

## Thee Undertakers



Photo: Angie Garcia



Photo: Edward Colver



Photo: Wild Don Lewis

# EASTSIDE PUNKS

## A Screening and Conversation

Thursday, April 22, 2021, at 7 p.m.

Live via Zoom

University of Southern California

### WHAT TO KNOW

- *Eastside Punks* is a series of documentary shorts produced by *Razorcake* magazine about the first generation of East L.A. punk, circa the late 1970s and early '80s
- This event includes excerpts from *Eastside Punks* and a panel discussion with members of several of the featured bands: Thee Undertakers, The Brat, and the Stains
- *Razorcake* is an L.A.-based DIY punk zine

### ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

**Jimmy Alvarado** (*Eastside Punks* director) has been active in East L.A.'s underground music scene since 1981 as a musician, backyard gig promoter, writer, poet, bouncer, flyer artist, photographer, podcaster, historian, and filmmaker. He has authored numerous interviews, articles, and short films spotlighting the Eastside scene. He plays guitar in the bands La Tuya and Our Band Sucks.

**Teresa Covarrubias** was the vocalist for The Brat. Their debut EP, *Attitudes*, was released on The Plugz' record label, featured contributions from John Doe and Exene from X, and is a prized item among collectors. *Straight Outta East L.A.*, a double album packaging it with other rare tracks, was released in 2017.

**Tracy "Skull" Garcia** was the bass player of Thee Undertakers. Starting off by playing local parties in 1977, they became regulars in the scene centered around the Vex. Their 1981 debut album, *Crucify Me*, successfully melded second-wave hardcore bite with first-wave art sensibilities, but wasn't released until 2001 on CD and 2020 on vinyl.

**Jack Rivera** drummed for the Stains, East L.A.'s first, most notorious, and highly influential punk band. The Stains were contemporaries and friends of Los Angeles first-wave bands Germs, X, Mau Maus, Screamers, and The Gears. Their out-of-print, self-titled album on SST Records is a holy grail among punk, hardcore, and metal record collectors. After the band broke up, Rivera switched to guitar and is now a successful songwriter and solo artist touring the U.S. and Europe.

**Dino Everett** (moderator) is the footage archivist of the *Eastside Punks* documentary series and runs the Hugh M. Hefner Moving Image Archive at the USC School of Cinematic Arts, which contains the Punk Media Research Collection (PMRC). Everett has published and presented articles in the moving image field and film history and, as a founding member and bass player of the L.A. punk band The Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, has backed up many first-wave punks such as Wayne Kramer, Sylvain Sylvain, and Walter Lure.

## PUNK

It's pretty un-punk to try and define punk, but for whatever it's worth, some defining characteristics and key facts:

Punk coalesced as a scene / movement / aesthetic / ideology in the U.K. and the U.S. in the late 1970s, and has taken on lots of different forms in lots of different places since then.

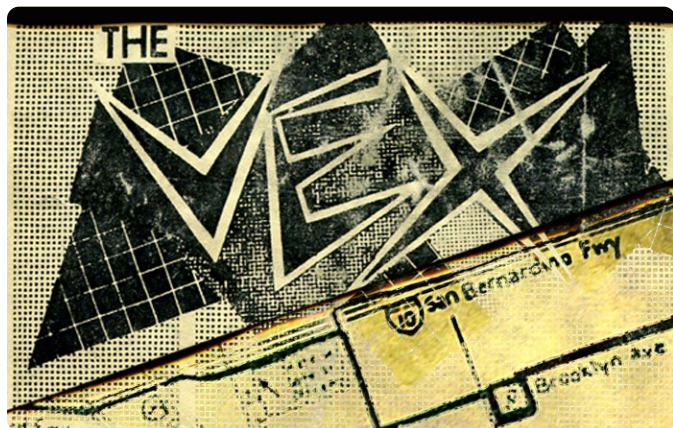
Punk music is known for being stripped-down, aggressive, and rebellious. Punk musicians may be self-taught or (proudly) may not actually know how to play their instruments at all. The punk ethic and aesthetic—which is embodied not only in music but also fashion, visual art, zines, and more—celebrates DIY, independence, non-conformity, and often anti-establishment politics.

