

Ethnographic Zines: Publishing the Field

- **Convenor:** Dr. Santiago Orrego
- **Duration:** 1 week (5 days, ~30 hours)
- **Format:** Morning (3 hrs seminar/lab) + Afternoon (3 hrs field or studio work)
- **Final Output:** 1–2 micro-zines (8–12 pages each) + 300-word reflection “*What the zine taught me about method.*”

Workshop Description

This laboratory explores the zine as an ethnographic device—a format where field encounters are not merely represented but reassembled into small, affective, and speculative publications. Zine-making transforms ethnography into a process of composition: collecting fragments, folding narratives, and layering textures to create situated modes of knowing.

Zines have long occupied a liminal zone between art, activism, and documentation. Within anthropology, their potential lies in how they destabilize conventional hierarchies of form and authority. As Kathleen Stewart (2007) shows, attention to the “ordinary affects” of everyday life opens ethnography to intensities that cannot be neatly summarized; they must be felt, arranged, and shared. Similarly, Kim Fortun (2012) invites ethnographers to embrace the late industrial condition through *inventive method*—forms of writing and making that can hold complexity and contradiction without resolving them.

Zine-making offers a material response to these calls. It aligns with what Tim Ingold (2013) describes as “thinking through making,” where form is not the result but the very process of inquiry. Each fold, cut, or juxtaposition becomes a gesture of ethnographic thought—a way of tracing relations across text, image, and texture. From a methodological perspective, the zine also echoes the curatorial experiments of critical museology (Duclos and Sánchez Criado 2018; Myers 2020) and the multimodal turn in anthropology (Collins, Durington, and Gill 2017). It asks how knowledge might circulate otherwise: cheaply, collaboratively, and tactilely.

In this workshop, participants will experiment with all stages of the zine-making process: collecting field fragments, editing, folding, sequencing, and reproducing. Rather than aiming for polished results, the emphasis lies on thinking-with materials—paper, ink, glue, photocopies, residue. Through guided exercises and collective critique, participants will

produce their own micro-zines and a collective publication that captures the textures of fieldwork as they unfold in real time.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this workshop, participants will:

1. Understand zine-making as a form of ethnographic analysis and dissemination.
2. Experiment with sequencing, layout, and material form as epistemic tools.
3. Develop critical awareness of the politics of circulation, authorship, and care.
4. Produce and publicly share their own ethnographic micro-publications.

Requirements

This laboratory welcomes participants from anthropology, art, design, and related fields. No prior experience with illustration, publishing, or design is required—only curiosity and a willingness to experiment with materials and ideas.

- **Participation:** Attendance in all sessions is essential. The workshop depends on collective discussion, peer review, and shared studio work.
- **Materials provided:** All basic materials—pencils, pens, scissors, cutters, glue, paper sheets, old magazines, and photocopies—will be available in the studio. Participants may bring additional items if they wish (personal fieldnotes, photos, or texts).
- **Technical access:** A printer or photocopier will be available for small print runs. Participants comfortable with digital layout tools (Affinity Publisher, InDesign, Canva, etc.) are welcome to use them, though analog production is encouraged.
- **Readings:** Short daily readings (30–45 minutes) will guide morning discussions and afternoon exercises.
- **Engagement:** Each participant contributes 1–2 zines, a short label, and a reflective text to the collective compilation *Field Notes Folded*.

Daily Structure

Day 1 – The Field on Paper: Zine as Ethnographic Device

Morning | Concepts & discussion

- **Read:**
 - Stewart, Kathleen. 2007. *Ordinary Affects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (Introduction)
 - Fortun, Kim. 2012. “Ethnography in Late Industrialism.” *Cultural Anthropology* 27 (3): 446–464.
- **Discussion prompts:**
 - How do “ordinary affects” (Stewart) argue for fragmentary form?
 - What counts as *inventive* in Fortun’s sense—and how might a zine hold indeterminacy without resolving it?
 - What can a folded page do that a traditional article cannot?

Afternoon | Field & studio

- 60-minute **Learning to Notice** walk. Collect 10 fragments (lines of overheard talk, textures, small photos, timestamps, micro-maps).
- Output:** A3 “field spread” of 10 annotated fragments (your raw zine matter).
- Practice references:**
- *Tarde* (selected spreads)

Day 2 – Assembling Fragments

Morning | Discussion & Technique

- Short seminar: sequencing, rhythm, and juxtaposition as analytic tools.
- Mini-exercise: rearrange fragments into three different page sequences; note changing meanings.
- Presentation: folding formats (single-sheet, 8-page, 16-page) and low-tech printing.

Reference artists/anthropologists:

- Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces* (1974)
- Silvia Margarete Lienhard, *Feldnotizen in Falten* (2020)

Afternoon | Studio Session

- Begin designing the first zine prototype.

- Combine text and image through collage, handwriting, or digital layout.
- Instructor feedback on pacing, tone, and the relation between field and form.

Output: 4–6 mock-up pages.

Day 3 – Editing, Folding, Reproducing

Morning | Workshop

- Lecture-discussion: editing as method — what to keep, what to erase, what to expose.
- Demonstration: printing, folding, and binding techniques (glue, staple, or thread).
- Peer critique: exchange drafts and write short feedback focusing on clarity and affect.

Afternoon | Production Lab

- Final editing and assembly.
- Explore the aesthetics of photocopying, scanning, and duplication (grain, overlay, misprint).

Output: printed prototype (black-and-white or risograph test).

Day 4 – Writing the Label and Circulation Ethics

Morning | Reflection

- Mini-lecture: zines as public ethnography — ethics of intimacy and exposure.
- Reading and discussion:
 - María Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care*, intro.
 - Annette Markham, “Ethics as Method” (2018).
- Write a 75-word label describing your zine and its methodological stance.

Afternoon | Peer Assembly

- Table-review session: arrange zines side by side, discuss sequencing and resonance.
- Group decision: select pages for collective compilation “*Field Notes Folded*.”

Output: labeled final zine ready for display.

Day 5 – Exhibition and Reflection

Morning | Installation

- Prepare a small exhibition or reading table with participants’ zines.
- Optional: record short video leaf-throughs for online archive.

Afternoon | Collective Reflection

- Group conversation: What did the zine make possible that writing alone did not?
- Write the 300-word reflective piece “*What the zine taught me about method.*”
- Closing circle: discuss how zine practice can integrate with ongoing ethnographic work.

Final Deliverables:

- 1–2 complete micro-zines (8–12 pages each)
- 75-word label
- 300-word reflection

References

- Collins, Samuel, Matthew Durrington, and Harjant Gill. 2017. *Networked Anthropology: A Primer for Ethnographers*. London: Routledge.
- Duclos, Vincent, and Tomás Sánchez Criado. 2020. “Care in Trouble: Ecologies of Support from Below and Beyond.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 34 (2): 153–173. <https://doi.org/10.1111/maq.12540>.
- Fortun, Kim. 2012. “Ethnography in Late Industrialism.” *Cultural Anthropology* 27 (3): 446–464. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2012.01153.x>.
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- Markham, Annette. 2018. “Ethics as Method: Doing Ethics in the Era of Big Data Research.” In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research Ethics*, edited by Ron Iphofen and Martin Tolich, 16–32. London: SAGE.
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- Perec, Georges. 2008 [1974]. *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*. Translated by John Sturrock. London: Penguin Classics.
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