

This Must Be the Place

Zines as Personal Media Archaeology

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In the spring of 2003 I drove with my mom from the suburbs to the Montrose area of Houston, Texas to buy zines from Sound Exchange—the one place I knew that sold them—so that I could send some sample reviews to Punk Planet magazine (1994-2007). Sound Exchange is a vinyl record store that first opened in 1979 and was located in a two-story red brick house at the corner of Richmond Avenue from 1998 until 2019 when it moved to Second Ward in Houston's East End neighborhood. Like many other places in Houston, the lot was bought by a developer for new construction. As a writer and zinester who has lived the majority of my life in Houston I now find myself meditating on the passage of time and how to reflect the felt value of such spaces in zine form (Watson & Bennet, 2021). After a long hiatus and many life changes I began creating zines again in 2022. I am drawn to the one-page format in particular as it is both easy to complete and assemble and because it allows me to create a uniquely distilled physical object in today's primarily digital landscape (Blake, 2020). Further, I am inspired by the viral social media trend (Picaro, 2025) that uses Google Maps Street View to find images of deceased relatives, old houses, and other nostalgic glimpses of the past (Hu, 2020). This paper will use my recent zines about Houston as examples of how the form can be used to create a landscape of personal media archaeology.