## THE VEX, AND THE VENUES IN THE BACKYARD

The longest-running venue of the East L.A. punk scene of the late 1970s and early '80s was Club Vex, originally located above the community art center Self-Help Graphics & Art. The Vex moved multiple times, and was part of an ecosystem of punk venues that importantly included lots of backyards.

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- Why do you think punk emerged in the late 1970s?
- Do you think Eastside punk is distinctly different from other L.A. punk of the era? How so?
- Has punk influenced your life or perspective? If so, how?
- What kinds of independent, DIY, or underground music or art cultures are you aware of today?
- What influences what kinds of art flourish—or are marginalized—in any given time and place?



## SOME EAST L.A. PUNK BANDS YOU MAY WANT TO CHECK OUT . . .

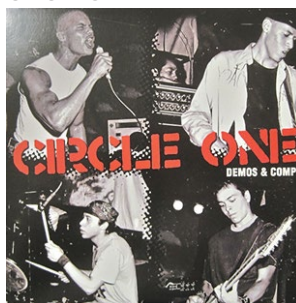
BLACK JAX



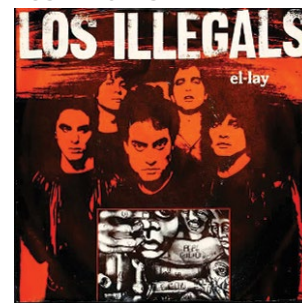
THE BRAT



CIRCLE ONE



LOS ILLEGALS



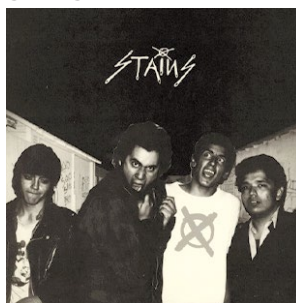
LOS LOBOS



SKEPTICAL YOUTH



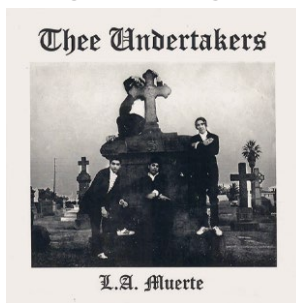
STAINS



LA TUYA

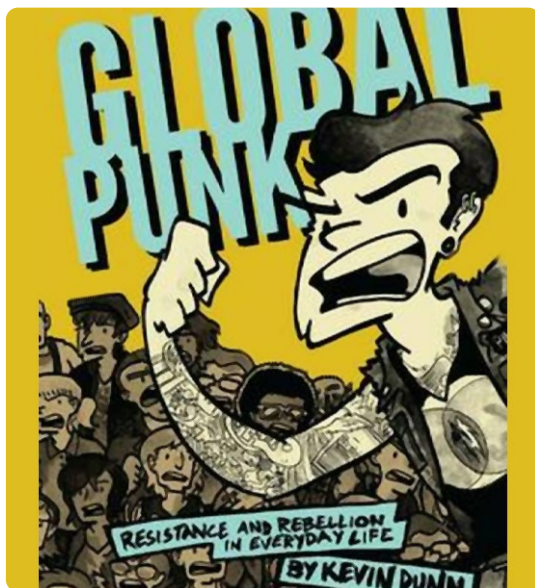
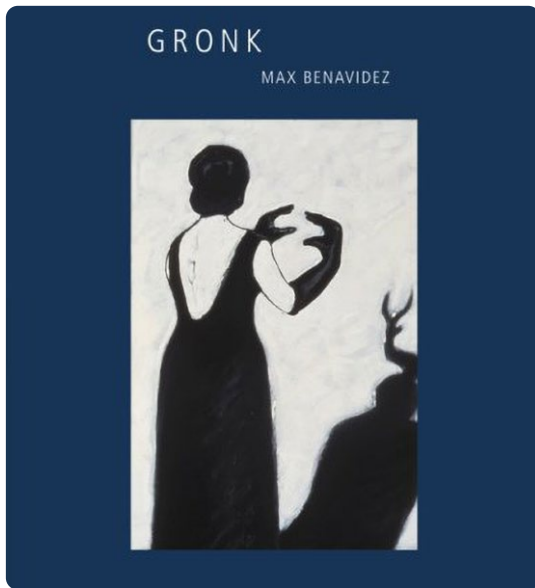
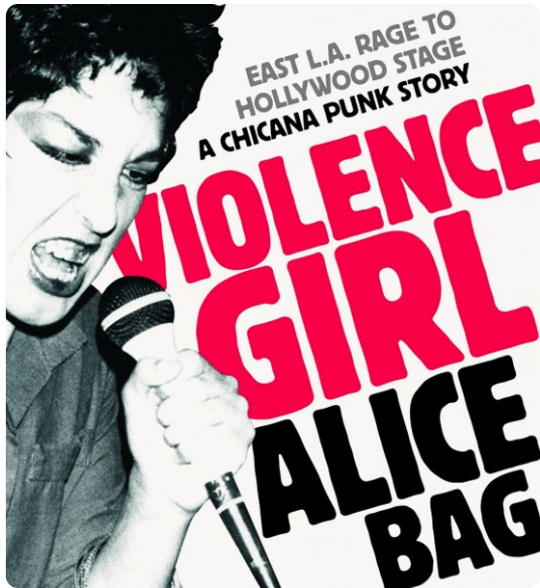


