

# William Petrie Graduate Student Library Scholarship 2017 Recipient

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## Award-winning Essay

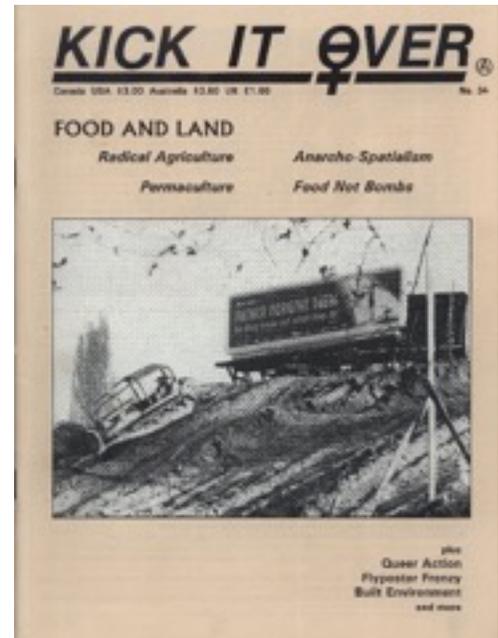
### Digging Deep into Anarchist Art History in the University of Victoria's Special Collections

I began the first day of my MA in English Literature in the University of Victoria's Special Collections seminar room. English 500, a Research Methods course taught by Dr. Alison Chapman would—for the first year ever—pair MA students up with a collection or book of their choice to analyze for eventual uploading via the online library archive platform, Omeka. The four-month long project required students to pour over their special collections book of choice for metadata, differences in iterations, clues about the author, and of course, required English students to do what they do best: close read chosen texts with a finely attuned eye to historical detail and literary aesthetics.

On that first day in the Special Collections seminar room, I decided that I wanted to examine contemporary text (not what one might assume a special collections archive holds!) that suited my taste in literatures of dissent and resistance. After a little online sleuthing, and much help

from the Special Collections staff, I discovered the *Kick it Over* collection compiled neatly in boxes and stored deep in the library archives. *Kick it Over* is a Canadian anarchist magazine published between 1982 and 1994 by the underground, anonymous Kick it Over collective. Issues boast DIY culture-inspired art, political cartoons, hand-drawn sketches, and photographs of rallies (examples of which are included in this essay). I was enthralled. The sheer volume of issues owned by Special Collections provided a range of written material, from anarchist poetry and long-form features to in-magazine discussion forums.

I was, in essence, given the privilege of mining a rich resource of radical, politicized material. After pouring over dozens of issues, I focused my analysis on Issue 34—a “Food and Land” issue that explores topics including permaculture and sustainable food production, and profiles organizations such as Food Not Bombs.



Once my initial research was complete, I used the data garnered from Special Collections to craft an archival website page detailing:

- 1) The social, political, and historical contextualization of *Kick it Over*
- 2) Anarchist creative resistance and artistic cultural production
- 3) Anarcho-poiesis (the imaginative and creative power of anarchism) and
- 4) Anarchist literary aesthetics

*To view more of the beautiful artwork in Kick it Over, and read more about the collection, please see this link to view the page:*

<http://omeka.library.uvic.ca/exhibits/show/movable-type/the-book/kick-it-over-main-page>

My research revolved around an examination of the anarchist as key producer of culture and art, and delved into the literature and artwork of queered anarchist creative resistance (which was important for me to study as a queer graduate student). On our last day of class, I presented my research alongside my peers—but our projects weren't officially complete until the webpages went live this spring.

By exploring and mining the Special Collections resources, I was given an opportunity to share a quietly important collection that I feel is vital to researchers in the fields of Art History, Fine Arts, Creative Writing, Gender Studies, and English at the University of Victoria. I am proud to

share that after the completion of my project, I reached out to leading anarchist scholar and UVic Art History professor Dr. Allan Antliff, who suggested that I compile my findings into a formal scholarly paper for peer review by the *Journal of Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies*. Ultimately, I anticipate that the small treasure trove of anarchist material I found will reach far beyond the scope of our university, and hopefully will inspire and assist in the research and artwork of other activists and scholars.

