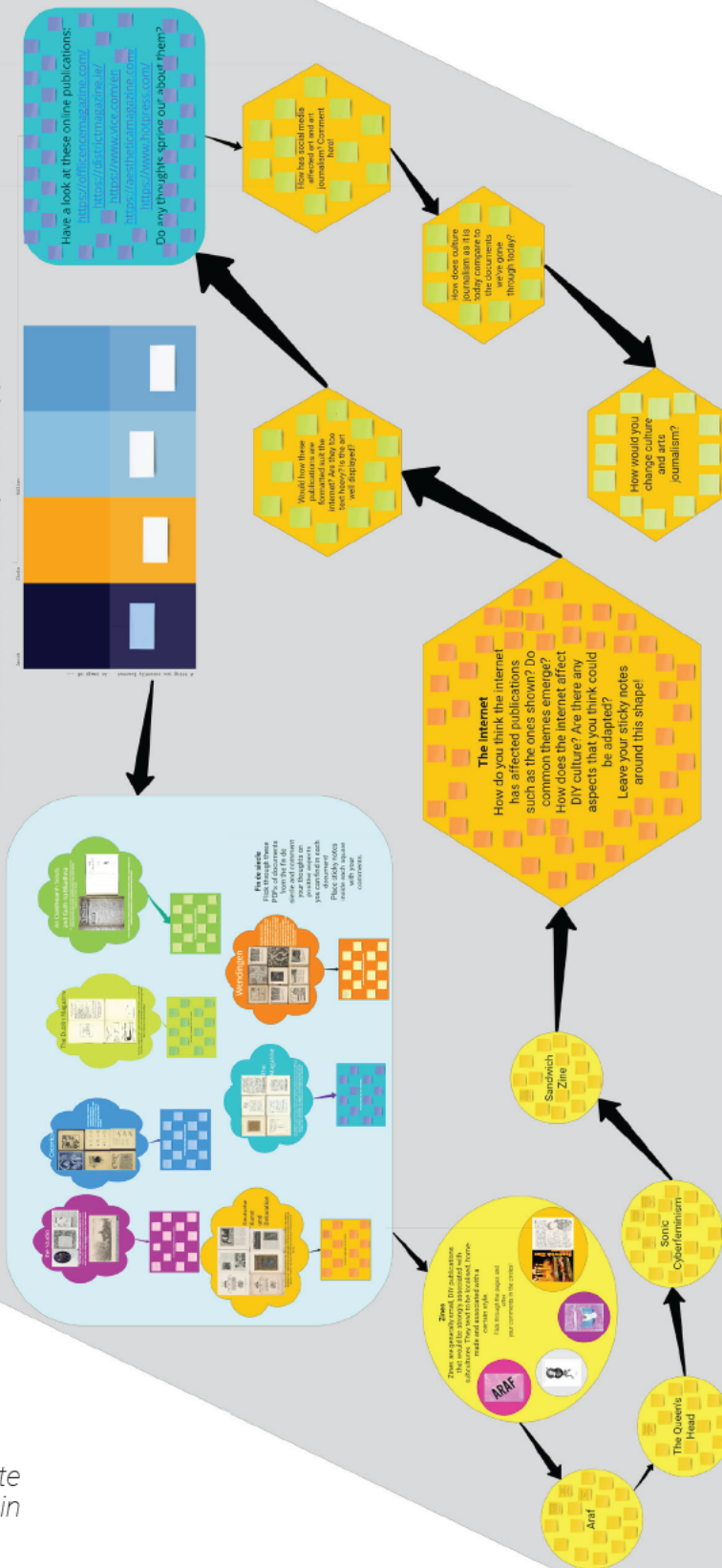


Figure 29 - Image of the workshops in October 2021 - note the emergence of a blue square in the top right corner

4.4 // How the workshops went**4.4.1 // Workshop One**

The first workshop took place on Wednesday, 28th of July 2021, and consisted of two participants, Belfast journalist and Leeds journalist. As this was the first workshop, it went slightly less smoothly than anticipated despite a test workshop taking place two days before. This workshop differed from the other workshops in that the icebreaker involved a recently learned fact, rather than a magazine. Belfast journalist questioned the relevance of such an activity and provided a fact about a famous actor being on an IRA hitlist, while Leeds journalist could not think of any facts. Later in the workshop Belfast journalist noted that one of the zines, a communist zine named Spaghetti for Brains, contained an offensive word which went unnoticed by the researcher when putting the workshop together. These incidents set an awkward tone and led to the researcher eventually rethinking the icebreaker activity and removing the zine from the workshop. Belfast journalist was the most vocal of the two, and the researcher later learned that Leeds journalist was slightly intimidated by Belfast journalist's status, making him less eager to speak.

4.4.2 // Workshop Two

This workshop took place on Friday, 30th of July 2021, and the participants involved were Zine library curator and Leeds creative. The ice breaker activity went more smoothly, with each participant sharing an interesting fact. As both participants were involved in the creative industries, the workshops mostly discussed zines and zine making, social media, the design of the publications and DIY culture. Both participants felt that they couldn't speak about journalism as much, and much more emphasis was therefore placed on physical publications and how they compare with online publications. This means that rather than discussing the impact of social media on cultural journalism, more emphasis was placed on design and social media, and how zines and the internet work together.

4.4.3 // Workshop Three

This workshop took place on Monday, 25th of October 2021 and the participants involved were Dublin journalist and Glasgow journalist. There were no incidents of note, both participants contributed equally to the conversation, while the magazine-based icebreaker gave the researcher an idea of what each participant valued in a publication. This contributed to the understanding of each participant's perspective, and Glasgow journalist's interest appeared to be more along the lines more grassroots forms of music and art, and she was also a zinemaker, while Dublin journalist was more interested in establishment publications. This was shown through Glasgow journalist choosing Little White Lies as a publication she enjoys, due to its "beautiful" design and clear formatting which doesn't include design "for the sake of it", while Dublin journalist chose The New Yorker for its strong front page. This helped in applying IPA analysis when listening

back, and I was conscious of what each participant valued in each publication. This workshop also differed from the previous two in that websites were included to be viewed by participants. Both participants were cultural journalists, but also had different cultural values.

4.4.4 Workshop Four

This workshop took place on Thursday, 28th of October 2021 and the participants involved were Cork artist, Berlin writer, Glasgow poet and Glasgow writer. The latter three work together on the same Glasgow-based literary zine, and therefore know each other. This, however, did not cause any awkwardness with Cork Artist who spoke at length and with conviction throughout. Again, as with workshop four, it went smoothly, with each participant contributing equally to different areas of the conversation. However, the icebreaker, while helpful, went on for far longer than intended, taking up to fifteen minutes, although there were some valuable findings in what some of the participants were saying in this part of the conversation and it gave the researcher valuable insights into the perspectives of each participant. Berlin writer brought a small German book, which was written by a PhD researcher studying urban anthropology, and he liked the size of the book, and the mix of poems and photos alongside the essay. Glasgow writer brought a poetry book which she liked for the mix in designs and fonts. Glasgow poet discussed work by Prototype publishing and stated that they are a rare example of a publisher in the UK that puts out poetry, with a lofi website that is very well designed. She also finds that they are interesting in how they went from being solely an online resource to a physical one, and that they counter the trend of PR type music journalism with in-depth stories in a quirky and well-designed publication. Cork artist included a website, 17,776 by Jon Bois, a fictional, interactive, online story which predicts what American football will be like in the year 17,776. As with workshop three, websites were included. These discussion in the ice breaker made the researcher aware of what participant valued, and so it was noted that Berlin writer enjoys poetry and reading passively, Glasgow writer values designs and fonts, Glasgow poet enjoys thought out and well designed work, and Cork artist enjoys online work and seeing what you can do with digital spaces. The dynamic in this workshop was different to others, and less conversational. The larger number of people participating led to more mics being muted and participants engaging in monologue.

4.5 // Evaluative Process

There was then an evaluative process, localised entirely within the Cork art scene, asking artists about the findings and their experience using social media. This was done to find whether there would be a difference between the views of artists and journalists. As mentioned in the introduction, the researcher had previously conducted research on the Cork music scene and has a strong understanding on the music and artistic scenes of the city, while also being quite active within both.

The researcher would share a statement articulating a finding and the interviewee would discuss the truthfulness of that statement with regards to their own experiences and engagement with

the topic. Although some of the artists did not vastly differ from those of the journalists, there was an interesting contrast between both, with key differences being found. There was also a demonstrable contrast between the answers provided by Artist A and Artists B and C, meaning that the issues are not location specific. Due to the researcher being already acquainted with the artists, the interviews were somewhat informal and laid back, taking more of a conversational tone.

4.6 // Chapter Conclusion

In order to answer the research questions, the researcher used workshops which included the consultation of archives, zines, and websites which generated discussion between research participants. It allowed for participants to reflect on and discuss the situation of the internet and provided the researcher with key insights which would help to answer the research questions. The process provided some insightful results, some of it surprising and some of it related to the findings of the literature review. The online nature of the workshops meant that participants from different areas were able to discuss the topics, which in-person workshops would not have been able to do, and so they had a richness in the diversity of the perspectives of the participants. The materials engaged with each had a different reaction from each participant, and some took differently to them than others, and they prompted a wide range of discussion on different types of writing, presentation, and subculture, and each of their position in the digital age. However, the lack of physicality made the research a little difficult. Some documents were removed and replaced owing to the relevance of their content, and changes were made at different times. There were awkward moments in some workshops, which the online element may have contributed to. The evaluative process worked to find whether the findings had accuracy in relation to the experiences of artists, who this project initially aimed to benefit. They garnered the artists views on the topics and added some rigour to the findings, giving contrasting views to some of those found in the workshops. This worked with the thesis' phenomenological and interpretivist viewpoint which asserts that all participants' ideas and perspectives are different.

5 // Analysis and Discussion

This chapter will set out the results of the fieldwork, and using the methods presented above, analyses, and discusses the findings in relation to the context set out in the literature review. This is done with the goal of answering the primary research question of:

How has digitisation and social media affected countercultural arts media and movements?

This had two sub-questions:

What opportunities have counter-cultural publications like zines offered artists and what are their key characteristics?

How can grassroots arts movements and countercultural publications take advantage of the move to digitisation?

The results were analysed by the researcher using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and were anonymised; the participants and workshops are listed in the graph below.

