



REVOLUTIONARY DRESS
PRESENTS

THE

PUNK

MOVEMENT



THIS IS REVOLUT DRESS

The top section of the image features the text 'THIS IS REVOLUT DRESS' in a large, bold, purple, sans-serif font. To the right of the text, there are two light purple illustrations: a safety pin at the top right and a boot at the bottom right.

A collection and conversation about social and political movements through the lens of what people wore. We're looking at the ways dress has been used as a strategic tool of politics, protest, resistance and revolution, across countries, cultures, and communities of the past and today.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION & MORE ZINES LIKE
THIS ONE VISIT *(insert url here)!***



TIONARY



DRESS is a powerful window into so many aspects of human life and behavior. By studying what people wore, we can look for clues that help us understand their daily experiences, beliefs, values, social structures and so much more. We can use what we've learned about past people and movements to inform our choices today, and better recognize how our dress can be one tool amongst many in our collective fight toward liberation.

NO, WE DON'T MEAN THAT KIND OF DRESS. While a dress is a specific kind of garment in which a top and skirt are connected in one piece of clothing, dress can also be much broader than that. Dress includes all aspects of how someone presents themselves: including clothing, shoes, jewelry, hair, tattoos, perfumes, and other accessories like headwear or bags. Just like "getting dressed" doesn't always mean putting on a literal dress, dress can apply to all aspects of how you look and how others perceive you.



Put on your ripped jeans and break out your studded belt, we're headed to the late 1970s, where this new craze called punk is sweeping through Britain's youth like wildfire—and it's got parents and adults everywhere hoping it's just a phase. But the wild hairstyles and rebellious music of the punk scene are much more than that. The roots of the punk movement are political and represent lifestyles, critical perspectives and cultures that are still very much alive to this day.

THINGS IN LATE-1970S BRITAIN ARE LOOKING

PRETTY GRIM. The economy is failing. High inflation means that everyday items cost a lot of money, but jobs aren't increasing workers' pay to match. Workers' unions are going on strike asking for higher wages, and certain jobs are going undone. Garbage piles up in the streets when sanitation workers strike. The dead go unburied when funeral workers strike. And all of this unrest is hitting Britain's poor and working class folks the hardest, leaving them struggling to get by.



At the same time, young people are feeling frustrated that the older generations left them without a lot of hope and with fewer chances at success as they grow up. This group of youth feels angry with the British government for hoarding wealth and not doing more to help those who need it most, especially during such economic turmoil.



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Meanwhile, across the ocean in New York City, a new, amateur genre of rock is growing more popular amongst youth, and it doesn't take long for young British bands to follow suit and mimic the same sounds. These new rock bands enter the British scene and start expressing their frustrations through their music and fashion. A lot of teens and young adults feel seen and turn to this blossoming **subculture** for a sense of community and an outlet for their outrage.

SUBCULTURE: a group of people whose opinions and/or interests are different from larger, more mainstream culture

This subculture of music and fashion gets labeled "punk-rock," meant as an insult by music industry critics, who scoff at these young bands and their apparent lack of musical skill, as well as their tendency to dress like outcasts or trouble-makers,⁵ as the word "punk" has a history of being used in harmful and negative ways.³ Initially, a lot of punk bands don't embrace the name.

"The rebellious part of it is really important. Because people get too complacent. I think that the fight against that complacency is **PUNK ROCK.**"⁵

JIM JARMUSCH

Indie film director

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"**EVERYONE THINKS ENGLAND INVENTED PUNK.** Rubbish. But they were smart enough to give it a look...It wasn't invented here [in London], they just gave it a style. Which is not to be sniffed at, 'cause that combination of music and style is a deadly combination."⁸

DON LETTS

director of *Punk Attitude*

"The **POLITICAL SOCIAL CLIMATE** at the time in the 70s was crucial to the formation of punk rock."⁵



POLY STYRENE

singer/frontwoman of X-Ray Spex



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"PEOPLE DIDN'T LIKE YOU FOR BEING A PUNK. We wanted to undermine the establishment. We didn't want to accept the values of this older generation."⁶

