

Zinesters unite

Blackbird DIY art show previews upcoming Chico festival

Of the many offspring of print technology, the zine remains one of the most vital and interesting. Thanks to the ubiquity of desktop

story and photo by
Carey Wilson

Review:
DIY-ers Unite! shows through Aug. 31. Reception Friday, Aug. 23, 7-9 p.m. Also, next month: Chico Zine Fest, Sept. 28, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Blackbird
1431 Park Ave.
433-1577
facebook.com/blackbirdchico

printers and the affordability of photocopying, even those with relatively limited funds can craft their visions into publications that can be produced for little cash outlay. The zine is thus a do-it-yourself artform/outlet available to those with an urge to examine and express their points of view in print without having to depend on established commercial mechanisms. With distribution often being as much of a challenge as creation, venues like Chico's Blackbird—a combination community meeting space, cafe, gallery and bookstore specializing in nonmainstream literary and sociological works—are vital to the dissemination of such small-scale endeavors. And for the month of August, in addition to its usual selection of zines, Blackbird also will showcase the group art



"Max Boil," acrylic painting by Alexander Lynch.

to any individual with an interest in DIY, print and zine culture," Moreno said. "We didn't feel the need to limit anyone that was willing to participate, and so this is why we have different mediums up on display, from zines to framed collaged artwork, paintings, prints and even works including found objects."

The Blackbird space provides a suitably homey, intimate setting for displaying the pieces submitted for the *DIY-ers* show. In fact, some of the pieces—such as Will Bryant's series of contemplative hand-drawn color postcards ("Get Off the Internet") and Alex Hilsee's delightful black-and-white drawings ("A Baba Yaga Gaga Christmas Story")—are small enough to be posted on the wooden columns that frame the entryway of the space that was once a home.

Other drawings and paintings in frames cover the walls and dot the end tables of the gallery proper. Of course, there also are the zines themselves, each a self-contained art show. Those currently on offer at Blackbird cover a wide range of topics and aesthetic approaches. On one end of the spectrum, there's "Housing for All, How We Made It Happen," a photocopied and stapled collection of kids' drawings produced by a children's workshop given by the North Valley Childcare Collective. And on the other end is the well-known, professionally typeset and designed "Razorcake," an impressive music zine full of essays, interviews and commentary on the current state of DIY punk music.

Anyone interested in humanistic, rather than capitalistic, art should make their way to Blackbird for the exhibit's reception this Friday (Aug. 23) to experience local performers Scout, Calvin Black and Leonel Castillo-Ferreira offering musical examples of the aesthetic to complement the DIY show.

show *DIY-ers Unite!* The exhibit features works by local and out-of-town zine-makers and is being presented as a preview of Chico Zine Fest, a day featuring zine creators, vendors, speakers and workshops at Blackbird Sept. 28.

The festival and the current exhibit are the brainchild of artist Kristy Moreno, a So Cal transplant who was inspired by Blackbird when she moved here to attend Chico State last year. "[I] started checking out their books and noticed that they had a zine selection on the shelves. I thought it was super rad that they actually had a zine library, and [I] knew that the zine world must be alive in Chico," Moreno said by email.

After receiving encouragement from Blackbird to pursue a festival, Moreno contacted Aimee Murillo, a friend who organizes the OC Zine Fest in Orange County: "We spoke she gave me some wonderful advice on so many aspects to running the event, and said that I was already on a great start being that I had landed the location already."

With the ball rolling, ideas began to coalesce, including the addition of the preliminary art show. "This idea snowballed into not just including zine-based artwork—which can include photocopied, paper-based art and collaged artwork—but is open

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