Workshop	Participants	Notes
Workshop One	Belfast Journalist Leeds Journalist	Two cultural journalist working in different countries which are under the study remit of this project. Thought it would be interesting to compare both experiences. Awkward atmosphere, slightly tense. One journalist's perceived status intimidated the other. Strong data gathered however about cultural journalism and social media.
Workshop Two	Zine Library Curator Leeds Creative	Two British creatives with a deep knowledge on counterculture. Zine library curator has an extensive knowledge on zine culture and its place within society, with a depth of experience. Leeds creative has an extensive knowledge of art, zines, music and counterculture, and has had prior experience as part of collectives in Liverpool. A relaxed atmosphere with extensive discussion between participants a few jovial pleasantries exchanged.
Workshop Three	Dublin Journalist Glasgow Journalist	Two cultural journalists working in different countries, and notably, for two different types of cultural publications. The magazine Dublin Journalist wrote for is far less countercultural than that which Glasgow Journalist wrote for, while Glasgow Journalist is also a zinemaker. Experiences were therefore shared about both zine making, mainstream cultural, and countercultural journalism. Participants spoke mostly in monologue but also between themselves.
Workshop Four	Berlin Writer Glasgow Writer Glasgow Poet Cork Artist	This workshop had the most participants and lasted the longest. Three participants: Berlin Writer, Glasgow Writer and Glasgow Poet all know each other through working on a zine together. This did not affect Cork artist and what she had to say. Each participant brought lots to the table, particularly in relation to web design - the first three made a website from their zine and Cork artist specialises in internet culture. Due to the size of the workshop, it felt more formal than others and there was an element of taking turns to speak and muting your microphone, in contrast to the conversational element of the previous workshops.

Figure 30 - the workshops and participants

The first section will discuss the 'clean'-ness required online in opposition to the messiness that is favoured with zines. The second section will discuss the importance of physical publications, how they safeguard communities, and how people are more inclined to pay for a physical object. The third section will discuss physical and online spaces, set out the impact that social media has on certain mediums, declining quality of journalism, the opportunities for networking, the growth of PR, and the problem of the algorithm and Search Engine Optimisation. The fourth section will discuss how to grab a reader's attention, address potential methods for slowing the reader down and making the internet advantageous to grassroots culture. The fifth section discusses now unconventional mediums, which could be advantageous to certain groups and mediums, and whether they could be repurposed to an online audience.

5.1 // The 'clean'-ness of the online vs the messiness of zines

The first research question asks how digitisation and social media has affected countercultural arts media and movements, and the first section of the literature review, 2.1, discusses the context of cultural magazines, the sub-element of countercultural magazines, and introduces the context of zines, to offer an answer to this question. Through bringing in the ideas of by Wagner (1849), Simmel (1997), Bourdieu (1993), it introduces dominant magazines and speaks about the importance of handmade, physical objects to contracultural, and DIY movements discussed by Baines et al. (2018), Weddle (2018), Piepmeier (2016) and Chrysagis (2016). This hierarchy and the values that counterculture maintains remain evident through the research.

The first important point that the research points towards to answer this research question is the seeming disconnect between the values of the internet and the values held by DIY zinemakers. The online and zines are two completely different spaces, with very different values. Glasgow poet mentions that since the 2010s, the internet favoured "clean'-ness and minimalism", and a blog culture emerged which became a form of "regurgitated press releases", about quoting and tweeting rather than involving any actual analysis. Dublin journalist and Glasgow poet point out that there is a 'clean'-ness which also comes through on social media campaigning with the emergence of Instagram infographics as the modern form of protest, aimed towards shareability, as font-heavy infographics are how people disseminate information, although they do tend to simplify complex topics. Dublin journalist mentions how magazines use grid highlights which are highly shareable on social media, catering to the reader who observes at a glance, usually on Instagram. This is iterated by Belfast journalist, who believes that art and protest now live on Instagram:

When you're online it's all about what looks most accessible, that's why all the Instagram infographics all look really clean even when they're protesting, whereas when you went protesting before it was scabby signs that didn't look nice but it had the message, I think it gives everybody access to be able to do it, for better or worse, it's cheaper. [Belfast Journalist]

This clean cut, simple format, designed to be shared, contrasts with the old, DIY zine ethos of sharing a message using unconventional methods. Zine library curator notes that there isn't a

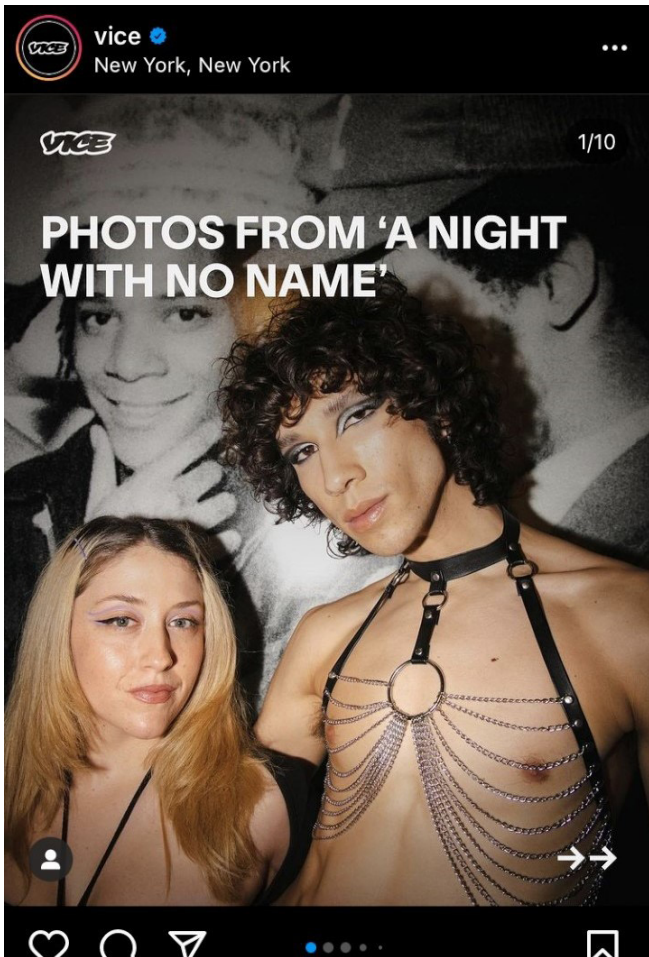


Figure 31 (above) - an example of a 'clean' and 'shareable' Instagram post

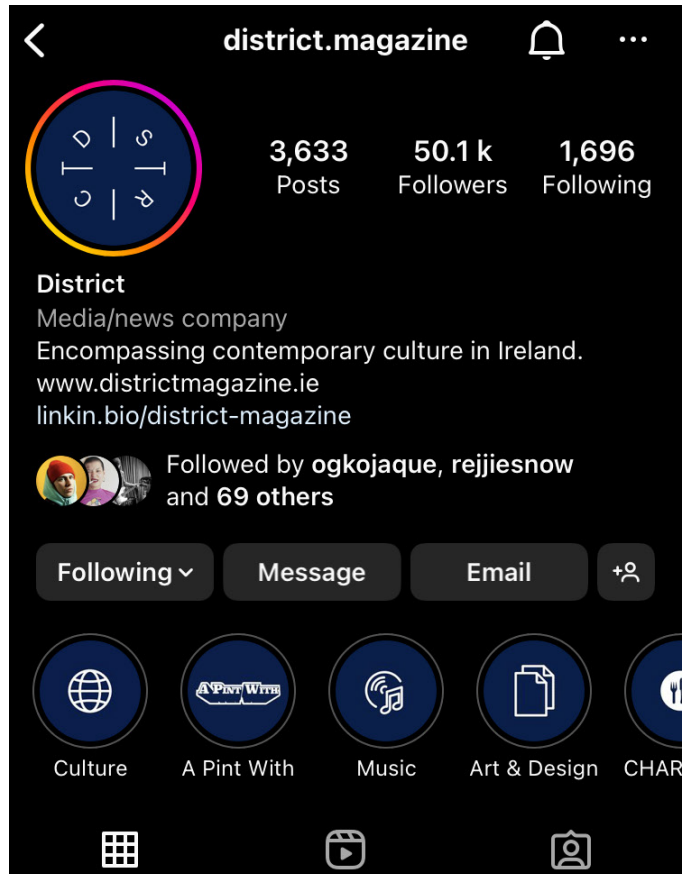
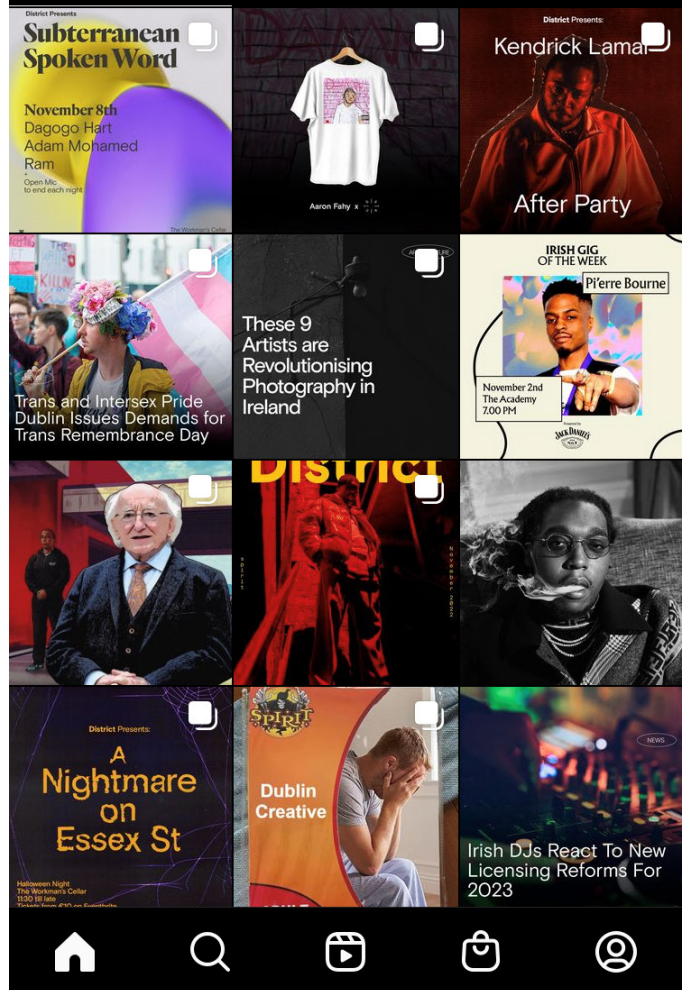


Figure 32 (right) - District's Instagram page, with examples of 'shareable' content

Figure 33 (below) - a 'messy' zine format



perfection with zines as with online, their ethos is about challenging notions of excellence and aiming for misprints, the social media is only practical for sharing them, a notion which is shared by Glasgow journalist. According to Zine library curator, zines have an uncontrollability that adds to their appeal.

There is therefore an important contrast between online spaces, both in terms of design and content, and physical zines. Online spaces favour more clean-cut, quick-to-read, visually simple content, designed to be viewed at a glance. Zines favour messiness as a form of protesting the norm, which does not exactly translate to this simplicity and shareability which is sought online, and these contrasting elements offer and answer to one effect that digitisation and social media has had on countercultural arts media and movement: there is an incompatibility in some of the visual elements between print and digital.