THEE UNDERTAKERS



UNION 13





## IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- ◉ Razorcake | [razorcake.org](http://razorcake.org)
- ◉ Jimmy Alvarado's online overview of East L.A. punk [razorcake.org/teenage-alcoholics-punk-rock-east-los-angeles-jimmy-alvarado](http://razorcake.org/teenage-alcoholics-punk-rock-east-los-angeles-jimmy-alvarado)
- ◉ *Mas alla de los Gritos*, a 1999 documentary about Latinx punk [vdb.org/titles/beyond-screams-us-latino-hardcore-punk-documentary](http://vdb.org/titles/beyond-screams-us-latino-hardcore-punk-documentary)
- ◉ *Vexing: Female Voices from East L.A. Punk*, a 2008 exhibition [claremontmuseum.org/vexing-female-voices-from-east-la-punk](http://claremontmuseum.org/vexing-female-voices-from-east-la-punk)
- ◉ *Eastside Punks* YouTube playlist with all episodes as they are released [bit.ly/VVEastsidePunksPlaylist](http://bit.ly/VVEastsidePunksPlaylist)

## DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

ANDREW JUSTICE of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this evening's event. Electronic resources are accessible through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at [libraries.usc.edu](http://libraries.usc.edu) but may require the user to log in using their USC credentials.

### BOOKS

- ◉ Alice Bag, *Violence Girl: East L.A. Rage to Hollywood Stage, A Chicana Punk Story* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2011).
- ◉ Max Benavidez, Chon A. Noriega, and Steve La Ponsie, *Gronk* (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, 2007).
- ◉ Caroline Cox, *The World Atlas of Street Fashion* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2017).
- ◉ Kevin C. Dunn, *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).
- ◉ David Laderman, *Punk Slash! Musicals: Tracking Slip-Sync on Film* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2010).

### ARTICLES

- ◉ Soraya Alonso Alconada and Ángel Chaparro Sainz, "Punk Pioneers: Chicana Alice Bag as a Case in Point," *Lectora* 23 (2017): 83–98.
- ◉ Jimmy Alvarado, "Backyard Brats and Eastside Punks: A History of East LA's Punk Scene," *Aztlán* 37, no. 2 (2012): 157–180.
- ◉ Colin Gunckel, "Vexing Questions: Rethinking the History of East LA Punk," *Aztlán* 37, no. 2 (2012): 127–56.
- ◉ Marci R. McMahon, "Self-Fashioning through Glamour and Punk in East Los Angeles," *Aztlán* 36, no. 2 (2011): 21–49.
- ◉ Jesse Prinz, "The Aesthetics of Punk Rock," *Philosophy Compass* 9, no. 9 (2014): 583–93.
- ◉ Jack Sample, "The Commons: Psychedelic Cumbia Punk from East Los Angeles," *Anthropology Now* 10, no. 1 (2018): 62–71.

### DISSERTATION/THESIS

- ◉ Anthony Emilio Francoso, "We Have Been Silenced for Much Too Long: Music as Decolonial Resistance." PhD diss., Univ. of California, Santa Barbara, 2012.
- ◉ Jonathan Daniel Gomez, "'Where's the Gig at?' The East Los Angeles Backyard Punk Scene and the Creations of Social Spaces at the Turn of the 21st Century." Master's thesis, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara, 2012.