



THE ART OF GARAGE

HOW TO ROCK & ROLL YOUR ARTWORK

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FOREWORD

This project was only realized because a lot of people helped me get through the process. Artistic, academic and practical support was absolutely necessary. I would like to thank:

My daughter: Elena Amelie Lykkebø Evjen for supporting me through a time that must have been really boring for her. My parents and my siblings for stepping up and being fantastic people. My tutors: Ashley Booth, Hilde Kramer and Morten William Knudsen. All the people with a unique expertise on garage and Rock & Roll, that helped me along the way, in particular Jonas Bjällesjø and Craig Steptoe. My band "The Scumbugs", which I consider family (no offense

to my real family) The three people who took the time to answer all the questions in my interview: Rudi Protrudi, Beatman Zeller and Chris Moore. Råkkeper for his musical input and great enthusiasm. And last but not least all the people I've met through a shared interest in Rock & Roll and garage music. Especially the 15 - 20 people who contributed to the fantastic playlist: "50 YEARS OF GARAGE!!!" which I have provided a link to on page 4.



Photo: Liv Marit K. Evjen. Me playing a homemade guitar in the early 90s. In the middle of my first personality crisis.

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First things first! If you picked up this thesis with no knowledge of garage rock music, you should put it down and start listening. And just to make that very simple I've provided you with a link that is sure to give you a good first trip into the realms of the genre. If somehow disposition, heredity and environment have left you unable to appreciate the qualities of the music, then you might have the same challenges with the visual aesthetics. It is my theory that these aesthetics are linked on a deeper level, and your responsiveness to the music is an important indicator on how you will respond to the graphics. I believe a certain understanding of the total artistry within this subculture is required to

fully appreciate the visual aspects. This project is deeply rooted in my passion for the garage rock genre. And it is aimed at people who either share that passion, or are open to explore. Trying to force a passion is the worst thing you can do. Maybe Rock & Roll isn't for you, maybe you just don't get it. But if you're curious, the least you can do is go on a date and learn to know it. Have a beer and turn up the music. Who knows, sparks might fly. This might be what you have been looking for your whole life, an inspiration to create and break out of a routine. I don't care what you do, as long as you do what you want. But I hope this can bring you closer to knowing what that is.



50 YEARS OF GARAGE!!!
1966 - 2016

■ INTRO

1.1 SUBJECT INFO

Garage rock is a musical genre that emerged in the U.S.A in the early 1960s, with its peak commonly recognized as 1966. It is a genre based on rhythm & blues, 50s Rock & Roll, beat, soul, surf and frat rock, pioneered by teenagers and young adults without professional musical backgrounds. It was not solely an American phenomenon, but it was in the US the genre was defined and where it was most prevalent, so this is where my historical focus and references will be throughout the thesis.

Even though the genre has its roots in American musical traditions it was also strongly influenced by the British invasion bands like The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, The Kinks, The Pretty Things etc. It's been coined as the first wave of punk, and rightly so, because most of the principles the 70s punk movement was built on,

are present both in the mentality and musical approach of the participants in this scene in the 60s. Most bands were in strong opposition to society's status quo, and even if their musical and visual expressions might seem harmless by today's standards, they were the true outsiders, rebellions and musical radicals of their era. Their rough and enthusiastic "do it yourself" approach to the techniques required to play the music, combined with an extreme desire to be heard and make an impact, has been the inspiration to a vast variety of later musical directions that focus on a stripped down, primitive sound and expression.

But garage rock is not only a musical genre locked in the time when it had its heydays. There's a very vibrant and pulsating subculture built around this music, and it's alive and well in

present time. This subculture stays true to the mentality and original ideals of the 60s scene but still manages to incorporate them and make them relevant in a present context. It is different from a lot of other 50s and 60s subcultures in the sense that it doesn't seem to be frozen in time. It is a conservative genre in that it has its foundation firmly rooted in the 50s and 60s, and this era's music, art and artefacts are by far the main influence on the subculture's identity. But it is also an innovative genre that continues to push boundaries, steal, mix and put together both musical and visual expressions with the same enthusiastic "hands on" DIY spirit that was the core characteristic of the original garage rock scene in the 60s.

1.2

MOTIVATION

The greatest passions in my life are visual art/design and music. This is where I want to invest my time, and where I want to make a difference. In this project I'm combining my two greatest passions by working with the visual art associated with garage rock. In my opinion, this genre represents some truly unique qualities that go far beyond the superficial aesthetics. I regard garage rock as the embodiment of the Rock & Roll ethos. This project has the intention of capturing the essence of the genre, or even culture, and communicating it visually. It is an abstract exercise, and both my theories and my expressions will be colored by subjective interpretations. Still, I am confident that this project will be of value to others. My goal is to generate a greater understanding of the garage culture and artistic approach, and inspire people to engage and find their own "voice" within the

"This thesis contributes to the preservation of the artistic tradition by highlighting the most essential aspects. At the same time it aims to stimulate the deep-rooted radical and rebellious energy within the culture that encourages its future creative directions and expressions."

artistic tradition. This thesis contributes to the preservation of the artistic tradition by highlighting the most essential aspects. At the same time it aims to stimulate the deep-rooted radical and rebellious energy within the culture that encourages its future creative directions and expressions. I believe the true power of Rock & Roll lies in its ability to inspire by engaging people emotionally. It represents a creative approach and attitude that has an immense power when executed properly. This is of course mostly related to the music, because it is such a

powerful media. But my claim is that the unique traits and characteristics of Rock & Roll expressions, are not confined only to music. It can be applied to visual work as well. Throughout this thesis I intend to define these unique traits and characteristics, and investigate ways they can be applied to a creative visual process. My hope is that this project will inspire more people to tap into the raw and primitive power of Rock & Roll and contribute new and exciting visual material that continues and further develop this artistic tradition.

1.3

BACKGROUND

I discovered the world of garage rock around the year 1999. That revelation came from the second generation of garage rockers active around the late 70s, 80s and 90s, better known as the garage revival scene. It was bands like The Cramps, The Mummies, The Fuzztones, Dead Moon, The Lyres and Billy Childish (to name a few) that lit the initial spark. They were my stepping stones towards all the magnificent garage rock recorded and forgotten in the 60s and my entrance to the garage rock subculture.

I was totally blown away by this stripped down, primitive and energetic expression. When listening to the records I experienced a much more direct communication between the artist and the listener than anything I had experienced in music before. And it was contagious, I could feel the power of this music deep in my

bones. It just spoke to me on so many levels. One aspect was the "sound" that made it feel more real, honest and authentic, because there was little or no filter of production and overdubs between me and what took place in the room during the recording. It was concerned with capturing the "live" and the "human" element of the music. This format gave the music that spontaneous quality of a great sketch that just captures the moment and can't be reproduced. A type of aesthetic where the flaws and inaccuracies add to the experience because it relies on the listener's ability to actively seek out the qualities and interpret them instead of having everything filtered and diluted through the process of production. I had to fill in the blanks, participate, on a similar level to what I do when I interpret abstract art. Or indeed "outsider art", an art-form where the genius is often not ev-

ident in the same manner as in schooled art, but only recognized when the interpreter has the ability to "take in" the qualities. I was by no means new to rock or punk music at this point, in retrospect it's easy to see how I was steered in this direction, but it was in the garage genre I found the artistic expression that truly spoke to me on so many levels.

One attractive aspect was that it was so aggressive, confrontational and bursting with attitude that I couldn't help getting instinctively drawn in, identifying and empathising with the artists. It was so obviously out of sync with the popular culture and social norms and at the same time so unmistakably cool and characteristic that it made the perfect soundtrack for everyone who identified as an outsider. This felt raw, real, dangerous and unpredictable. Just like real Rock &

Roll should. It gave the music a nerve that really appealed to me, and it made listening to this music so much more than just a pastime activity. It was a big middle finger to anyone who didn't like what I did, no gift wrapping or polished finish, just a pure uncomplicated expression of emotions blasted out with a passion through a basic and simple musical format. My encounter with the garage rock genre made me realize that, to me, Rock & Roll embodies the purest form of artistic expressions. And that included a lot more than just the music.

The discovery of garage rock was also a portal into a new universe of visual expressions. And I was as much intrigued by this as I was by the music. The visual expressions mostly seemed to be in total tune with the spirit and aesthetic of the music within the scene, but still it was a very

eclectic and diverse visual language and harder to wrap my head around. A lot of the imagery was a bricolage of references from a strange world in a time I had little knowledge of. Mainly forgotten 50s and 60s pop and b-culture incorporated into new contexts. The artwork was often put together in a rough and unschooled manner, but there were also examples of high level artwork that was clearly the work of trained artists and designers. The visual artists spoke to me much in the same way the musicians did, and in fact it was often the same people behind both expressions. I perceived it all as honest and authentic. It often had a childish or naïve approach both in technique and imagery, like the artist was balancing on the edge of his capabilities and going with gut feeling rather than relying on established conventions and techniques. This was, again, in total contrast

to the slick and calculated approach of the imagery I saw in the popular music industry. I felt the visual expressions gained a certain integrity, much like the music, by not conforming to the norm and going outside of all the preconceived perceptions of what would (and should) appeal to the masses. It seemed timeless in the sense that it was completely disconnected from the popular fashion, trends and culture. I wanted to be a part of this culture and this artistic tradition instead. So I started making choices that allowed me to put this enthusiasm to good use. This thesis is just one of many projects driven by my enthusiasm for this culture and art-form. My 17 years of experience and enthusiasm provides the background for this project and makes sure it has a solid foundation. It also guarantees motivation and persistence, because the whole project reflects who I am and how I live.

1.4 SOCIAL RELEVANCE

In terms of social relevance I believe every subculture is an important contribution to our diverse and ever changing pop-culture. Drawing attention to and preserving this particular subculture is especially important because of its retrospective aspects. Its focus on forgotten and obscure music, art and design creates a common platform where these expressions can thrive and reinvent themselves in new contexts. Subcultures, in general, play a crucial role in the socio-cultural development of a modern society. There are many individuals in society who do not identify with the present pop-culture, and for them, access to information from alternative cultures is essential. Subcultures also have a tradition of challenging established conventions and through this contribute to the shaping of new directions within everything from art, music and design to deeper sociological phenome-

na. And that inspires change and innovation. As much as that can threaten the status quo, it can often be a good thing, as it helps point out the flaws of the older generation, and encourages a break with negative traditions. But for a subculture to be relevant and thriving, the different aspects of the culture need to be understood, defined and recognized. I believe it's very useful that someone highlights the most relevant parts so they can easier be picked up by the collective consciousness within the subculture. And it's crucial that it's researched and analysed as both a cultural and artistic phenomenon so that it can be established and developed as an independent study field. I want this project to take on such a role so that it can help the subculture preserve and develop the vital and distinct visual language that goes along with the music within the culture.



Photo: Darren Ward. Audience at Munster Raving Loony Party losing control, Arc de Bara, Spain 2012

1.5

ETHICS

LIVE FAST, WILD & WEIRD

Part of the charm of a subculture is that it's an alternative culture you have to seek out for yourself. The fact that you actively looked for it shows dedication and is often a sign of a confident and independent mind. It has to do with your personal identity. Whenever a subculture is popularized and commercialized it loses its charm completely. That's the last thing I want to see. Also the "secrets" of the art-form are best communicated when it speaks to the subconscious. If this thesis ever had the effect of revealing "secrets" and demystifying the powers of the Rock & Roll expressions, that would be a complete failure on my part. My target group is people with a passion, curiosity and respect for Rock & Roll as an art-form. And my intention is to inspire them and generate excitement about Rock & Roll. And it will, if they find the theories as inspiring and exciting as I do.

It is fair to say that the culture and tradition the garage rock scene aim to keep alive, is associated with a lot of potentially destructive and negative behaviour. The typical social setting where garage enthusiasts meet is at a concert or a party, and the behaviour and mind set is often escapist, hedonistic, and the mood fuelled by inebriation.

The main idea is to get as much immediate kicks as possible and the bands go out of their way to make the crowd go wild and out of control. Both the audience and the bands crave this kind of kick, and it's one of the major factors that tie the community together. It's been proven time and time again that living the Rock & Roll lifestyle to the fullest is dangerous and sometimes even lethal. The anti-conformity factor is also solid in the scene and like many counter/

sub-cultures, people are often driven towards these communities by a strong dislike for the popular culture. In many ways the "state of mind", or even lifestyle, of Rock & Roll can be seen as an absolute counterpart to the rational and responsible role society in general wants individuals to play.

In its most extreme form it can be a lifestyle that celebrates the total dropping out, both mentally and physically, from society and the everyday life "normal" people are living. In that sense the subculture itself could be perceived as a threat not only to an individual's health, but also to the values our society is built on, and in effect harmful to the larger community as well. As this project aims to glorify and promote this culture, I feel obliged to take these aspects into consideration.

DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR

I'm going to address this from a personal standpoint. My motivation for this project is deeply rooted in the enthusiasm and passion for something I experience as a strong, driving force in my life. To me this music and art is cathartic to the point that I feed on it, it gives me energy, joy, and provides me with an escape from negativity, the often boring every-day life and mundane surroundings. I believe this is because losing control, acting out and blocking the rational works as a counterweight to the pressure and burdens one has to deal with in "real" life. This culture provides the ultimate arena for blowing of steam, and that keeps me balanced and motivated. In a strange way this kind of art, culture and community, in spite of all its destructive aspects, is what actually really makes me feel alive. To me personally, the positive aspects far outweigh the negative.

DROPPING OUT

The anti-conformity aspect is closely related to individuality, personal freedom, and also to the diversity of society. The Rock & Roll mentality is NOT founded on opposing all the laws and norms of society, it just encourages you to challenge anything that gets in the way of your personal freedom. It tells you that you don't have to be like everyone else, and that you don't have to conform.

As part of the Rock & Roll community you adopt an alternative set of ethics, values and norms more or less provided by the subculture. You can use these as guidance rather than those of society in general. Basically the vast majority of people within the scene are liberal and open minded. There is a red thread in the philosophy and politics in most of the Rock & Roll community. Just look at how it helped spawn the civil

rights movement in the 50s, and contributed to the end of racial segregations. But Rock & Roll is absolutely not a political movement, it is just radical by nature, and against all forms of oppression. It seems as if the people who are drawn towards this culture are likeminded and they share a focus on enjoying themselves and celebrating their right to break free from ideas that aim to control them.

This points towards another positive aspect of the subculture, and that is the Rock & Roll tradition of picking up the outsiders, the people who don't want to, or simply can't fit in to the mainstream. During this project I interviewed visual artist and musician Rudi Protrudi, most famous for his music and artwork in the band "The Fuzztones". He shared some interesting thoughts on this aspect of the culture:

“I guess since I’ve always considered myself an outsider, Rock & Roll became my lifestyle. I believe that, through the music, someone with ideas that may not be considered ‘of the norm’ has the platform to express themselves freely, and in return actually receive POSITIVE feedback.”

- Rudi Protrudi

Protrudi is reflecting on this from an artistic point of view, but I believe this applies to anyone who identifies with the subculture, artist or not. When someone discovers a community built around an art-form that really speaks to them it can become an important part of their identity, especially if this art-form is in sharp contrast to popular culture. They need something to identify with, and in this sense I believe the garage rock subculture can be very positive to a lot of people on a personal level.

- **CONCEPT**

2.1

PROBLEM & OBJECTIVE

1: What is the essence of garage?

2: How can this essence be translated into visual expressions?

The project is highly dependent on an extensive research and analysis phase. A definition of the essence of garage, or even Rock & Roll, needs a comprehensive understanding of a wide range of aspects within the culture. It is not sufficient to simply address the aesthetics. I need knowledge of the people within the culture both on a collective and individual level, and I need to know the history. This means I have to approach the subject from an historical, anthropological, philosophical and psychological point of view, in addition to the obvious design perspective. This research will provide the material I base my definition on, and function as the foundation for the development of my theories.

This is by all means an abstract and complex issue, and the results can't be measured or evaluated by right or wrong. Defining this essence is just a conceptual exercise. In the Oxford Dictionary the word essence is defined as:

"The intrinsic nature or indispensable quality of something, especially something abstract, that determines its character."

To define the absolute and evident essence of a diverse subculture and artistic genre is impossible. But through the use of extensive research and analysis I am confident that I can present a definition that resonates well with the sub-cultural community. Translating this essence

into visual expressions puts my theories into practice, and presents another crucial question: How much of the cultural identity relies on the artistic tradition and aesthetic principles? As I already stated in the motivation chapter, I hope that my project can encourage more visual artists, amateurs and professionals, to tap into the powers of Rock & Roll expressions. Therefore it is also crucial to my project that I find efficient ways to communicate my findings. While the main objective of the thesis is to define the essence of the culture and develop a strategy to express it visually, my second objective is to share this information in a manner that inspires more people to take action and take part.

TARGETGROUP

Artistic youth and adults with a curiosity or passion for the music, visual aesthetics and mentality associated with Rock & Roll.

The future innovators of Rock & Roll aesthetics.

SECONDARY TARGET GROUP

Designers with an interest in primitive analogue techniques and expressive outsider design.

LIMITATIONS

In the research of visual aesthetics this project focuses almost exclusively on graphic expressions associated with the Rock & Roll culture. Aspects like fashion, performance and product design will not be of great concern. Although the typography within the scene is an important part of the graphic expressions, I have limited my focus on that specific aspect as well.

The intention of this thesis is NOT to document, categorize and present the visual identity of the garage rock subculture. I will give a brief introduction, and I encourage those who have an interest to continue exploring on their own. This project seeks to decode and utilize the mechanics that make up the structures behind the facade, not demonstrate how to replicate the already well established expressions. Therefore I will limit the research and visual analysis of the

existing aesthetics within the genre and rather put more effort into analysing the culture as a whole. My goal is to inspire a certain innovation, and while a general knowledge of the visual history is fundamental, it is crucial for this project to emphasize that the aesthetic itself is not the actual essence of the culture.

2.4

PROS & CONS

A substantial part of the project has gone into research, analysis and gaining as much subject knowledge as possible in the frame of time given. The theoretical part of the project is therefore more extensive than in the average design master thesis, and this has left less time for the practical part. This was a calculated decision, and I chose this option because the intellectual work and theoretical studies make up the entire foundation for the theories that I base my practical work on. The conceptual part of the project should therefore be emphasized in the total evaluation.

It would be in the right spirit of the project to communicate the content of the thesis in an accessible and straightforward language, in particular the language used in the end result. The use of academic and intellectual terminology

can make the content less appealing and even incomprehensible to a considerable part of my target group. I see this as a weak point in my project, but this terminology is crucial in order for me to be specific. And also within this timeframe it was not possible for me to translate all my research and theories into more pedagogical terminology, and I had to prioritize the visual communication more than the textual.

I've made sure to work parallel with practical and theoretical work throughout the project. It's been a top priority to develop a personal distinct visual expression that fits and reflects my definition of the essence of Rock & Roll. If I get the chance to develop this project further I would like to experiment more and explore my theories in interaction with a wide range of different media and techniques. But in this project

I have decided to focus on the further development of a particular visual style and strive for expertise within that specific direction.

I believe I have a privilege in this project by being part of the target group. It's not the traditional role for a graphic designer, and it might be an unconventional approach to a master thesis. But it gives me a lot of confidence and it encourages me to trust my instincts and my own taste. I'm extremely passionate about my work and I believe that shines through. In this project my work-process is full of joy, and hopefully that rubs off on the audience.

2.5

END RESULT

The end result will be an inspirational guide on how to create Rock & Roll artwork. In this guide I will present my theories on the essence of garage, and Rock & Roll in general, and suggest how I consider it most efficiently applied in practice. I will elaborate on my theories on the Rock & Roll mentality and address the relevance of the subcultural artistic tradition in relation to the future artistic direction of the genre. I argue that these two aspects combined make up the crucial characteristics of the Rock & Roll cultural identity. I question whether the aesthetics associated with the culture are flexible as long as these two aspects are taken into consideration.

This will not be a design manual, and my goal is not to impose guidelines, but rather inspire innovation without the loss of the essential core

values of the culture. The guide will be designed by applying the same theoretical and aesthetic principles that is promoted in the content. Instead of referring to specific examples to back up the theories, the whole design of the guide itself will be presented as a manifestation of these theories.

I'm going to use a risograph to print the guide and several copies will be on display and made available to the audience at the exhibition. The presentation of the guide will be the focus point in the middle of the room. On the walls I will exhibit several 2d works in the form of posters, record covers and screen prints. The screen-prints are selected designs from the inspirational guide blown up in size. The posters and record covers are examples of my design strategy utilized in commercial projects within the ga-

rage rock subculture. I will also show my design strategy applied to moving image and motion graphics by exhibiting a garage rock music video on a TV in the corner of the room. It is important that the room I have at my disposal for this exhibition communicates a certain type of mood and atmosphere that resonates with the concept of my project. My plan is to create a homelike environment that gives the audience a sense of entering a personal space. This personal space shall represent the natural habitat of a Rock & Roll fanatic.

2.6

DEFINITIONS

Subculture

A community with a set of shared interests, values and norms that don't apply to society as a whole.

Ethos

The fundamental character of a community.

Theory

A theory in this thesis is what a scientist would refer to as a hypothesis, meaning it is based on (strong) assumptions but can not be scientifically proven.

Connotative

An secondary meaning associated with a word or thing, besides the literal meaning. Skull = Death.

Cathartic

Psychological relief through the expression of strong emotions.

Hedonistic

In pursuit of pleasure, and sensually self-indulgent.

Dionysian

Hedonistic and driven by instinct and emotion.

DIY

Do It Yourself, a hands on philosophy that encourages amateurs to take on challenges without professional help.

Bricolage

Something put together by whatever is available.

Autonomy

Individual freedom and independence.

- **RESEARCH**

3.1

INTRO

Since I consider myself a part of the garage rock subculture I don't feel like I have the opportunity to analyze the phenomenon from the outside. I think this can have both positive and negative aspects. I will not be able to objectively analyze something that is such a big passion, inspiration and even part of my personal identity. And the fact that I've been part of this subculture for so long must of course have normalized a lot of the elements that an outsider would find strange, exotic or just a little bit peculiar. On the other hand my relation to the subject gives me a very high level of motivation, and it makes the process more interesting and enjoyable. As part of the culture I have a lot more insight than an outsider would ever get during the process of writing a master thesis. It's fair to say that my research for this project started at least 16 years ago and obvi-

ously that works to my advantage. I've read a lot of books, fanzines and magazines related to garage rock, watched documentaries, attended and arranged endless amounts of concerts and parties and played garage clubs and festivals with my band "The Scumbugs" all over Europe. I'm familiar with the community. I also worked with the same subject in my bachelor project, which means a lot of the preparatory work for this research was already in place. Because of this background knowledge and experience I am comfortable relying on my own intellectual analysis and ability to decode the different elements of the subculture. There is a limited amount of previous research available on this specific subject, so I often have to draw conclusions based on my own expertise. I believe I have the competence to do so, and hope the readers of this thesis will agree.



Photo: Puck Dominus. from left: Deke Dickerson, me, Ulf Ramone, at Fantastic Dracula Carnival, Benidorm, Spain 2012.

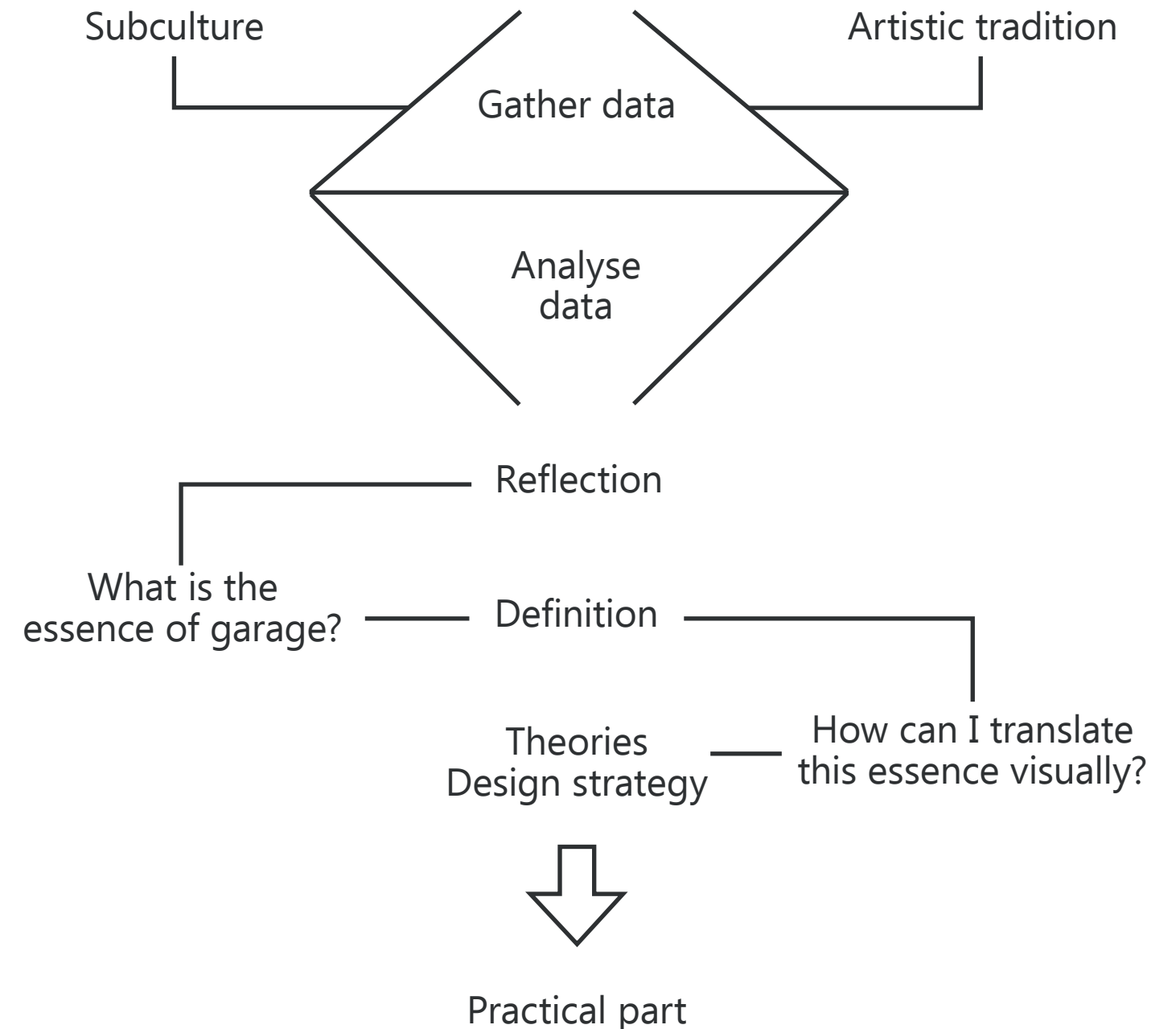
3.2

METHODS

- **Field study, discussion and observation**
- **Relevant literature**
- **Expert interviews**
- **Philosophical research**

I have divided my research into two fields of study. Garage rock as a sub-cultural phenomenon, and garage rock as an artistic tradition, with its own specific aesthetic principles and style. The study of the subculture as a whole has provided me with the material I need to define the essence of garage, which I also believe represents the essence of Rock & Roll. The study of the visual tradition and aesthetic principles has generated a deeper understanding of how the Rock & Roll values and mentality have inspired artistic ingenuity throughout the genres existence. This demonstrates how this essence has been consciously, or subconsciously, communicated in the past. Understanding this is crucial when suggesting how it can be expressed in the future. These two fields of study have been of equal importance to the development of my theories.

PLAN OF PROGRESS



FIELD STUDY AND OBSERVATION

One of the criteria for success in this project was that I got totally absorbed and capsuled into the subject. I've been even more active in the garage community as both artist and fan since I started this project and it's fair to say that my work and spare time has melted into one giant blob of Rock & Roll goo.

I've picked up a lot of information along the way and I've managed to see the culture from an analytic point of view. Not only do I get to study the subculture in action by being a part of it, but I also get to have lots of discussions about my project with people who have equal or more experience within the scene. I'm fascinated by the level of self-awareness this community displays and the reflective ideas about the subculture that has come up in these discussions. It is obvious that the people truly in-

involved and invested in this scene have a very strong ideological basis for being part of this, and that their genuine passion for the culture has become a significant part of their identity.

This interaction reminds me of the relevance of the project, keeps me focused, creative and also guarantees that the project never stops being fun. It has been an absolutely crucial part of my research.