5.2 // The Importance of the Physical Object

As mentioned in sections 2.2 and 2.3 with the research of Grazian (2013), Chrysagis (2016), Newbigin (2021) and Morton et al. (2019), some groups rely on physical objects and spaces to maintain a scene, and physical merchandise is used by independent musicians to make money. This is done to contextualise counterculture, to provide some answers for the first subquestion, which asks what opportunities counter-cultural publications like zines have offered artists and what are their key characteristics are. The research subsequently finds that physical objects are still hugely important for artist's income and legitimacy, offered by zines and countercultural magazines. Leeds creative finds that while a website is to be purely digital, it does not offer the romantic side which you receive from a physical copy. However, according to Dublin journalist, there are often differences between the offering from the online version of a magazine and the physical version: they may have a differing style or be aimed at different readers, they will always have something done differently, the fact is that some work does better online, while other work does better in the physical copy, echoed by Glasgow journalist. According to Belfast journalist, those who have the physical copy of a publication have the intention of reading it, whereas online, having it on your screen gives it less permanence - you can click away, and it will be gone forever. This favours more passive reading and Glasgow journalist finds that online publications do not offer the same editorial experience as a physical publication, although she adds the proliferation of online work having emerged and becoming easily accessible has led to magazines becoming a luxury object. Another crucial point which Cork artist makes is that there needs to be a frank conversation about how work is paid for, there is access to so much work for free, but different platforms use different strategies for payment, through Patreon or subscriptions. Berlin writer believes that physical objects are a key driver in getting people to pay:

I definitely find that with publications, how people are so more willing to pay and just having that physical object at the end of it. You wouldn't ever really expect to just be handed that and given it for free. But yeah, online, it's almost like the ephemerality of online writing where you feel that it doesn't borne paying for. [...] I think the payment is such a hard question because I'm, I'm really pro paying

for content, I feel like it's like the blessing and the curse of the internet. Everything's free, because I think that's greatly democratizing sense. But then, yeah, I also just feel like paying for content is what helps keep content good, to some extent, acts as a type of filter. [Berlin writer]

To expand on the first finding, not only is there a there a difference between the style of content found on social media and physical zines, but there is also a difference within publications on the style of their online and physical copies. The physical copies are luxury objects which are only bought every once in a while, while payment is also more likely once there's a physical object involved. This means that physical copies are still maintained in a higher regard than online equivalents and are a key driver in maintaining the industry economically, but the organisational and professional models of arts journalism have been severely disrupted by this increase in online publication. This means that, to answer the first subquestion, countercultural publications and zines have offered opportunities of payment and a legitimacy that is difficult to replicate online. This also answers the main research question, as social media and digitisation have tainted this legitimacy and made receiving payment for work more difficult.

5.2.1 // Gatekeeping at the bottom and the top

As discussed in section 2.2.1, with the research of Chrysagis (2016) in Glasgow and Jones (2021) in Dublin, there are alternative communities who engage in purposeful concealment. Glasgow journalist mentions that, as a zinemaker, she does not put all of her zines online as they are not for everyone:

It still has some kind of gatekeeping to it, which sounds horrible, because like, zines aren't about gatekeeping, they're supposed to be for everybody. But I mean, I think there has to be an intention for somebody from a certain community to read it, and I think that that has to do with safeguarding as well. Because if you're making, for instance, like I make a zine that is has writing by women and queer people, people of marginalized genders, I wouldn't necessarily want to put that all online because it's not for everyone. [Glasgow journalist]

She finds that microcommunities who "do their own thing", be they DIY or for artists or LGBT people, will conceal themselves from the outside, and this paywall is necessary to gatekeep and maintain an intentionality. This can swing both ways, however, and Zine Library Curator finds that zines develop in response to a gatekept publishing industry and aim to uplift marginal voices that don't have access to journalism or infrastructure, although they can't or won't imitate the quality of a big publisher. Echoing this, Belfast journalist points out that despite gatekeeping from the bigger players, you can be a successful independent musician using merch and shows, however the inequality involved is systemic and not easy to change. Therefore, gatekeeping occurs on both ends of the hierarchical spectrum, for distinct reasons: the lower end does it for self-preservation, while the upper end is perceived as doing so by outsiders. To answer the research questions, this provides an answer to the research questions in that zines allow for mediated, gatekept communities to be kept within them without much outside interference, while social media allows for this to continue. This also answers the primary research question, showing that digitisation

allows marginal communities to maintain their corner. However, this lack of change is also evident at the top of the spectrum, larger publications also being gatekept, although digitisation allows for independent artists and musicians to gain a following without them. As mentioned by O'Sullivan in section 2.4, social media also allows for musicians to interact with these gatekeepers digitally, which means that digitisation can allow for opportunities to bypass gatekeeping as much as maintaining gatekeeping in certain spaces. This means that digitisation has made certain people or communities more accessible to others.

5.3 // Qualities of In-Person and Digital Connections

To answer the second research subquestion, about how grassroots arts movements and countercultural publications can take advantage of the move to digitisation section 2.3.1 discusses the importance of physical spaces to DIY communities, uses social network analysis to connect examples different scenes and collectives, and goes on to argue in section 2.4 that social media can help maintain these communities when the physical spaces shut down. In Glasgow specifically, there are communities based around publishing, as mentioned in section 2.2, in relation to the Good Press, and Zine library curator and Glasgow poet both mention this scene, with Glasgow poet mentioning the particular reliance on the Good Press. Zine library curator concedes that although there is this small publishing scene in Glasgow, along with a proliferation of online literary journals, it is probably a bubble that you are familiar with once you are within that context. The fact that there isn't a dominant short story publisher, he states, means that it comes through with zines, with them being made as part of short story collections, but it's also small scale and fragmented. Glasgow poet mentions how it happens on a larger scale and there are magazines in which short stories go viral, such as the New Yorker, and the medium of attention required for a short story is ideal for the internet, but it is also a praise orientated form based around prize culture. Therefore, it has its audience, venues, and institutions which maintain its health, regardless of online spaces.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, there is a small publishing scene in Glasgow which is particularly reliant on the Good Press, and the literature review discusses this and the importance of physical spaces to DIY scenes. Glasgow poet mentions that the pandemic had put into question certain DIY communities which were dependant on certain spaces, but that the internet has expanded, what these spaces can do and a community can now be held together with social media. Cork artist mentions that there are websites which exhibit works online well, such as Pallas Projects, who maintain a well-organised online space, and the fact that DIY communities are now able to connect to others outside of their local community has been a good thing for those communities. Glasgow journalist mentions that online zine fairs, along with the internet and social media, makes it easier to connect with similarly minded people online, and Zine library curator expands on this in saying that many zines now get made through callouts on Twitter and Instagram. Glasgow poet echoes this with the fact that reach is different now, and with their zine, they had started off with photocopiers and eventually got submissions from all over the world.

This use of online spaces is discussed in section 2.4 of the literature review, the threat of the loss of certain spaces is mentioned in relation to Dublin, Norwich and Edinburgh, with online spaces being used for connectivity and for maintaining a when there is a lack of physical spaces, as done in Edinburgh, Sheffield and Dublin. Section 2.4.1 discusses the case of hashtagging (McDowell and de Souza 2018) and how that is used between artists to make connections, while Instagram has become a spot to sell artworks directly (Goetzmann 2018), due to the social capital gained from it being used to capitalise financially (Cotter 2018), and well as interconnecting practices (Martin 2021). Glasgow journalist mentions that this globalisation was common in DIY culture, and that now you can collaborate with your tribe of people through small communities on the internet. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, Dublin worked for an American magazine which began hiring staff from various parts of the world, increasing the diversity of perspectives in its content. This increased connectivity can also bring the artist closer to their followers, as stated by Belfast journalist: they can livestream and receive comments instantly and showcase work interactively. This offers direct artist/audience interaction outside of the traditional exhibition or performance space and shortens the distance between the artist and the fan. However, Glasgow journalist points out that artists also have to work as their own PR, they can no longer be enigmatic, as there is a need to constantly make videos or do press to remain in the eye of the audience. This is one of the bigger challenges that artists face nowadays, which has been exacerbated by social media and the move to digitisation.

Therefore, to answer the second research subquestion, about how grassroots arts movements and countercultural publications can take advantage of the move to digitisation, although physical spaces still play an important role in maintaining a scene, online spaces have also played a role in maintaining them. DIY scenes have used them in the absence of a physical space and have also used them to connect with similarly minded people. With the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing, bigger and more mainstream publications have also taken this approach. However, the lack of distance that online spaces put between the follower and the artist makes audience engagement more difficult for the artist, with PR being very much necessary on social media, and there is a constant need to feed the audience when using online spaces, leading to a more challenging audience engagement landscape to navigate, and so this provides an answer to the primary research question of how digitisation and social media has affected countercultural arts media and movements.

5.3.1 // Challenges to the quality of journalism

To answer the primary research question of how digitisation and social media has affected countercultural arts media and movements, the quality of arts journalism was discussed with participants. The constant need to feed audiences discussed in the previous section also appears to be feeding into journalism, and the research finds that artists and journalists are a small bit overwhelmed by the constant need for new content, which affects quality and leads to too much work being done. Glasgow journalist finds that it can be difficult to identify your tribe these days as

there is so much stuff online, and Belfast journalist makes a similar point, due to an “oversaturation of shit”. This means it can be difficult to come across in depth, well written work as work is driven by what does well on algorithms and what is more shareable. The most common reasons for this, according to participants, seems to be a change in attention spans and lack of payment for journalistic work.

Belfast journalist believes that attention spans are shorter, and this makes work more constant, while similarly Berlin writer finds that social media doesn’t give people enough time with work and it isn’t appreciated to the same extent. Dublin journalist points out that shelf life is much shorter now, and articles lose their relevance quickly, leading to some cases of articles being written in advance, while Belfast journalist has a generally unfavourable view of how work gets done now, making the point that success stems from working and posting constantly. He also believes that it also means that lowest-common-denominator work does well.

To be successful, you need to be posting all the time, but it’s impossible to be posting all the time and taking shortcuts, basically. Like, if you’re an artist, if you’re a journalist, you need to be working flat out all the time, which isn’t healthy, or you need to be taking shortcuts. [Belfast journalist]

Leeds journalist believes that the idea of content diminishes the approach taken by the artist, with social media posts of two-minute videos taking a condensed position of what would be twenty-five pages of good quality journalism. He notes overly positive journalism where controversial opinions are avoided, echoed by Belfast journalist, who finds that many publications don’t want to “rock the boat” and engage in “tick-box PR”. However, that can swing both ways, according to Belfast journalist, as some publications may write controversial opinions for the sake of shares, while Dublin journalist finds that things get politicised quite quickly on the internet. The key point, however, is that journalists can be interacted with a lot more now, whereas before, they would have been held in higher esteem and at a distance, deemed untouchable. That is no longer the case, and this can democratise opinions a small bit. However, this may mean that critical, rigorous and good-quality journalism has become a bit more of a rarity.

I also think the fact people can interact with journalists and stuff means that before they were maybe held in higher esteem. Because they’re distant from you, you could think: ‘Aw, these guys are untouchable’ and they weren’t as accessible whereas now you can Tweet at them, I think people are less inclined to hold them in that respect. [Belfast journalist]

It’s trying to kind of get a foot in the door with like arts and culture journalism as well, it seems like part of the difficulties that you need to be an entrepreneur as well, you need to be continuously hunting for work and pitching. And it’s almost like you spend much more time looking for work and pushing for work, than you do actually working. [...] but I do think, culture and arts journalism and arts writing, it’s particularly prevalent just because it’s not paid so well. [Berlin writer]

Another issue which Berlin writer brings up is that journalists need to continuously hunt for work, almost spending as much time searching and pushing for work as actually working, while as mentioned in section 5.2, Cork artist notes that publications need to completely rethink how they get paid for - people should be getting paid for work but readers are getting lots of access for free. Therefore, this answers the primary research question of how digitisation and social media has affected countercultural arts media, as digitisation has a few issues that it places on journalism: the speed and rate at which work gets made and released, a highly competitive environment for readers' attention, and the lack of payment for much of online journalism.

