

Elliat Albrecht

'Copy Machine Manifestos': five artists on their zine practices

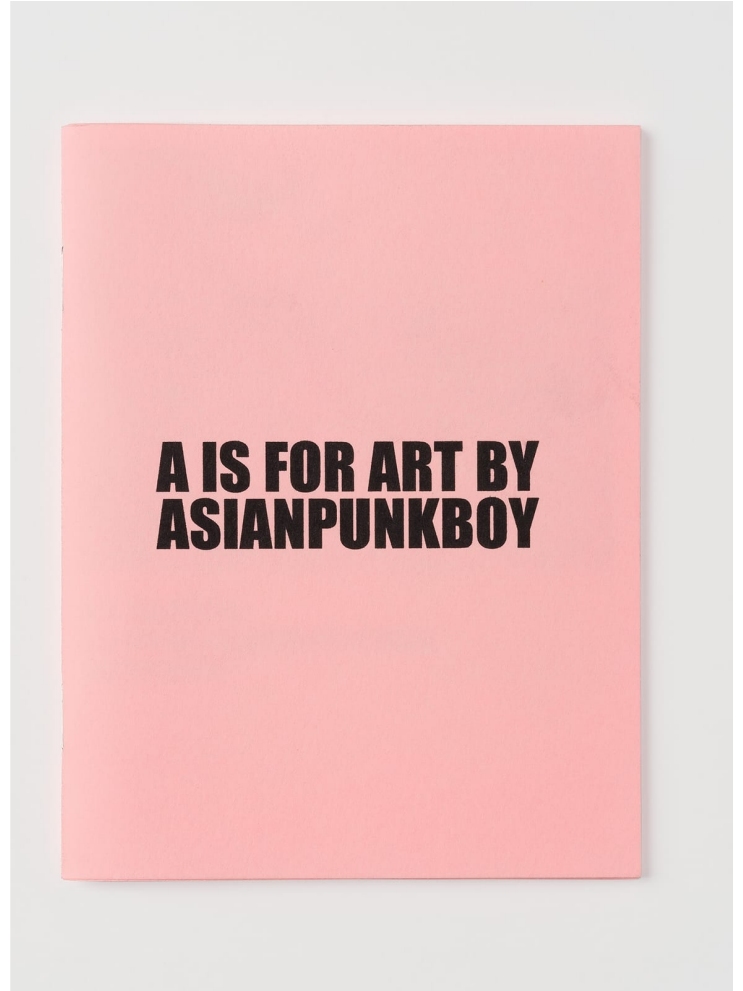
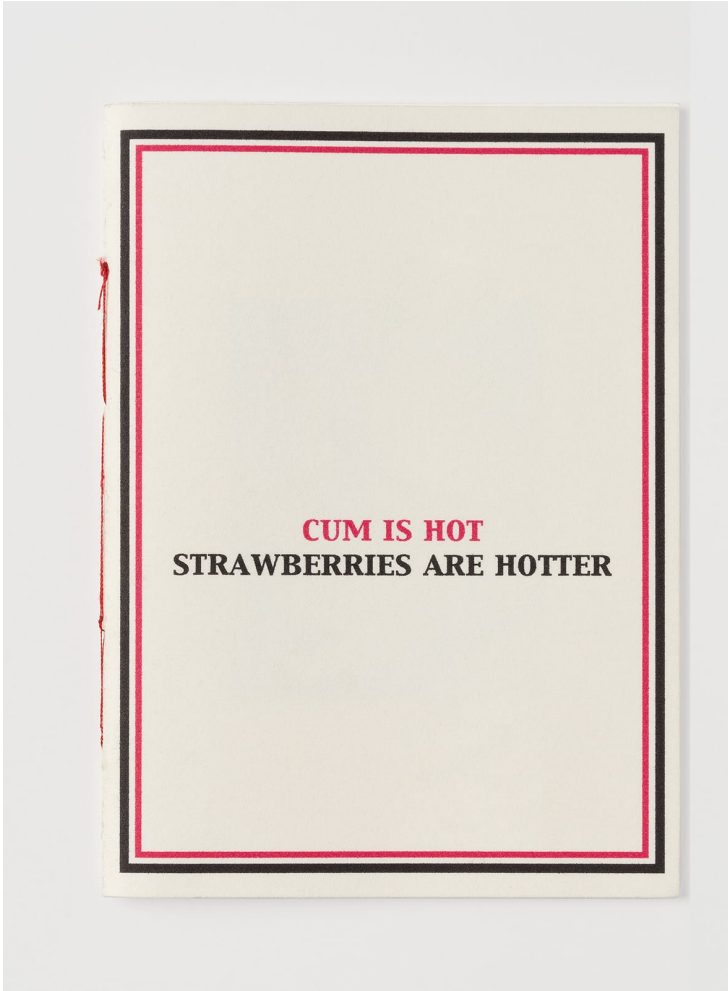
Ahead of an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum, artists including Bruce LaBruce, Maggie Lee, and Terence Koh talk about the importance of DIY publishing

When Xerox copiers entered the workplace in the 1960s, few could have foreseen that those big, buzzing machines would launch a bold new form of avant-garde expression: the zine.

Born out of access to cheap means of reproduction and a hunger for unmediated creativity, zines have been a powerful tool for artists and activists since the 1970s. They put the power of print in the hands of everyday people, who could suddenly amplify the voices of marginalized communities, underdog subcultures, and grassroots movements. Today, in a world dominated by glossy imagery and data-driven content, many artists continue to find that do-it-yourself media is more valuable than ever – a belief that is underlined in the exhibition 'Copy Machine Manifestos: Artists Who Make Zines' at the Brooklyn Museum.

Presenting over 800 objects by artists including ***Raymond Pettibon***, ***David Wojnarowicz***, Mark Gonzales, ***Vaginal Davis***, Mirha-Soleil Ross, and Neta Bomani, the show delves into the history of the zine in North America. Ahead of the opening, Art Basel asked six artists from around the world about what zines mean to their practice today.

'On a recent visit to New York, my friend tipped me off about a second-hand bookstore with lively vintage tiles and a gently haunted atmosphere – the owner mentioned a ghost cat. I was immediately drawn to a special section for zines at the back. What makes a zine successful is similar to what makes or breaks a bookstore's selection and mood: It's intentional, something only the creator(s) can make, and speaks to whatever context it draws from. In this store, I found two zines that reminded me of what fueled my early experimentations in self-publishing: an urgent need to make legible and material my interior life. No grand pronouncements, just leaving traces for someone else to find one day.'




The covers of the zines 'Cum Is Hot Strawberries Are Hotter' and 'A Is For Art By Asianpunkboy' by Terence Koh (fka asianpunkboy). Courtesy of the artist.

Terence Koh

Terence Koh is a Beijing-born Canadian artist who deals with spirituality, subculture, and sexuality through his durational performances, sculptures, installations, and digital media. For decades, Koh has been compiling photographs and texts into zines and custom books – formerly under the pseudonym 'asianpunkboy' and under his own name since 2004. When asked what motivates him to make zines in a digital age, he replied with a handwritten note:



make

Zines because its
individual energy
(thats why handwrite
all my text messages
and emails)
when we experience
a story online, it is
multi-energy, multi time,
multi space. you can read
the story anywhere, shared
at the same time too
everyone. and they can
respond back, as collective
energy, collective story
telling. but when you
hold a physical zine in
the warm embrace of
your hands, that energy
is concentrated and the
story shared in the
zine has a warmth
that no machine
can ever generate.