Photo: Puck Dominus. After a long day of studying the field, it's important to unwind. Munster Raving Loony Party, Arc de Bara, Spain 2012.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

I have not come across any previous research that addresses the visual culture of garage rock specifically. But I have read books about the visual culture of related genres like e.g. the low brow / kustom kulture and the surf scene. I have also read a lot of books on the field of garage rock as a musical genre. Looking into this research helps me understand the culture as a whole and gives me perspective and insight. To gain a sufficient understanding of the subculture I also researched sociocultural studies on "retro" subcultures in general and revival trends. Philosophical aspects like the concept of authenticity, Apollonian and Dionysian, and ethical hedonism have also been of considerable relevance to my research. The psychology of the teenage brain, and research on personality traits helped me in the decoding of the Rock & Roll mentality. (Full list of literature provided in references.)

EXPERT INTERVIEWS

Maybe the most crucial input I've had in the whole project. I had confidence in my ability to reflect on this subject so I decided to postpone the interviews until the final stages of the research and analysis. At this stage the direction of the project was more defined and that helped me ask the right questions. I managed to steer the interview in a more or less philosophical direction and got answers which reflected around the aspects most important for me in the search for the essence of garage. I chose to interview three people from three different generations, each of them graphic artists and musicians within the garage scene. The interviews helped clarify my theories and gave me more confidence that my project was heading in the right direction. All three interviews are included in the thesis at the end of the research chapter (page 73-88).

PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH

The nature of this project requires a lot of analysis and reflection on my part. It is dependent on a philosophical approach to the research process. Defining the essence of garage is an abstract exercise and while the relevant literature and expert interviews give me a lot of input to base my theories on, the final formulating of the theories are entirely up to me. It is my interpretation of the data I gather during the research phase that make up the entire foundation of the thesis. I'm relying on my own experience and expertise. I feel it is important to stress that the only reason I'm comfortable with doing that, is because I enter the project with a lot of background knowledge. I would not be comfortable drawing these conclusions based on the data gathered during the research phase alone.

3.3

■ CULTURAL ANALYSIS

“Unlike the cultures we are born into and a part of because of nationality or society, the subcultures are cultures that people choose to be a part of. These cultures are under constant development and their direction is dictated by those who are attracted to it. The intention of this analysis is to understand what attracts people to the garage rock subculture, and which factors are the most important.”

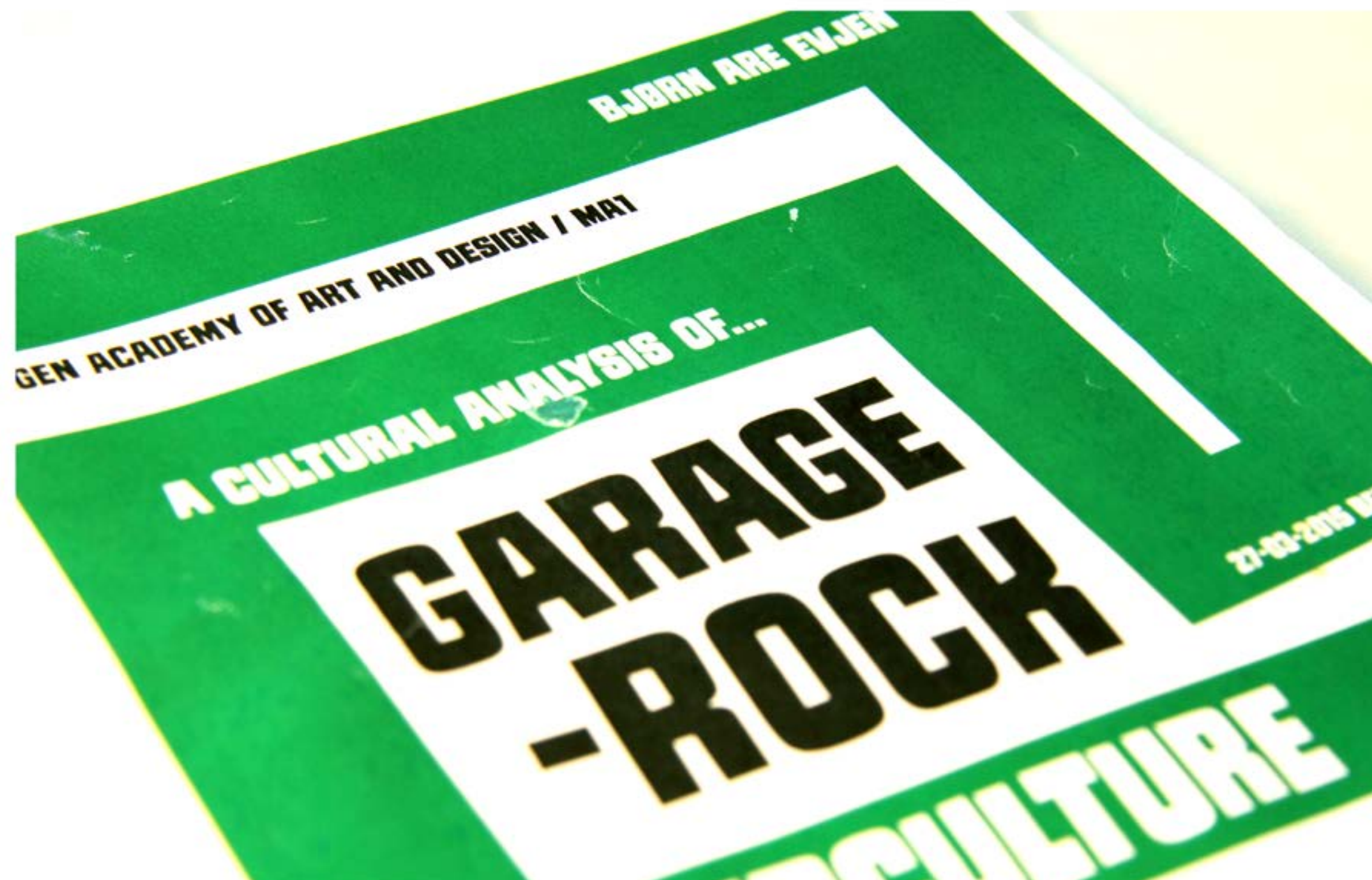
I have divided my analysis into chapters and each chapter focus on what I believe to be key points within the subculture. Each chapter ends with a conclusion discussing why the garage rock fanatic sees this point as crucial. By understanding this stereotypical garage rock enthusiast I believe I can also understand the subculture as a whole, because this stereotype is the one who created the history and is now in control of the further development of the subculture. I understand that this is very generalising, but it seems to me to be the most effective way to interpret the subculture. Hopefully the majority of people related to the scene can identify with a large portion of these characteristics.

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THE PIONEERS OF PUNK

I'M A NO-COUNT! That's what "Ty Wagner and The Scotchmen" snarled out on their 1965 single, proudly proclaiming their status as low class outcasts who would amount to nothing. Along with tunes like "I'm a Nothing / The Magic Plants" "Born Loser / Murphy and The Mob" and "Good Times / Nobody's Chyldren" we get a glimpse into the world of the no-good teenage outsider lurking in the shadows on the far left field of 60s Rock & Roll. The snotty punk sticking a fat finger to the slick and polished pop image, and taking pride in failing and dropping out of the mainstream. Take the lyric from "Good Times by Nobody's Chyldren": "Things started bad from the day of my birth / looks like I was destined to be a scum of the earth." These were not lyrics designed to charm their way into a young girl's heart, or music fit to secure a support gig for The Beatles on their

British Invasion tour. This is the sound of the losers and outsiders, and the prime examples of the first punk pioneers! Sure there were some bad-asses in the blues scene, 50s Rock & Roll had its fair share of wild-men and British bands like The Pretty Things, Rolling Stones and The Kinks certainly spiced up and brought an element of danger and excitement into Rock & Roll with their raw "hands on" take on R'n'B. But if you're searching for the purest original source of punk, the untamed, unpretentious, primitive caveman of Rock & Roll, the trace leads straight back to the American 60s garage. The term "punk" was actually used in reference to 60s garage bands by several music critics as early as 1971. But even so, in popular culture the term has become accepted as the definition of the mid to late 70s music movement and later genres related to it. This has off course

generated a debate about the true meaning of the term, but what I find more interesting, and what I will focus on in this chapter, is the link between the original 60s garage punk and the later movement known as punk rock.

Not every band within the 60s garage rock scene would be considered punk, off course. Garage rock covers a vast range of influences, and a lot of garage bands don't fit the "punk" paradigm either in music-style or attitude. 60s garage is also not exclusively an American phenomenon. Garage bands were formed more or less all over the world during the 60s, but the U.S is commonly considered the birth place of the genre, so that's where I will direct my focus in this analysis. It is important to consider that the terms "punk" or even "garage rock" were not used at the time, and these bands were

not deliberately trying to create, or fit into, a specific genre. They were simply playing Rock & Roll and drawing influence from everything associated with that. Also keep in mind that most of these bands never went on big tours or received radio play of any significance, so the scenes in the different areas developed without much substantial interaction. Still the bands bear so much resemblance and share similarities enough for them to later be categorized in the same specific musical direction.

In terms of music, what really distinguishes the punk part of the garage scene from their influences has a lot to do with the basic lack of sophistication combined with the aggressive and unapologetic "Do It Yourself" approach to the art-form. Some of the bands, like "The Trashmen" from Minnesota spawned their own

style of garage punk directly out of American influences like surf rock, while a band like "The Zakary Thaks" from Texas relied heavily on inspiration from The British R'n'B scene. Still, both bands fit the garage punk category quite well with their aggressive and raunchy sound. If we take a look at bands like: The Sonics, Swamp Rats, The Groupies, The Benders, The Kingsmen, The Keggs, Shadows of Knight or Adrian Lloyd, who fit the punk label very well, there's no question about the similarities in expression. These band's punk spirit and sound had a formidable impact on both the identity and mentality of garage rock subculture as we see it today. I'm not saying that garage bands need to be "punk" to be an integral part of the subculture, but there's definitely been a considerable focus on the punk aspect of garage rock that has contributed to its direction and popularity.



From my experience it seems that garage rock's status as the pioneering punk scene is often what initiates the first interest and keep attracting people from all over the world towards this almost forgotten and buried chapter in American music history. In my case it was the proto-punk (Stooges, New York Dolls, Dictators) and 70s punk (Ramones, The Damned, Vibrators) that lead me to the garage revival bands that mostly operated in the 80s and 90s. Bands like The Cramps, The Mummies, The Milkshakes, The Lyres, Fuzztones, Fleshtones, Gravedigger V and The Miracle Workers functioned as gateway-bands into the original garage scene of the 60s. They totally thrived on their influences and, along with their own tunes, played covers of 60s garage no-hit classics that just forced the listener out on a hunt for the original versions. Some bands, like The Chesterfield Kings,

presented themselves as near exact replicas of 60s garage bands both visually and musically, while others like The Mummies or Thee Mighty Caesars brought new elements of wildness and danger into their expression by including a large part of 70s punk influences. If the link between 60s garage and punk rock was not evident to everyone before, it surely became clear as day through the work of bands like this. They set out to regenerate the tradition of the 60s garage bands with the most punk expression, and their hybrid style of 70s punk and 60s garage is simply also referred to as garage punk.

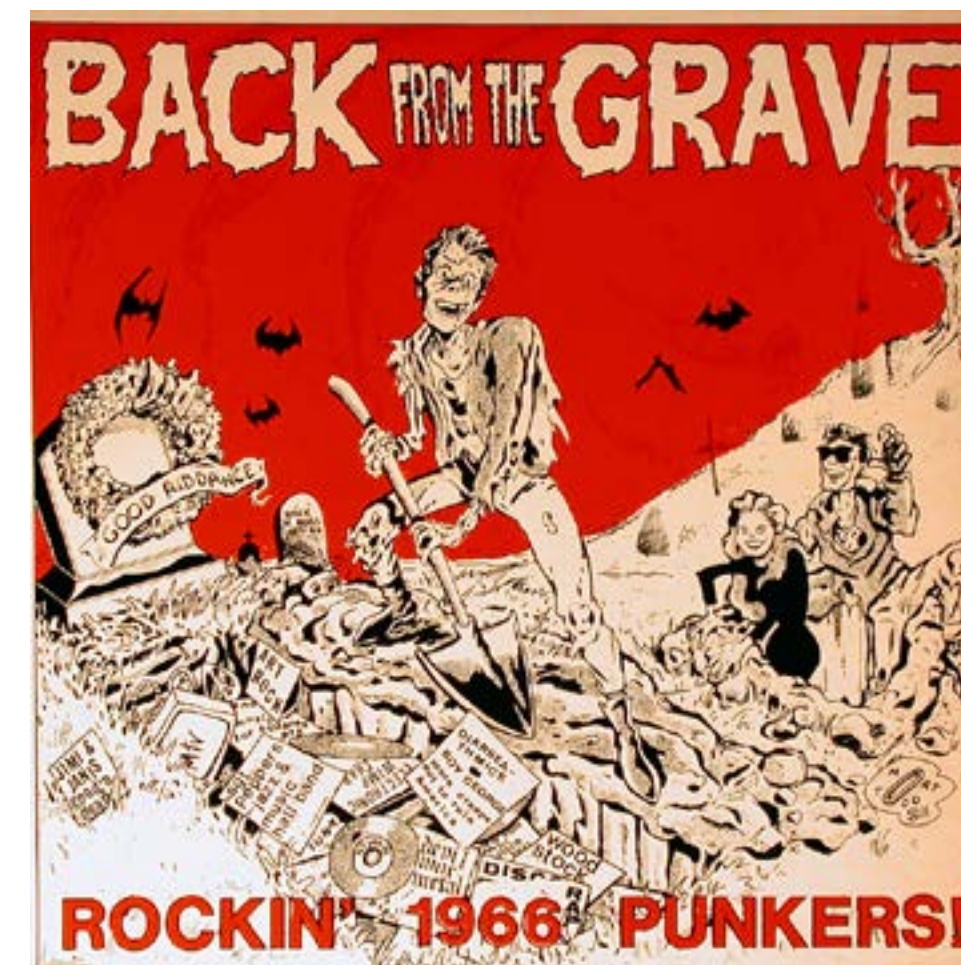
These bands definitely lit my initial spark, but when I stumbled across the obscure 50s and 60s compilations from Tim Warren's "Crypt Records" label it was like being struck by a damned flamethrower. Like so many other ga-

rage-heads Tim Warren started off as a fan of The Ramones-style punk from the 70s. But when he heard the 60s garage bands he lost all interest in the current scene and fell head first into the obscure roots of the punk he was brought up on. After years of collecting records he put together the first "Back From The Grave" compilation, released in August 1983. BFTG was a 15 track LP with utter obscure, stripped down and amateurish rants that he considered to be the ultimate punk of all time. Warren's approach to garage rock is heavily coloured by his punk background, he absolutely shuns anything with a hint of hippie or (post Sgt Pepper) psychedelia. The BFTG series (10 in total at writing moment) portrays itself visually as a total war against everything that happened musically after 1966, with artwork by Mort Todd (except vol. 9 & 10 by Olaf Jens) depicting cartoon zombie

teenagers from the original garage era executing, torturing and decapitating cult figures of every later musical direction, with the "tactic" exclusion of 70s punk legends. Along with the artwork adjectives like: crazed, frantic, primitive, bone crunchin', wild, raw, blastin' unpsychedelic and snarling are used to describe the music which is always referred to as 60s punk or garage punk. BFTG certainly hit the nail on the head if the goal was to steer modern punk rockers towards the 60s garage scene. The liner notes in the LP's were also packed with aggressive rhetoric, screaming out the gospel of garage punk in an uncompromising and convincing manner, with an effective jargon that has become a common aesthetic within the genre. But Warren was not the first to illuminate the obvious link between 70s punk and 60s garage, in fact the very thing that initiated him to the

raw sound of the 60s was another earlier collection of obscure 60s garage tunes; The Pebbles compilations. The Pebbles compilations were likely a collaborative project between collectors, but the evidence points towards the true mastermind behind these compilations to be Greg Shaw, music critic, head honcho at BOMP-records and garage fanatic extraordinaire. If anyone was responsible for keeping the garage flame burning during the late 60s and early 70s it was Greg Shaw with his fanzine "Who Put The Bomp" which refused to give up on its garage rock evangelism during those difficult years of musical mayhem. Shaw initially saw the rise of 70s punk as the resurrection of the true rock and roll spirit and was wildly enthusiastic. When it did not turn out the way he was hoping, he changed directions to become the front figure of the garage revival of the 80s by managing

and signing bands like "The Crowdaddys" and "Gravedigger V" who fit his musical preference; authentic sounding 60s garage.



Shaw highlighted the punk aspect of garage on the first pebbles compilation in a smart and cheeky manner, not only in choice of songs but also in the visual and contextual profiling of the product. In 1972 Shaw had assisted a certain Lenny Kay (rock critic, music archivist and guitar player of the Patti Smith Group) when he put out the first "Nuggets" compilation on Elektra records. This Nuggets compilation was a very influential compilation of American garage rock with a specific focus on forgotten one hit wonders. It was sort of a "best of an era" compilation with the subtitle: Original artyfacts from the first psychedelic era 1965-1968. The cover art was kitsch psychedelic bouldly coloured drawings and couldn't be further from the later aesthetic associated with the 70s punk scene. Given the punk scene's particular distaste for anything involving hippies Shaw made a

good move by choosing a completely different approach when launching the first volume of Pebbles in 1978, one year after the notoriously golden punk year '77. The cover art depicted what seemed to be a man with nails sticking out of his head and the name of the bands scattered around the image on a plain white circle, an aesthetic much closer to the 70s punk style. Not only was the name "Pebbles" a play on the title "Nugget" but the subtitle of Pebbles was: Original artyfacts from the first punk era. With this move he managed to keep the link to the Nuggets compilation intact while at the same time redirecting the focus from the psychedelic part of the genre over to the punk aspect. No wonder then, this was the record the young punk rocker Tim Warren picked up before his life was flipped around.

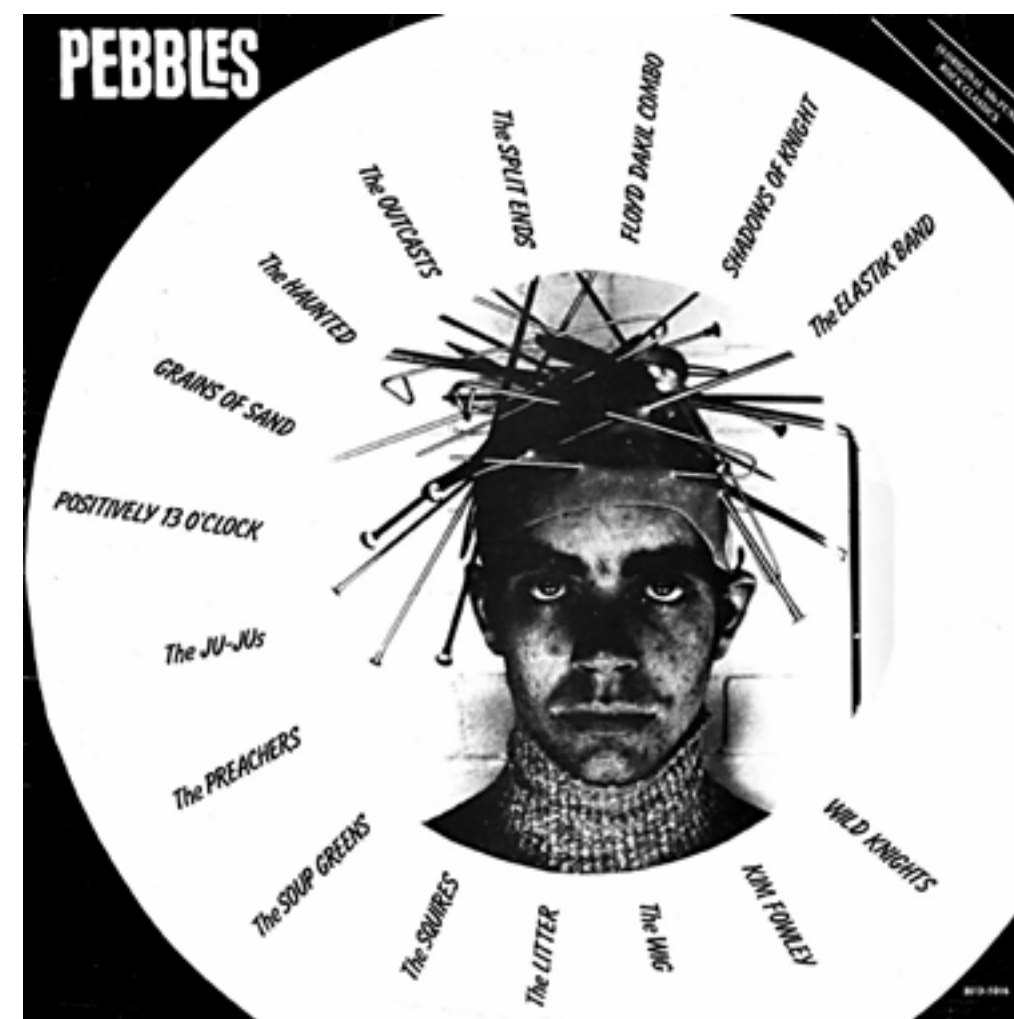


Photo: Pebbles Vol. One (Original Artyfacts From The First Punk Era) , BFD Records 1978.

Jumping back to my own personal experience, my obsession with 60s garage eventually generated a strong passion for many related genres and especially the most formative genres within Rock & Roll like 50s R'n'B, surf, beat and instro-rock which inspired the whole garage scene in the first place. Even though it's a far step from 70s punk to 50s R'n'B, I think my travel back in time has been a natural progression in the search for the roots and origins of that essence that captured my interest in punk music in the first place. I believe this ring true for a lot of garage-heads. If you enjoy the energy, passion and unsophisticated rawness of the 77 generation of punk and onwards, it's likely you'll want to investigate its origin, and you'll end up on a trace leading back to the 60s in the aftermath of the violent birth of Rock & Roll. That will open up a door to the world where these

essential traits were in their prime stage of development and at their purest and most original, but at the same time at their most spontaneous and unpredictable.

As a conclusion I will suggest that the 77 punk genre carries with it an essence which, to a lot of people, is a first introduction to the true spirit of Rock & Roll. Most of the later punk genres and the post-punk movement lost touch with this essence, but it is very obvious in both 77 punk and 60s garage. The people who are attracted to this essence in the 77 punk is therefore naturally drawn back in time towards the ultimate source of inspiration, and out of that fascination, the garage rock subculture emerged.



Photo: The Mummies, front of "Never Been Caught" LP, Telstar Records 1992.

WRONG PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

Garage rock subculture, in present time, exists under completely different social circumstances than what the original scene did, but it still draws inspiration from the initial ideals of the genre. To gain a better understanding of these ideals it is crucial to know the social circumstances that the original scene grew out of. In the first chapter I already concluded that the “pioneers of punk” aspect is essential to the garage fanatic. But it is, off course, bigger than just the fact that they were first, and it’s also bigger than just the aesthetic qualities of the music and the attitude of the bands. One also has to understand the cultural context these original bands operated within to fully comprehend the ideals that garage rock subculture is based upon. If they truly were the proto-types of the do-it-yourself rebel musician, what were they rebelling against?

The typical scenario for a U.S suburban, middle class teenager in the mid-sixties (especially after the British invasion; Beatles, Rolling Stones etc.) was a choice of two options: Play sports, or play in a band. That choice would define you as a person, and it most likely would dictate your entire lifestyle. The eruption of Rock & Roll in the 50s had caused a major revolt in the American society and basically you were either part of it, or against it. This would, indirectly, mean that if you were part of Rock & Roll, you were against everything else, which is not a bad place to start when forming a punk band. Playing Rock & Roll in the moralising, conservative but still politically turbulent 60s America could in itself be a strong enough statement to put you in real danger. In some areas you could expect violence and heavy harassment from both law-enforcers and the local community. Texas

had a strong garage rock scene in the 60s, and in this area the conservative forces were in total war against the youth involved in the scene. Austin born Roky Erickson might be the best example of a Rock & Roll front man thrown to the lions just to make a political statement to scare other youths away from sex, drugs and rock and roll. The 22 year old Erickson was indefinitely incarcerated in Rusk state hospital, a maximum security prison for the criminally insane, after being caught with a single joint. He spent two years in total at Rusk, and what he experienced in this hospital was a nightmare beyond fiction. He was routinely subjected to forced electro shock treatment and spent his days and nights heavily drugged down on Therazine in the company of murderers and rapists who were too mentally ill for a normal prison. In the book “Mind Eye” author Paul Drummond

gives an elaborate description of Roky's band "The 13th Floor Elevators", a garage rock band commonly credited as the inventors of psychedelic rock, and the total witch-hunt that led to both the band and the unfortunate frontman's collapse. The whole book is just full of unbelievably dark chapters that really show the forces young Rock & Roll enthusiasts were up against. The band's massive LSD evangelism surely didn't help the situation, but still, the amount of harassment and blatant use of force these musicians were subjected to shows us that this was more than just a war on drugs. It was basically a war on Rock & Roll.

Even if this is an extreme example it tells us something about the general social circumstances these bands were operating within. This stretched beyond being part of a mischief

counter-culture. It surely could be a choice of lifestyle with severe consequences, and the bands that stood up and fought and chose to be social outcasts rather than confirm to the norm certainly gained a lot of credit for that in retrospect. They were not just the pioneers of punk as an aesthetic, but also punk as an artistic force breaking down cultural and social barriers by challenging conventions through aggressive expression and individuality. They were the foot soldiers building up the barricades as society and Rock & Roll was in the most deciding era of the war. Naturally, the ones with a particularly aggressive and rebellious approach is seen as the most relentless fighters and have achieved a respectable status in the garage community, because without them there would be no 60s garage scene and also no later subculture. To the garage-head who collect records from, play

in bands and live a life that strongly identifies with this era, there is a strong focus on keeping this flame of enthusiasm burning. To manage that you have to draw your inspiration from the initial sparks and where the fire burned the brightest. The intention is the same, even if the challenges are different in today's society. In the 60s there was a real political war against Rock & Roll and a lot of forces were trying to tame it or obliterate it entirely. In present time it's more about preservation, keeping the (right) tradition alive and making it relevant in a present context. In both cases it's basically about keeping the spirit of Rock & Roll alive. When the modern garage-head takes part in this preservation, he relates to the same ideals as the pioneering 60s punk generation did, but there is a different opposition. The social landscape has changed and the expressions will often adapt to that.

HATED IN THE NATION

In 50s and 60s America there was a widespread perception of Rock & Roll as the devils music, and the whole genre was labelled immoral in every sense of the word. The conservative forces of society saw themselves as the good guys with God on their side. When labelled as "the bad guys" the rockin' youth chose to embrace that. Being bad, outrageous and immoral (in the eyes of the conservatives) became the identity of the Rock & Roll rebel. Being shunned by society in general was the price you paid for standing up for your values and ideas. So that became the ideal. Be a "bad" guy, dear to be controversial and over the top. This is an element that follows all genres related to Rock & Roll. If you take that away you will lack a crucial element in the mixture. Because it sets the tone for the ideal that formed the entire identity of the genre in the 50s and 60s. It's a key element

because it states an opposition to the norm. As society changed and got used to Rock & Roll, the expressions associated with it of course got more accepted as well. But if we accept the notion of original Rock & Roll icons as "bad" guys in a war with the "good" guys (who don't like Rock & Roll), it is easy to comprehend why the most hated 60s garage bands are often also the most loved ones. The amount of hatred projected by the "good" guys, or "the squares" can become a statistic in which we can measure a band's efficiency and level of trueness to Rock & Roll as a controversial art form. Being hated can become a quality in itself. As an example of this I would like to go back to Tim Warrens "Back From The Grave" compilations and quote a paragraph from the liner notes on volume 5 where he describes one of his absolute favourite 60s teenage garage punk bands; The Keggs:



Photo: GG Allin, front of "Always Was, Is, And Always Shall Be"" LP, Orange Records 1980.

"... they changed their name after each party they played because people hated them. Their strangest show was at an outdoor tennis court booked for dances every Thursday by the local Jaycees. The idea was for the bands to play and the kids would pay to go inside the court and dance. But when The Keggs played NO ONE came onto the court. There they were, with 200 kids surrounding the high fence screaming and swearing at them for ruining their evening of fun and games. But The Keggs kept on playing to earn their money (40 dollars for 2 hours!) until someone pulled the power switch. Well, the kids that didn't dig'em back then, and any of you SQUARES who don't dig'em today can FUCK OFF! Cauz these guys are the FUCKIN' BEST!"

(Tim Warren, BFTG5).