5.3.2 // The effects of algorithms and SEO

In section 2.4.1, the document discusses algorithms and how they have affected how art is shared, discussing Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), which is encouraged by Google, and the case of deceiving headlines which hide what a story really discusses to gather clicks, as discussed by Nygaard Blom and Reinecke Hansen (2015) and Molyneux and Coddington (2020). It also discusses how algorithms work, bringing in discussions by Cotter (2018), Sri Darma (2019) and Peterson-Salahuddin and Diakopoulos (2020). The following chapter discusses views on the algorithm and other attributes of the online world from the participants' perspective. Belfast journalist sees fault in another aspect of how the internet has affected journalism: Today, generally, articles cannot be given interesting titles anymore due to SEOs, meaning that the article needs to be easily searchable and identifiable from a search engine. Therefore, titles go towards what it is that people are searching for online. Echoing this from experience of when he had to factor in SEO when working for a tech company, Berlin writer also finds that articles are becoming box-ticking exercises, similar to issues of "tick-box PR" and articles getting driven by what does well on the algorithm, becoming a feedback loop, mentioned by Belfast journalist. This means the article has to contain key words that are shareable rather than valuable. The algorithm also has an unpredictability which makes it difficult to share art, Dublin journalist finds that the internet and algorithm makes it more difficult to promise reach to an artist through an article than would be with a physical copy, the algorithm may not pick it up. Cork artist finds that it can be difficult to reach an audience as they are fed by the algorithm, and Glasgow poet mentions how the change in the Facebook algorithm affected reach and viewing figures. The only way to get this reach back would be by purchasing sponsored ads, which is somewhat of a controversial issue in DIY circles, and it is no longer possible to build a DIY community like you could before due to the algorithm. Glasgow journalist mentions, Tik Tok as a chaotic, extreme and unpredictable version of this algorithm where you don't know what will land. This provides another answer to the primary research question of how digitisation and social media has affected countercultural arts media, as digitisation and the digital world encourages short, condensed work, and this is the direction that most applications (Instagram/Tik Tok) seem to be taking. This means that the issue discussed in the previous chapter of oversaturation and quickly made work doing well will only worsen in time if this continues, unfortunately, echoing section 2.4.1 of the literature review

5.4 // Do we need to rethink the online and use design to alleviate the issues?

As noted in the last section, the case of SEO and of instant content drives a quickly made and inferior quality product. However, the literature review sets out the value of zines and countercultural publications, discussed by Dunscombe (2008), Weddle (2018), Piepmeier (2016) and Worley (2018), and some of the values which pre-technology publications espoused, set out by Heller (2003), Beegan (2007) and Delyfer (2010), in sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.5. In order to answer the first subquestion, which seeks to understand key characteristics, and the second subquestion, which asks how they can adapt to digitisation, the researcher put these publications and values to participants to garner views regarding them in relation to what currently exists. Belfast journalist believes that it would be better for things to be released more periodically, and that a monthly digital issue of a product would be a breath of fresh air. The key, however, is slowing the reader down, although the art must be front and centre as people would be less inclined to click otherwise. The first part of this section will discuss how the reader's attention can be sought, while the second part will discuss methods for slowing the reader down.

5.4.1 // Grabbing the user's attention

Instagram is a key location for grabbing the user's attention. As discussed in the chapter's first section, Infographics and grid images tend to do well there, and this can be another form of front page, and Belfast journalist mentions that Instagram has many people who create tester covers and graphics. When looking at the archival material, this is what Wendingen reminded the participants of, Zine library curator found it to be striking and believed that it would grab people's attention and lead them to click the article which the image points towards, while Leeds creative agreed that the front pages of Wendingen would work well on Instagram and provided itself for that digital format. Dublin journalist also echoes this point and said that they remind her of the grid highlights which are discussed earlier in the chapter, adding that when looking at District, the header images convey the story that they are telling with a strong image, and this makes the article visually appealing to social media. Cork artist also makes this point, stating that she is familiar with District through social media and that she is aware of their use of strong imagery in articles which draw her to the article. Dublin journalist finds that this is, in a way, bringing elements which can be seen in older publications into an online space.

5.4.2 // Maintaining the user's attention and slowing them down

As mentioned at the beginning of the section, Belfast journalist would favour work being made more rarely, and getting people to read things properly. A website's design could go towards getting



Figure 34 -
Wendingen front
pages

the reader to stay longer, as some websites are poorly done and can be unattractive. Glasgow poet mentions that music publications tend to go for a tile format; Aesthetica goes for a similar format, but Glasgow journalist finds that there are too many tiles and that it is overwhelming, this style can discourage readers from lingering on the website. Zine library curator finds that today, there is never a blank space:

In the end, the difference with that is it there's never a blank space. It's endless tension, right? The minute they show you something, you're going to do something else, and I think that's where this like, I really hope it is, this format is to slow the reader down and make them consider the things that we're looking at. But yeah, it does, it does rub up against the internet's expectation that you must be satiated at all times with a thing. [Zine library curator]

Belfast journalist believes that a lot of the time, today, reading an article can be a race to the bottom, and that being guided around a page, as with older publications, can make you more mindful. Having images in your peripherals, as older publications do, can make reading a magazine an immersive experience.

Berlin writer and Glasgow poet are both involved with the same zine and maintain a website for it and discussed their experiences and values from when they made it: they attempted to create a design that invited people to stay on the website and read, and so colour and spacing was brought into consideration rather than rapid scrolls, influenced by the Financial Times. There was a conscious decision made to differentiate the magazine side of the website from the other sections, using a pink background which offers a material trace, if a screenshot was taken, it would be recognisable from their website. Off Licence Magazine uses background colour similarly, and Glasgow journalist comments how it looks quite material, as well as being quite lo-fi and having a non-hierarchical design with flippant headlines while District loads new articles once you have scrolled past an article which you have finished reading. That makes it quite an immersive magazine experience with a continuous flow.

The use of multimedia can also enhance an online space, and Cork artist commended the online space created by Pallas Projects, mix of video and exhibition spaces which is put together quite well, while Belfast journalist notes that Sonic Cyberfeminisms does this in print format with videos and 3D which are be used to exhibit works online in a post-internet style. Berlin writer points out that in an online context, many of the artefacts found in the archival material would go from 2D to 3D in an online space, the text would stay the same, but the images could be given a sort of 360 degree tone that isn't possible with paper. Therefore, these points show that internet allows for immersive work to come through, however the key is to make this work more common and to lead potential readers towards it. This may require changing the overall approach to online journalism, which would be a mammoth task. This provides an answer for the primary research question of how countercultural arts publications can adapt to digitisation, although it may be overly difficult and unrealistic.

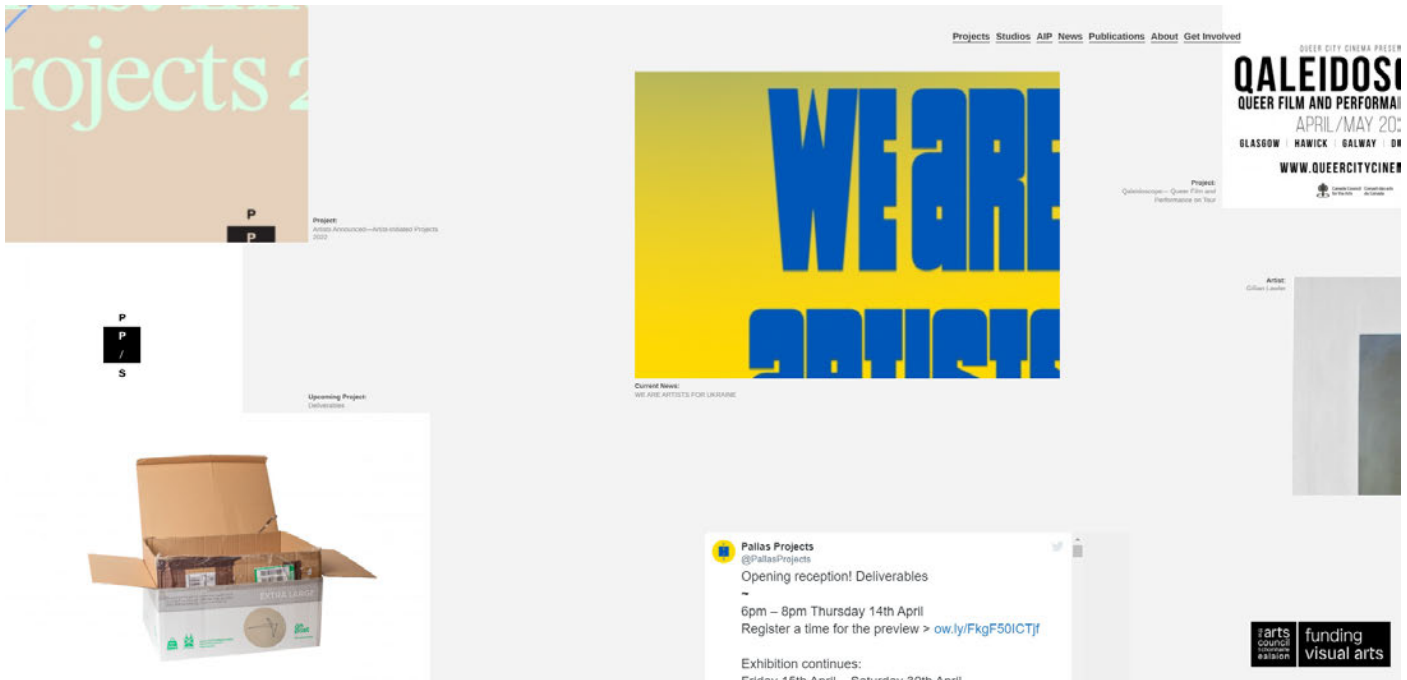
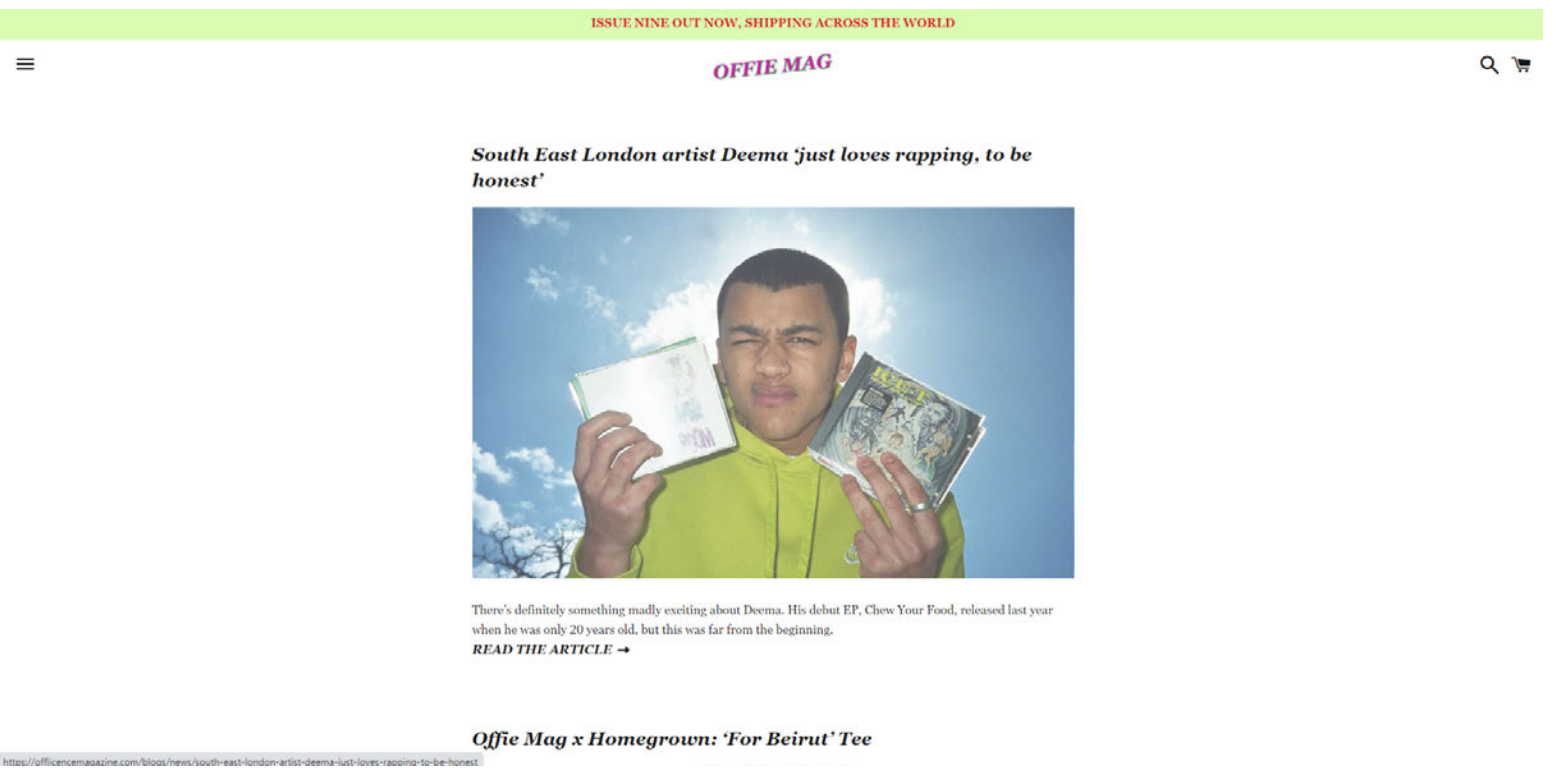


