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Illustrator Cara Luddy shows her work and talks about her zine-making process at the Zine Swap on Saturday.

Photo: Stephanie Jade Wong

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Syracuse non-profit organizations host first Zine Swap

By Stephanie Jade Wong
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Syracuse in Print and Light Work hosted a zine swap at Light Work on Saturday. A zine (pronounced, "zeen") is a mini magazine.

People of all ages trickled into Light Work through gusty winds for a rainy day Zine Swap on Saturday afternoon.

Syracuse in Print, a non-profit organization inspired by do-it-yourself publishing, co-hosted the event with Light Work, a non-profit photography organization. Jason Luther and Patrick Williams, both 38, founded Syracuse in Print after being inspired by zine festivals around the country. "Zines offer this possibility for people who never thought they could publish themselves," Luther said. "It's kind of a simple idea. You just put it together, photocopy it, and distribute it."

Williams and Luther said they have been involved in the zine culture and making zines since they were teenagers. "I think all along we've been interested in both the people that are producing and trading these zines and small publications," Williams said. "But we're also interested in getting people who aren't [making zines] to start."

The event started with four guest speakers: bookbinder Peter Verheyen, zine maker Ryan Canavan, illustrator Cara Luddy, and artist Mark Mulrone. They talked about topics ranging from how they bind zines, what they write about, and the process that goes into creating a print product. They presented zines they made to attendees, who flipped through numerous tangible creations.

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Luddy, who is influenced by feminism and human rights, said it's liberating to make zines. The 23-year-old freelance illustrator got her start when she studied illustration at Syracuse University; she said she had a story and wanted it mass-produced. "A lot of young women have reached out to me and said they enjoy my work, and that means a lot to me," Luddy said.

Tangible products are still popular in an era where the Internet is taking over. A few of the attendees chimed in with their thoughts about online commenters and the power of print content.

Taro Takizawa, a second year printmaking grad student, said the Zine Swap was informative because he has made books before, but not zines. Takizawa said he liked that the event brought people from different fields together, such as writers and book artists.

"I wish there were more bridges where we can connect like that," Takizawa said. "This kind of event helps."

Luther said he'd like to plan a workshop in the spring. "I'd love to see the people who were here today come back," he said. Williams said Syracuse in Print is not only interested in gathering people who already make zines, but also for those who haven't made zines before.

"I think it's interesting that such a small little pamphlet can have such a big impact," Luddy said. "This is like a gun for some people. This is a powerful format."

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