This is Warren's approach to garage punk in a nutshell. His aggressive "us against them" rhetoric implies that only idiots don't understand the greatness of this music, and therefore their opinion is completely irrelevant. He doesn't need theory to support his claims, he is a pure enthusiast and don't give a damn about people with opposing taste or opinions. I should also mention that just because this is the liner notes of a BFTG compilation, it does not give them the reliability of an historical document. On the early compilations Warren would fill in stories of the top of his head if accurate info about the bands was difficult or impossible to find. Later he changed tactics and went to extreme lengths to gather info for the liner notes. But either way his story of The Keggs, true or not, supports the theory that the "right" people hating you can be a seal of quality in Rock & Roll and punk.



If we jump ahead to the 70s punk scene, being hated certainly became a trademark for the whole movement. Actually the story about The Keggs bear a striking resemblance to the tales about The Sex Pistols playing in hostile surroundings on their first tour in America in 1978. But in their case it was pure provocative tactics, and it became part of their gimmick to be as offensive as possible just to be hated by everyone who was not punks themselves. In the 80s GG Allin claimed that Rock & Roll was dead and he tried to save it by putting the danger back into it with his outrageous live shows and demented behaviour. His '87 cassette release "hated in the nation" portrays himself as the complete social outcast doing everything in his power to shock and provoke. If being hated in the nation was a goal in itself, I would argue that a large bulk of the 60s garage bands defi-

nately succeeded. The entire nation might be an exaggeration, but at least in their local communities, or wherever they managed to gain a reputation. But I don't think GG Allins approach resonates well with the mind-set of the originators of punk. It's extremely single-minded, and I don't think the 60s garage bands saw the provocation as a goal in itself. Their rebelling was a statement against a norm that tried to ruin their party. For the provocation to have an effect and a meaning, there has to be a certain set of ideas and values behind it. In my opinion the punk and Rock & Roll agendas fall out when punk becomes purely confrontational and nihilistic. Self-destruction without even having fun in the process. GG Allins artistic project seems more like a performance where the provocation and shock was the entire goal, even if some claim his project to be a comment on a degenerat-

ed society. It certainly has an undisputed place in rock history, but I don't believe he's close to defining the essence of punk or Rock & Roll through this project. If anything he managed to stretch the scale on which we measure extreme behaviour combined with music. Much in the same way the '77 punk generation took things to the extreme with their behaviour, often also with a tragic outcome. Within the garage rock subculture, more extreme is not necessarily better, and the general interest always points back to the originators of the genre who are considered more pure and more authentic in their expression and ideas than the later directions that tried to top everything by exaggeration and excessiveness.

The 60s garage bands were surely also often wild and outrageous both in music and behaviour, living out the image of the licentious and bohemian Rock & Rollers. But this idea of the musician or artist as a preposterous drug-fuelled wild-man goes a lot further back than the 60s and has a strong foundation in blues, country and jazz as well, so it certainly didn't start with the garage scene, even though it absolutely didn't do anything to demystify that myth. For the garage rock fanatic the ideal is to stay true to the values and ideas of the original 60s garage movement. These ideas can be liberal and controversial also today, but this is a different time and off course it doesn't provoke in the same manner. But that's beside the point, because the goal is not provocation in itself. We can assume that the first garage rock generation primarily fought for individu-

ality and the right to live out a Rock & Roll lifestyle. If you feel free to do that in today's society, you've come a long way and you shouldn't waste time looking for new ways to provoke. If the Rock & Roll war was a fight between the "good" and the "bad" we can conclude that the "bad" guys won (at least in the western world), because there's nothing really stopping us from carrying on that tradition and living out this lifestyle in modern society. Therefore the garage rock "bad" guy can operate with a certain ironical distance, because the original ideals of the 60s, does not cause the same reaction today.



Photo: Screaming Lord Sutch, front of self titled EP, ACE Records 1981.

The cartoon character "Rat Fink", created by Ed "Big Daddy" Roth in 1959, has become sort of a mascot for garage rock's humorous take on the Rock & Roll bad guy. Roth's artwork was originally only associated with the hot rod movement. But it was picked up by surf, and novelty bands, and later by garage bands in the garage revival scene of the 80s. What is interesting about the adoption of this expression to the garage rock subculture is how the symbolism of the character resonates with the "bad" guy ideals of garage rock and particularly garage punk. Roth's motivation for the "Rat Fink" character was Disney World and Mickey Mouse. He hated it, and with Rat Fink he had created the anti-Mickey Mouse. A dirty, sweat dripping, obnoxious, no-good character that symbolized the complete opposite of everything the popular culture Disney America stood for. In the docu-

mentary "Tales from the Rat Fink" the idealism behind the character is explained in the words of Ed Roth:

"Whenever I looked at Rat Fink, I felt like I was looking at my inner self. The world my parents, teachers and responsible type people belonged to wasn't my world. Why did I have to be like them? I didn't. Somehow Rat Fink helped me realize that."

It's easy to see how this symbolism resonates well with the garage punk ethos, and garage rock subculture as a whole. Both the distaste for the "clean cut" popular culture and the individual freedom to dissociate from the responsible and serious world are cornerstones in the whole movement. Rat Fink symbolize an escape from authorities and the world you don't want to be a part of, and this style of drawing and imagery

has become a common standard for modern garage rock graphics. In real life the modern garage rock bands typically combines the Rock & Roll "bad guy" image with a large dose of humour and theatrical "shocking" and "provoking" antics. If you look at modern garage bands like: Nobunny, Monsters, Reverend Beatman or King Khan and the BBQ Show, they are a far cry from the political or antisocial aggressiveness found in many fields of modern punk and metal. It's sex, drugs and Rock & Roll without the hating everything and including the seriousness of politics, because garage rock is fundamentally focused on fun, and it therefore kicks the seriousness out of the entertainment. The message is the same as in the 60s teen punk generation. Do what you want, be what you want and have fun doing so. It's not founded on provocation, but they don't care if they provoke.

NOBODY SPOIL MY FUN

Earlier I talked about garage rock originally being part of a controversial counter culture, more or less in war with society at the time. Even though this is true, the music itself did not target politics anywhere near what other genres like the folk revival or hippie movement did. Playing in a Rock & Roll band in the 60s could be seen as a statement in itself, yes, but in garage rock the lyrics are, with very few exceptions, entirely apolitical. For teens and young adults playing in garage bands the biggest motivation for being a musician probably boiled down to personal taste and preferences; what they thought was cool and fun, plus an extreme distaste for anything getting in their way of pursuing this. In effect their movement became a riot against the social norms and values of the conservative forces, and they attacked it by total escapism, taking no part in the discussion

and not relating to the “real” world. An ideal that relates to Rock & Roll in general. When the world didn’t fit them they just dropped out and had a good time instead. It was all about fun, to hell with the serious people, they were considered boring and square. As we’ve concluded earlier in this analysis, not being on par with the squares was just a seal of approval from the likeminded no-counts. The Rock & Roll teens would take pride in disconnecting from the serious world, and become outsiders, fuelling their escapist soundtrack with the anger and frustration caused by those harassing and pressuring them to participate. They wanted entertainment and Rock & Roll provided the perfect valve that could release the pressure of everyday issues. One of the more successful garage bands “The Seeds” provides us with a great example of this attitude in the tune “Nobody Spoil my Fun” of

their self-titled debut LP from ‘66. The lyrics are just as simple and unintellectual as you can get it; find a girl, run away, dance all night, have sex and nothing can stop you. It’s a total escapist pathos, and it neatly sums up one of Rock & Roll’s most important motivations; to get away from it all through doing what you enjoy. Utopian? Perhaps. But why shouldn’t an escapist art form be flooded with a utopian undercurrent? Within the garage rock subculture, Rock & Roll symbolise freedom, and worship it as an escape from seriousness and responsibility. Intellectual thought, deep philosophy or politics have little to no place in this entertainment at all, because it’s not considered fun. You can be as full of opinions as you want, but don’t drag them into the music, at least don’t blatantly express them. Garage rock lyrics generally appeal to, and communicate, emotions and primal instincts

rather than cognitive thought. And the simple messages are often universal and timeless just because of that. Even if the social circumstances were totally different in Detroit in 1965 I can still totally relate to a song like "City of People" by "The Illusions" with simple lyrics like: "if they wanna laugh and stare / go ahead cause I don't care" and "you know you can never bring me down". It's not because I think it's such a great lyric, it's because it, combined with the music, speak a pure universal message of being true to yourself, never care what others think, do what you want and if that makes you an outsider, embrace it. That's the true spirit of punk in my eyes. It's universal to every person who doesn't fit in or can't find comfort in the mainstream of society or popular culture. The fact that these bands were hated and harassed because of this message also generates a sense of unity across

the boundaries of time. It amuses the fans of garage rock to know that this alienation only fuelled the band's lust for being more different, and looking elsewhere for good times. That gives them even more integrity. I would argue that within Rock & Roll history there's never been a more suitable decade for anti-conformity than the 1960s, the garage bands of this time were just fighting for the right cause. It's as simple as that. The ideology they were rebelling against was just the perfect enemy for Rock & Roll. And what they were fighting for was just pure and simple fun.



Photo: The Cramps promo poster, late 1970s.

AUTHENTICITY

One of the things I always found interesting about the primitive, crude and unsophisticated nature of garage rock was the idea that it took a refined sensibility to truly appreciate the greatness of the music. At least for me, it was sort of an acquired taste that developed more and more over the years. It really grew on me. A lot of the elements that other musical genres polish away through post-production, or avoid through refined studio techniques, are exactly what makes the sound of a garage rock recordings so much more powerful. A producer often takes the "real" sound and filter it through a system designed to make it more appealing to the listener. The cheap and rough recordings of 60s garage bands truly delivers the real sound, the live sound of what happened in the recording session. That helps the recordings get what I strongly believe is a more authentic sound.

Authenticity is a big word, but to me there's somehow a sense of honesty in expression when you can really hear that the musician is pushing the limits of their capability. It highlights the human element of the music. When there is basically no post production, no layering of instruments or auto tuning to pollute that realness, it comes across as more natural. In the art world we find the realist movement of the mid-19th century that was formed as a reaction to the earlier romanticism. These artists rejected the smoothness and artificiality of romanticism and often emphasized the ugly and sordid elements of real life just to underline the "realness" of their paintings. Modern garage bands will typically choose vintage recording equipment and techniques, and reject the smoothness and artificiality of modern production. Maybe there's a parallel to be drawn here? Maybe

what is commonly perceived as dirty and rough sound actually emphasize the "realness" of the recording? Another thing that defines the typical garage punk sound is the aggressive, often clumsy, playing techniques. The teens playing in the original 60s punk scene were often really unsophisticated musicians, but I'm actually sure that can be a good thing when it comes to Rock & Roll. I believe sophistication is synonymous with control, and raw power and wildness can't be achieved without losing some of that control. It is therefore essential to Rock & Roll to be somewhat unsophisticated and, in effect, out of control.

Rock & Roll doesn't need to be authentic in the sense that country was with legends like Hank Williams or Jimmie Rodgers telling stories about their real lives. As I already concluded in

the earlier chapter's Rock & Roll is escapist and utopian in its nature, so it is also totally open for re-invention of the self. There is no urgent need for autobiography and authenticity in this sense, as Rock & Roll is a playful genre with focus on flat out entertainment and cartoonish larger than life characters. The authenticity we find in garage rock is the realness of the expression, and the real enthusiasm of the musicians. That spontaneous and out of control power, that can't be tamed. It is not calculated and rehearsed to death in an attempt to achieve perfection. This resonates so well with the garage-head because perfection is what takes the excitement and danger out of Rock & Roll. The garage punk, with its total lack of sophistication, could sometimes even be described as something as paradoxical as the perfect imperfection. It is a style of music where the flaws and slip

ups can add to the total quality of the listening experience, and where certain elements of chance and spontaneity shape the final outcome. It must all be within reasonable boundaries off course. There is a thin line between being bad, and being so bad it's good. But this is where the garage-fanatic is an expert and, in my opinion, where there is a need for a refined sensibility towards the artistic nuances of Rock & Roll.



Photo: Screaming Jay Hawkins.

THE CURATOR

When you're pushing far out on the left field of Rock & Roll, searching through the no hit wonders that never received any audience in their time, you really have to have a great feel of what's good and what's not. Because it's a total hit and miss artistic environment where it seems almost every band got the chance to record. It's also damn near impossible to explain the quality of the music with reason (even if I'm trying my best in this analysis). Most people can't see the qualities because they are blinded by the simplicity both in musicianship and sound. As I've pointed out before, garage rock appeals more directly to emotions than intellect. Again I would like to quote a phrase from Tim Warren's liner notes, this time from "Back From The Grave" Vol 1 when explaining why "The Rats" with their single "The Rats Revenge (part 1+2)" is the greatest garage punk record ever.

"It's the GREATEST because: No dickweed intellectual 'rock critic' will never be able to appreciate, analyse, or understand the absolute GENIUS behind a record like this."

He actually just emphasizes the point that this enthusiasm can't be explained from an intellectual point of view. I've come across a similar opinion before, when asking a friend what he liked about garage rock. He was almost upset that I even asked and his argument was that it was simply the best, he loved it and he didn't give a damn what other people thought. He felt absolutely no need to defend or explain the qualities. Either you get it, or you don't. The garage rock fanatic can feel the intensity of the music and he doesn't see the unsophistication as elements of disturbance, it actually adds to the total experience. When you experience this

there is no question about the very real effect of the music. For me it was a feeling of realisation, like I broke through and finally found an essence in Rock & Roll that had been totally watered out ever since. There's also a strong sense of community that goes along with this realisation. It's hard to explain the qualities of the music because it's almost purely emotional, when someone gets it, there's a strong sense of connection. This is of course true with a lot of peculiar interests, whatever they may be, but nevertheless this understanding of the qualities "hidden" in the garage music creates a bond between the participants within the scene. And even if I'm doing a thorough analysis of the music's qualities now, I realise that the basic notion within this community is that the qualities of the music should be self-evident to the listener, and shouldn't need to be explained.

The ability to source out really good quality 60s garage tunes is obviously a well-respected trait within the garage rock community. People look to dj's at clubs, concerts, festivals or radio/podcasts, go to particular stores and record-labels and have favourite sellers on internet pages like e-bay or gemm.com that they follow to get a hold of the records. These collectors and sellers are hugely influential on what music become popular within the scene. And then, of course, you have the music and the musicians themselves from the current bands within the scene. As much as the fans of the bands love their music, see them live and buy their records. There is always the awareness that these bands too generally look directly back to the records from the original era for inspiration. Some bands like The Cramps or The Fuzztones have even generated LP compilation series like: Songs The

Cramps taught us, or in Fuzztones' case: Songs we taught The Fuzztones. These compilations contain original 50s and 60s music that were either covered by the bands, or direct inspiration to their songs. There is a fairly relaxed view on originality in music in the garage rock community, and drawing direct inspiration from, or playing covers of obscure 60s bands are generally never considered as "fake" or inauthentic. Actually it's often the complete opposite. It just shows that the bands are part of the same collector culture as the rest of the community and it's considered more a sign of recognition than an element of unoriginality. Billy Childish, a well-respected figure in the British garage punk scene since the late 70s and a huge inspiration for countless later garage revival bands, made this statement about originality: "Originality is over-rated in our society. Originality usually

means gimmick." Though not a big fan of the American 60s punk, he is a true believer in the pure force of stripped down, basic Rock & Roll, and like the rest of the cult figures within the movement, he believes that the real source of this can only be found in the early stages of the genre. So he chooses to make his music according to the same set of principles because he believes that they are the best.

The music is of course the foundation of the subculture. But there is no question that the passion for collecting and discovering obscure records, and the knowledge of that part of musical history is absolutely crucial to every aspect of the subculture as well. It's like an anchor that is connected to all the later developments of everything from the present garage music scene to the whole subculture itself. The 60s

garage records that become the most popular within the scene, and are now perceived as classics, have all at some stage been (re)discovered by someone with a particular interest, who saw a potential no one, or very few, saw at the time of its recording. These people are the curators within the garage rock subculture, and they have worked up a fine skill as cultural archaeologists. I use the term "curator" because they actually function a lot like the curators we know from the art or museum world. They are the keepers and maintainers of the garage rock cultural heritage. They use their expertise in the field to carefully select the best music of this era and present it to the other enthusiasts. As an example of such a pair of curators I will point towards Billy Miller and Miriam Linna at New York based Norton Records. They have dedicated their entire adult life to searching out the

wildest music from the darkest corners on the left field of Rock & Roll and have become one of the main contributors to the soundtrack of the subculture as we see it today. What Norton records specializes in is putting out 50s and 60s recordings that has never before been released on vinyl, and they have an amazing catalogue of music to show for their work, that has been hugely influential. They are the single reason why people have ever heard these recordings, and the reason why a large part of the subculture got turned on to this style of music in the first place. Along with the work of Norton records there's also the vast range of 60s garage compilations put out by other contributors. Most of the time these compilations only contain re-issues of rare records, but still they definitely serve the same purpose in turning on garage-heads all over the world.



Photo: Billy Miller and Miriam Linna of Norton Records, NY.

The curators behind these compilations have a tremendous impact on both what music is heard, and also what music become the classics that everyone wants.

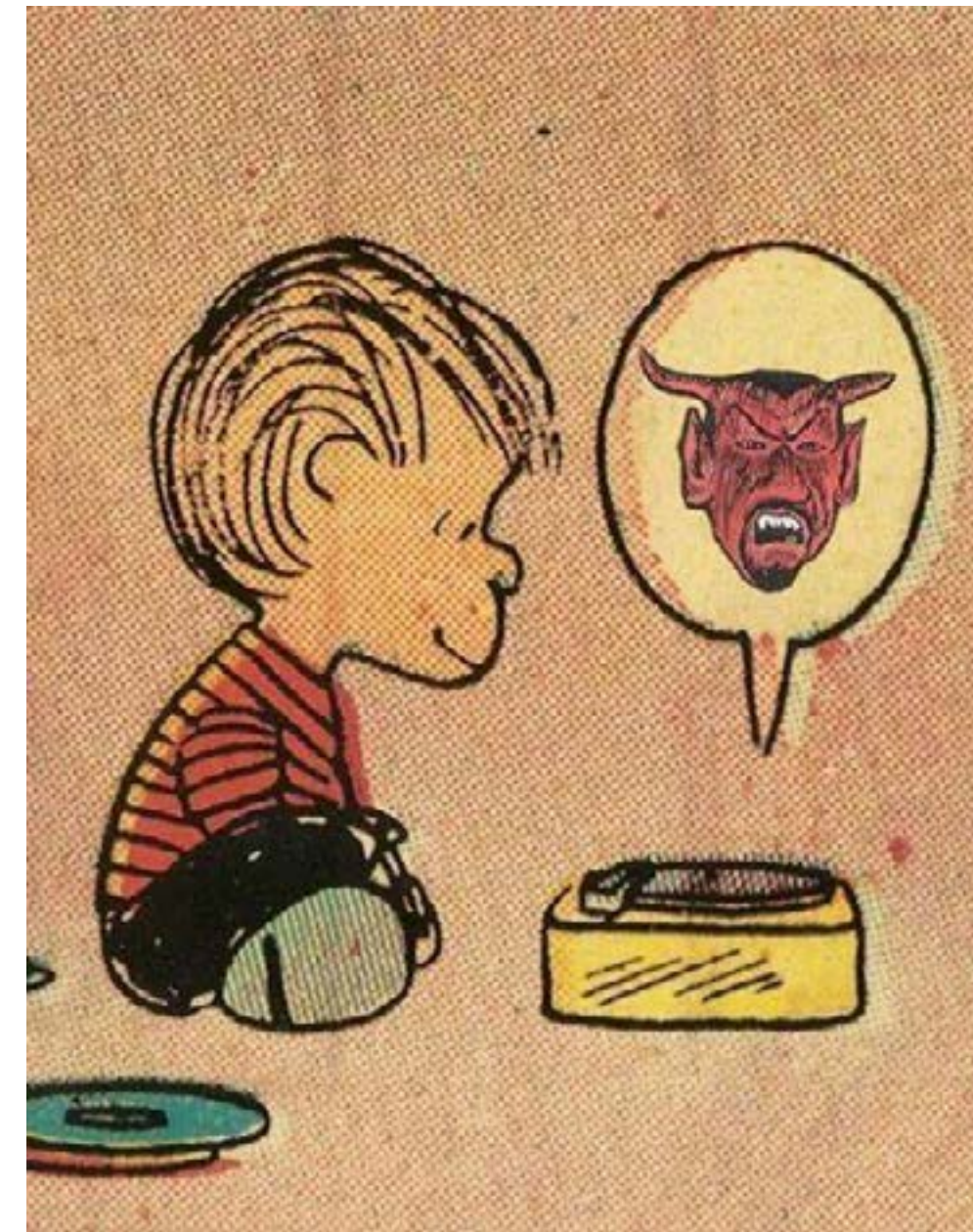
From a cynical point of view one could say that these curators are just controlling the market with their personal taste and preferences, and in effect also controlling the prices of the original singles. But I believe they are doing a real important job, and that this is exactly what we need to keep the subculture focused on the best available music. It needs people that are willing to go the extra mile, look for qualities and use their refined sensibility and aesthetic abilities to source out "new" old material. Showing the public the "right" music is of course a very old tradition that goes back beyond the birth of radio, but it's a tradition that is slowly

drowning in the modern information age. With unlimited access to whatever music you want, whenever you want, people are just getting more and more indifferent. It seems that music in many ways has become a background noise to people's everyday life and they are never focusing solely on the music. So the curator's role is as important as ever. The garage rock subculture stimulates everyone to become a curator by idolising the selector of good tunes. A garage rock dj is simply showing his record collection, and he is admired for his taste and ability to spot good quality in music neglected by the masses. When a tune ends up on a respected compilation it is handed a seal of approval by the mastermind behind it. When you buy an LP with 15 obscure garage tracks, you are bound to listen through the whole thing and put some effort into the listening to seek out the quali-

ties. I would argue that Spotify simply doesn't work that way because this is a media that offer almost unlimited choice and in effect just stimulate an indifference to the music. Sure there are playlists you can rip of other people, but the effort it takes to find that list doesn't even compare to buying a physical product, let alone a truly obscure record. You will never get the same sense of attachment to the music when it is not materialized in a physical product. You take the object out of the equation and remove the music from the physical world. In my opinion this is not the best way to listen to music. The fact that garage fanatics keep buying and listening to actual records also help keep the spirit of the curator alive, because we need these people to help us find the right records. And unlike people who just collect music digitally, we can't afford to obtain every single bit

of music we might want to listen to sometime in the future. Buying a record is a decision, an economical and emotional commitment to both the product and the artist. Downloading a song or putting it on a playlist in Spotify means nothing. It's the difference between buying a painting and putting it on your wall, and typing in "Munch" on your computer and taking a look at the picture on google. It is two different worlds. The garage fanatic is very content with the old fashioned way of listening to music, and like a lot of other old fashioned things, he believes this is the best way to do it. Starting to collect records will also be the first step towards wanting to be a curator yourself, and this of course goes hand in hand with the genuine interest for the music. So what we see is that there is a friendly and sharing hierarchy within the garage rock subculture where people admire the

efforts of curating and often follow the lead of the most respected. It's a collector's community where there is a strong focus on sharing the treasures, because the music within the culture is in its essence meant for sharing, at a loud volume.



TEENAGE CAVEMAN

The fact that the original garage rock scene was almost exclusively created by teenagers and for teenagers is a key aspect to understanding the garage rock subculture. The whole genre was created out of the need to both express and to stimulate the teenage mind. As the subculture evolved it is now no longer based around teenage bands or a teenage audience, but the core values present in the original scene and the mind-set that formed the genre is still the ideal within the subculture, regardless of the age of the participants. Earlier I analysed the role of the garage punk teenager in 60s American society, the way they chose to rebel through escapism and what they were rebelling against. In this chapter I'm going to take a closer look at the defining traits of the teenage mind and try to shed some light on why the teenage mentality has such a strong presence in this subculture.

While not all the characteristics of the adolescent phase are interesting to the subculture, there are some I believe are very relevant to the whole mentality and also the ideological aspects. In the same way that the subculture is selective about what parts of the 60s culture it chooses to include, it also emphasizes certain behaviour, stereotypical teenage attributes and psychological factors associated with adolescence. The first aspect I would like to highlight is the purity in expression and experience during the teenage phase. The teenage years are often the time when you experience everything for the first time, especially in the sex, drugs and Rock & Roll department, and naturally those first time experiences make more impression than when you experience the same thing again. When this is combined with the psychological factors typical for the adolescent

brain the reaction is even more intense than for the older debutant. The prefrontal cortex is a part of the brain associated with rational thought and moderating social behaviour. Scientific studies show us that during the teenage years this part of the brain is undeveloped and improperly balanced in relation to the emotional part of the brain. This, along with the hormonal changes, can go a long way in explaining why a teenager's decisions and experiences are often fuelled by emotion rather than rational thought, and also why the emotional experiences are so much more intense during this phase. In garage rock subculture this chapter in life of intense experiences is seen as the prime time and the state of mind one should strive for. These psychological factors also fit perfectly with the garage punk ethos of putting emotions before intellectuality in the music, hunting for a

thrill and a neural buzz rather than stimulating the rational, cognitive part of the brain through complex analytic interpretation of the music. To the people within this scene the ability to experience the music on the purest possible emotional level and giving in to these emotions is the main goal, and this is best done by blocking out the rational and analytical part of the brain. In many ways garage rock can be seen as an anti-intellectual art form that shuns every hint of improvement or progression through sophistication, the extreme opposite of the 70s progressive rock scene with bands like "Rush", "Yes" or "Emerson, Lake and Palmer." It might not come as a surprise then, that the prehistoric Neanderthal or "caveman" also has become some sort of a mascot within the garage rock scene. The primitive and animalistic features of man are the most interesting in relation to this

music, and both the caveman and the teenagers are more in touch with these primal instincts than your average rational grown up. There is however a common way to numb down your frontal cortex and become more in touch with your inner "caveman." And that is alcohol. No wonder this drug is extensively appreciated within the subculture. Alcohol slows down rational thought and depresses the behavioural inhibitory centres, making you more likely to act out on emotions and impulses. While there is absolutely no question about the negative effects of alcohol, it does seem like a perfect fit when it comes to enjoying the primitive, unsophisticated nature and energetic emotional stimuli of Rock & Roll. Like with everything else it all boils down to finding the right balance. In this case the right balance between chaos and harmony, or excitement and predictability.



The second aspect of this fascination with the teenage mind that I want to address is; the idea of the teenager as the truant and troublemaker, breaking all ties with the norms and values projected onto him by authorities during his childhood years. Adolescence represents autonomy without responsibility. It's the absolute Rock & Roll prime-time. You can experience total freedom and blow up your pleasure center without severe physical or mental consequences. The lust for life and action has just ignited and you're out on a mission to find your own values and ideas on how to live life, leaving behind everything you've learned and starting from scratch. This is the typical phase where the garage fanatic steps out of the mainstream and look for new and adventurous environments, and through this search he eventually ends up in a subcultural lifestyle. After that, it has noth-

ing to do with your physical age, the rest is just about preserving your spirit. But the teenage state of mind stays as an ideal. There's actually also a lot of similarities between the rebellion of adolescence and the evolution of Rock & Roll during the 60s. It goes hand in hand with teenage rebellion, not only because it was the teenagers themselves that caused the major revolt in society and popular culture through the explosion of Rock & Roll, but also because Rock & Roll itself was in what you can call an adolescent phase, testing boundaries and breaking away from the conservative forces of society. If the 50s are considered the birth and childhood of Rock & Roll, we can imagine it as a real rowdy, obnoxious and loud child that was in many ways sedated and controlled more or less by the authorities. It tested the boundaries in a somewhat controlled environment, and there

was plenty of adult supervision and strong forces working hard to limit its expression. It surely did cause a riot, that's for sure, but as far as the musical and behavioural expressions go, it was in many ways taken up a notch in the 60s when the teens started making the music themselves and the whole art form started evolving more outside the reach of corporate forces. Much like what happened in the 70s punk scene, there was a "do it yourself" attitude amongst the 60s teen rockers, and a realisation that they didn't need to be professional musicians to do this. And that Rock & Roll was their personal arena to express whatever they wanted and act however they liked. So this can be seen as the teen years of Rock & Roll, the careless, adventurous joy of freedom and search for cheap thrills and instant gratification. Emotions running high and rational thought left behind.