Figure 35 (above) - The Pallas Projects Home page

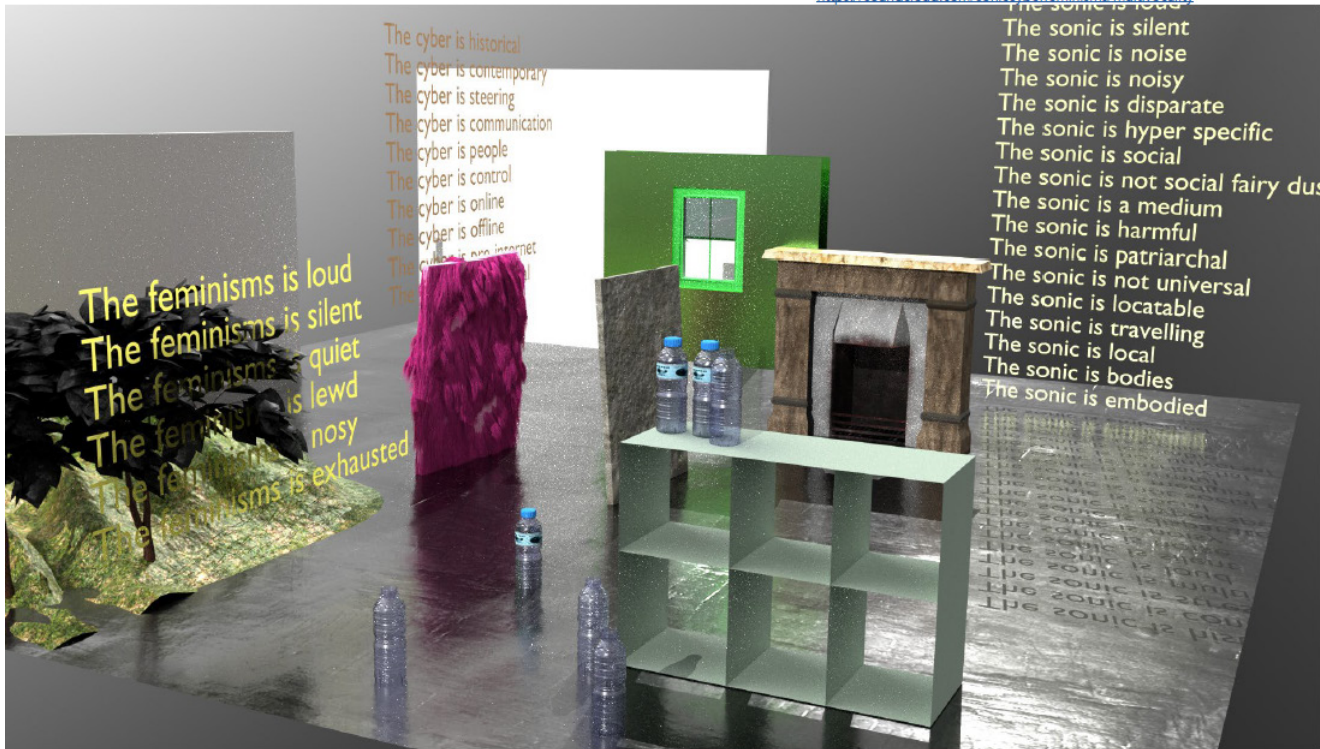
Figure 36 (below) - Off Licence Magazine



Multivocality

Satellite Sounds

<https://soundcloud.com/sonicyberfeminisms/multivocality>



Sonic Cyberfeminisms Environment
Louise Lawlor

(image 1)

Using the 3D space as a space to explore the conversations that have occurred over the course of the residency. Collaging elements to form a habitable environment, a space of collective thought and personal projections.

Figure 37 (above) - An image from Sonic Cyberfeminisms

Figure 39 (below) - an image from Aesthetica



Mirrored Geography

Murray Fredericks captures ethereal horizons on Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre, an endorheic salt lake 700km north of Adelaide, Australia.



Satirising the Everyday

Olivia Locher highlights humanity's unrealistic expectations, depicting daily regimes to comedic effect, where candles literally burn at both ends.



Beyond Aesthetics

Ulga Kesebir and Merve Türkan work as a duo to redefine the parameters of fashion imagery, with bold colour schemes and alluring environments.



Rise of the Megacity

Michel Lamollier's photographic reliefs highlight the alarming rate at which humanity is expanding, depicting high-rises as markers of infrastructure.



Personal and Political

Over 12 years, Gillian Laub produced a major documentary project in Montgomery County, Georgia, a series sparked by one written letter.



Moments of Serendipity

Andrea Lohmann's compositions are inspired by the built environment: structures from the post-war period complemented by passing clouds.



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5.5 // Intentionality with design elements

In order to answer the research subquestions, particularly in relation to physical traits, and having an advantageous transition to digitisation, the designs of publications were discussed in order to understand if some aspects would bode well online. This was done with the values discussed by Haller (2003) and Piepmeier (2018) in mind. One of the design elements from the archives which participants found to be an interesting concept was the Cocorico masthead, which changed with each issue depending on which artist was featured. Glasgow journalist finds that it feels collectible, whereas Glasgow writer thinks it to be ahead of its time, the changes make a strong statement. Glasgow poet was quite interested the use of the excess and the decorative involved, and Zine library curator also commends it, finding it to have good use of colour and a font which is unique and recognisable, and more like something an artist would make rather than something which would be used for promotion.

Glasgow journalist finds that the use of dividers and decorative drop caps give the publication an identity, and Dublin journalist agrees with this point, reflecting the art which is within the publication. This is similar to the title banner in Cocorico. However, it must be noted that an online publication offers less control over how a publication can look and there is also the question of what Glasgow journalist calls conscious transition, which is key: it cannot be expected that a layout will work out online in the same way as in print, the text must be scalable and legible. This can cast doubt in how these elements, and the ones mentioned in the previous paragraph, can be brought into an online publication. The conscious choice of choosing which images have colour, emphasising some images over others gives the publication an intentionality and consistency, according to Glasgow journalist, working with the drop caps to give the publication an identity, while Cork artist and Glasgow poet both find it interesting what is chosen to be put in colour. Leeds creative compares this with zines which are intentionally black and white. Therefore, to answer the second subquestion, although these design elements may be difficult to bring into online publications, they are thought of as interesting and could offer something unique to a modern publication as they value the artist and artwork in a manner that would be unique to the online context.

