

New journals showcase Detroit art scene

Michael H. Hodges, *The Detroit News* 5:45 p.m. EDT April 14, 2015



Want more proof of the quickening in the Detroit art scene? Consider the small explosion of local art journals that have popped up in the past year or two.

"It's like mushrooms after a rain," says Royal Oak artist Mary Fortuna, who edited the mid-1990s journal *Ground Up*. "I am delighted by the breadth and variety, and the something-for-everyone quality."

The newest of the bunch, *Detroit Research*, just launched a month ago, joining other recent arrivals *Infinite Mile*, *Essay'd*, *The Periphery*, *Detroit Art Review*, and *ZIPR*.

"A lot of people are talking about Detroit's potential for becoming a new artistic hub," says Dick Goody, an Oakland University art professor who's director of the university's art gallery. "So I think this runs parallel to that."

(Photo: Detroit News Illustration)

And there's a palpable desire for discussion, says Vince Carducci, who launched the online *Motown Review of*

Art in 2010.

"Anytime there's a panel about art in Detroit," Carducci says, "it's always well attended."

Still, keeping a journal going can be difficult. Just ask the following publications, all deceased, from the past 40 years — *Detroit Artist Monthly*, *Dialogue*, *Detroit Focus Quarterly* and the aforementioned *Ground Up*.

"Sometimes these things only have two or three issues," Goody says. "That's the hard part — making something that will have years of volumes."

Detroit Research

Detroit Research (detroitresearch.org) was started by Michael Stone-Richards, a London-born professor of art history, philosophy and English at the College for Creative Studies.

The twice-a-year publication, which appears both in print and online, is the most academic — and longest — of the new publications. Their first issue, released last month, is 245 pages.

The aim, says Stone-Richards, "is to place what's emerging in Detroit in a national and international framework." Every issue will have a guest editor, feature a specific Detroit artist (the first was sculptor and photographer Scott Hocking) and describe a significant local art collection.

The inaugural issue includes pieces by artists Hocking, Addie Langford and Biba Bell.

Detroit Research sells for \$15 for students and \$25 for everyone else. It is available at several galleries, as well as Source Booksellers and the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit.

Not close to any of those outlets? You'll also find the issue on the journal's website designed by Curtis McGuire.

Infinite Mile

New York City refugees Jennifer Junkermeier and Stephen Garrett Dewyer launched the online *Infinite Mile* (infinitemiledetroit.com) in December 2013.

The name involves an oblique, cool Detroit reference. Tip the eight in "8 Mile" on its side, and you get the mathematical symbol for infinity — and the journal's logo.

The pair started the publication because it seemed like only mainstream galleries got reviewed in local publications.

"We cover those as well," says Dewyer, who grew up in Bloomfield Hills, "but also some of the smaller venues." The magazine comes out monthly, with six articles every issue. They also put out a print anthology with all of last year's essays.

"We see ourselves as a collective," Junkermeier says. "At this point, we have 70-plus contributors. So it's not about our agenda. It's about the people participating in the Detroit arts-and-culture scene."

A series of articles through June will cover the issue of art and gentrification.

As far as writers go, Dewyer and Junkermeier look for wide-ranging viewpoints. "We have yet to have a janitor from an art institution write for us," he says, "but we aim for a real mix."

Junkermeier attributes the recent multiplication of journals to Detroit's new creative ferment.

"I love everything that's happening here," she says, "and am constantly trying to get people to move to Detroit, because I think they'll be so excited."

Essay'd

Steve Panton, founder of Hamtramck's 9338 Campau gallery, launched the online-only Essay'd (essayd.org) late last year.

"Our premise is pretty simple," says the British-born Panton. "We publish one short essay on a Detroit artist by a Detroit writer every 10 days — or three essays per month. Writers are restricted to one page in length, about 600 words."

Why so short?

"It's a nice digestible length for the reader," he says. "And from writer's perspective, it really makes you focus."

Unlike most of the other new journals, which rely on many contributors, Essay'd has a core group of writers — Panton, and art critics Dennis A. Nawrocki, Rosie Sharp and Matthew Piper.

If Detroit Research waxes academic and theoretical, Essay'd is anything but.

Panton quotes his favorite Nawrocki injunction, which sets the tone for the entire publication: "Write about the work. Don't go off on what you think the piece is about. Start by writing concretely."

The aim, Panton says, is to reach a broad audience. "But I think even people who go to a lot of events and openings," he adds, "will also learn something."

ZIPR: Zenith Index of Public Record

Graphic artist Jason Reed started ZIPR ("zipper") in December, with an issue dedicated to the late artist and College for Creative Studies professor Gilda Snowden.

Like Detroit Research, ZIPR (zipmag.com) appears online and in print. But the latter, available for free at 30 Detroit locales including coffeehouses and museums, includes special treats not available on the web, like the page in each issue with cool, peel-off stickers.

"It's really all about the tangible, print product," says Reed, who's also the owner of Detroit's Start Gallery.

The journal's purpose, he adds, is simple. "We're trying to attract people to Detroit to experience art." Subjects covered range from exhibitions to artist profiles to commentary, and, so far, have mostly been written by local artists.

Helpfully, every issue includes a local gallery guide.

So far, ZIPR's only been available in Detroit. But starting next month, there will be eight new distribution points in the Detroit suburbs — as well as Berlin.

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