In my opinion it's easy to see where it all went wrong. By the end of the 60s the popular Rock & Roll had "grown up" and changed into rock music, it became political, experimental and self-conscious through the hippie movement, and in the 70s it went on to become progressive, sophisticated and flat out pretentious with the progressive rock bands. The only real Rock & Roll bands left were the ones who fought in a shit storm to keep the teen spirit of Rock & Roll alive. And this is exactly what the garage rock subculture keeps on doing, keeping the teen spirit of Rock & Roll alive. Because it is the prime age mentally, physically and last but not least musically.



Photo: 50s B-movie poster, wrongsideoftheart.com.

ROCK & ROLL REMAINS

My research suggests that Rock & Roll represents freedom in the way that it encourages diversity and individual autonomy, and also by providing a cathartic escape from the responsibility and seriousness of everyday life. The fascination with Rock & Roll has little to nothing to do with nostalgia. And that's evident because it continues to be picked up by generations who only know the original era through the aspects the subculture emphasizes. It has nothing to do with a longing for the actual 60s. The conservation of this mentality and aesthetics is about keeping Rock & Roll, as an art-form, alive and on the right track. The original garage scene used Rock & Roll as an escape from their present surroundings, and the current scene does exactly the same. The mentality stays the same. The only difference is that they were looking forward, and we are looking backwards.

As far as aesthetics go, the modern garage rock artist works within a more or less traditional template. And that is the tradition of Rock & Roll. Like any culture it passes down the most crucial elements to the next generation. What outsiders don't seem to understand is that the Rock & Roll culture adopts everything that truly possesses the spirit of Rock & Roll, regardless of when it was made. It just happens to be the 50s and 60s that present the most considerable body of Rock & Roll infected work. So everyone automatically associate the art-form with that point in time. The Rock & Roll label fits a vast range of genres between the 50s and present time, and they all of course bear resemblance to the original aesthetics. It was the origin, the birth of the culture, and since then it has continued as a subculture, unaffected by the popular culture. While society in general sees the music,

visual art and whole culture as "retro", I see it as just an independent culture which sticks to its own agenda and the methods that works best when communicating its own cultural identity. Modern R'n'B, hip hop, techno or disco has no place in Rock & Roll, not just because of their aesthetic principles, but because they also communicate a completely different mentality. Why on earth would Rock & Roll ever change just because pop-culture got fascinated with these genres? These type of influences are irrelevant, they only distract and that is why it is so important to define the essence of Rock & Roll and understand how it relates to the aesthetics of the genre. Only then will it be possible to be innovative, radical and relevant to a new generation without bastardizing the culture.

3.4

ANALYSIS OF THE ARTISTIC TRADITION

ARTISTIC TRADITION

The initial visual identity of garage rock developed amongst the throwaway “trash” pop and b-culture artefacts aimed at the Rock & Roll youth of the 50s and 60s. While fine art has always been preserved and taken care of, this type of “art” and design was more or less considered trash the moment it was sold. Recognizing the value of this “trash” has become a defining trait for the later subculture. And not just the record-sleeves and posters directly linked to the garage music, but all kinds of artefacts, illustrated and designed for pure commercial exploitation of the 50s and 60s youth culture. This ephemera is now a crucial part of the visual identity of the subculture. They are classic designs customized to appeal to the first wave of Rock & Roll crazed teenagers, and therefore they embody the authentic spirit of Rock & Roll, which this scene aims to keep alive.

To recognize the qualities and value of these original artefacts, both aesthetically and connotative, is the first step to understanding the Rock & Roll visual aesthetics. It is the ABC textbook of the visual language.

There’s a wide range of artwork, expressions and styles from the 50s and 60s that either was from the start, or later became so associated with Rock & Roll that it is now part of the cultural bricolage that make up the visual identity. On the next page I have provided a list of categories that have been of particular relevance to my research of this artistic tradition.



Photo: Real Gone Garbage, 1980s compilation LP of 50s and 60s garage rock.

MUSIC ARTEFACTS

- 60s garage rock scene
- British "invasion" bands
- Blues, R&B, R&R and Rockabilly scene
- Surf and frat rock scene
- Exotica and Tiki Culture

60S GARAGE ROCK SCENE

Unfortunately the most interesting material in this category is also the hardest to find. I'm interested in the amateurs outside of the commercial forces. In my opinion that scene represents the most authentic Rock & Roll spirit. The art comes straight from the Rock & Roll youth themselves and therefore communicates the ideas in a primitive and passionate manner. It comes across as less calculated than any commercial approach. The artwork is consistent with the music they represented. It's mostly minimalist expressions and they appear unintentionally rough and unpolished. The lack of expertise carries with it the anti-conformity attitude and symbolize the idea of literally taking the Rock & Roll art-form into your own hands and away from corporate powers. The naive self-taught style speaks on many levels, and it is an aesthetic with deep connotative value.



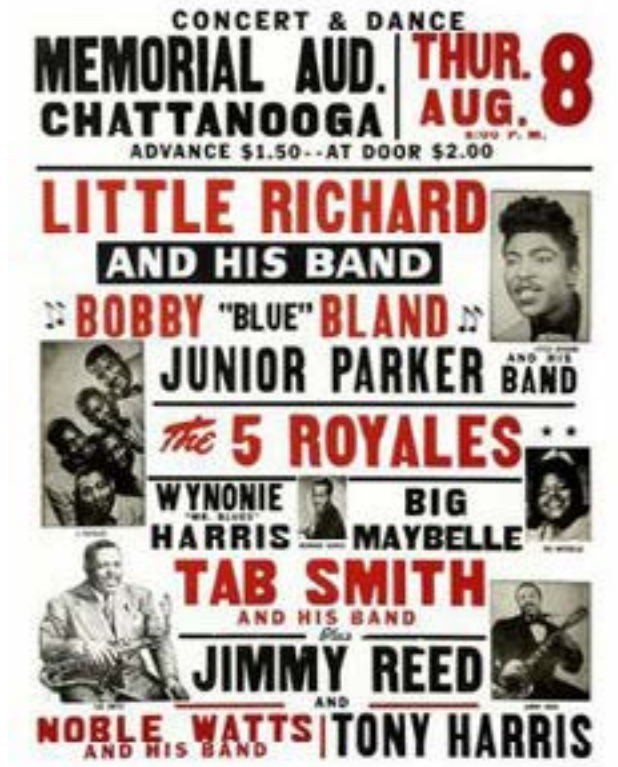
BRITISH “INVASION” BANDS

Bands like The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, The Animals, The Pretty Things etc. inspired the whole garage boom in America. They had an immense influence on the musical and visual aesthetics of the genre. They played a crucial part in promoting the idea that the youth themselves could write their own material, and all they needed to perform live was guitar, bass and drums. A lot of the visual expressions that developed in the American DIY garage community in the 60s are just flat out attempts to replicate the expressions of these famous English bands. Of course the fact that they were famous had a huge impact on their graphic material. The primitive, naive, folk art aesthetic found in the garage rock scene is a far cry from the polished professionally designed promotional material the English bands were provided by their record labels market department.



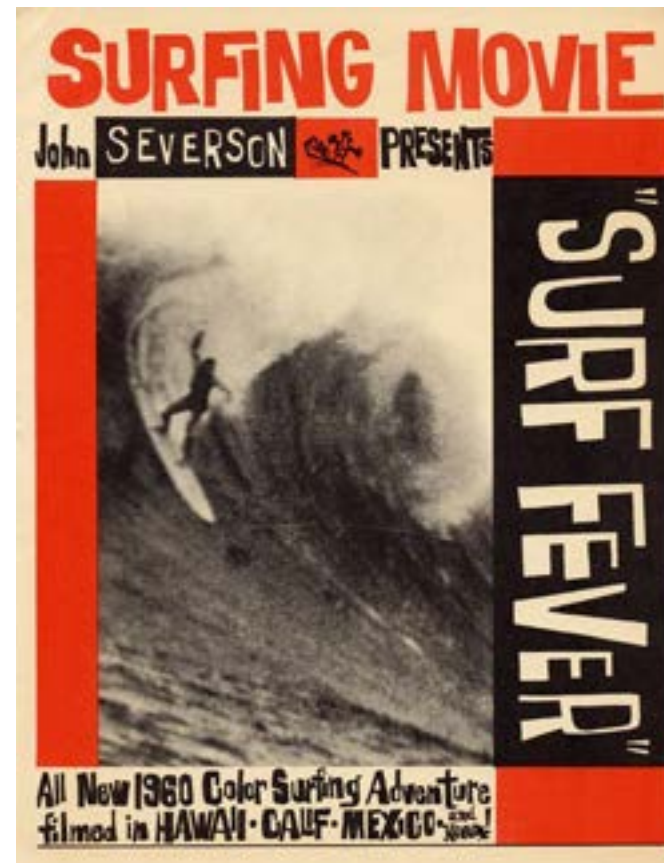
BLUES, R&B, R&R AND ROCKABILLY

While garage rock might have been inspired by the British "invasion" bands, there is little doubt about where the British bands found their inspiration. That whole movement was founded on a shared interest in African-American folk music mainly in the form of blues and R&B. By the end of the 40s and early 50s R&B morphed into the Rock & Roll popular genre that was to create the big bang that unleashed a wave of Rock & Roll crazed teenagers. It's important to understand that this wave was guided by corporate forces. The promotional artefacts were custom designed to stimulate the new and rising youth culture. Most of the graphic material was designed by professional designers, and they became experts on capturing the spirit of Rock & Roll in their designs. These designs are milestones in Rock & Roll art, and represent the classic graphic aesthetic within the genre.



SURF AND FRAT ROCK SCENE

The surf culture had a huge impact on the American youth in the late 50s and early 60s, it inspired a specific style of fashion, language, music and, of course, visual graphics. It stretched far beyond the people involved in the sport. The music scene inspired hot-rod rock and frat rock, where the surf aspect was exchanged for hot rods and wild frat parties. The frat rock genre is the direct link between surf and garage rock. In frat-rock the musical expression is spiced up more towards the heavy rhythm and blues. This was party music made for dancing and live performance with a deliberate focus on futile stupidity and shenanigans. Simplicity in lyrics and visual expressions are typical, absurdity and insanity is emphasized. It was music for going crazy, and the visual style reflects that. It also shares many of the DIY qualities we see in the 60s garage scene.



EXOTICA AND TIKI CULTURE

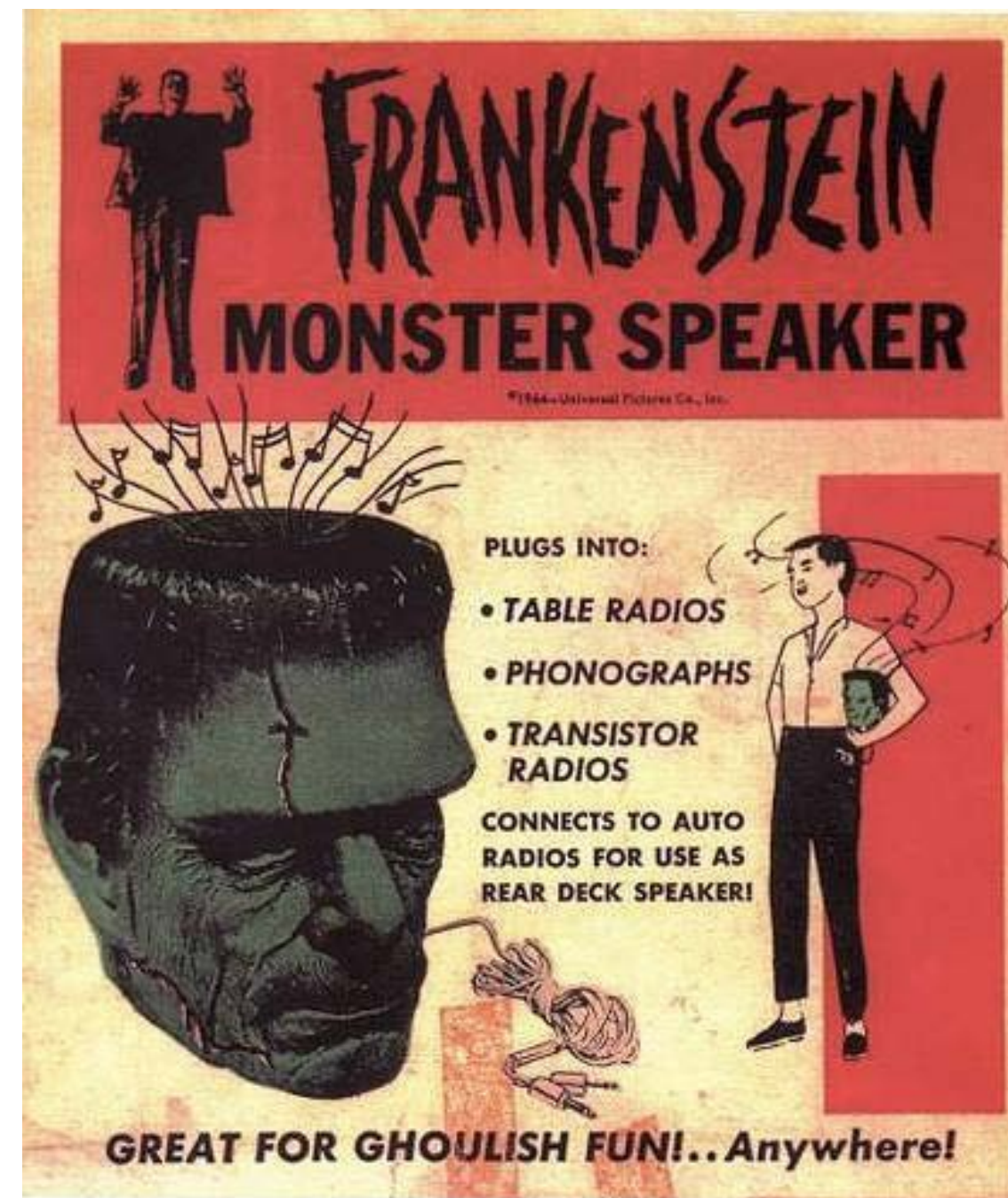
Along with the surf culture you also get the Polynesian "tiki" influence, as the Polynesian islands are where surfing originated. 50s America had an enormous fascination with all foreign culture, but especially the Polynesian. Tiki-bars with all its decoration and drinks is a result of this. Exotic clichés were used for all it was worth, and out of this charming stew, the exotica music genre emerged as well. But what is essentially instrumental Rock & Roll with exotic influences has also contributed generously to the Rock & Roll visual universe. It represents a tongue in cheek take on exotic influences that are used in a playful manner, intentionally naive and unsophisticated.



ARTEFACTS

OUTSIDE OF MUSIC

- B-movie posters
- Kustom kulture (lowbrow cartoon)
- Pulp Art
- Horror comics



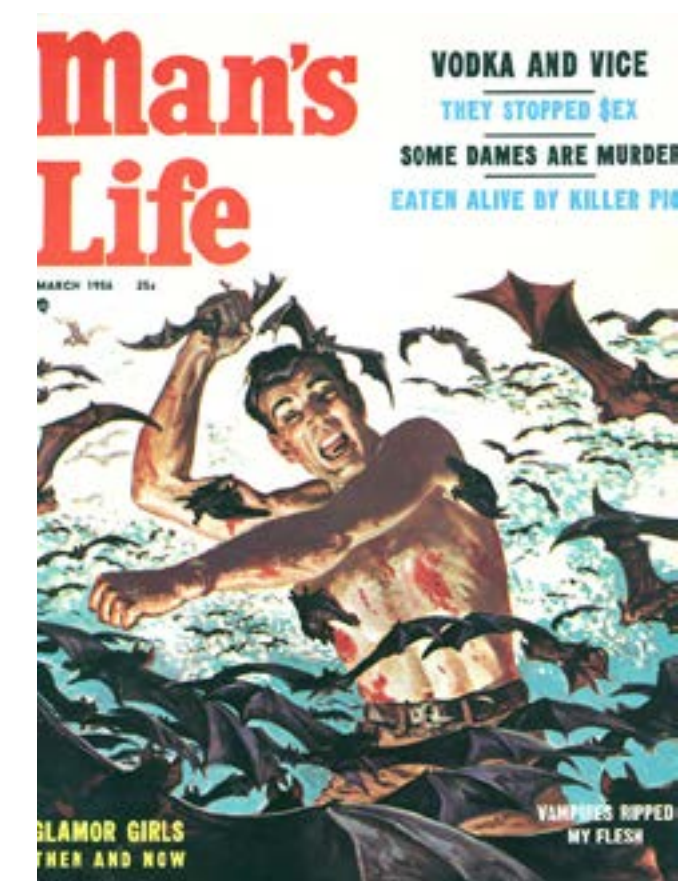
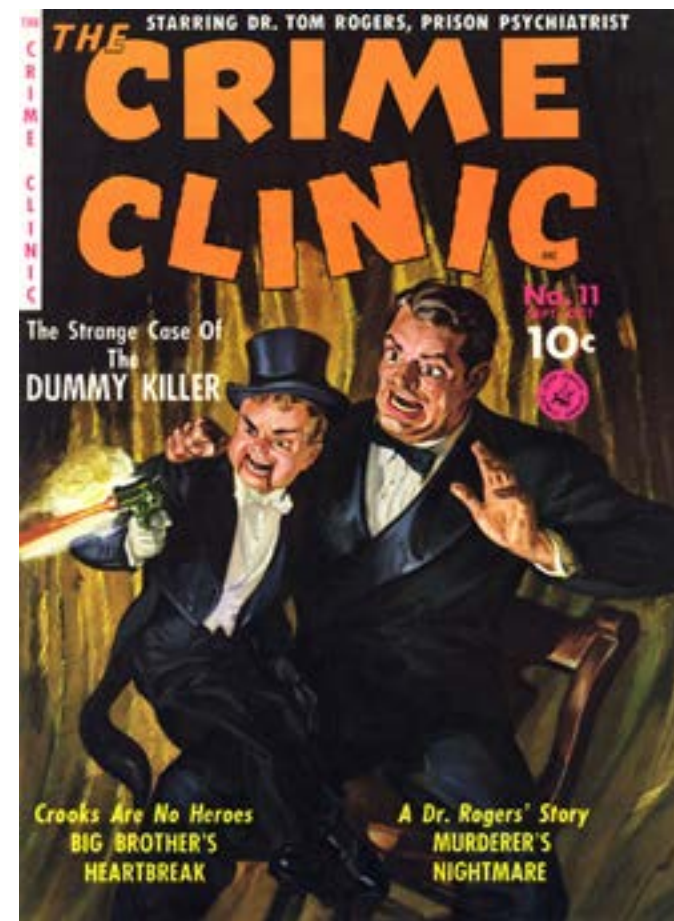
B-MOVIE POSTERS

Another part of 50s and 60s ephemera that the garage subculture has adopted and adapted is the b-movie posters. It's also directly related to the teenage craze of the time, but it's completely outside of the mainstream, the rejects of the pop-culture. So even in theory it seems natural to include it in the garage universe. It also resonates with the garage aesthetics in its naïve simplicity, straight forward appeal to primitive and basic instincts and emotions plus the absolute total lack of rationality and sophistication. The themes are often absurd, sexual, dangerous and rebellious, designed to trigger a quick thrill. And of course, on top of that you have the brilliant designs that are just the perfect blend of classic 50s and 60s design and amateurism. The b-movie poster is a genre, or even world, of its own, and it has become a natural part of the garage rock visual universe, with good reason.



PULP ART

Pulp art is a generic term for illustrations used as covers for pulp literature. These books were part of the “trash” ephemera that were designed for a quick thrill and little more than that. Both the themes of the books and the illustrations on the covers resonates with the Rock & Roll spirit because of their action-packed thrill-seeking nature. It is also typical for the pulp novel to dabble in the realms of the occult, perversion, violence, absurdity, aliens etc. anything that represented a complete contrast to the mundane everyday life. This “immoral” fascination with taboo themes and rebellion against the regular and normal fits perfect with the Rock & Roll mentality. Especially suitable for the hormone-fueled teens rebelling against the conservative norm. Again I believe the connotative value is of great importance, and it adds positive association to this aesthetic.



HORROR COMICS

The 50s and 60s horror comic style, with EC comics probably being the most influential, have also made its way into the garage rock visual universe. Like most of these visual genres they were not directly associated with the original garage scene but became part of the visual identity through the revival movement in the 80s. Rudi Protrudi of "The Fuzztones" was one of the pioneers of merging this style with garage rock. Mort Todd, designer of the "Back from the Grave" compilations (Crypt Records!) was another important illustrator in establishing this expression as a garage classic. It's of course not only horror related comics that have inspired garage rock illustration. There are a lot of hand drawn cartoons amongst the garage artefacts. It seems like a natural, primitive approach to illustration that fits the genre well. Just the right amount of childish and playful.

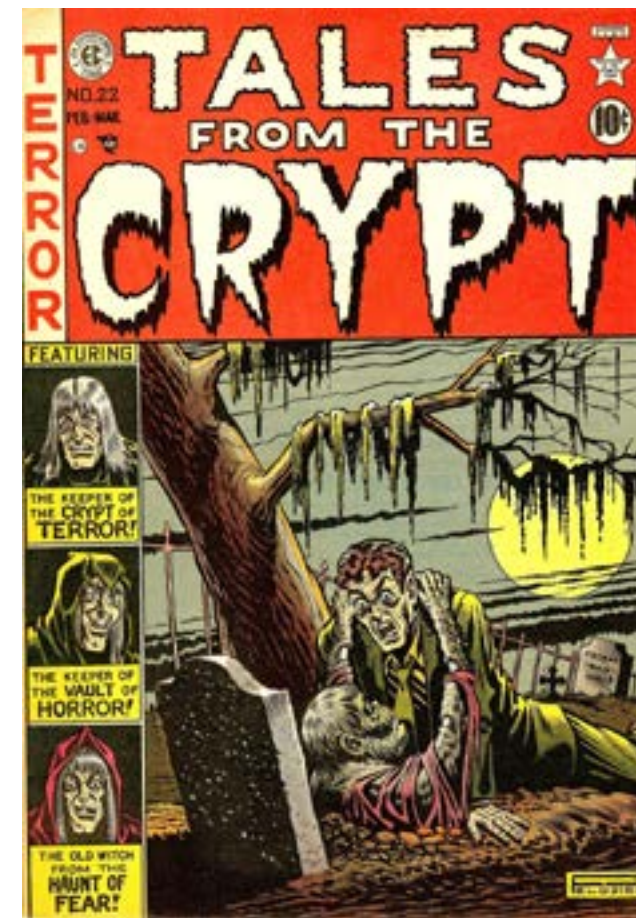


Photo: various Various 50s and 60s horror comic covers. Private digital collection. Bottom left: Back From The Grave 3, artwork by Mort Todd.

THE LIST GOES ON

These are just a few examples of visual expressions from the 50s and 60s that the garage rock subculture has adopted and adapted over the years. That list could of course be a lot longer. The pin-up, burlesque and adult magazine world of the 50s, sideshow art from the 20s and 30s, op-art from the 60s, and certainly the early (primitive) psychedelic scene of the mid to late 60s are other examples I could have included.

There's also a varied, but distinct, kind of typography associated with the garage scene. Typically hand drawn, with inspiration from either monster magazines, pulp literature and b-movies or kustom kulture. Harry Chester and Kenneth Howard aka Von Dutch being two good examples of each respective style. The fields of inspiration in total is just too extensive to give it a fair presentation in this thesis. If I was

“How can the Rock & Roll community challenge the artistic norms and traditions within its own genre, while still staying true to the essence of the culture?”

to present my entire research there would be no time for anything else. But to anyone who wants to fully understand the aesthetic principles of Rock & Roll, researching these initial influences is fundamental. The whole garage visual identity is built around a shared fascination, or even fetish, for this kind of ephemera. It represents a highlight in history, a cultural climax and the ultimate heyday of Rock & Roll. At least in retrospect. Because the original scene was not that self-aware, and the visual identity of (what would later become known as) garage rock was a lot more blurry and incoherent. The

visual identity of the subculture, as we know it today, is based on what Art Chantry refers to as: selective cultural archaeology. It instinctively emphasizes the bits and pieces that complement the subculture's collective idea of Rock & Roll. And on top of that it tends to mutate these ideas with later artistic influences if they appear to have similar connotations or/and share common aesthetic aspects. This points towards the problem that inspired the initial motivation for this master thesis. How can the Rock & Roll community challenge the artistic norms and traditions within its own genre, while still stay-

ing true to the essence of the culture? In his book "Retromania, pop culture's addiction to its own past" Simon Reynolds pinpoints the inevitable dilemma of all artists within a so called "revival" subculture.

"Either he strives to be a faithful copyist, reproducing the music's surface features as closely as possible, risking hollowness and redundancy; or he can attempt to bring something expressive and personal to it, or to work in contemporary and local musical flavours, which then risks bastardising the style."

(Reynolds, 2011, p.211).

Even if this quote refers to music, it is equally relevant to the visual aspects. Finding the right balance between these two extremes is absolutely crucial for a specific style to stay relevant

over time, without losing touch with its tradition. But the Rock & Roll family tree has a lot of branches, and there's a wide range of genres that all apply a different set of aesthetic principles to their expression. Some genres are conservative and some are more radical. Still, they are all part of the same family and they all carry with them an essence of Rock & Roll. I believe the garage rock subculture captures this essence in an exceptional manner because of its ability to be innovative and radical, create new sub-genres and transform itself, while still staying true to the original ideals of Rock & Roll.