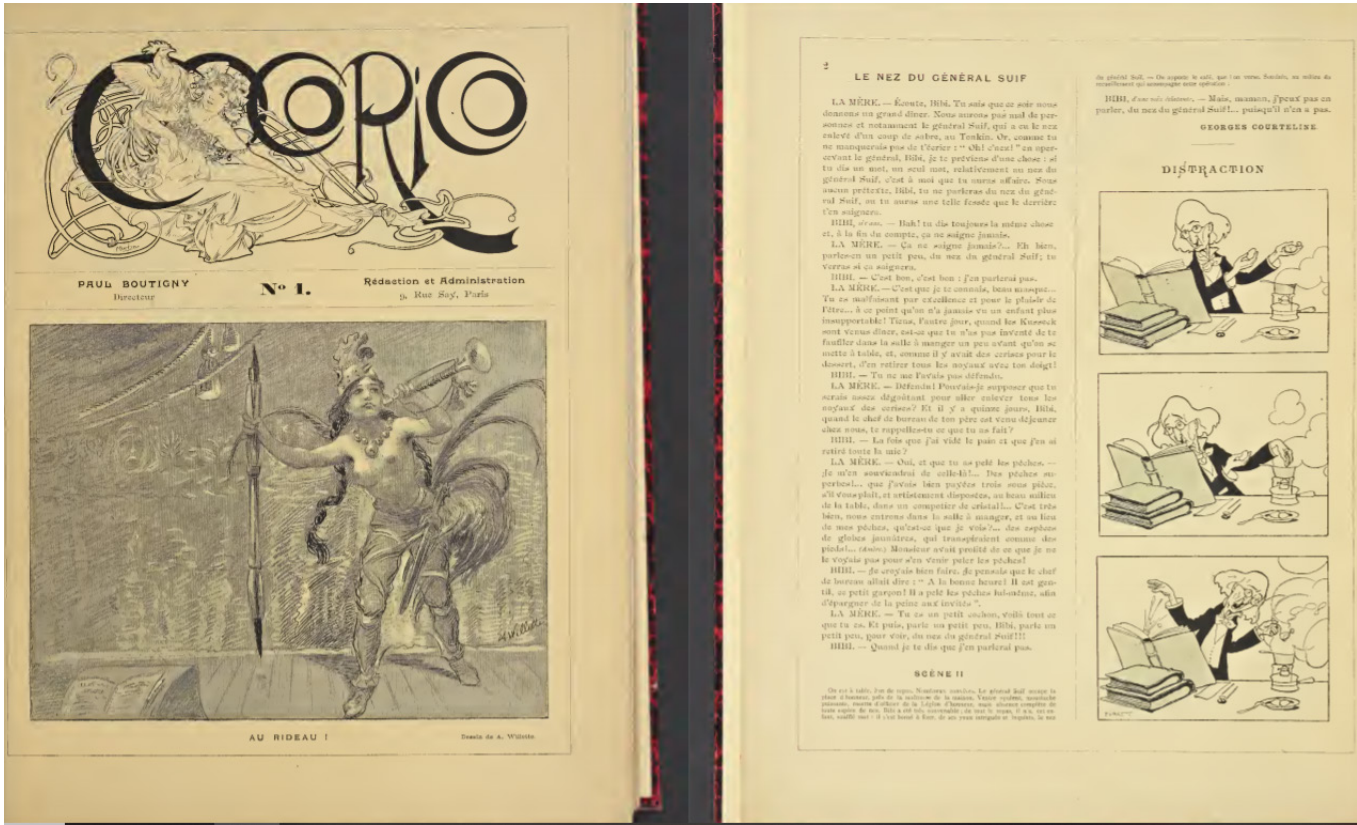
5.6 // Chapter conclusion

In conclusion, in order to answer the research questions, several topics were probed with participants. These aimed to understand their experiences with digitisation and social media, including formatting, materiality, journalism quality, the issue of algorithms and SEOs, and connectivity. It found that digitisation has affected countercultural arts media and movements through the use of social media as a primary form of communication, and this, in turn has changed how publications and movements present themselves, as discussed in the first section. However, the research still finds that physical objects are still massively important, and that they



Figure 39 - Issue of Deutsche Kunst with certain selected images in colour

Figure 40 - Issue of Cocorico with a unique title designed by an artist





JOSEF HOFFMANN
 □
 KOLOMAN MOSER
 M

Im Stillen hat sich in Wien ein kunstgewerbliches Unternehmen grossen Stils unter der Leitung seiner Gründer Professor Josef Hoffmann, Professor Koloman Moser und Fritz Waerndorfer gebildet. In einem weitläufigen Neubau in der Neustiftgasse hat diese Vereinigung von Kunsthandwerkern ihr Heim aufgeschlagen; drei weitläufige Stockwerke bergen den Complex der »Wiener Werkstätte«, und zwar eigene Werkstätten für Metallarbeit, Gold- und Silberarbeit, Buchbinderei, Lederarbeit, Tischlerei, Lackiererei, die Maschinenräume, die Bau-Bureaux, die Zeichensäle, den Ausstellungssaal. Mitten im Fabriklärm tut sich die stillere und besessene Handarbeit des Kunsthandwerkers auf, zwar fehlt es auch hier nicht an maschinellen Einrichtungen, im Gegenteil, die »Wiener Werkstätte« ist mit allen technischen Neuheiten, die dem Betriebe dienen, aufs vollkommenste ausgerüstet, aber die Maschine ist hier nicht die Herrscherin und Tyrannin, sondern die willige Dienerin und Helferin, und die Erzeugnisse tragen die Physiognomie nicht von ihr, sondern von dem Geiste ihrer künstlerischen Urheber und

FIG. 1. 1.

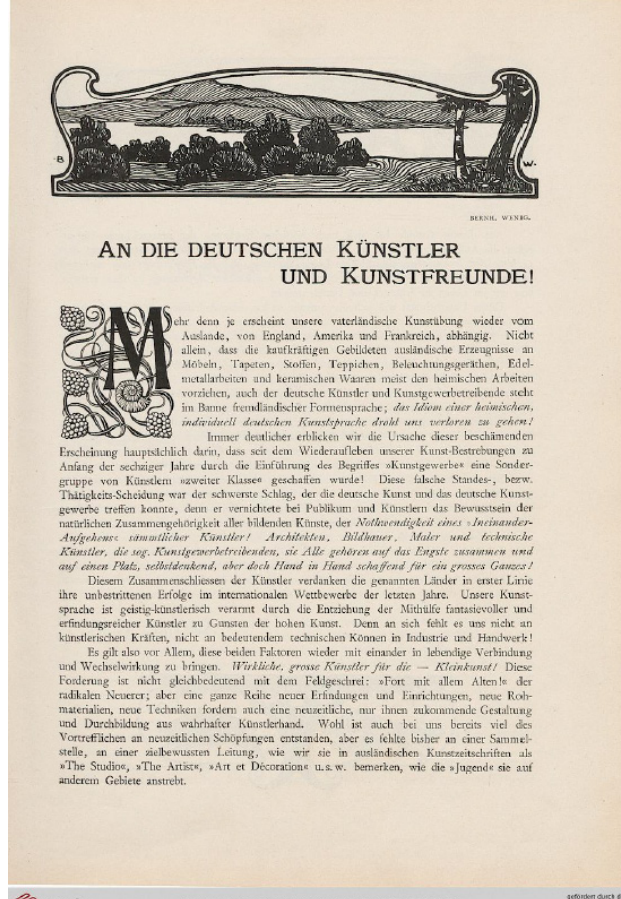


2

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Figure 41 - Issue of Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration with examples of unique dividers and borders

Figures 42 and 43 - Drop caps in Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration



AN DIE DEUTSCHEN KÜNSTLER UND KUNSTFREUNDE!

Aber denn je erscheint unsere vaterländische Kunstübung wieder vom Auslande, von England, Amerika und Frankreich, abhängig. Nicht allein, dass die kunstfertigen Gebildeten ausländische Erzeugnisse an Möbeln, Tapeten, Stoffen, Teppichen, Beleuchtungsgeräthen, Edelmetallarbeiten und keramischen Waaren meist den heimischen Arbeiten vordrängen, auch der deutsche Künstler und Kunstgewerbetreibende steht im Banne fremdländischer Formensprache; das Idiom einer heimatlichen, individuell deutschen Kunstsprache droht uns verloren zu gehen!

Immer deutlicher erblühen wir die Ursache dieser beschämenden Erscheinung hauptsächlich darin, dass seit dem Wiederaufleben unserer Kunst-Bestrebungen zu Anfang der sechziger Jahre durch die Einführung des Begriffes »Kunstgewerbe« eine Sondergruppe von Künstlern »weiter Klasse« geschaffen wurde! Diese falsche Standes-, bezw. Tätigkeits-Scheidung war der schwarze Schlag, der die deutsche Kunst und das deutsche Kunstgewerbe treffen konnte, dann er verdrängte bei Publikum und Künstlern das Bewusstsein der natürlichen Zusammengehörigkeit aller bildenden Künste, der Nothwendigkeit eines Ineinander-Aufgehens sämtlicher Künstler! Architekten, Bildhauer, Maler und technische Künstler, die sog. Kunstgewerbetreibenden, sie Alle gehören auf das Engste zusammen und auf einen Platz, selbstbedeutend, aber doch Hand in Hand schaffend für ein grosses Ganzes!

Diesem Zusammenschliessen der Künstler verdanken die genannten Länder in erster Linie ihre unbestrittenen Erfolge im internationalen Wettbewerbe der letzten Jahre. Unsere Kunstsprache ist geistig-künstlerisch verarmt durch die Entziehung der Mithilfe fantasievoller und erfindungsreicher Künstler zu Gunsten der hohlen Kunst. Denn an sich fehlt es uns nicht an künstlerischen Kräften, nicht an bedeutendsten technischen Können in Industrie und Handwerk!

Es gilt also vor Allen, diese beiden Factoren wieder mit einander in lebensige Verbindung und Wechselwirkung zu bringen. Wirkliche, grosse Künstler für die — Kleinkunst! Diese Forderung ist nicht gleichbedeutend mit dem Forderungsschrei: »Fort mit allem Alten! der radikalen Neuerer; aber eine ganze Reihe neuer Erfindungen und Einrichtungen, neue Rohmaterialien, neue Techniken fordern auch eine neuezeitliche, nur ihnen zukommende Gestaltung und Durchbildung aus wahrhafter Künstlerhand. Wohl ist auch bei uns bereits viel des Vortrefflichen an neuerzeitlichen Schöpfungen entstanden, aber es fehlt bisher an einer Sammelstelle, an einer zielbewussten Leitung, wie wir sie in ausländischen Kunstzeitschriften als »The Studio«, »The Artiste«, »Art et Decoration« u.s.w. bemerken, wie die »Jugend« sie auf anderem Gebiete anstrebt.

ERNST MORITZ GEYGER.

Das Kunstschaffen von Ernst Moritz Geyger steht nun schon seit einem halben Menschenalter in üppigem Flor. Blüte an Blüte entsprang aus einem genialen Gestaltungstrieb und reifte eine Fülle herrlicher Frucht an der toskanischen Sonne. Und doch ist noch niemals im Zusammenhang über dieses reich entfaltete Künstlerleben berichtet worden. Das kann Wunder nehmen in unseren hochgradig publizistischen Zeitaltern. Ebenso haben wir hier vorliegend den ersten Versuch, das Werk Geygers in den Hauptzügen bildlich zu veranschaulichen. Geyger gehört offenbar nicht zu den Künstlern, die sich schnellfertig in die Öffentlichkeit drängen. Er arbeitet nicht für Ruhm und Gewinn, sein Schaffen ist innerstes und eigenstes Erleben, und hat sich die treibende Kraft im vollendeten Werk ausgeliebt, so ist damit des Meisters Anteilnahme erschöpft. Nicht das Werk an sich und nicht die Begierde nach dem Effekt, den es auf andere macht, sondern die Arbeitsfreude, das ringende Werden, das peinigende Zweifeln und das heisseratmende Bezwingen der idealen Aufgabe ist der Kern des künstlerischen Vollbringens. Auf der Höhe des ersten Horizontes turmen sich tausend andere auf, und auch, das Menschlichen ist so kurz und die Fülle der Naturwunder, die es zu meistern gilt, so gewaltig, dass der starke Nimbus, Man könnte meinen, er wäre bei Donatello in die Schale gesprungen. Doch genau betrachtet, ist damit die Deutung von Geygers Art nicht erschöpft, vielmehr muss gesagt werden, dass er in demselben geistigen und sonnenigen Milieu heranreifte, wie die alten Meister, dass in Florenz dieselbe Natur auch ihn anzog und erzog. Der gewaltige Einfluss der toskanischen Kunst war ihm nicht um, er assimilierte die Vorbildungen seines Schaffens mit der alten Kulturblüte und die Berührung mit der echten und edelsten Renaissance stärkte und veredelte die ihm innewohnende laetere Individualität. Wollen wir also den Entwicklungsfaden

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offer a tangibility and legitimacy that digitisation lacks, particularly in relation to payment. The research also finds that digitisation has presented challenges to the quality of journalism, through the introduction of algorithms and SEOs, with a 'click-bait' style of journalism based around PR becoming prevalent. However, it does allow for new opportunities for connectivity between artists, while also allowing them to bypass gatekeeping.