VIVIENNE WESTWOOD



PUNK MUSIC

While the punk music scene first emerges in New York City, London is the birthplace of the iconic punk style we recognize today.⁸ British bands like the Sex Pistols and The Clash, connect the aesthetics and style of punk culture with controversial political criticisms of the British government and wealthy classes. The Clash are particularly known for their songs describing racial tensions, criticizing war efforts abroad, and relating to unemployment and other daily struggles living in Britain's failing economy.⁴

Punk bands become the voice of the punk movement, something for young people to rally around. Dressing in punk styles is a way for youth to express not only that they enjoy punk music, but that they hold a lot of the same political and social critiques of government and British society.



VIVIENNE WESTWOOD

Designer Vivienne Westwood rises in popularity from the epicenter of the punk movement, and she is pivotal in defining the punk aesthetic, along with her partner Malcolm McLaren. Her earliest designs are meant to shock and put political dissent on display with graphic t-shirts that have slogans and imagery like “God Save the Queen” pictured with Queen Elizabeth with a safety pin through her nose, and “Anarchists are Pretty.”⁶ Westwood’s designs are expensive, but they’re also easy to replicate. It doesn’t take long for her high-end styles to trickle down into the street fashion of youth who achieve similar looks by altering their own clothes.⁸



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Punk style develops from attitudes of discontent and growing disdain for the systems that cause the economic, political and social failures of the time. Because punk is often more about expressing attitudes and ideas than having a specific uniform, punk dress varies greatly depending on the wearer.⁷ But there are common threads throughout that can give us a better idea of what this movement is all about.



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"The spirit was totally DIY; from the clothing to the hair to the music. The styles reflected the music ... The point of the style was to clash against the contemporary styles of the time. It wasn't fashion but the complete opposite—
IT WAS ANTI-FASHION."²

SNOOKY BALLOMO

punk, co-founder of Manic Panic
(on right in photo 17)



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ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT

RESISTING CULTURAL NORMS

Punk youth feel as though the British government and older generations have failed them and left them with little hope for the future. These sentiments lead to a disregard for British leadership, as well as a desire to push back on what is considered “respectable” dress and traditional beauty standards at the time. Graphic t-shirts with controversial sayings and taboo imagery are popular. Body modifications like facial piercings and tattoos, as well as radical hairstyles like mohawks and spikes in bright colors all mark youth’s dismissal of societal expectations.

DIY, MODIFICATION

& ANTI-CAPITALISM



With the British economy struggling, the youth don't have much money to spend on high fashion or trendy clothing, and they begin to resent the idea that clothes need to cost a lot of money to be considered stylish. "Do it yourself" (DIY) fashion, also known by the French word *bricolage*, gives punk youth a chance to express themselves in unique, more affordable ways.² Distressed jeans, ripped t-shirts and customized jackets with paint or pins allow for youth to communicate their individuality and feel stylish, while still making known their anti-fashion and anti-capitalist feelings.



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CRITICAL ANGER

Punk youth display their anger at the systems and people who have let them down with garments and accessories that evoke images of aggression.² Belts, necklaces and bracelets with spikes, studs or chains are common. Safety pins are an accessible and cheap accessory that add an edge to any garment. Combat boots and leather jackets are worn in reference to military uniforms and meant to evoke a sense of rebellion or revolt. Black clothing and dark attire is also the norm.



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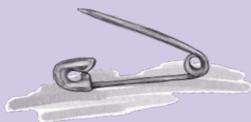
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Punk in its original form is a relatively short-lived phenomenon, just a couple of years in the late 1970s.⁵ As punk spreads amongst Britain's youth and throughout Europe and the US, elements of the music and style become more mainstream, trendy and "cool" and begin to lose their connections to the political and economic criticisms that fueled the culture in the first place. And when punk becomes mainstream cool, it becomes less appealing to a lot of the first people to adopt the style.²