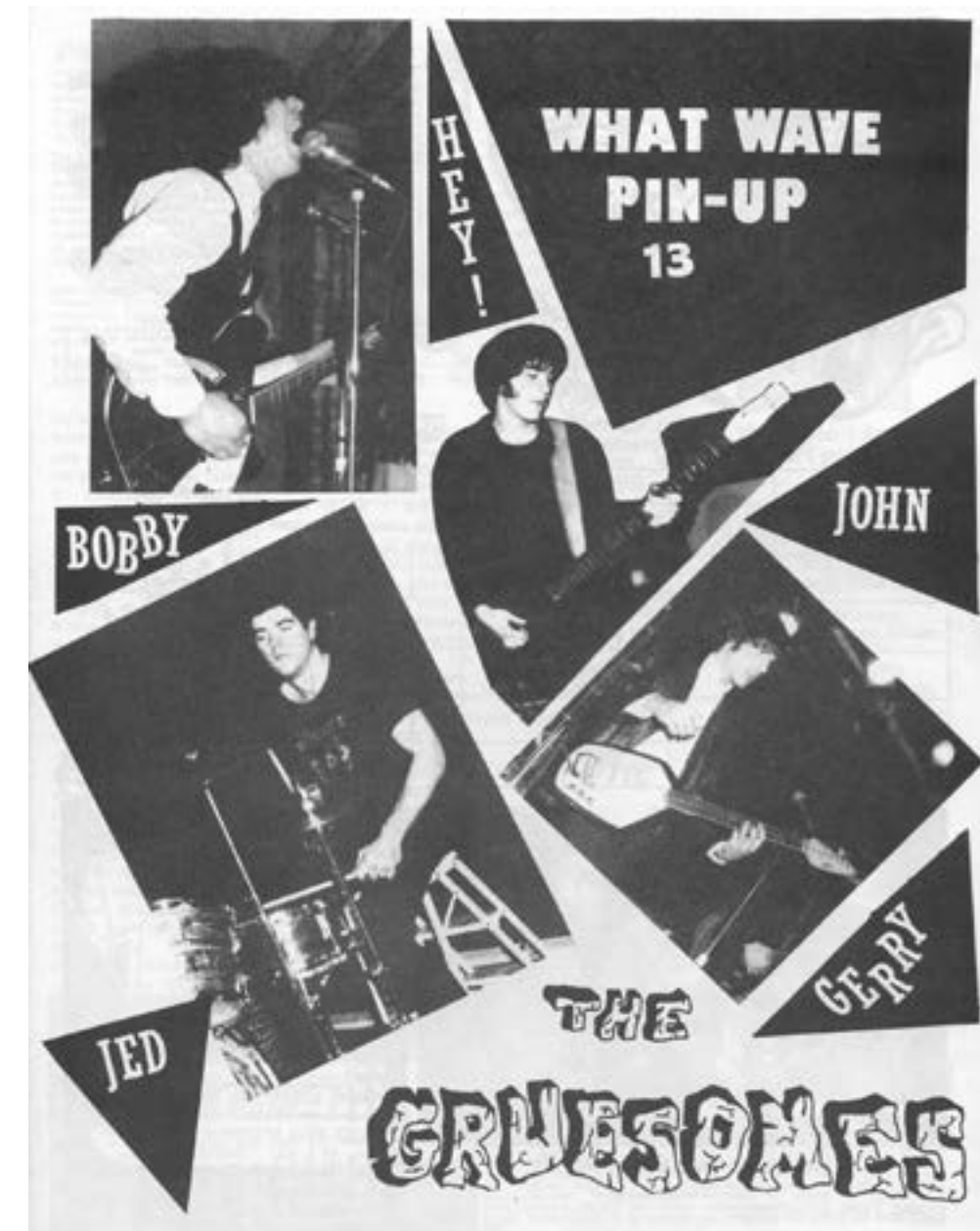
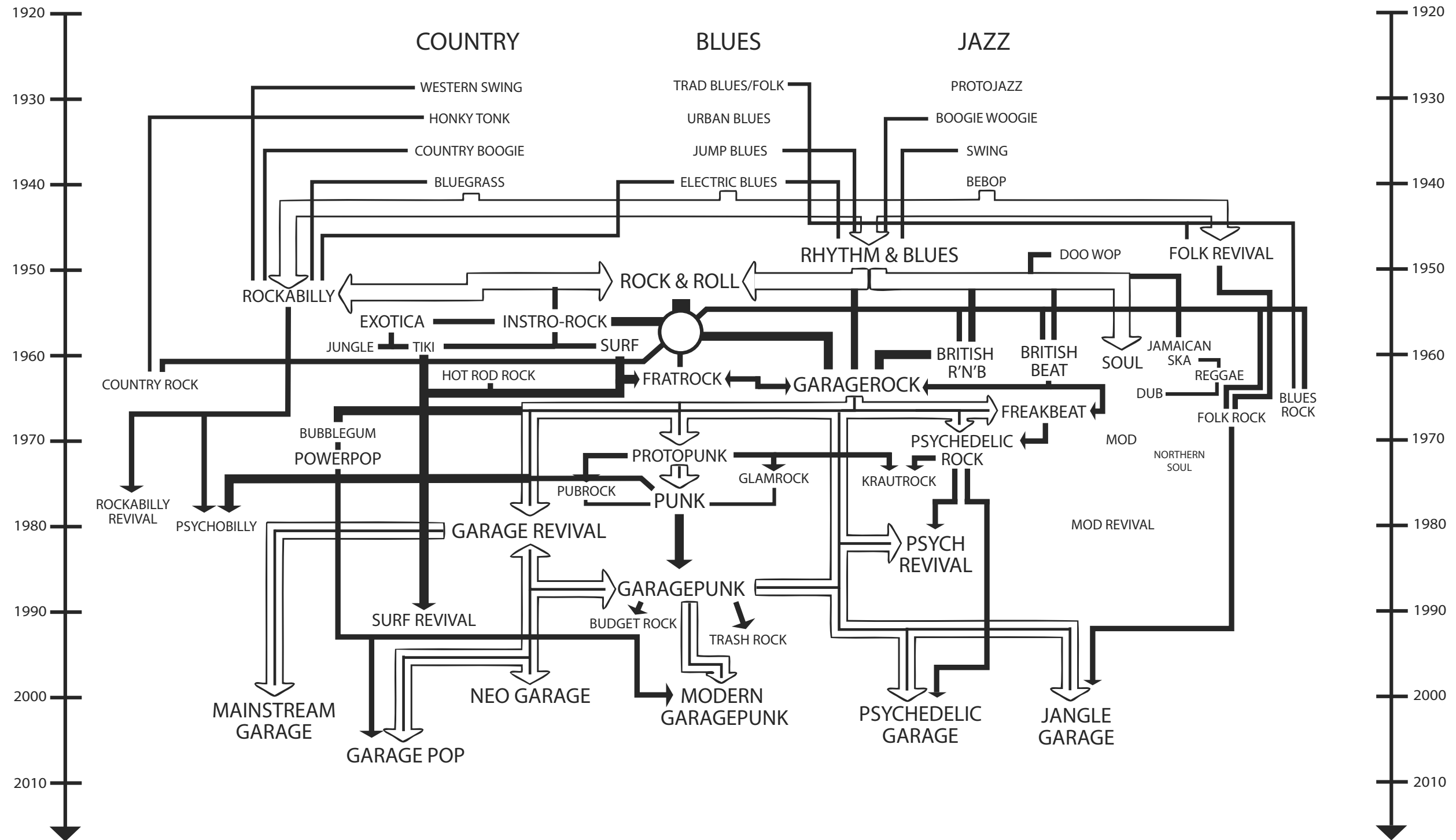


Photo: The Gruesomes poster, late 80s.

THE ROCK & ROLL FAMILY TREE – THE EVOLUTION OF GARAGE

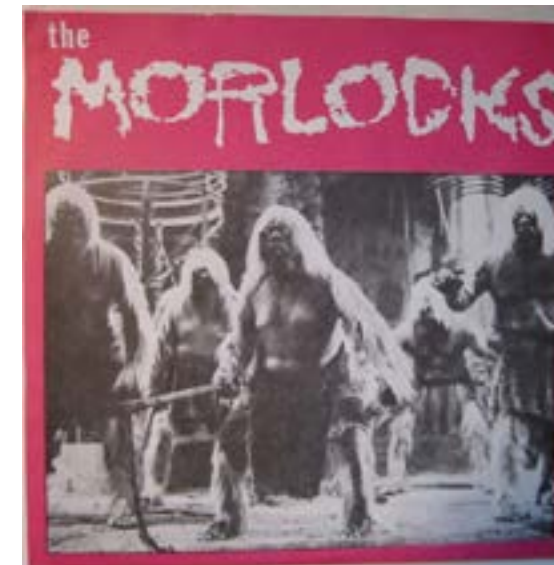


“The birth of a new genre does not mean the death of an old, without the roots the branches can’t grow, and if the branches don’t grow the tree will be left to rot in the shadow. It’s a symbiotic relationship between old and new, and that’s how the subculture survives.”

As seen in this “map of genres” the Rock & Roll label stretches over a wide range of genres. Every radical style contributes a new set of aesthetic influences, both musically and visually. And every old genre stays alive by sticking to its principles. The birth of a new genre does not mean the death of an old, without the roots the branches can’t grow, and if the branches don’t grow the tree will be left to rot in the shadow. It’s a symbiotic relationship between old and new, and that’s how the subculture survives. Some interesting examples of how this relationship is played out in practice are found in the 80s garage revival movement. This was the first wave of garage “revivalists” and therefore the pioneers of establishing the bricolage of 50s and 60s Rock & Roll ephemera fused with a more modern, often punk inspired, aesthetic.

GARAGE REVIVAL

The most obvious example of Rock & Roll spirit brought back to life through a more intensified expression has to be "The Cramps". Their eclectic mix of obscure 50s and 60s references and first wave punk aesthetics has been immensely influential on the development of the subculture. In fact Lux Interior (vocals) and Poison Ivy (guitar) represented a view of Rock & Roll, and an ideology that was nothing short of revolutionary. This ideology has both been an inspiration and a strong influence on this thesis. Other bands and artists that was crucial to the further development of this visual universe were "The Fuzztones", "The Mummies" and "Billy Childish" to name a few. The common denominator between them is that they were either able to merge their 50s and 60s influences with "new" aesthetics, or put their diverse influences together in a manner that excited a new audience.

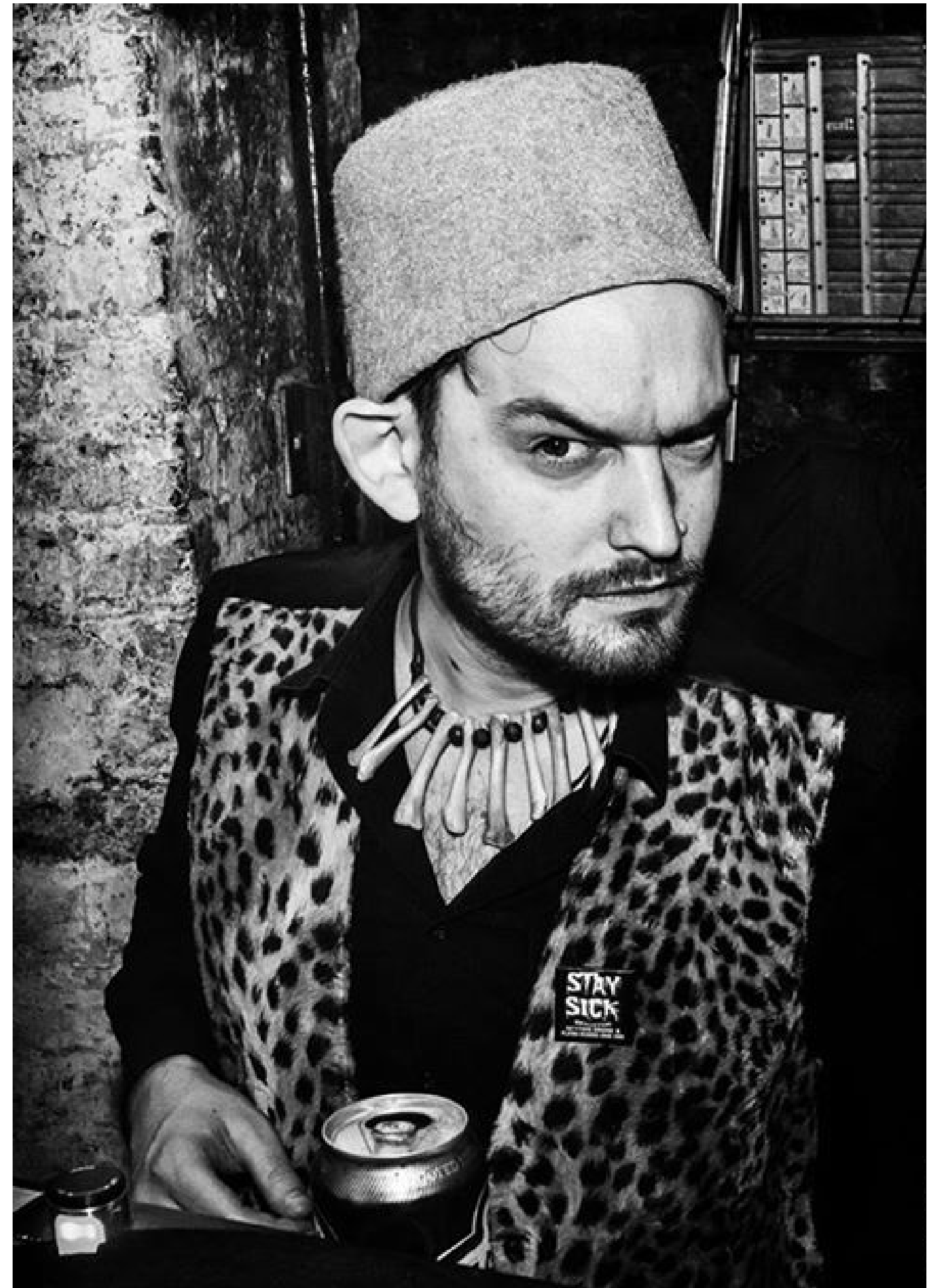


3.5 ■ INTERVIEWS

CHRIS “SICK” MOORE

Illustrator and graphic designer with an unhealthy Rock & Roll fetish. He mainly works with music related graphics drawing his influences from B-movie posters, '50s illustrators such as Jim Flora, Cliff Roberts, Saul Bass and Ed “Big Daddy” Roth, pulp novels and horror comics.

He's also a Rock & Roll DJ and gig promoter at the wonderful “STAY SICK!!!” in Brighton U.K



In this project I make the suggestion that within this scene an artist/designer should approach the visual art of garage in the same “state of mind” that a musician approaches the garage music. Do you have any thoughts on this?

The ethos is exactly the same. As a former musician, and now a DJ, I never did anything original. Particularly with DJing, I don't create music, I present it to be consumed, to make people dance and party. Garage bands do the same. Appropriating riffs from old surf tracks or versions of “louie louie” is the same as being inspired by B-movies posters and horror comics, it's almost not about originality in that respect, it's recycling music and images to keep the Rock & Roll feeling alive and current. It's pure exploitation. It's the kleptomania involved

in the music reflected in the artwork. This stuff celebrates ephemera, which totally is in tune with the “live fast die young” 3-chord Rock & Roll, live for today mentality of the music. It's all about immediacy - if you can steal a design, cut it out of a newspaper, collage it, DIY, sketch it, photocopy it, then you take ownership of it. It's disposed of trash that no one wants. 45s, B-movies and posters were never supposed to last or have any life outside a few months of play. They become orphans waiting for adoption and adaptation.

Within the music part of the garage scene there is a lot of passion for vintage gear, finding that authentic sound and using the “right” aesthetic references. These aesthetics are well established. How do you perceive the visual part of the scene in relation to

that? Is there any authentic look and established aesthetics in most garage artwork?

The modern garage scene has got to have some form of retrospection as it's inspired by a scene that is 50 years old. Visually, this means I spend a lot of time looking at design features of the '50s and '60s, particularly regarding printing processes. Halftone, screen-printing, distressed and stained backgrounds, a limited colour palette, black and white photos, these limitations do evoke something of the era I am trying to present. Then if I use vintage fonts, usually inspired by horror posters, then this comes close to an “authentic” look, however the process is very different as it emulates these design tropes using digital design, so I would not class it as authentic.

Most of the artwork within the garage scene has an obvious or suggestive reference back to the 50s and 60s era of Rock & Roll. These are all aesthetics that occurred in a time of technical limitations both in relation to printing and the actual design process. What is your view on digital vs analogue approach in garage design? And do you think some techniques are more authentic than others?

As much as I like the limitations that bring out bolder and more textured designs such as screen-printing and a restricted palette, I would not like to have to screen-print every poster I do for a gig. It's about how the art will be consumed. I love the blemishes and off-registration of screen-printing that gives the piece an organic feel, however this can easily be emu-

lated. Some would claim "faked" but I use up-to-date technology just as they did in the '50s and '60s. I don't class anything as more authentic because I don't view it in those terms. Music technology has changed, how we listen to music, where and when we listen to music, the devices we listen to music on. I also collect and DJ 78rpm shellac records but I don't want to hear them through a tin horn. In the same way I don't feel the need to screen-print an image that will be used online. It's the same argument photographers have: film vs digital. Technology is not a false way to produce art, it's a tool, as much as a pencil is a tool.



Artwork by Chris "Sick" Moore

Do you personally prefer the visual scene staying traditional or do you welcome experimentation and inclusion of new visual styles and imagery?

It has never stayed traditional and that's not what the scene is about. Look at the trippy psychedelic cover of Nuggets, the first to coin the phrase "Garage Punk", then Todd Mort's horror comic of "Back From The Grave" to the Op-Art of the early "Pebbles" series. Then the Ed Roth-style ghouls of the Garage Revival bands and the '50s-style artwork of bands like Thee Milkshakes. And obviously, those B-movie horror fonts just keep coming back. Garage Punk embraces, what I call, a "kleptographic" state of mind, nothing is off limits.

And finally, can you come up with three core values, or core ideas, of rock and roll?

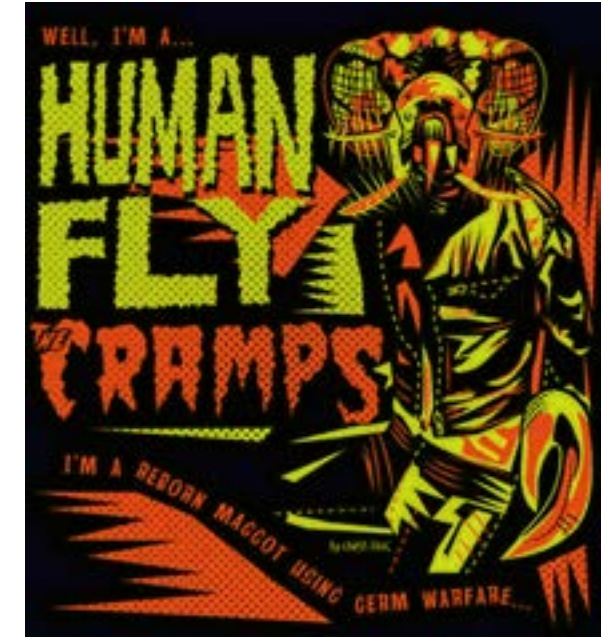
I cannot say it better than Frank Sinatra when he said:

"Rock n Roll is the most brutal, ugly, desperate, vicious form of expression it has been my misfortune to hear."

"It fosters almost totally negative and destructive reactions in young people ... It is sung, played and written for the most part by cretinous goons and by means of its almost imbecilic reiterations and sly, lewd—in plain fact dirty—lyrics... it manages to be the martial music of every sideburned delinquent on the face of the earth."



Artwork by Chris "Sick" Moore



Artwork by Chris "Sick" Moore

REVEREND BEAT-MAN

Front-man of legendary band "The Monsters", head honcho at "voodoo rhythm records", the man behind the mask in "Lightning Beatman" and last but not least; the preaching primitive gospel blues trash evangelist known as REVEREND BEAT-MAN.

In addition to all of this he is also a productive graphic artist with a large body of work built up during his 30+ years "career" as a Rock & Roll madman.

P.S Because of aesthetic and symbolic reasons I have posted this interview completely as it was. In Swiss / English dialect.



I understand your interest in Rock & Roll started early in your life, and it seems like it's been such a strong force and passion ever since. Do you have any theory of why you personally were so drawn towards this type of expression?

I'm From Bern Switzerland, this is a very Square and Narrow Mindet Country if you are talking of free expression, this is the mother country of all Repression, you have to fit in from the 1st second you are born , when i turned 13 i was listening to the radio and tuned into BBC in london and for the 1st time i heard punk rock or hard rock music, i grown up with the record collection of my parents, the loved Elvis and bill haley.. but now i heard Motörhead or the Sex Pistols for the first time.. and i knew this is the Tool to break out from thos chains switzer-

land try to put on me and i start to reasearch what rock'n'roll is and i found out realy quick that Pat Boon deffenetly has nothing to do with rock'n'roll.. Rock'n'Roll is a wild pure energetic form of people who wants to brek out of the norm like in the early 50's when black and white teenages put themselves together and created that music style just against their rasist parents, the same in the mi60's and 70's when punk was born, thins is revolution in a face of music... anyway exactly thos flows in my veins and exeactly this is my passion

What do you think real good rock and roll should communicate and express? What nerve should it strike with its audience?

when im on stage i maby play a song that i play since 30 years every night.. and this is the cha-

lange and this is what i want to show my audience , i wanna show them that every day is a new day, everything i do is Brand New and her is my song i pay for over 30 years and i play it today for the first time, becouse tomorrow may im dead so i will play it for you with so much passion and power and love that i will blow your head off, i wanna play it as creative and mind blowing that you wanna go home and buy a guitar and start the same, i wanna show you that everybody can start a revolution, you just have to do it

Do you think this same nerve can be struck through the visual work?

totaly , Alejandro Jodorowsky , jim jarmusch and many others did

Would you say you were already an artistic type of person when you first discovered the world of Rock & Roll? And if so what was your style and techniques and who inspired you back then?

i was very bad in school, never fit in and i hated school, but i finished everything i started that was a great lesson i learned from my parents if you start something you have to end it, so i learned the profession as electrician as well.. it was forbidden for me to learn an artistic job, my brother was a graphic artist so they told me that at least one of their children has to learn a 'real' job hahaha but anyway after that i tried to sign up for art school but they didn't take me, they said i have no talent, so i said to myself fuck them all and i did everything myself, yeah i was artistic from birth on but no one except

of me saw that, and if it's like that you have to stand up in your self and just do it.. that sounds easy but has a lot to do with raping yourself and dealing with your self and sometimes just close your eyes and just go for it and not care about all the others who don't understand nothing what you are doing... you know i'm from Switzerland and from a small town, if i would live in Berlin or New York, this would be much easier i guess.. but over here? ajajaj.. this is hard core, my brother was the same, he was a drag queen in the early 80's, people in my village wanted to burn him alive hahaha



Artwork by Reverend Beatman

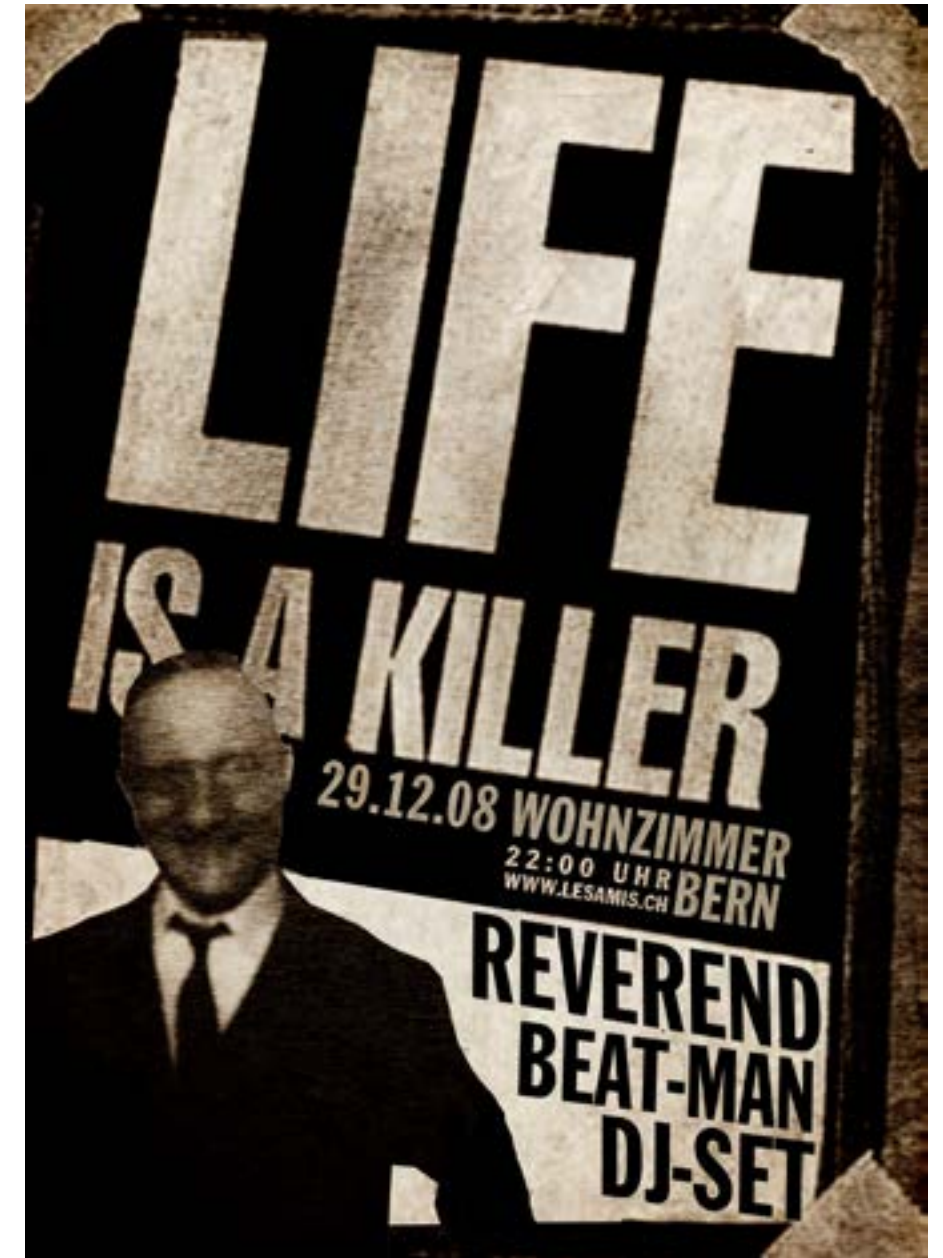
A lot of Rock & Roll fanatics, myself included, see parts of the 50s and 60s pop and b-culture as an unlimited box of inspiration, both musically and visually. How much of your design is directly inspired from diving into obscure 50s and 60s design, artefacts and music? And where do you like to look?

oh yea that was a grafic explosion back then as well the 20's and 30's then the 70's or early 80's after that not so much for me .. but i like it today.. i think 2000 is great there ar alot of great artwor i can see, i take my inspiration from alot of things, im a book collector (bicture books) i love visual things i love beautiful things and ugly things as well at the moment im very intressed in the 1916 years stuff like that and the very new punk fuck up designers, the youngsters who paints again, very naive ,

im constantly looking at things im the modern peeping tom, sometimes i just sit in middle of town and observe people warling by .. for hours, imthinking what they are doing when they have sex or how do they talk to their chidren, what is their jop and i watch how they dressed, are they perverts or normal? anyway thins is a mind explosin and trows so many pictures in your brain, then at the end i go back to the voodoo rhythm office and create something

What would you consider to be some core values or core ideas of Rock & Roll music? If you can come up with at least three that would be great.

1. dont be a copycat
2. rock comes along with the roll
3. rock'n'roll is a statement not a music style



Artwork by Reverend Beatman

Do you think these values could be translated and applied to visual work? And that by focusing on these values it would basically make the art more Rock & Roll?

sure, very easy, i guess that what alot of visual artist try to do, the thing with music is, that its very direct, it probabyl the most direct form of art that is around, you get to the people ime- diatly in one second you can chang their mind and blow their heads of and inspire them... with rock n roll you can chang the world in seconds. paintings or movies is more a long there thing

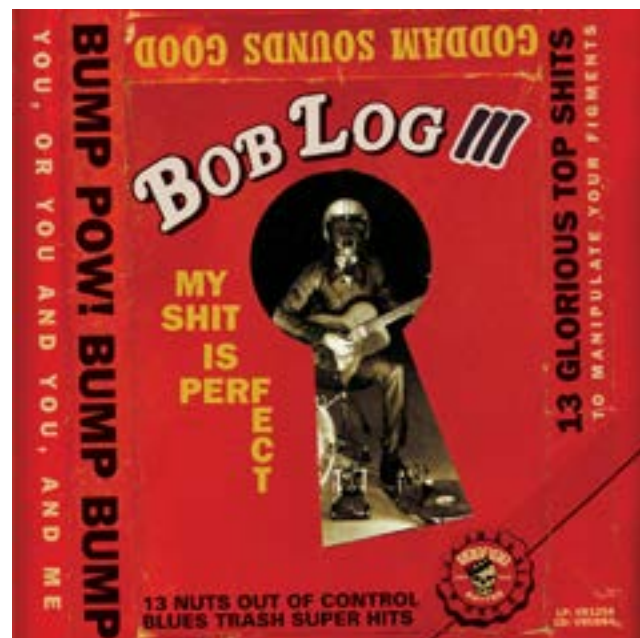
How do you feel about modern bands challenging both the musical and visual traditions and norms within the garage genre. Do you think there's a problem with the la-

elling or understanding of what garage is? Or do you welcome innovation and experimentation within the genres and rather just let the frames of what can be labelled garage musically expand with the participants?

ah yea this bores me to death traditinal rocka- billy bands or surf or garage, they all look perfect they can play their licks andy play perfect they look great but they dont understand whats going on, rock'r'roll is to shit on stage and eat shit rock'n'roll is your parents forbid you to go to the shows rock'n'roll is not a sweet family dinner rock'n'roll is a fist in your face... anyway most of people dont understand

What do you think about originality in art and design

your artwork represents your inner you as a piece of art, if your boring your art is boring if youre a copy cat your boring too if i dont understand what your art is and if i may say its full of shit.. then this is a good piece of work if it change my point ov view and if it changes my opinions of looking at things then this is original art and i love it

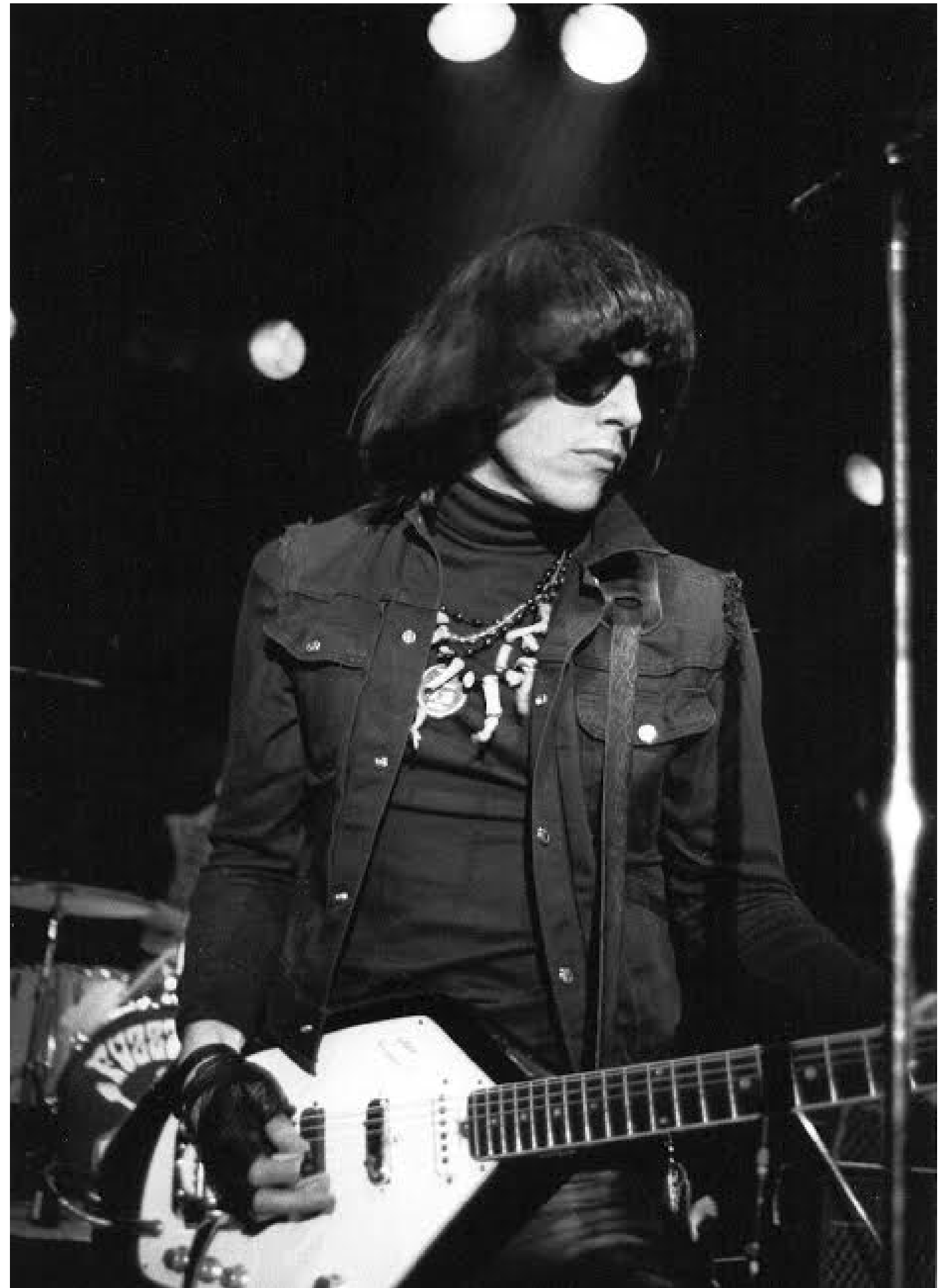


Artwork by Reverend Beatman

RUDI PROTRUDI

Legendary Rock & Roll wildman. Best known as front-man of “The Fuzztones” but has a completely action-packed discography that stretches all the way back to 1972. Was part of the punk scene around CBGB’s in New York 1977, part of initiating the whole garage revival movement in the 1980s.