The research also finds that the principles of zines and countercultural publications have offered opportunities to artists in the past, with characteristics of unorthodox creativity coming through with zines, as argued in the first section. However, this particular type of presentation is somewhat incompatible with the principles of social media. The latter two sections, however, talk about the characteristics of the presentation of cultural magazines in the fin de siècle, discussed how these publications featured works, and sought to understand how these may be adaptable to the current situation of digitisation. This led to answering the second subquestion, offering ideas of how certain aspects of these publications can be adapted to the digital age, with principles of allowing art to flourish online in the same manner which those publications did, and to slow the reader down in a context where content is generally quicker and more condensed.

There was a notable lack of artists, in comparison to journalists, in the workshops, and therefore the research sought to validate whether the issues seen by journalists shared by creatives. This was done for a more rigorous and all-encompassing set of results, where not only the views of journalists were sought but the artists who they generally write about as well. Therefore, in keeping with an understanding as to whether the Cork arts scene itself would have affected the researcher's biases going into the research, and to test whether the findings had accuracy within a specific artistic community, interviews were done with three Cork artists about the research findings.

6 // Validating the findings with Cork-based artists

To test the reality of these findings and their value to local artists, a validation process took place involving three artists from Cork, Ireland. As argued in previous chapters, the choice of validating within a specific geographic area was to test whether the findings had accuracy within a specific artistic community. The researcher would share a statement articulating a finding and the interviewee would discuss the truthfulness of that statement with regards to their own experiences and engagement with the topic. This was done to understand further the experiences of artists with regard to social media and cultural journalism and find whether there would be a difference between the views of artists and journalists, and to identify potential gaps in the research, such as identifying whether certain issues are journalist-exclusive, location-exclusive or artist-exclusive. Cork is a mid-sized city with many artists, localised in a relatively isolated area, and is the third largest city in the country, and the Irish city furthest from Dublin. These details may be cause to some of the issues/phenomena that the researcher sees rather than them being, national/British issues. The artistic community in Cork is quite tight knit, with a good arts infrastructure and solid connections between education and the artistic scene. It cohabitates the city alongside the music scene, sometimes collaborating through the creation of band merchandise, gig posters and album covers. Therefore, the participants consisted of artists who are active within that scene:

- ✘ Artist A, a graphic designer and illustrator with a degree in Visual Communications from the Munster Technological University. She is involved with a local collective and does many designs for local band merchandise.
- ✘ Artist B has a BA in Fine Art and an MA in Art and Process from the local art school, the Crawford College of Art and Design. She is also involved in curation and has put on exhibitions featuring local artists.
- ✘ Artist C has a BA from Edinburgh College of Art and specialises in internet and meme culture. She has an artist's residency in the Uilinn Arts Centre in Skibbereen, County Cork.

The findings were put to the artists, and they were asked for their views and experiences relating to each finding, to be contrasted with the views of the journalists in the previous section.

6.1 // The Importance of the Physical Document

Section 5.2 discussed how the physical document still maintains an important role in journalism, as it maintains the reader's attention without distraction and tends to be more likely to be paid for. Each of the artists maintain that the physical document is still important when it comes to art consumption.

- ✘ Artist A likes having the physical object, as it is more sustainable to keep with you, while also allowing you to possess a reference to return to.
- ✘ There are cases where these magazines feature artists in a more physical way than they would online, while also putting more longform work in the printed version, while their inclusion of opinions which are thought through and lack of a comment section are other qualities which lead her to hold them in higher regard. [Artist A]

This is similar to a majority of the views held by research participants and strengthens the idea that the physical document maintains importance for legitimacy, as it is associated with a better quality of document and analysis.

- ✘ While social media and website may appear more democratic, if a page does not have an editor, it has a content creator who adds a lens or opinion that you view the content through. [Artist B]
- ✘ Physical objects are still important for art, while social media is good for word of mouth. [Artist C]
- ✘ This could mean that print publications remain favourable in terms of analysis, as online content could be easier to manipulate, maintaining and strengthening the finding that print publications maintain importance despite the proliferation of online content.
- ✘ Zines still hold importance and prominence, re-emerging in a big way in recent years, and that those who are interested in them always will be. [Artists A and B]
- ✘ Social media has a partial effect on this, as smaller print presses use Instagram to share themselves, while artists use zines to collaborate. [Artist A]
- ✘ Zinemakers use social media to improve reach, while zines can be made on a computer and uploaded to a website, maintaining a nostalgic value despite the use of technology. [Artist B]
- ✘ Zines are doing well and many artists make zines and use them as physical rewards to Patreon subscribers [Artist C]

This strengthens the importance of the physical document, which adds legitimacy to work, and strengthens the finding that payment is more likely when a physical object is involved in the transaction.

6.2 // How Has Social Media Affected Artists?

While section 5.3 points out that physical spaces are still important to maintain DIY scenes, it also notes that the online spaces, such as social media, can add to them or maintain them in the absence of a physical space. Artist A only sees benefits for artists from the internet, however Artists B and C find that there are important flaws to it.

- ✘ Social media has been beneficial to all forms of art, even short story writing, as it gives a preview of work. [Artist A]
- ✘ Social media is particularly beneficial to photography, but less so for other art forms, and anything that depends on the experience of being in the space has not benefited from the internet, such as painting. Showing them on social media can be difficult, as with their transmission depending on photo quality and lighting in the studio, this can make it difficult to get across on social media, while the same issue arises for sculptors or any artist who depends on the physical space and getting a visceral, physical reaction. [Artist B]
- ✘ 3D galleries haven't managed to capture the sense of the space online [Artist C]
- ✘ Re-curated spaces are mentioned with an anecdotal case of an art gallery in Cork which, during the pandemic, curated an exhibition to look good online, but needed to change once

6 // Validity

visitors were coming back. [Artist B]

- ✘ The internet is not as democratic as it appears, because it makes it very difficult to make work, trends are constantly coming and going, and while you might be on top of them today you might not be on top of them tomorrow. [Artist C]

This shows that while the online spaces can be good for some types of art, a proper, well-curated space is not possible online in the same way as a physical space.

While Artist A praises the opportunities offered by social media, Artists B and C see flaws and find it to be imperfect. As discussed in section 5.3, physical spaces are still more important for artists, and social media does not offer the same artistic experience, from the artists' point of view. This strengthens the finding that social networks make making work more difficult, it is found to be a hindrance to good quality journalism and to the dissemination of art.

6.3 // New potential for connectivity

Section 5.3 discusses the increased capacity for connectivity online, and the opportunities this can present for artists.

- ✘ Artist A finds that the internet and social media has allowed her to connect with others abroad in a way that would not have been possible had she not had an Instagram page, without the need for an agent or an introduction.
- ✘ Because it is such a large platform, it gives artists a chance to connect with bigger, successful artists and makes it possible to keep an artistic record and get seen, which has changed the game for smaller artists. [Artist A]
- ✘ Meeting artists through Instagram happens organically; one will usually follow an artist or a gallery or an artist through seeing an exhibition, and the artist will follow them back, and it begins a dialogue. Artist C has also gained connections through collaborations which have improved her reach, for example with Notes to Cork, a branding and marketing company, which has improved reach towards her page which gets her even more shares.
- ✘ Artist B also made connections through her Instagram, and you can go without meeting them and eventually collaborate with them. However, it is now based around follows and going on Zoom, and there is a level of human connection that is now missing.

This iterates the previous point that physical connection is still an important aspect that is impossible for the internet to provide. However, there is still a lot more connectivity possible, and collaborations and connections are easily established through the use of social media, despite the loss of some in-person connection. This strengthens the finding that online spaces can act as a substitute with the disappearance of a physical space.

6.4 // Is the quality of journalism declining?

Section 5.3 raised two subpoints: whether the quality of journalism was declining, and the possible decline of the critic, both discussed in section 5.3.1.

- ✘ The quality of journalism depends on where you look, there are publications that treat art properly. [Artist A]
- ✘ Publications such as Artforum share art well, however lots of artists go towards the click-bait, PR genre of work. An artist is more likely to delve into work than someone in the wider circle of art, but art criticism is generally considered to be quite stuffy. [Artist B]
- ✘ Other publications that are only posting press releases and are responding to the algorithm, while there is also the question of payment: it is in the journalist's best interest, if they are freelance, to churn out as much work as possible because they are not paid enough. [Artist C]

Therefore, while artists do agree with the finding that there is poor journalism, they don't believe that it has declined overall – there is good arts journalism if you look in the right places. This adds some doubt to the question of whether journalism has declined.

6.4.1 // 'Click-bait' and algorithms

Section 2.1 of the literature review discusses a hierarchy in cultural magazines and section 5.3.2 discusses the issues caused by 'Search Engine Optimisation' and algorithms.

- ✘ District mostly operates from Instagram. Everything District do can be gathered from their social media rather than their website, and they tend to share the artists for the sake of it in a click-bait fashion, while others, like Aesthetica, focus on the work of the artist. [Artist A]
- ✘ 'Click-bait' makes making art more difficult, as artists are now focused on being shared on a website, going viral, or getting caught up in the quickness of the internet because it may bring traffic to their page. [Artist A]
- ✘ There are publications doing both click-bait and thoughtful work, such as the Vice Media group, which own Dazed and i-D and use their collective ad revenue from one to fund thoughtful work on the other. Click-bait, however, exacerbates the idea that a piece of art can be easily digested and doesn't need thought to go into it, or that all thoughts on a piece can be written in 300 words. [Artist C]
- ✘ Many artists are using click bait to bring attention to their work, with the hope that they will appeal to a wider audience, and if work doesn't appear interesting, people won't click into it. However, this isn't good for artists and people in the art world who actually want to hear about work, and click-bait tries to break it down to an audience who more than likely aren't needed. [Artist B]
- ✘ The quickness of social media more than likely stunts an artist's growth, because they may be getting likes, shares and commissions from very simple work, and they'll keep doing that because it makes them money. Many artists are now following the Instagram influencer

style, and this especially appeals to emerging artists, so art is now becoming more and more something that you scroll past rather than something that you consciously decide to see. [Artist B].

The algorithm, discussed in section 5.3.2, affects how work gets made and disseminated.