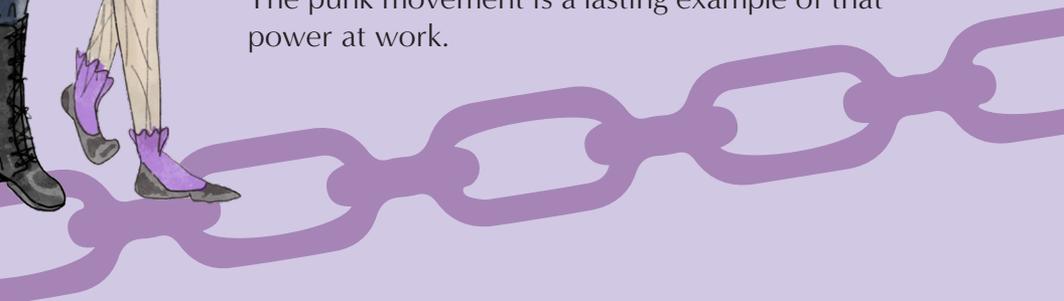
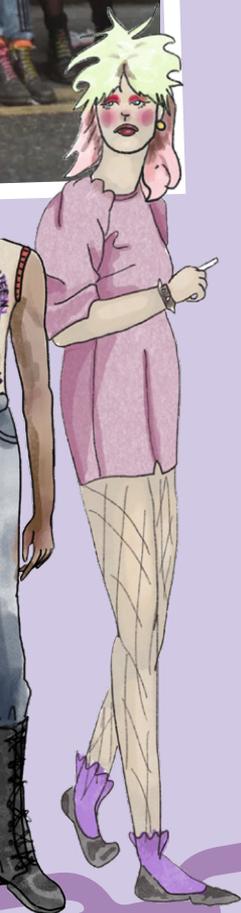
Donning punk dress is unifying for young people who feel especially ignored, marginalized and hopeless in mainstream culture. Punk music and style create community, and it becomes the uniform of a people fed up with systems that disenfranchise so many. It allows young folks to express their political opinions, deemed controversial and taboo by their elders, in a public way, and in doing so, their critiques of society became the subject of more public conversation. While the punk movement does not include a lot of direct political action or advocate for specific policy change, it marks a time of widespread youth rebellion and freedom from cultural restraints put on them by older generations.

"AS LONG AS THERE ARE REBELS, NON-CONFORMISTS, AND CREATIVE PEOPLE, PUNK STYLE WILL ALWAYS BE A PART OF FASHION."²

SNOOKY BALLOMO

punk, co-founder of Manic Panic

Today, punk style can still be seen in countless different variations across countries and cultures.² While not everyone who wears punk styles today holds the same political beliefs of the founding movement, the legacy of punk as counter-cultural and a community for outsiders remains. There is always power in youth rallying together to push back on societal norms and resist marginalization. The punk movement is a lasting example of that power at work.



REFLEC



Punk culture began with youth who felt like older generations left them without a lot of hope for the future or chances for success as they grew up. They felt like those in power weren't listening to their calls for change.

CAN YOU RELATE TO THESE FEELINGS? WHY/WHY NOT?



TION



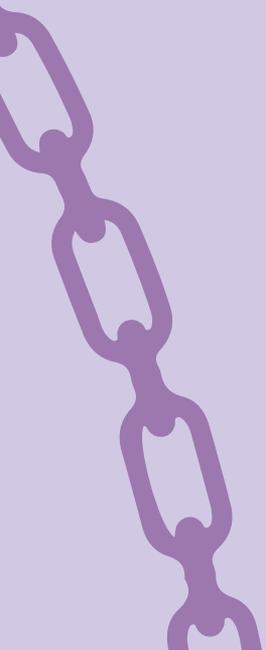
Punk youth expressed their feelings and beliefs through their dress, often pushing the boundaries of what was socially acceptable in order to make a statement.

IF YOU COULD SAY ANYTHING YOU WANTED WITH YOUR CLOTHING, WHAT STATEMENT WOULD YOU WANT TO MAKE? What kind of clothes would you wear to make that statement?