Needless to say, an authority on this subject.



The Fuzztones was one of the first garage-bands I discovered, and to me it was a gateway into both the musical and visual aesthetics of garage rock. It seems to me that a lot of the imagery and styles that are now such a strong part of the visual identity of garage rock, were first introduced in the eighties when bands like The Fuzztones started using them. Would you agree that you were an important part of shaping and developing this visual identity?

Well, we were the first to bring in OTHER elements. There were four bands that started all about the same time - The Unclaimed in L.A., The Lyres in Boston, The Chesterfield Kings in Rochester, and us. The Unclaimed pretty much started out dressing like the Music Machine and stuck with that for their entire tenure. The

Kings were pretty true to the early Stones image - sweaters and tight pants, Beatle boots, bowl hairdos. The Lyres never seemed to have much of an image that I could detect. We started out wearing paisley, mixing it with leather (pants, vests) and Beatle boots - pretty much the expected gear you'd expect. But right from the start we played nothing but Vox equipment, and I'm pretty certain we were the first "revival" band to do that. I know that we re-introduced the Vox Phantom guitar and bass - which of course became our signature guitar, and the one we would use on our logo. Now EVERY band seems to feel they must have Vox Phantoms to be considered Garage. By 1982 (three years after we began) we had incorporated the bone necklaces, which I'd never seen any other band do up to that point and that includes 60's bands. The reason we did that is because

I had seen a video clip of Steppenwolf's John Kay being interviewed on a 60s teen show and when asked how he would describe their music, he replied, "Primitive." I had just seen the movie "The Hills Have Eyes," and felt that the bald killer's human bone necklace looked very cool - especially with his fur vest, and was certainly "primitive," so I incorporated that into our look. It has been speculated, even reported, that we wear chicken bones, but for the record, my first few necklaces were 100% made from HUMAN hand bones. Later we started using dog and cat bones as well. I can say for certain that neither Deb or I EVER wore chicken bones.

The other thing we re-introduced, and I say "re" because it had been done ONCE in the 60s, by the Music Machine, was for every member to have black hair. Simply because it looked

much more menacing and went with our sound, which has always been much darker than other bands doing this sort of stuff. Of course the "dark" element came out again in the artwork that I used to illustrate album sleeves and posters. I incorporated my own EC horror comic-influenced artwork (the swamp zombie creatures on the Lysergic Emanations cover, for instance) as those comics were a big influence on me as a kid. Now you see that sort of artwork going hand-in-hand with the current Garage thing, but never back in the 60's. Same with the bulging-eyed, razor-teethed cartoon monsters that graced the boxes that the Ed Roth and weirdo models used to come in in the 60s. I utilized that sort of art as well - and was the first to introduce that into the modern Garage scene. A good example is the cover of Link Protrudi & The Jaymen's "Drive It Home," where I depicted

the band as weirdos driving a souped up Vox-mobile. Again, that sort of art is now standard for today's Garage band. In 1985 we began incorporating biker vests- inspired again by the 60s biker flicks such as "Wild Angels." I never saw any 60s band wear vests like the bikers, but always thought those vests looked cool with the biker clubs insignia on the back, so we started doing that as well. I've seen a few bands doing that now as well - the Lords of Altamont being the best example.

What makes Rock & Roll such a strong passion and driving force in your life? And why do you think it appeals so much to you?

I think I was probably just born at the right time. When I was coming of age my dad had all these rock 'n' roll ORIENTED pop records that I heard

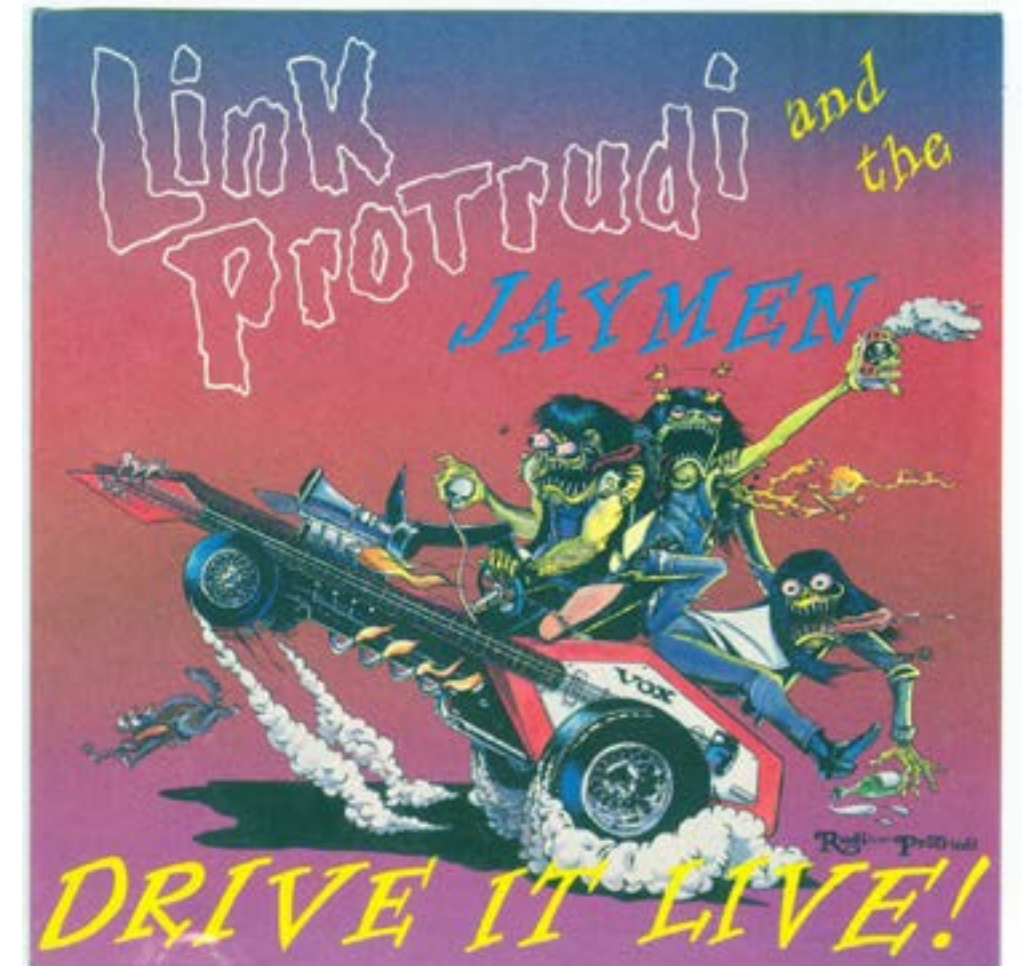
all the time: Paul Anka, Brenda Lee, Bobby Darin - that started the appreciation for it. Then when I was about 10 I started hearing stuff on the radio - More Rock 'n' Roll oriented Pop like Lesley Gore, Jan & Dean, James Darren, Chubby Checker - some of the Philly stuff like the Dovells. I loved all that stuff, but it wasn't really 'till I heard the Beatles that Rock 'n' Roll became an obsession. See, I was a real outcast as a kid - all the other kids were playing sports and I couldn't relate to that at all. I liked going out in the wilderness and catching snakes, collecting monster magazines - real OUTSIDER stuff. I IDENTIFIED with the "outsider" and Rock 'n' Roll was the music of the outsider. I guess since I've always considered myself an outsider, Rock 'n' Roll became my lifestyle. I believe that, through the music, someone with ideas that may not be considered "of the norm" has the platform to

express themselves freely, and in return actually receive POSITIVE feedback. But this is all just me trying to analyze it, which of course I don't do in real life - I just take it for what it is: The music that speaks to me.

Music and live performance is a very powerful medium, especially when it comes to Rock & Roll. Do you ever feel able to express/communicate the same passion in visual work? And do you see that visual art as equally Rock & Roll?

Sure. They're both ART forms, after all, and therefore both reach an audience, and hopefully convey a message. The main difference in the two mediums is that the visual form - drawing, painting, etc - doesn't usually elicit an immediate response, specifically APPLAUSE... in other

words, the artist creates the art to be appreciated LATER, while a musician, at least playing LIVE, is able to elicit IMMEDIATE response, which tends to contribute to the quality, or at least the INTENSITY of the performance. Then again, the musician is more on the par with the visual artist when he is RECORDING, and the same goes for the record itself - it's made to be appreciated LATER. I guess, at least subconsciously, that might play a role in why I find it necessary for a band to have strong visuals - as I understand that the visual aspect communicates a message as well, and that message is only stronger when combined with the audio side of it - the music!



Are there any particular visual artists, or works, that has influenced you strongly during your career?

I think I probably already mentioned him, but definitely Ed Roth, artistically. He was the creator of Rat Fink, as well as many other hot rod-driving monsters, usually with the “fink” moniker attached somewhere: SurfFink, Fink Eliminator, etc. In the ‘60s when I was around 11 or so, his model kits, and the similarly inclined “Weirdo” kits, were very big and that style - green and purple-skinned monsters with bulging bloodshot eyes, huge mouths full of pointy teeth and huge tongue hanging out of a demented grin – somehow “spoke” to me! I was also very big on EC horror comic art. They had the BEST artists! Real gruesome stuff. So I incorporated these styles into the art that I used

to illustrate Fuzztones and Link Protrudi & The Jaymen albums. I also dug the San Francisco Hippie art that was used on Fillmore and Avalon posters of the ‘60s - mostly the bright, clashing colors as well as the lettering - I loved psychedelic lettering, so I made up my own fonts to use for The Fuzztones - kind of a mix of psychedelic and scary...

Can you come up with three core values, or core ideas, of Rock & Roll?

For me, Rock & Roll has always been about freedom, basically freedom to express yourself, even if it goes “against the grain.” Of course when it does go against the grain, it’s called “rebellion.” Not going along with the norm. Another important aspect of Rock ‘n’ Roll is it’s primitive nature - Good Rock & Roll appeals to our

primal urges: Sexual, for sure, but also just the basic urge to raise hell once in a while - which of course goes against the norm, and thus reverts back to the “rebellion” aspect I mentioned earlier. So I guess the answer to your question would be:

1. Rebellion,
2. Freedom
3. Return to primal instincts.

Can you come up with any core values that are typical to garage rock?

Well, the term "Garage" seems to infer different things to different people. For instance, to Tim Warren, who released all the Back From The Grave comps in the '80s, it is purely teenage angst-ridden amateurs sloppily playing 3 or 4 chord songs about cheating babes. According to him, nothing else is Garage. Many people, on the other hand, consider the Music Machine to be a "Garage" band, as well as Love, even though both bands are obviously more progressive than your average 4 chord screamers. Some people say that the Rolling Stones are NOT "Garage" but all the teenage American bands that copied them ARE. Little Steven plays Bruce Springsteen on his "Underground Garage" radio show, so I guess he thinks the Boss is Ga-

rage. As far as MY opinion, I'd say that "Garage" is basic Rock & Roll, played by musicians that other, more "schooled" musicians might look down on as "amateur." Of course there's more to it than that. There is a certain beat or beats, certain guitar and organ sounds, and a certain vocal style that lends itself to what I would term "Garage," but it isn't anywhere near as cut-and-dried as someone like Tim Warren would suggest. If I were to sum it up in a nutshell, I'd say "Garage" is the teenage white male's BLUES.

Do you think new garage rock bands should stay close to the tradition and try to not water out the identity of the genre? Or do you think it's good if they challenge the norms and come up with new ways to express themselves within the garage rock scene?

I think there's merit in both approaches. "Purists" want the genre to remain pure, and I understand that in the way that they want to keep it alive, and as it was. Unfortunately for them, it's not possible for a number of different reasons. Musically it isn't possible simply because today's musician are not teenagers in the '60s and therefore cannot possibly FEEL the music the way we who were there did, and in my case, do. It's similar to BLUES - sure, whites can study the records, learn the riffs, assimilate the vocal stylings, but all they're doing is IMITATING artists who actually wrote about what was going on AT THE TIME, and how THEY felt about it. That subtle ingredient - AUTHENTICITY - is what is lacking with the purist approach to the genre. Don't get me wrong. I see nothing at all wrong with trying to keep it as it was -personally I prefer the ORIGINAL stuff to anything I've heard

in the '80s 'til now. BUT on the other hand, if you want this form of music to survive, to thrive, and to live on, you must be a bit less reverent and allow some other influences to creep in IF you want to make it more accessible to today's listener. A case in point is the Hives. Same with the Horrors. And The Fuzztones did it in the '80s - basically give the music a harder edge, and add some "punk" to it...

...So basically the answer to your question is, in a nutshell, HAVE FUN with the genre. Add your OWN personal style to it! That's what the ORIGINAL guys did, and now the purists want to copy THEM!

As both musician and visual artist, what would you like your audience to get out of your work?

I'd like them to get inspired. Maybe creatively - like to start a band, or write a song, learn to play an instrument. Something other than spending all their free time on Facebook and their cell phones. I'd like to see people start to relate to each other again - person to person. I'd hope that The Fuzztones music -as well as our shows- promotes freedom: Freedom to express oneself by the way one dresses or acts. The Fuzztones believe in a Dionysian lifestyle which includes and promotes freedom sexually as well - and not just for men! Freedom for gals to be the aggressor and live out their fantasies as well. I would also hope that our music, and my art, makes people think - perhaps question, which is even more important! "Do I have to go along with the crowd?" "Do I dare to challenge popular opinion?" And most importantly, to rebel if necessary!



■ REFLECTION

4.1

THE ESSENCE OF ROCK & ROLL

My research and analysis supports the conclusion that the essence of Rock & Roll can not be expressed by simply replicating and imitating the styles and aesthetics of the past. It lies behind the facade, and it has less to do with aesthetics, and more to do with a certain mentality. This mentality is the foundation for all Rock & Roll art. The aesthetics are the result, and they have of course shaped the artistic tradition that is now full of symbols and expressions with well established connotative meanings. But what these expressions have in common, is that they reflect and express the Rock & Roll mentality. If one loses track of this mentality, the future aesthetics will have no substance and no foundation. The answer to the main problem of my thesis is that the essence of garage lies in the Rock & Roll mentality, and in this chapter I seek to define that mentality.

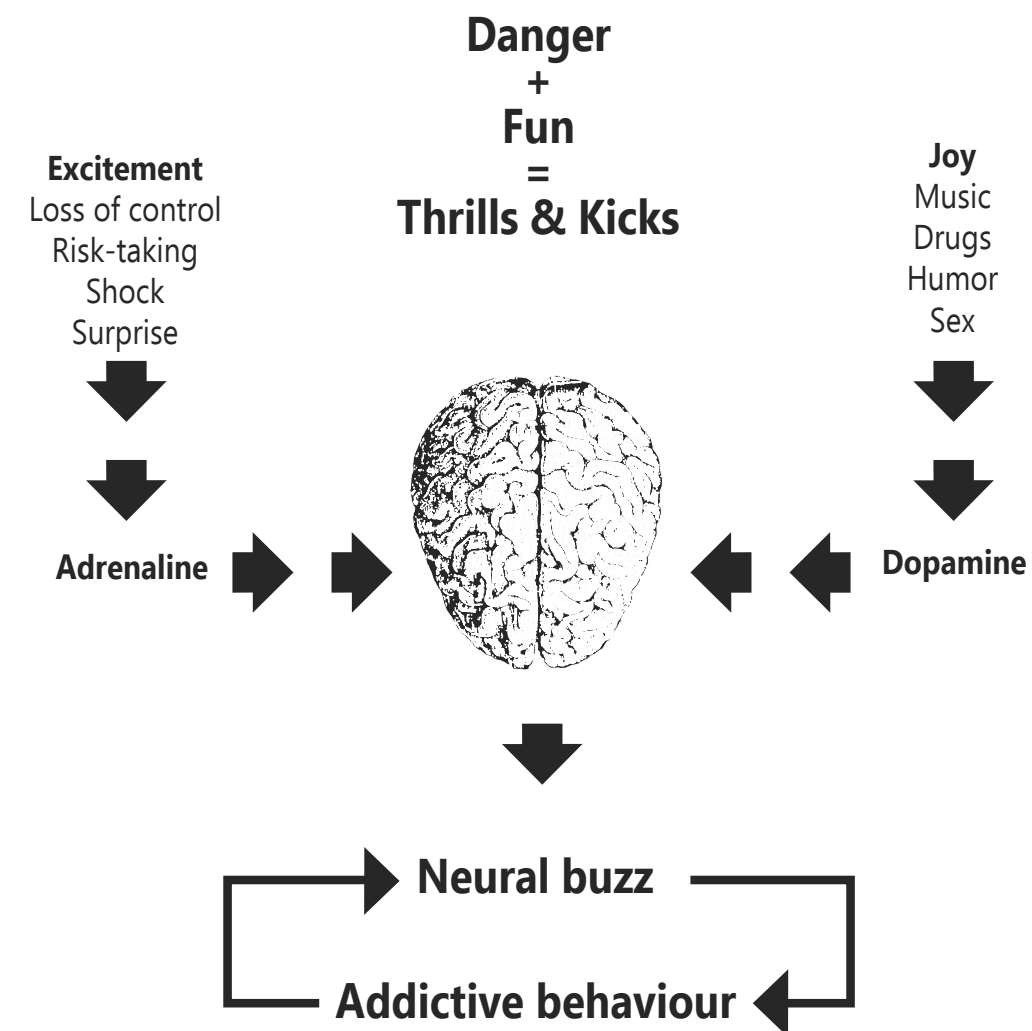
“My claim is that the Rock & Roll mentality is based on three crucial aspects, all equally important to the total state of mind.”

1: THRILLS & KICKS

The Rock & Roll mentality is driven by the craving for thrills and kicks. That is the motivation. Stimulate the release of adrenaline and dopamine in whatever way you can. In its purest form the purpose of Rock & Roll is to deliver a NEURAL BUZZ and spin the receiver out of control. The most effective way to do this is by targeting the emotions directly without the delay of rational thought.

Rock & Roll is an art-form that targets, and expresses, the teenage state of mind. The teenage wiring of the brain is perfect for this kind of stimuli, because it is naturally triggered to emphasize instinct over intellect. During the adolescent years hormones and emotions are out of control and hyper active. But the part of the brain that deals with rational thought is not yet fully developed.

THE TEENAGE BRAIN

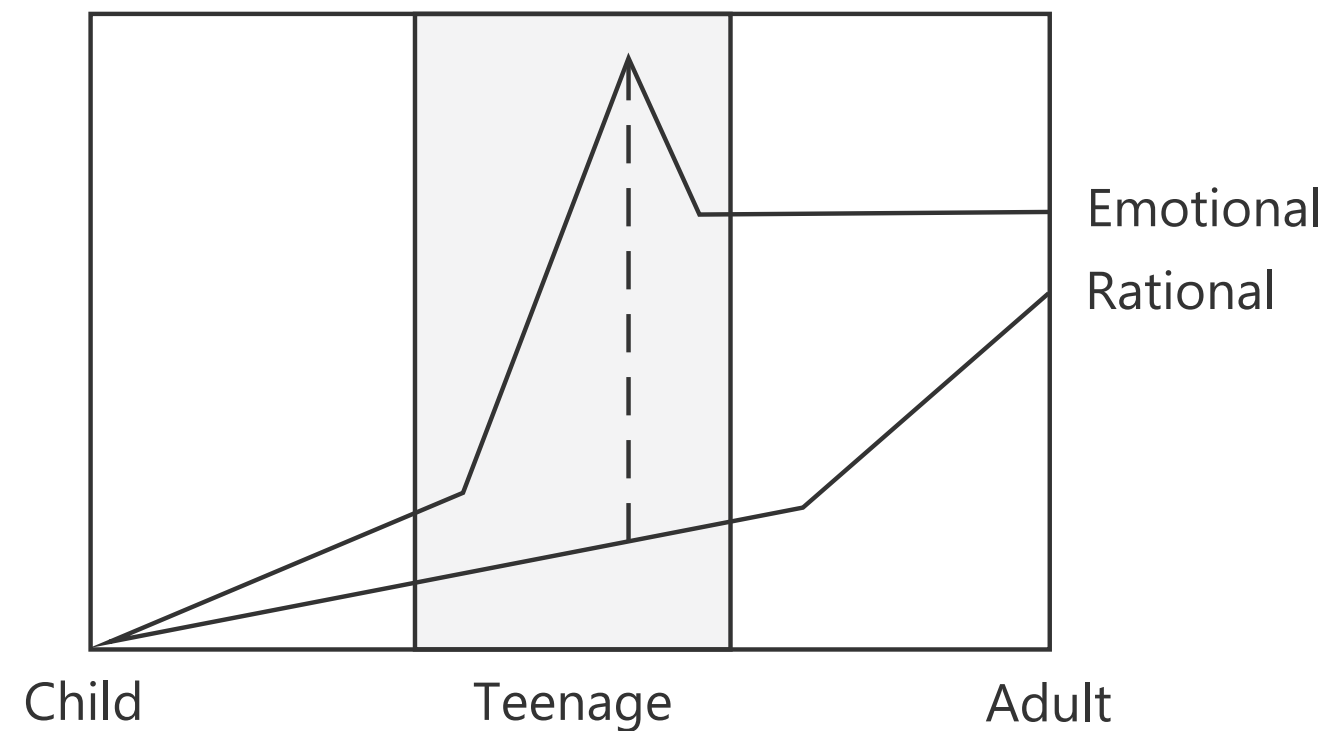


This disposition can easily lead to impulsive and irrational behavior. It can lead to dangerous and flat out stupid situations. It also creates restlessness, extra energy and a strong urge for new impulses and emotional stimuli.

This is the ideal mindset from a Rock & Roll perspective. Action, excitement, madness, badness, euphoria, all spring from here at the high ends of the emotional scale. Absolutely no mediocrity. That is the problem with the stereotypical adult state of mind. It's predictable and boring. Rationality gets in the way of all the real joy and excitement. The stereotypical youth is brave, adventurous and spontaneous. The Rock & Roll ethos: "Live Fast - Die Young" has to do with this mentality more than your physical age. When Rock & Roll glorifies the teenager as an ideal, it is because of these qualities, and the beneficial impact they have on life. If you lose touch with your inner teenager, you will fail.

Teenage behaviour and cognition

The peak of thrill-seeking behaviour



Conclusion: The Rock & Roll mentality is dependent on staying active, excited, impulsive and young at heart. Thrill-seeking and buzz-craving. Rock & Roll art should strive to stimulate that neural buzz. In short, it should: **Stay Teenage!**

2: PASSION

Rock & Roll fuels of passion. It goes hand in hand with the thrills and kicks aspect. It relates to the purest, strongest, primal emotions. John Lennon addressed this aspect when talking about the original era of Rock & Roll in a 1970 interview with Rolling Stone magazine:

“What gave Rock & Roll its true power was its direct connection to instinct, emotion and sexuality.”

(John Lennon, 1970).

This is a widely accepted notion. That, as an artistic genre, Rock & Roll expresses passion in a more powerful way than other genres. When intense passion is expressed it often involves a loss of control, a focused presence in the performance that overshadows everything else. In Rock & Roll this passion communicates authen-

ticity. The ability to block out the details. Put instinct before intellect, heart before head and passion before rationality. In the book: “Faking it - the quest for authenticity in popular music, Hugh Barker and Yuval Taylor agrees that the primitive expression holds the key to authenticity in Rock & Roll.

“...now it is commonly accepted by rock fans the world over that the most authentic music is the most savage and raw. Of the many varieties of self-expression, it is the most primitive that rock fans associate with the greatest emotional honesty.”

(Hugh Barker & Yuval Taylor, 2007, p23)

The reason why primitive expressions signify such intense passion, is found in a dilemma that dates all the way back to ancient Greece.



Photo: Hasil Adkins, The Wild Man LP, 1987, Norton Records.

PASSION VS RATIONALITY

The passionate Rock & Roll expression exists in the state of mind where emotions run wild and the rational is blocked out. The uninhibited primitive power of Rock & Roll is dependent on keeping the gap between rationality and emotion at an absolute maximum, because it encourages loss of control and giving in to emotions and primal urges.

This Rock & Roll ideal resonates with the God Dionysus in Greek mythology. He represents the impulsive, ecstatic, orgiastic, creative, frenzied, intoxicated and undisciplined. He is the personification of passion without rationality. His counterpart Apollo, represents all the opposite values. Here we find an obvious parallel to youth vs adult behaviour. All of the Apollonian values represent restrictions to the Rock & Roll mentality. Values typically favoured by adults.

TEENAGER VS ADULT

| Dionysian | Apollonian |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Feeling | Thinking |
| Passionate | Self-controlled |
| Irrational, Instinctual | Rational, logical |
| Chaos | Harmony |
| Excess | Restraint |

While most humans possess traits from both characters, Rock & Roll does not. It is purely built on Dionysian traits. Its goal is to represent the chaos, and offer the wild and outrageous counterpoint to the rational and restrictive adult ideal. Its goal is to maximise pleasure, to seek out thrills and kicks. In philosophic terms Rock & Roll is a pure hedonistic practice.

This conflict between rebellious youth and the conservative adults has shaped the whole identity of Rock & Roll. Rock & Roll refuses to “grow up” it refuses to conform, exchange exciting for mundane and primitive for sophistication.

In Rock & Roll the adult world illustrates the squares, those who only honour the complete opposite of youth values. The squares are as far away as you can get from joy and excitement, therefore they don't understand the value of thrills and kicks and the passion in the primitive. They see the rejuvenating power of Rock & Roll as disturbing, regressive, immoral and destructive. And Rock & Roll see them as boring. Again, it's not really about physical age, of course. It's about sustaining a primal joy you were biologically triggered to access in your youth, but that has a tendency to burn out with age and pressure from the norm. Rock & Roll has a mission of keeping that joy alive, if it dies, you fail.