- ✘ The internet moves very quickly, but artists are aware that their work is short-lived on the internet, therefore the goal is to get the word out there and lead people to the physical work. However, the algorithm has affected smaller artists and some work isn't being seen as much due to changes in it. [Artist A]
- ✘ Throwing money at promotable content such as reels on Instagram or necessarily going to make you go viral online, however, those with more financial resources are able to spend more time with their work and will have the resources to support themselves, others who do not have this time are at a disadvantage. [Artist C]
- ✘ The algorithm can be treated like a "mythical creature that can magically bless you with views", but nobody knows how it really works. If a magazine or an artist has the clout, they'll get the views and shares regardless. [Artist C]
- ✘ Larger artists will portray themselves as celebrities or influencers online - this celebrity status has almost become as important as the artistic work. This adds pressure which can favour the more financially capable artists, who have the money to promote posts and fight the algorithm. Contrarily, a smaller artist must fight this algorithm and can start second guessing themselves, and although they advertise themselves in a way that would not have been possible before, they cannot compete with more established artists, while the viewer has become greedier and has become used to seeing more artists. [Artist B]
- ✘ The algorithm favours certain types of content, specifically video content - this started with Facebook comes through with the Instagram reels feature and Tik Tok. [Artist C]

Therefore, the issues raised in section 5.3.2 about algorithms and SEOs somewhat frustrate artists, and the issues about quickly made and poorly made content are seen to be occurring by both journalists and artists. Passive consumption has made work more difficult, artists constantly need to catch up with trends, and can't take as many breaks.

6.5 // How can things be slowed down?

Section 5.4 sets out the idea that the user's attention needs to be grabbed in an online space discussed in section 5.4.1, while section 5.4.2 discusses that the user may need to be slowed down in order to keep them on a page. Section 5.5 discusses design elements which could be used to maintain audience attention on a page.

- ✘ If a website were to look more visually appealing, people would be drawn in more, and when things are more visual, they are more likely to be read and shared. A good example of this is Spotify wrapped, which people share widely. In general, however, websites get updated, and things generally have a shorter shelf life, although at the moment, there is a happy medium between Instagram and print - not the best, but not the worst either. [Artist A]

- ✘ Better design may not lead to more people appreciating work, as it will always be the same people who appreciate artwork, but it would lead to more considered work being made as there would be less focus on the content creation side of art. [Artist B]
- ✘ Websites are a lot more difficult to make than print magazines, however online publications which use good design do exist. [Artist B]
- ✘ The problem is not to slow things down but to pay people adequately for their time. For a freelance journalist, it is in their interest to write quickly and write more pieces, and to get paid for them, as opposed to writing more slowly and better. The issue is not to do with social media, it's to do with payment. [Artist C]
- ✘ Recreating a print publication on the internet doesn't always work, the 3D space offers different tools, and physical magazines always do and always will display art well. Money is the mitigating factor, PR and sponsored posts pay; the other stuff is good core values. [Artist C]

Therefore, the final two points could be positive but are not entirely possible. The artists more-so believe that social media and online publications should work in tandem with a physical publication rather than adopt methods from the latter. As mentioned in sections 6.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 2.3, physical spaces are still hugely important – bringing physical methods into online spaces may not work, but they can still work together as they offer different methods to use.

6.6 // Chapter conclusion

Through speaking with artists about the initial findings of the research, several similarities, differences and nuances were established between the perspectives of artists and those of journalists. Artists have noted that digitisation has made making work more difficult, due to social media there are now factors which need to be considered such as changing trends and sharing work in a visually appealing way. Digitisation also makes it more difficult as the internet moves very quickly, and art has a shorter shelf life, something which is also mentioned by journalists. Click-bait and algorithms affect what gets viewed, the former aims to gather attention and is beginning to get used by artists, while the latter is sometimes an adversary for an artist which allows certain types of content to gain views over others. However, the view that journalists tend to have that digitisation has led to a decline in the quality of arts journalism isn't shared by artists, who believe that good quality journalism is to be found if you look in the right places, while the view that art critics are no longer important is also disagreed with. Digitisation has also allowed for artists to connect and network more easily, as social media allows for connections to be sought through follows.

Countercultural publications and zines offer artists a medium for legitimacy, and they have been used to collaborate and sell works. It is notable that artists prefer physical copies of magazines and appear more apprehensive to the switch to digitisation as online spaces do not allow for the same type of diffusion of artworks as a physical magazine can, while some types of artworks are difficult to share online. Physical publications can garner a reaction more easily, as the object stands on its own and is tangible.

The new types of connectivity that digitisation brings has clearly been advantageous to artists, despite the loss of physical connectivity that comes with that. The quickness of the internet is also an obstacle, and the possible solutions discussed at the end of the last chapter are not necessarily agreed with by artists. Though Artist A does agree that well designed websites do get shared widely, Artist B and C are more sceptical of this idea. There is currently a happy medium between print and digital, and better design might not necessarily lead to more people appreciating work as it is those who are interested who will seek it out. There are also tools available online which can go into the creation of original digital spaces, and older design elements are more than likely no longer useful in the modern age. The mitigating factor is more than likely to do with payment, and the principal way to improve the quality of work online is to pay writers properly for their work. Unfortunately, the work that comes from good core values is unlikely to pay well. It is therefore difficult to say how grassroots and countercultural publications can take advantage of the move to digitisation, as there are conflicting views on the topic from all sides.

7 // Conclusion

Countercultural publications and collectives are integral in providing a platform for lesser known, more experimental and less mainstream artists. They exist in tandem with more mainstream media, and often offer an alternative viewpoint to them. They are important in spreading the ideals of DIY and counterculture in their approach and their format. This thesis discussed these publications and styles and investigated their position within the social media and digital age. The focus that this thesis took was on countercultural magazines which deal with art, music and theatre.

The internet has many issues; some which have persisted since the beginning of the documentation of journalism, and some which are based around the emergence of the internet. The existence of the algorithm on social media favours publications with greater traffic and greater financial resources. Although some grassroots movements are gatekept and prefer a smaller audience, social media allows the public greater accessibility to these movements. The literature review identified that online spaces allow artists to reproduce work on their platforms in a manner which was not possible before and are able to share their work more effectively and on their own terms, while countercultural movements can use it to their advantage as it is a more democratic medium than those which came before it. The literature review also understood the modern uses of the internet, discussing how galleries and curators use social media (Fisher 2016, Suess 2020), and it identified that though there are obvious advantages to the internet, social media affects what work gets more reaction through the existence of an algorithm, while also leading to more quickly made content with a shorter shelf life, and content which uses more audience interaction having greater success.

The fieldwork identified that publications social media accentuates the issues of fleeting attention and poor content with the algorithm and sponsored posts. The internet now makes shorter, less considered and shareable work more viable, which has been to the detriment of some forms of art and writing. However, there are manners in which publications can counter this, and use more considered methods to display work online and allow works to be fully appreciated. Social media can also be used to the benefit in multiple ways: Instagram posts are a new front page using strong imagery to build traffic on the page, there are now opportunities to share work in places where it not have been possible before, and connections are now more easily made between people and places. The pace of social media can be countered by using methods and formatting which aims to slow the reader down rather than have them consume as much information as possible. Established publications should stand to be more inclusive of grassroots movements and have more content relating to artists with a lower following. In conclusion, the internet provides an opportunity to create a space where hierarchy is of lesser importance and all movements can communicate, share work more easily, and create a space where work can be well considered and appreciated.

7.1 Research Questions

Primary research question.

How has digitisation and social media affected countercultural arts media and movements?

Digitisation and social media has affected countercultural media in general by catering for multiple mediums on its platform and reproducing other mediums in a manner which was not possible before, which means that there is now a greater range of reproducibility possible. However, it also affects what work gets more reaction through the existence of an algorithm and leads to more quickly made content with a shorter shelf life. Content which uses more audience interaction has greater success. Work gets churned out at a very quick pace as the current online infrastructure rewards that. However, artists generally find that the internet and social media has had a positive influence and allows them to display their work and reach an audience without the need for an outside facilitator.

Subquestions:

1. What opportunities have counter-cultural publications like zines offered artists and what are their key characteristics?

The fact that the internet caters for so many different mediums means that there is a large opportunity for reproducibility of methods which may have been lost with time. The internet generally favours shorter pieces of work that cater to lower attention spans. However, through looking at mediums which existed in the past, participants also found that unique design elements, such as a wider use of fonts and unique borders/breakers would also enhance online publications. More selective use of imagery and colour and being considerate of the reader by not using too much data on the site, are elements which are not common on the internet and their reintroduction would be a radical and refreshing development. Some arts forms haven't survived the transition to digital as well as others, some believe this to be the case sculpting, however there is still an audience for them. Some artists believe that recreating old styles may be pointless and that we should work with what we have, as that is financially viable, others believe that trying something new and having different styles would be welcome, though not as tangible as a print publication. Though some methods and considered designs could be beneficial and some artists would like that, coding and web design might make this difficult and it could just be a case of using what infrastructure exists and trying to use that as effectively as possible.

2. How can grassroots arts movements and countercultural publications take advantage of the move to digitisation?

Although some grassroots movements are gatekept and prefer a smaller audience, others operate as a group to allow artists to collectively reach a larger audience despite a lack of financial power. The internet caters for multiple mediums on its platform and allows artists to network and communicate in a manner which was not possible before, which means that

countercultural movements can use it to their advantage as it is a more democratic medium than those which came before it. There are now opportunities to share work in places where it may not have been possible before, and connections are now more easily made between people and places. This allows for new social networks to emerge and connections to be made. It also allows for arts collectives, zine makers, artists etc. to share their work independently and without the need for an outside facilitator.

7.2 Research Limitations

The research originally intended to have a different scope and range of participants, however a large number of roadblocks led the research to refocus. The researcher was limited to online access publications for much of the year, but also availed of access to physical copies of books from the libraries at University College Cork and Crawford College of Art and Design, Cork, provided by peers. The researcher later had access to the Glasgow School of Art library and the University of Glasgow library.

All the fieldwork took place over Zoom and on Miro, a whiteboard sharing platform. The workshops were also intended to have a wider range of participants. Initially, the hope was to have physical workshops in different locations across Ireland and the UK but this was not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, the pandemic did allow for a good geographic spread of participants, and also allowed for participants from different areas to have conversations which may not have been possible had the workshops not been online. There were challenges, however, with recruitment, and though the original intention of the research was to engage with more artists, there was a lack of responses from many of those contacted and this led to a reframing of the research. Though the initial participant sample did represent various different perspectives, it was quite small, and results are not entirely representative of any certain group. Some artists were involved in validating the research and so their input was included at the end of the research.

7.3 Future Research

This research's original intention was to engage with more artists and musicians than cultural journalists in order to understand how they currently find countercultural media is benefitting them. The research hoped to identify the most beneficial way for a cultural magazine to operate, in the practitioner's eyes. Future research into the topic could discuss these concerns with the wider artistic community and help to put cultural journalism more in control of those who it writes about. Otherwise, this research hopes to have given greater clarity on the issue of countercultural journalism and the online world and can offer some ideas to cultural journalists who aim to write about grassroots scenes.

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Page 15

Figure 1 - author's own

Figure 2 - author's own

Page 17

Figure 3 - author's own

Page 24

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Page 29

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Page 30

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Page 33

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Page 35

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Page 36

Figure 22 - author's own

Page 39

Figure 23 - author's own

Page 40

Figure 24 - author's own

Page 41

Figure 25 - author's own

Page 42

Figure 26 - author's own

Figure 27 - author's own

Page 44

Figure 28 - author's own

Page 45

Figure 29 - author's own

Page 49

Figure 30 - author's own

Page 51

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Page 58

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Page 60

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Page 61

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Page 63

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