We learned that “do it yourself” (DIY) was popular in punk style, especially among youth who couldn’t afford all the latest trends. They would rip up t-shirts and jeans, paint their own messages on shirts and denim jackets, and add pins and buttons to their clothing. What kinds of phrases or images would you put on a t-shirt or a button to express your beliefs, ideas or passions? **BRAINSTORM SOME IDEAS BELOW.**





Buttons are a simple way to express how you feel, celebrate things you love or state something you believe. They can be pinned on jackets, backpacks and more to make your outfit more unique to you!

USE SOME OF THE PHRASES AND IMAGES YOU BRAINSTORMED AND TURN THEM INTO BUTTON DESIGNS IN THE CIRCLES ABOVE.

(Remember, 1-3 words works best in a small space!)

CREATE

DIY BOTTLE CAP BUTTONS

YOU'LL NEED

- ⚡ safety pins
- ⚡ bottle caps (plastic or metal)
- ⚡ nail
- ⚡ hammer
- ⚡ paints, nail polish and/or markers

STEP BY STEP

- ⚡ Place a nail inside the lip of your first bottle cap and set on a stable, sturdy surface (ie. cutting board).
- ⚡ Tap the blunt side of your nail with a hammer until the tip of the nail pierces the bottle cap, leaving a small hole.
- ⚡ Repeat in the lip of the bottlecap directly across from the first hole.
- ⚡ Slide the safety pin through both holes.
- ⚡ Use paint, nail polish or markers to decorate the front side!





MEET THE ILLUSTRATOR

BENJAMIN ROSENTHAL

Benjamin (they/them) is a multidisciplinary artist who focuses on identity and emotional connection through wearable and digital art. Clothing and illustration become their most common forms of expression.



DIG DEEPER!

READ

1. *Critical Fashion Practice: From Westwood to van Beirendonck*, Adam Geczy & Vicki Karaminas
2. *Punk Style*, Monica Sklar
3. "Punk and Its Afterlives," Brown, Deer, Nyong'ó, *Social Text*
4. "Punk, Politics and Youth Culture, 1976-84," Matthew Worley

WATCH

5. *Punk Attitude* (2005)
6. *Westwood: Punk. Icon. Activist.* (2018)

LISTEN

7. *Dressed*
 - Punk Style, an Interview with Monica Sklar (2019)
 - Rebel Threads, an Interview with Roger Burton, Parts I & II (2018)
8. *Articles of Interest*
 - #6 Punk Style (2018)

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover: Elisa Leonelli, Shutterstock (1977); Derek Ridgers (1970s); *unknown*; David Montgomery, Getty Images (1977) **1.** Derek Ridgers (1970s) **2.** Anita Corbin (1980) **3.** *Squatparty*, Britain on Film (1980) **4.** Getty Images (1979) **5.** CVLTNation/Hardcore Old School Europe (1980s) **6.** Rex, Everett Collection (1984) **7.** Erica Echenberg, Redfern (1977) **8.** Falcon Stuart (n/d) **9.** Getty Images (1976) **10.** Ian Dickson, Shutterstock (1975) **11.** Staff, Getty Images (1976) **12.** Rex (1976) **13.** Elisa Leonelli, Shutterstock (1977) **14.** *The Punk Kebab*, Britain on Film (1977) **15.** Getty Images (1992) **16.** Derek Ridgers (1970s) **17.** Paula Gately Tillman **18.** Metropolitan Museum of Art **19.** *Death Is Their Destiny*, Britain on Film (1978) **20.** Derek Ridgers (1970s) **21.** Virginia Turbett, Redferns (n/d) **22.** M. McKeown, Getty Images (1983) **23.** CVLTNation/Hardcore Old School Europe (1980s) **24.** Virginia Turbett, Redferns (n/d) **25.** Ted Polhemus, PYMCA (1983) **26.** Blackham Images **27.** Derek Ridgers (1970s) **28.** Chris Parker, PYMCA (n/d) **29.** *Death Is Their Destiny*, Britain on Film (1978)