PRIMITIVE VS SOPHISTICATED

Conflict of values: adult / conservative point of view

| Teenage | Adult |
|----------------|---------------|
| Non-conformist | Conformity |
| Immoral | Righteous |
| Rebellious | Obedient |
| Trouble | Peace |
| Bad | Good |
| Unserious | Serious |
| Primitive | Sophisticated |

Conclusion: The Rock & Roll mentality is raw, savage and instinctual. Rock & Roll art should communicate a break with all sophisticated values, and provide an emotional escape from rational interruption. In short, it should: **Stay Primitive!**

3: FREEDOM

Rock & Roll tells you that you don't have to be like everyone else. You don't have to conform. You are allowed to be wild and weird. You can do whatever you want, except being a narrow minded person who imposes restrictions on other people's self expression and independence. Rock & Roll shuns anything that gets in the way of individual autonomy.

Obviously the rebellious youth that are biologically drawn towards the Dionysian characteristics, have a strong conflict with the adult world that tries to limit their autonomy. When the 1950s conservative christian adults tried to force their morals on the Rock & Roll youth by labeling them as bad and evil, they adopted all the traits and took pride in being bad and against the norm. But to the youth, the Rock & Roll rebellion also symbolized actual freedom.

AUTONOMY VS RESPONSIBILITY

Conflict of values: teenage point of view

| Teenage | Adult |
|------------|--------------|
| Freedom | Suppression |
| Joyful | Mundane |
| Exciting | Boring |
| Unusual | Normal |
| Individual | General |
| Dangerous | Secure |
| Radical | Conservative |

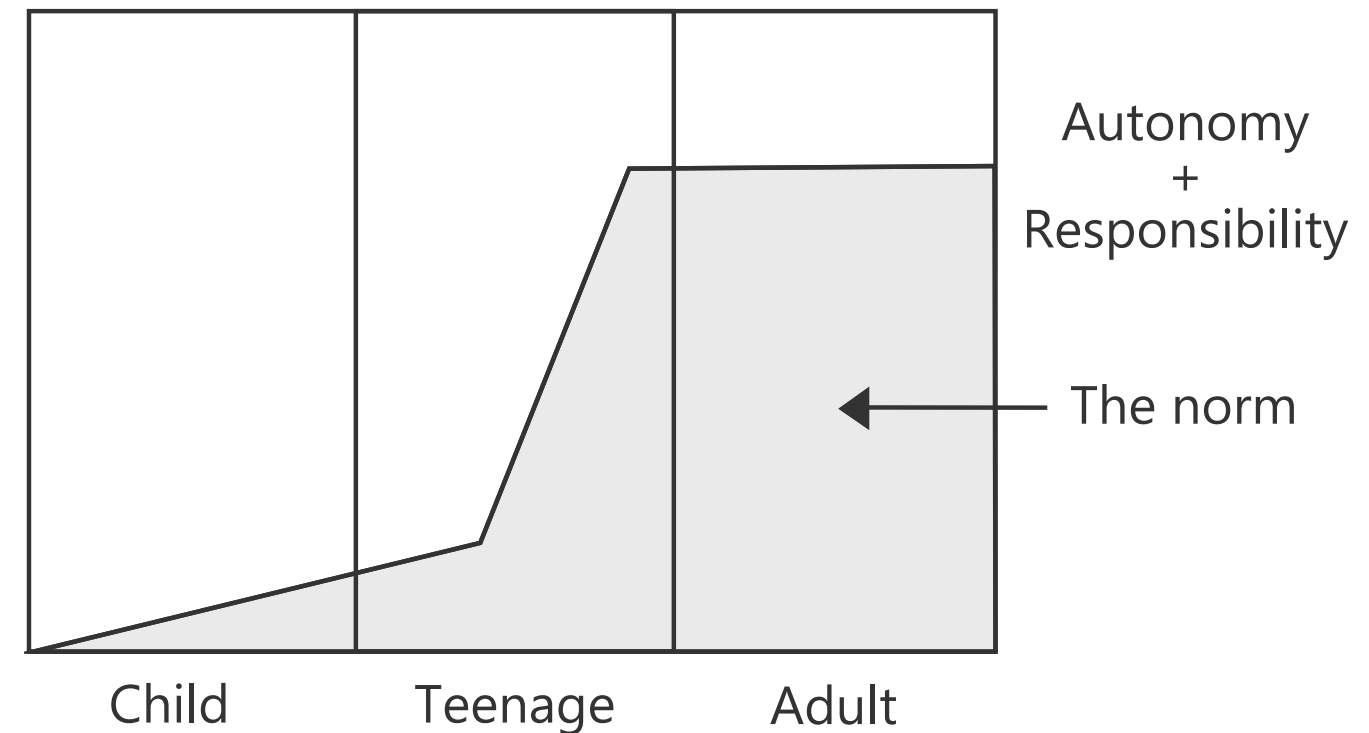
It symbolized the freedom to break from the shackles society, religion and all other forms of authority tried to keep everybody in. Rock & Roll artists showed, by example, that there was a fun and exciting alternative to the norm. It was possible, even cool, to be a complete misfit. It was possible to be a youthful adult. You didn't have to become your parents.

DON'T BE A SQUARE

Rock & Roll idolizes the rebellious youth, not only because adolescence is the biological prime time of life, but it is also the time when a window, that offers the opportunity of total freedom, appears. This window of opportunity opens when the adolescent obtains a high amount of autonomy without the responsibility of an adult. The point of teenage rebellion is to question everything, break loose, and construct your identity without any forced influence. You choose your own influences and find your own values, typically outside of the mainstream. This can not be done without neglecting the responsibility of fitting in, and refusing to adjust and behave as expected. If you obey all the rules and never rebel, responsibility and autonomy will go hand in hand through the adolescent years. It's like you have never been outside of the fence. You don't know anything else.

Autonomy vs responsibility

no rebel, complete obedience



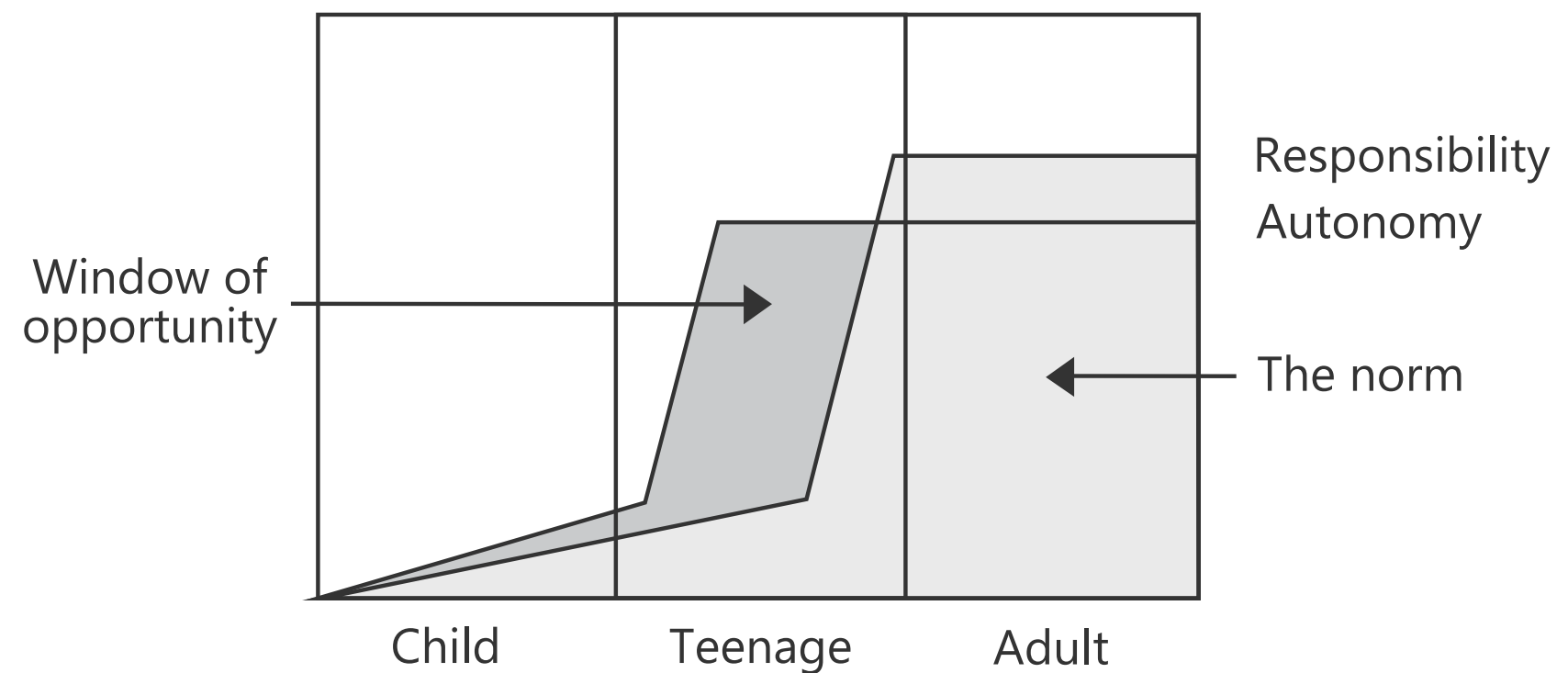
This is the recipe to end up as a square. The squares welcome responsibility because it endorses their rational and controlled mind-set. They do what's expected of them and never question authorities, laws, norms or traditions. They go with the flow, are obedient and sensible, and therefore never fight to gain autonomy without responsibility. They miss out on Rock & Roll's concept of personal freedom.

It is the mission of Rock & Roll to give young people the tools and confidence to break this window of opportunity open and tell them it's ok, and even good, to deviate from the norm if you want to. Rock & Roll provides an artistic platform for the misfits, those who can't, or choose not to, be like everyone else. And as a culture it offers an alternative lifestyle that either avoids a lot of stereotypical milestones in life, or at the very least offers perspective and an escape from the pressure of having to keep up with these normative expectations.

But the mission of the norm is always to keep the rebels under control and force them to conform into predictable obedient adults. A lot of the time the responsibility and pressure from the norm becomes too much, and the passion from the rebellious youth burns out.

Autonomy vs responsibility

Teenage-rebel who conforms to the norm

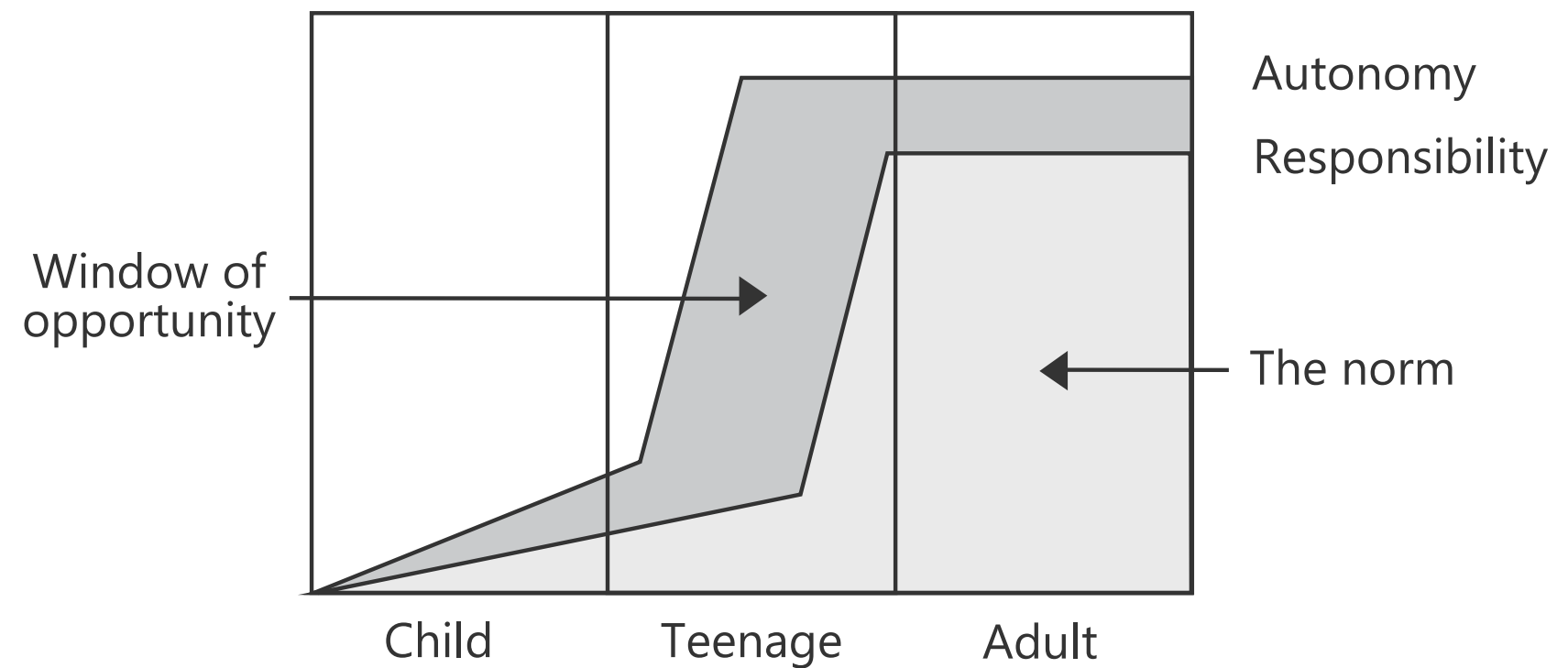


This group ends up seeing their passionate Rock & Roll engagement as a short phase that is separated from their now ordinary adult life. In this case boredom wins. They eventually end up as squares as well, pushed back inside the fence and out of reach from the true primitive power of Rock & Roll. They lose touch with the youthful urge for freedom, or force it away because they are unable to combine Rock & Roll and adult life.

This window represents the emergency exit from the slow death of being stuck in traffic on the high-way of utter boredom. Rock & Roll will keep you young at heart, radical, adventurous, joyful and creative, as long as you have the willpower not to conform, and the motivation to keep active and seek out new thrills and kicks. But as an adult the responsibility naturally starts to increase, and along with it, the pressure from the norm. Some people will struggle to find a balance that can keep Rock & Roll as a vital force at this point. The rational part of the brain takes over, and emotions are no longer running wild. At this point you are more or less biologically triggered to conform, let go of the passion and become like everyone else. Therefore "grown up" Rock & Roll CAN NOT EXIST! Responsible, sophisticated, intellectual Rock & Roll is impossible, and would be worthless.

Autonomy vs responsibility

Rock & Roll continues as an adult

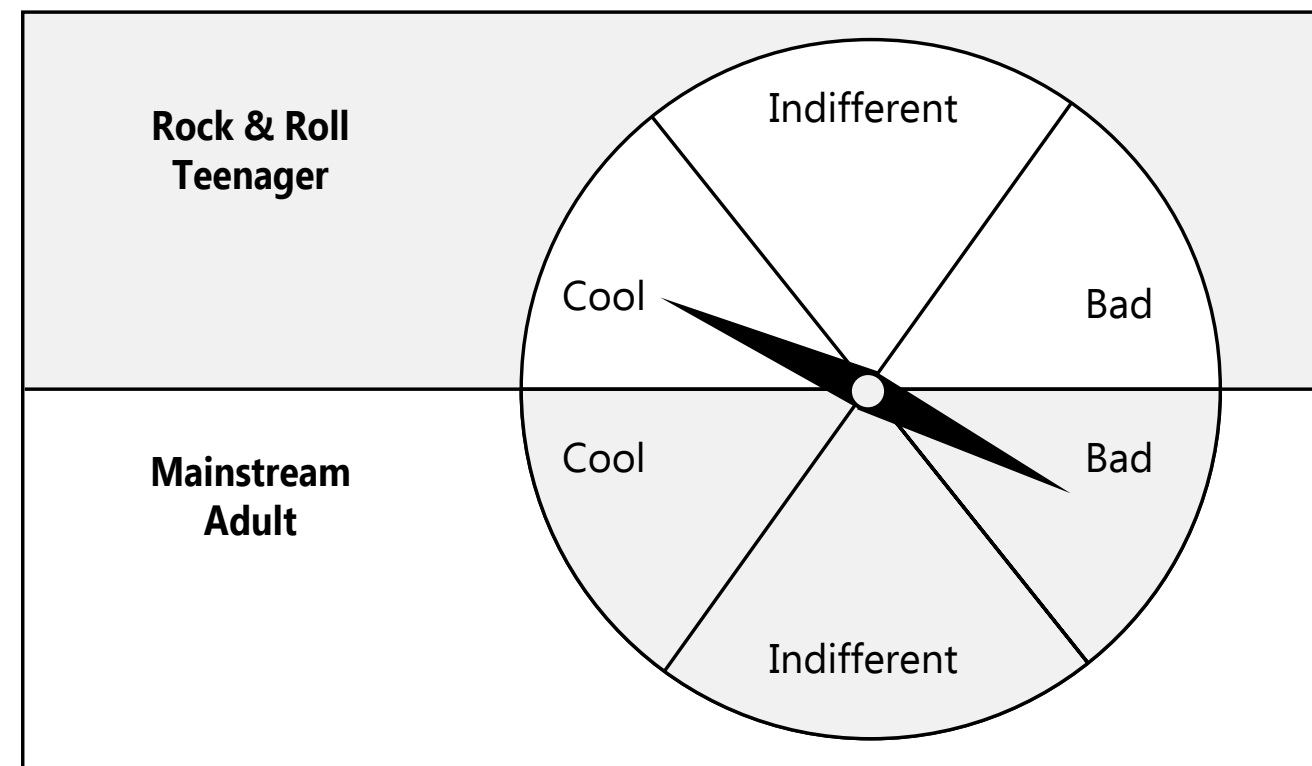


Domesticated, harmless, calculated Rock & Roll would not only fail to give thrills and kicks, but it would also do nothing to help break and keep the window open. True Rock & Roll must distance or alienate itself from the rational, responsible and restrictive norm, because it should always function as an escape from the serious and mundane "grown up" life.

THE LAW OF OPPOSING TASTE

The law of opposing taste suggests that Rock & Roll aesthetics should appeal to, and unite, the people within the culture, but at the same time distinguish it from the opposition. The Rock & Roll aesthetics should be used to separate the cool from the squares. In this way Rock & Roll becomes an artistic platform for all kinds of expressions outside of the norm, because what provokes the squares, makes a clear statement in support of personal freedom, individuality and anti-conformity. The basic values of Rock & Roll still apply, even if the squares have become more tolerant. In a liberal society there's a different quest for personal freedom, with less need of provocation. There's plenty of ways to signify a break with the norm, generate excitement, escape boredom and encourage personal freedom without the huge hostile authoritative opposition of 50s and 60s society.

The law of opposing taste



Conclusion: Rock & Roll has a tradition of being too wild, weird and out of control to be accepted by the masses, it has a tradition of being wrong, over the top, flamboyant and outrageous. Every now and then it strikes a nerve and becomes popular, but the fact is that one of the truly essential aspects of the Rock & Roll mentality is the refusal to fit in and be a healthy contribution to society. In short, it should: **Stay Sick!**

SUMMARY

I conclude that these aspects are the three cornerstones of the Rock & Roll mentality.

Stay Teenage:

Seek thrills and kicks, danger and fun, boycott boredom, live fast.

Stay primitive:

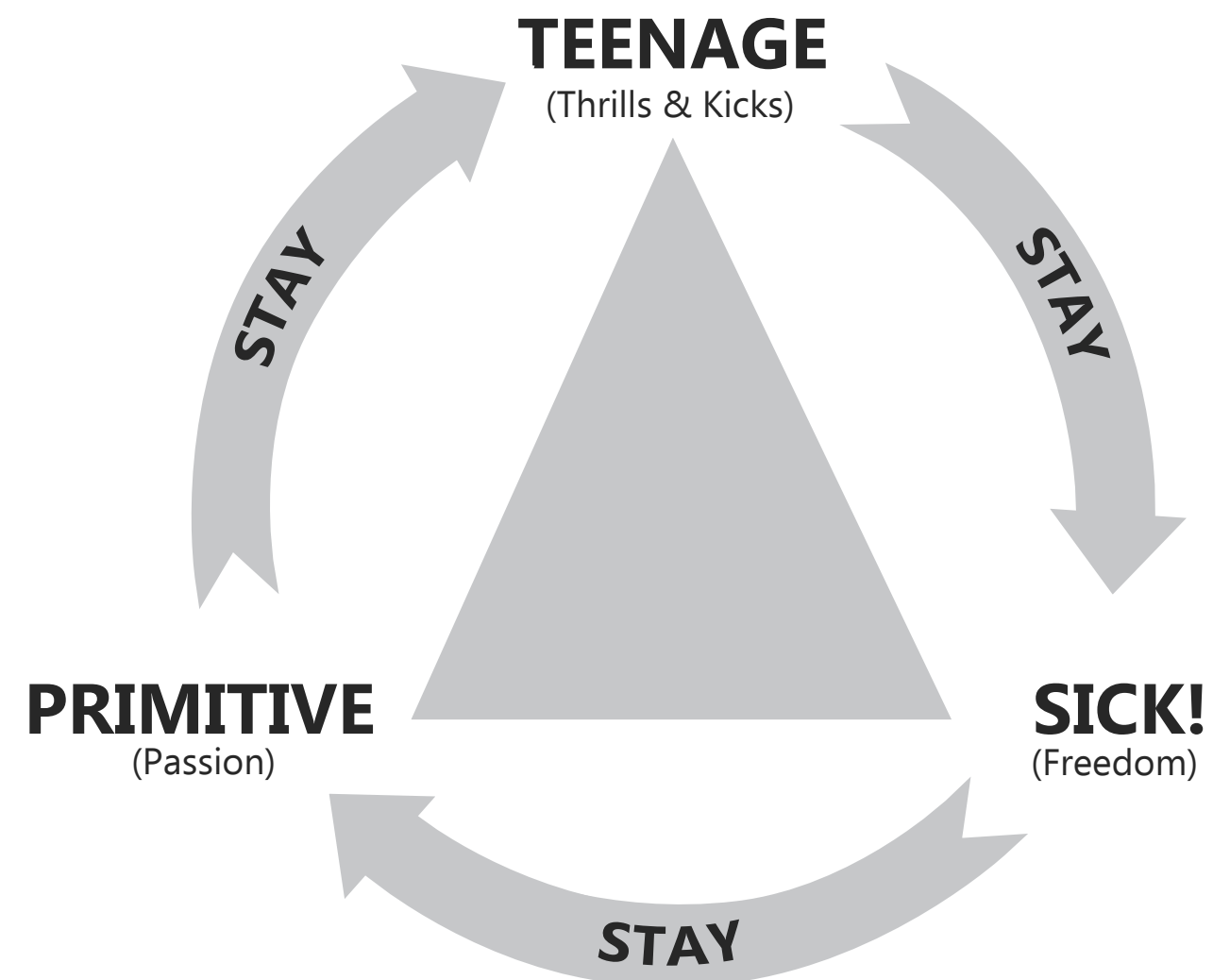
Act on instinct, be passionate and raw, boycott intellect, live wild.

Stay Sick:

Break free, never conform, be strange, boycott the norm, live weird.

Combined, these aspects generate the creative climate where the great Rock & Roll ideas occur and materialize, and are expressed, communicated and enjoyed.

THE ROCK & ROLL MENTALITY



4.2 DESIGN STRATEGY

INTRO

“your artwork represents your inner you as a piece of art, if you’re boring your art is boring”

- Reverend Beatman

INSPIRATION

Your artwork reflects your mind, and your mind is shaped by the impressions you feed it. Be active, search for stuff that gives you a kick, stuff that talks to you. Categorize, organize and build both a mental and a physical library out of this material. Surround yourself with it. This material is the building blocks that make up your artistic identity. Let your taste and instincts guide you, accumulate as much material as possible and use it to trigger your creative process. Make a “mood-board” out of different inspiration to get you started on a task, or just simply use another design as a template to bounce new ideas off. Don’t start with a blank piece of paper. As a visual artist you are part of an ever developing cultural field, and it’s perfectly fine to steal, borrow and learn from past innovations.

EXPERTISE

Even with the right mentality, there is still great value in studying how Rock & Roll has been expressed before. The point is: when it comes to the art and craftsmanship, Rock & Roll is a handed down, outsider folk-tradition that exists completely separate from the established art and music scene. The ideas, styles and techniques that have become representative for the culture, have become so because they are effective, functional and resonate well with the Rock & Roll mentality. By now they also add cultural codes and connotative meanings. As an artist who aims to be part of the Rock & Roll culture, you should acquire knowledge of and celebrate this artistic tradition.

ORIGINALITY

Don’t try to be unique, just be unusual. All art has a source of inspiration and some point of reference in earlier history, if you just know where to look. It is the natural evolution of the collective consciousness to recognize established ideas and use them as a stepping stone for new developments. Understand that whatever you do, someone else has always done something similar. Find them, study their work and create something similar. If you put the right attitude and passion into your work, trust me, you will distinguish yourself from them automatically because your own artistic identity and personality will shine through in your work.

LIMITATIONS

Ideas are abundant, but without restrictions the creative process lacks direction and can get lost and stagnated in endless possibilities. Use restrictions and limitations to your advantage, and to help you focus. By limiting yourself to certain sets of elements, tools and techniques, you have created a play-area where your ideas can be explored and executed without disturbance. Making the most out of the little you have can often result in simplistic brilliance as well and this is often the tactic behind iconic artwork that stands the test of time.

CHASE THE FLOW MODE

Flow is the joy of getting lost in what you do. It is a state of mind where you are totally focused and engaged in an activity you enjoy. Getting into the flow mode often takes practice, but there are a few shortcuts. First of all, remove all distractions. Any kind of disturbance will instantly snap you out of it. Get everything you need for the task out and ready. If there is any chance it might get messy, good, just get your hands dirty right away. Expect at least an hour of pushing yourself, and focusing, before the flow mode kicks in. Move around, stay in motion both mentally and physically. Be eclectic with your ideas, work intuitively, and never be afraid to change directions or scrap an idea for a better one. Drink coffee.

BE HANDS ON

Computers are great tools, but I strongly advise you to also incorporate the unique qualities of analogue techniques. While the practical benefits of digital tools are obvious, I argue that pen on paper, paint on carpet etc. communicates a more direct, personal and "organic" expression. The computer often adds a layer of "cold" technology between the artist and his audience. To me it's like the difference between the sound of a real drum-kit and a drum-machine. Modern technology can come very close to the real thing, but the "life", spontaneity, personality and charm that occurs naturally in analogue work, adds authenticity and character. Take the time to do it real, and keep the quirks and inaccuracies that occur in the process. They are the "life".

