

Thompson's pad gives launch to lil Zine Fair

ART: The one-day event celebrates Londoners' self-published artist books, most of which go for \$2 or \$3

By **JAMES REANEY**, THE LONDON FREE PRESS

Last Updated: 13th November 2009, 10:44am



Peter Thompson is helping to organize a zine fest in London. (MORRIS LAMONT/Sun Media)

London artist Peter Thompson is in the right place when it comes to the Best lil Zine Fair in London.

As a Forest City Gallery board member, Thompson has been in a good spot to help promote the idea of a one-day fair celebrating zines or self-published artist books.

As the artist with the apartment upstairs from the Richmond St. gallery, the BealArt grad has the room to provide the main space for tomorrow's zine fair.

"Zines are generally very affordable, like \$2 or \$3. A very expensive zine would be \$10," Thompson says. "I'll have some zines of my drawings, which are cartoony, pop arty kind of stuff."

In addition to providing the idea and the zine space, Thompson also produced the poster -- with characteristic imagery -- for the fair.

Often photocopied and inspired by the comic book tradition, zines have been the starting point for many younger London artists, like Thompson, says Forest City Gallery director Jason Schiedel.

"It's like an art fair, but it is so condensed. You get so many different (perspectives) in one room," Schiedel says.

A major exhibition continues to dominate the gallery's main floor. There will be some tables for zine works in that area. Most of the fair will be upstairs at Thompson's place. It's the first edition of a fair that may become an annual affair.

Primarily a visual artist, Thompson is also active in music, like others on the zine scene. As a laptop musician, Thompson teams with London hip-hopper Thesis Sahib (London artist and zine fair participant James Kirkpatrick) in the electronic duo Brain Trust. Thompson is also part of the London dreamscape/"space rox" band Los Hechiceros.

Even if the format or media differ, those "cartoony" images of Thompson's zines on display tomorrow are similar to the ones found in Thompson's "fine art."

Along with works by Kirkpatrick and others, Thompson's "completed, fine art," is part of a hit touring exhibition Pulp Fiction.

Organized by Museum London in 2008 and curated by Corinna Ghaznavi, Pulp Fiction drew raves at its recent stop at Toronto's Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art. Early next year, Pulp Fiction reaches the gallery at Halifax's St. Mary's University. Thompson and Kirkpatrick are to travel to Nova Scotia to discuss the exhibition in February.

Thompson also publishes work with Montreal-based Drawn & Quarterly, one of the most influential art and literary comics publishers in the world.

"I've been drawing as long as I can remember," says Thompson, who attended Cleardale public school as an emerging artist.

"I meant to get a BFA somewhere. I just never got around to it," he says.

"I don't think I'll bother now."

Zines are for kids of all ages

Zines (taken from fanzine, or magazine) are self-published artist books produced in limited quantities. Affordable, eclectic, entertaining and rare, zines offer a refreshing alternative to mainstream media and kids of all ages love them! A wide range of subjects are represented, from comic-inspired imagery to personal tales to all varieties of drawing and collage.

Jason Schiedel, Forest City Gallery

IF YOU GO

What: The first Best lil Zine Fair in London, a gathering of more than a dozen artists with musical guests. London artists include Peter Thompson, Jamie Q and James Kirkpatrick. Musical guests include London's Cailen Dye (of Exit 2012) and Ohio's Michael Ramey (of Golden Death Music), Art Pratten (Nihilist Spasm Band) with Toronto-Windsor's Alan Bloor (known as the noise performer Knurl). Also expected is an ambient set by London's Noise Level.

When: Tomorrow, noon to 6

Where: Forest City Gallery, 258 Richmond St. (north of Horton)

Details: Admission is free, zines and other works for sale. visit www.forestcitygallery.ca or call 519-4345875

James Reaney is a Free Press columnist covering arts & entertainment.