PRACTICAL APPROACH

TRUST YOUR TASTE

**MAKE
YOUR OWN STYLE**

THREE CHORDS

PLAY LOUD

PLAY LIVE

**TAKE
ACTION**

**BLAST OUT
ENERGY**

**CAPTURE
ENERGY**

PRACTICE & PRODUCE

**DO IT NOW
AND DO IT AGAIN**

TRUST YOUR TASTE

Collect inspiration - Steal and borrow - Nothing is off limits - Be brave and radical - No boredom - Challenge the artistic "rules" - Challenge your audience - Express primal emotions - Dig deep - Trust your style - Trust yourself

THREE CHORDS

Celebrate all ideas
 Make sketches / notes
 Act on the ideas
 Simplify
 Choose three, or less (main) techniques
 Use what you have
 Choose three, or less (main) colours
 Combine techniques
 Combine materials
 Think wholistic
 Creative combination is key
 Balance material and technique
 Strip it down
 Challenge yourself

PLAY LOUD

Intense colours
 Sharp edges
 Disturbing imagery
 Reckless technique
 Forceful contrasts
 Chaotic dynamic
 Blow up the format
 Overlap imagery
 Engage physically
 Challenge the format
 Challenge the material
 Challenge artistic norms
 Stimulate emotional response

PLAY LIVE

Work analogue
 Be direct and intense
 Get your hands dirty
 Leave fingerprints
 Let the material speak
 Keep the "life" in your work
 Show passion by being primitive
 Go with impulses
 Work intuitively
 Keep the rhythm
 Keep the small flaws
 Neglect details
 Avoid perfection
 Focus on the big picture

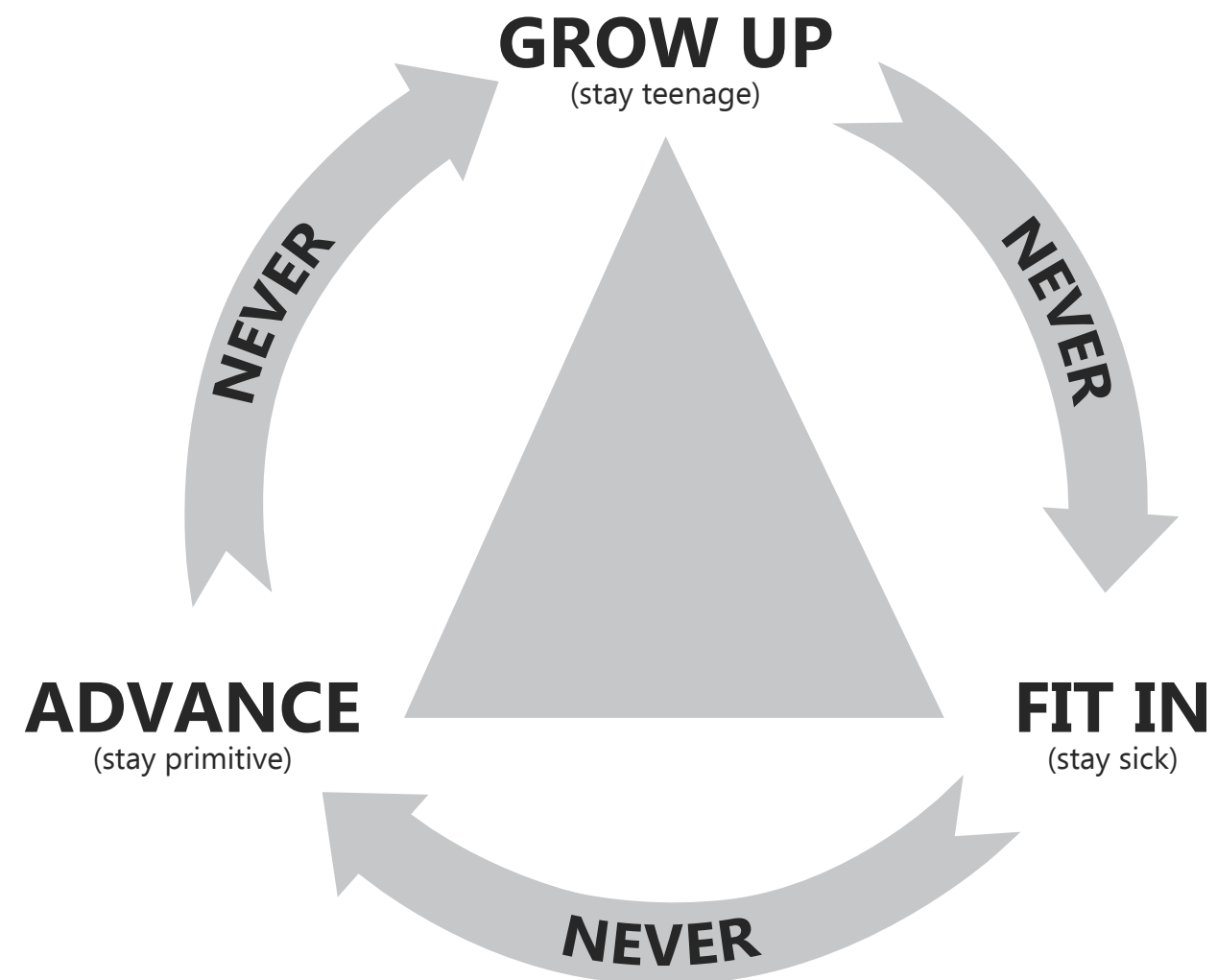
PRACTICE & PRODUCE

You want to do something? DO IT NOW!
 You want to be good at it? DO IT AGAIN, NOW!
 Have fun, get excited, put passion into the work. If you're not passionate about the process, no one will be passionate about the result. Consume the stuff that cool people make, and make stuff the cool people want to consume.

NEW IDEAS, SAME ATTITUDE

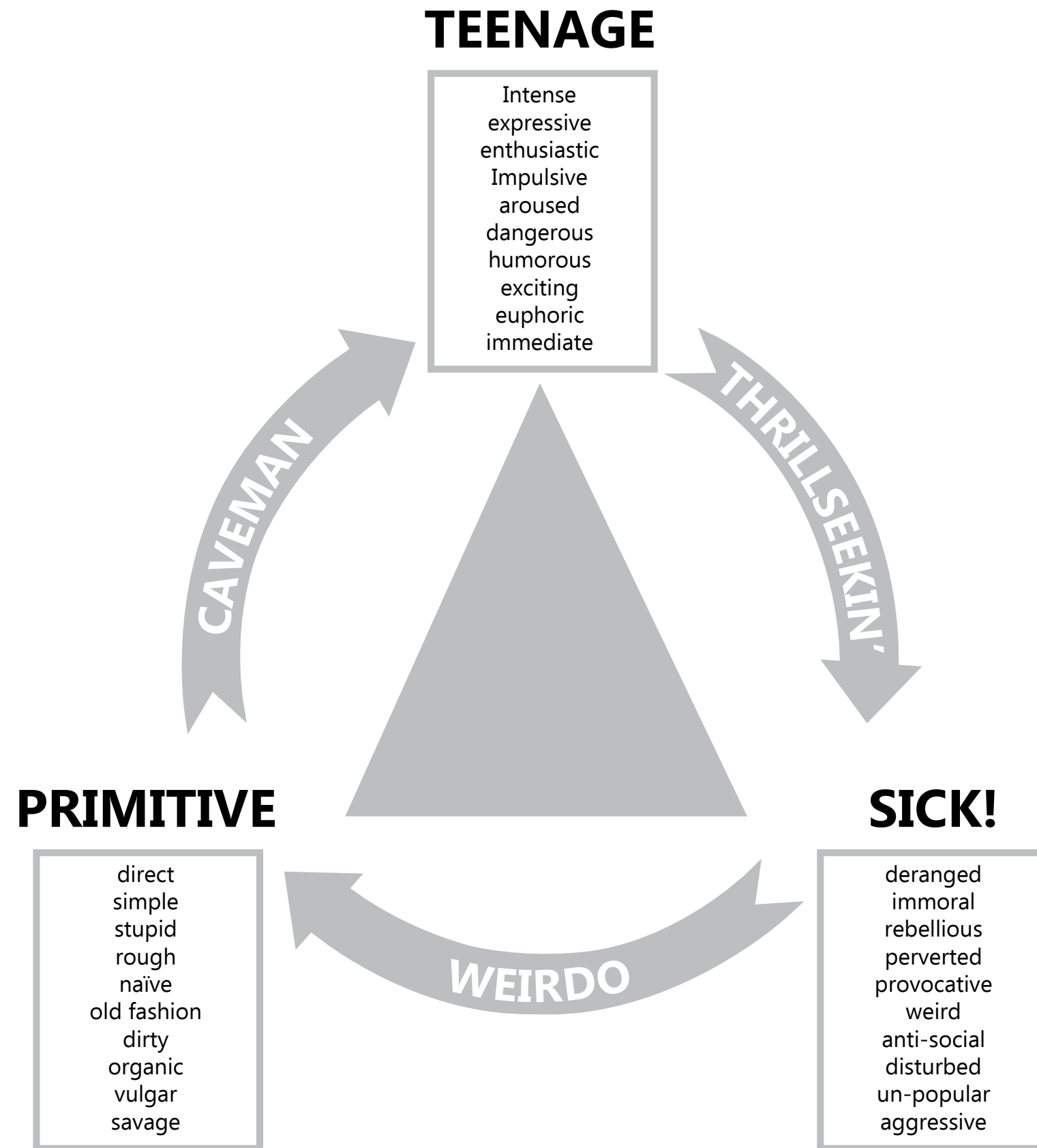
The Rock & Roll mentality relies on a strong enthusiasm and resistance, because it favors the youth over the adult values, the outsider over the norm, and the primitive over the advanced. The social pressure is constant, which means that whenever a Rock & Roll artist loses enthusiasm and focus, the expressions tend to automatically morph into more sophisticated, more adult and more socially accepted or popular expressions. At this point, from a Rock & Roll perspective, the art loses its edge. Rock & Roll art really has everything to do with who you are. What's inside your head. It values self-taught self-expression, individuality, anti-conformity and amateurism. It is an art-form that encourages everyone to engage and take part regardless of experience and technical ability. Even aesthetically, it tends to value the idea and attitude more than the artistic execution.

ROCK & ROLL ART SHOULD NEVER



MATERIALIZING THE IDEAS

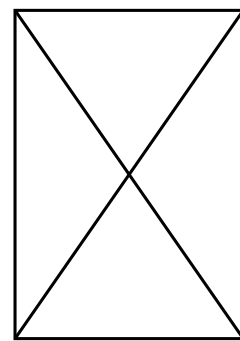
If you want your artwork to resonate with the Rock & Roll mentality, these descriptive associations might trigger the process. The intention is to get into a “mode” and apply it to the practical process. Maybe you’re looking for a photo for a collage. Why not choose something weird or provocative, something that feels disturbing, exciting or fun, and will create a reaction? If you need to cut that photo out from a background, it might be an idea to cut it in a rough and primitive fashion. Maybe you want to paint on top of that, go for it, be spontaneous and try to capture that moment. The process is essential to the result when it comes to Rock & Roll art. You need to capture the state of mind that you’re in, and capture the action so that the finished result carries with it a certain spontaneity and sense of immediacy. All kinds of ideas can grow a Rock & Roll face if you add the attitude.



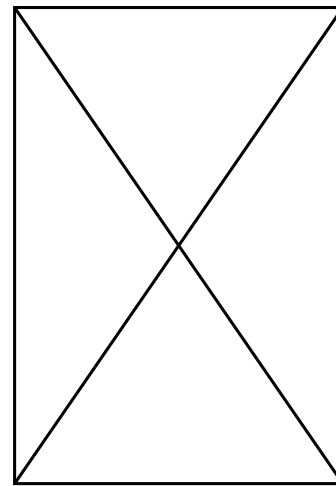
PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

POSTER MOJO WEEKEND 2015

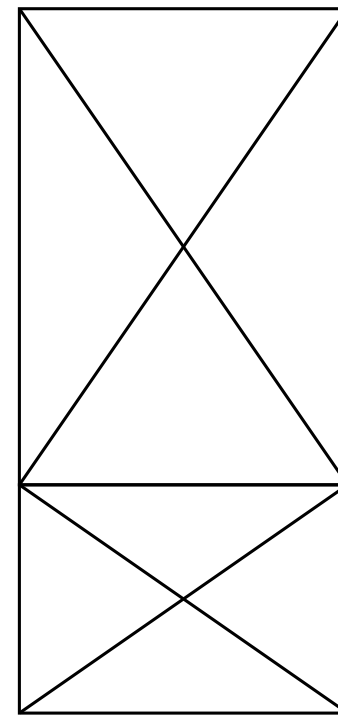
For this poster I wanted to use an untraditional format. My intention was to create the illusion of too much things happening at once, by suggesting there was more content than the usual format could hold. This option gave me the possibility of a more crowded, chaotic and hectic layout. I ended up using a format which is A2 + an additional A3. With this format I could also create a logical hierarchy between the 7 bands while still giving every band the chance to occupy the conventional horizontal space that you'd expect on a traditional A2 or A3 format.



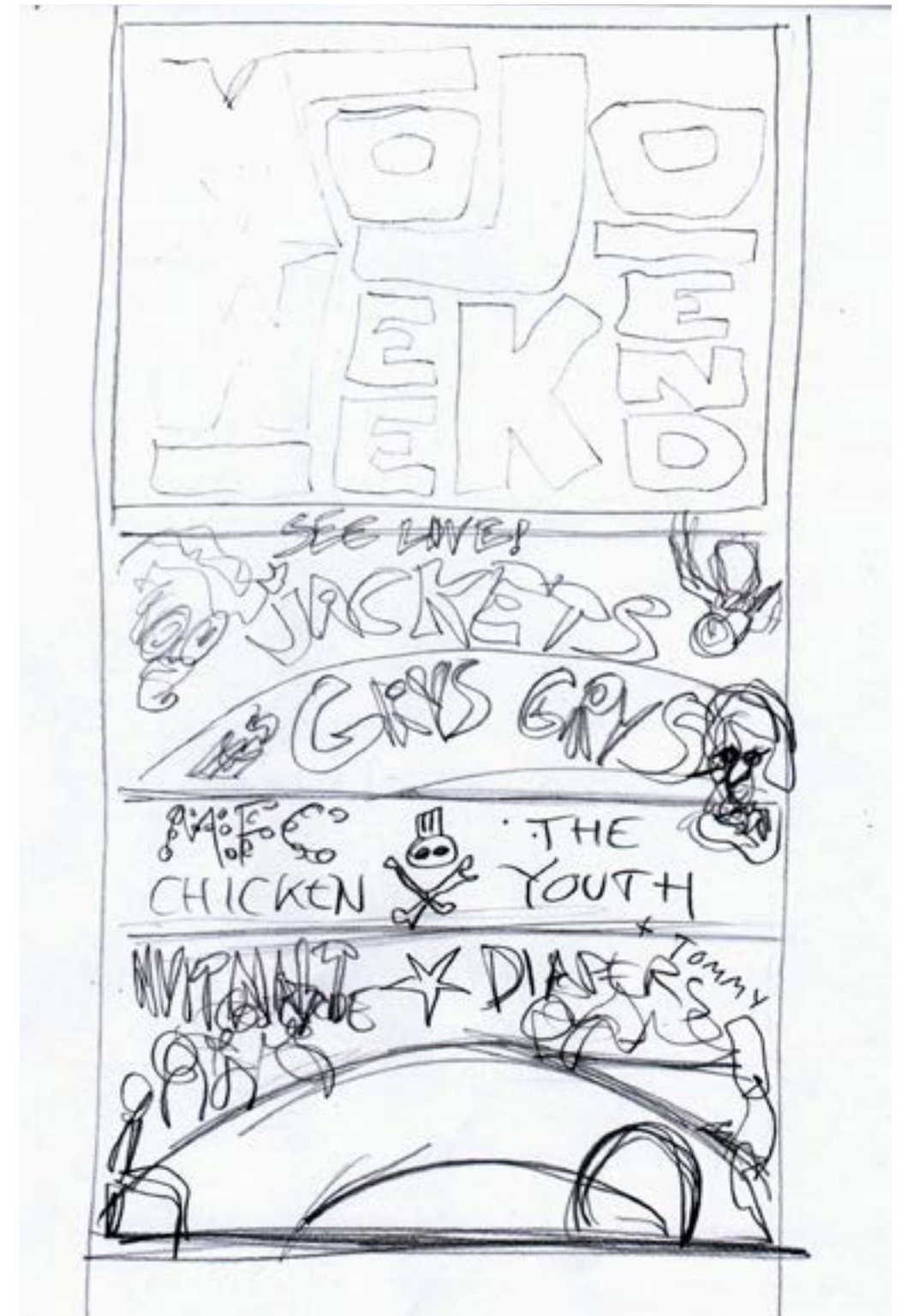
A3



A2



POSTER



LOGO & HEADERS

Since this festival is mainly putting on unknown bands I wanted the Mojo Weekend logo to catch the eye first. I always draw these kind of headers by hand and try to emphasize the analogue approach. There's really no good shortcuts to this, in my opinion. Except, of course, imitating earlier hand-lettering styles, which I do.

I wanted this logo to be playful and simple. And it should express joy. The logo, like the poster itself, is emphasizing that there is a lot of stuff happening at once. I put the M and the W together so they formed a star, this creates a focus point in the logo, something that should attract the eye and at the same time add connotations of a celebration or party, a bang or just a traditional stamp of quality



TECHNIQUE

I try to keep a primitive approach. I typically swap 50-50 between digital and analogue techniques. I use digital techniques for practicality and analogue for aesthetics. For this project I chose to work with painting, drawing and collage. I also limit my color palette. I typically choose 2, 3 or 4 colors for each design and I find that to be an effective method. Of course it relates to the primitive “three chord” mentality that is so important for the garage rock expression as well. There are some classic color combinations that I find particularly striking. The contrasts are strong and the colors are vibrant. Whether they became popular because of necessity or choice doesn’t really matter. They look good together, so I tend to use it a lot in my designs. This time I went with black, yellow and red. A combo that I feel packs a real punch and makes a good contrast to the b/w collage.

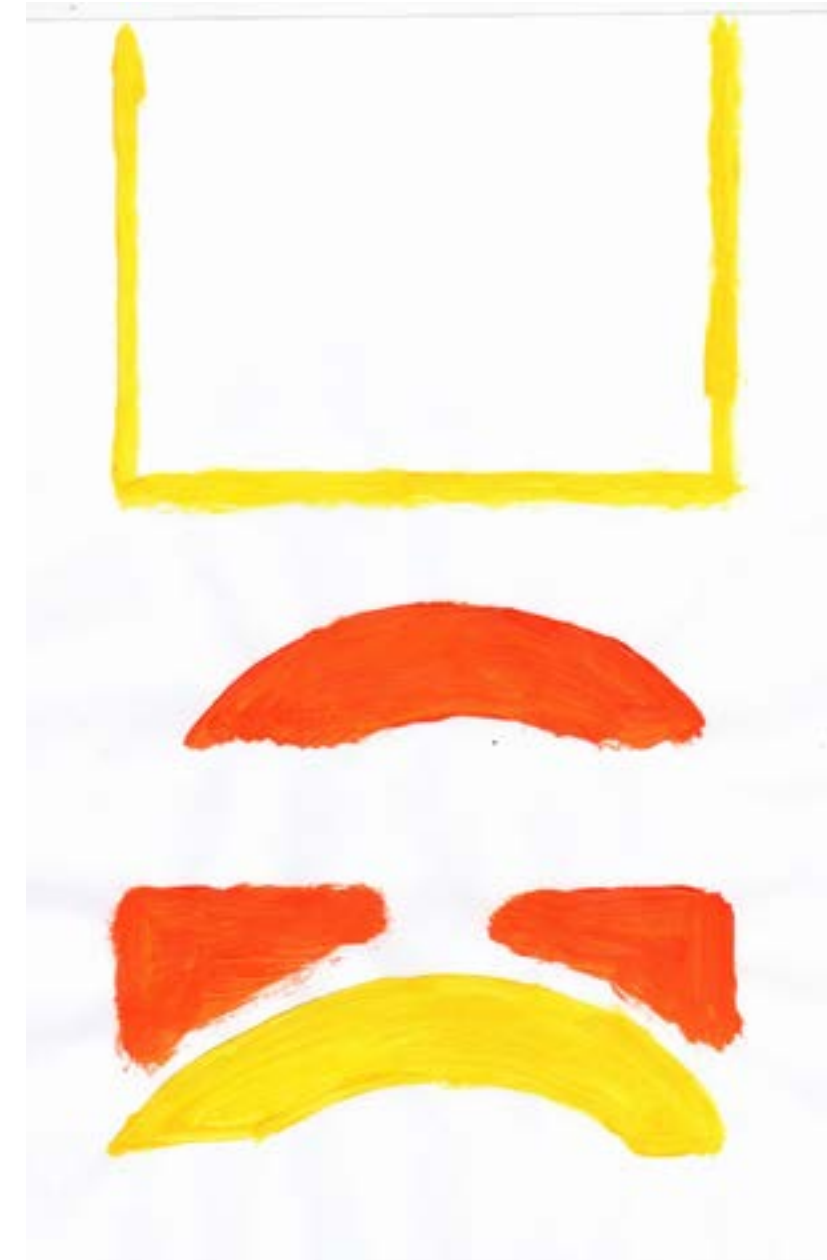


Over the years I've built up an archive of imagery. Mostly Rock & Roll related, weird stuff from the 50s and 60s. I always start out a collage with more pictures than I need. I look for images that can relate to each other in a new context. I favor an intuitive approach when I work like this. I encourage a spontaneous process and try to get into flow-mode. I prefer working with photo's I find rather than staging my own scenarios because I don't want it to be planned. I want to catch ideas that fly by rather than to contemplate them into shape. I trust the imagery will lead me in the right direction. This time wrestlers, a mummy drinking milk, a monkey and a naked woman puking seemed like a good combination. I felt it was the right amount of weird and disturbing but still fun, joyful and not too provoking. It's by all means a humorous and tongue in check approach to provocation.



SYMMETRY AND BALANCE:

I never use any kind of grid for this kind of design. It should look loose, rough and almost like it fell into place unintentionally. I ignore the small details, but I'm very aware of the wholistic picture. That's absolutely crucial to this type of design. It needs a good feel and to look "right" without seeming calculated. I have to balance the elements, and techniques I use, in a way that express a sense of chaos and vibrancy but at the same time appeal to peoples natural need for symmetry. It takes effort to make it look random and spontaneous, because there's no absolute right or wrong. If you have a grid, you can follow a recipe. That doesn't work with this type of design. This relies on gut-feeling.



Left: Transparent layer added to illustrate the symmetry of the layout.

I paint with a large brush to give it a naive and unsophisticated look. I think of each surface element as a stickers and just place them on top of each other. I basically just start at the top and work my way down. This also gives the poster some visual depth. My usual process is to work analogue and then feed it into the scanner or take a photo and transfer it to a computer. A major reason for doing this is because I want the rough and "organic" texture that one can only fully get from working with physical material. If you compare an analogue collage to a digital one, it's always a huge difference. The analogue approach gives it life, and adds a fingerprint from the artist / designer. The image becomes real only after it has had a trip out in the real world. So I always use a printer and a scanner when I work with this kind of design.



Right: purple cross added to illustrate balance between the techniques.



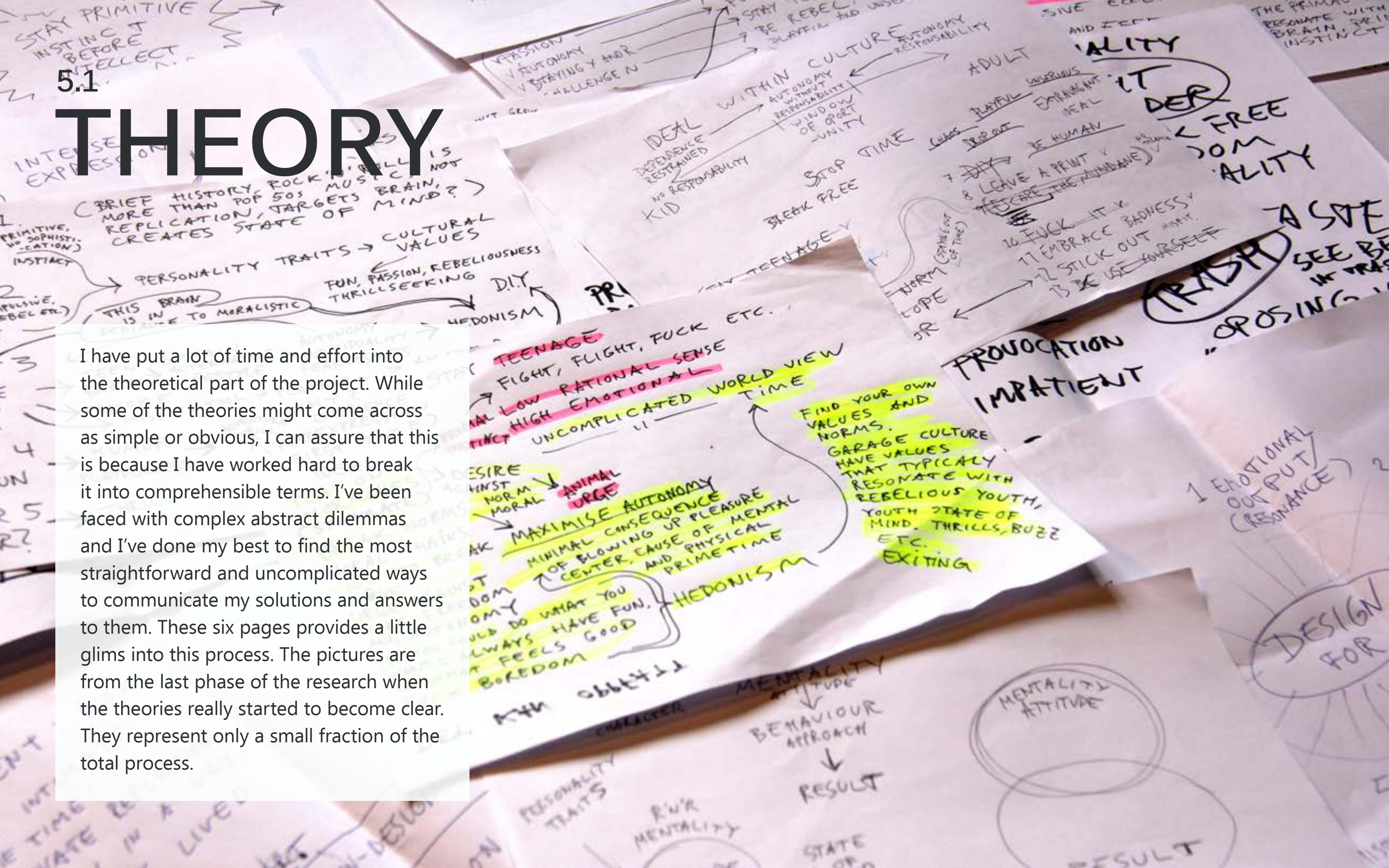
The finished result suggested that this would be a real good party, and I can honestly say it was. If you were not there, you were a square, and you don't know what you missed.

■ PROCESS

5.1

THEORY

I have put a lot of time and effort into the theoretical part of the project. While some of the theories might come across as simple or obvious, I can assure that this is because I have worked hard to break it into comprehensible terms. I've been faced with complex abstract dilemmas and I've done my best to find the most straightforward and uncomplicated ways to communicate my solutions and answers to them. These six pages provides a little glimps into this process. The pictures are from the last phase of the research when the theories really started to become clear. They represent only a small fraction of the total process.



CONTRIVERSY = REA

ON OF ARTIFACT → BASIC MEANING
SONAL ASSOCIATION → CULTURAL MEANING
OBJECTIVE TECHNIQUE → PERSONAL LEVEL
UP YOUR MIND → ASSOCIATIONS
ABOUT THE MIND
OR SAD, IN BETWEEN.
CAR, COLOR, COMICS,
ANIMALS, ETC.
SHIRTS, BRANDS,
ART, MOODS

BAD TRIAS

CONTRIVERSY
PROVOCATION

LOVE

HATE

RADICAL

LOVE

HATE

ALUE

8. CASE STUDIES → COMPARE
COMPARE SUCCESS AND FAILURES
KEY FACTOR TO SUCCESSFUL TEACHING → ENTHUSIASM
CHALLENGE → STRESS → BURNING LEAVES

ADDITIONAL QUESTION
RATE PLEASE!
MEANING → CODE (UNDER)
CULTURAL CODE
SOCIAL CODE

FAKE IT, UNTIL YOU MAKE AS
I LOVE IT WHEN WE BECOME ON
PIECE OF SHIT!

EXTORTION
IT'S YOUR CONSCIENCE!
GIVE ME 10 BEERS
AND I'LL LEAVE...

I AM YOUR CONSCIENCE
I HAVE ~~TO~~ TO
IN PUBLIC...

DEDICATED
ALL THE
WE HAVE

PHILOSOPHY!

ANY FAVOURITE EXPRESSIONS YOU THINK
RETTED OUT

IT IS CRUCIAL TO BREAK FREE FROM
THE NORMS OF SOCIETY, PARENTS, AUTHORITARIANISM
FROM THE CORPORATION'S
CORPORATE AND MA.

THREATSEEKING, PLAYFULNESS, ENGAGEMENT
RADICALITY, EXITEMENT, NAIVEITY
STRONG WILL, STRONG EMOTIONS, P...

ESCAPE EVERYDAY
ESCAPE EVERYDAY

THE EXPERIENCE OF ART
INDIVIDUAL - IT'S IMPOSSIBLE
EVERYONE WILL
THE SAME. (SAME HOUR)
BUT WHEN * CULTURE IS
ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS
AND DRUGS THAT UNDER
PICTURE.

SYMBIOTIC
RELATIONSHIP
→ ART

WY & HOW

PHILOSOPHY!

ANY FAVOURITE EXPRESSIONS YOU THINK
RETTED OUT

IT IS CRUCIAL TO BREAK FREE FROM
THE NORMS OF SOCIETY, PARENTS, AUTHORITARIANISM
FROM THE CORPORATION'S
CORPORATE AND MA.

UNSTABLE EXTROVERT
IMPULSIVE
PASSIONATE
ECCENTRIC
RESTLESS
ENERGETIC

EXTROVERT
UNSTABLE
UNINDIVIDUAL
UNRESTLESS
INTROVERT

ACTION
FEARLESS
THRILLSEEK
CHEAP THRILL
QUICK FIX

AUTONOMY
INDIVIDUALITY
NON-CONFORMITY
REBELLIOUSNESS

HUMOR
PLAYFULNESS

ESCAPISM

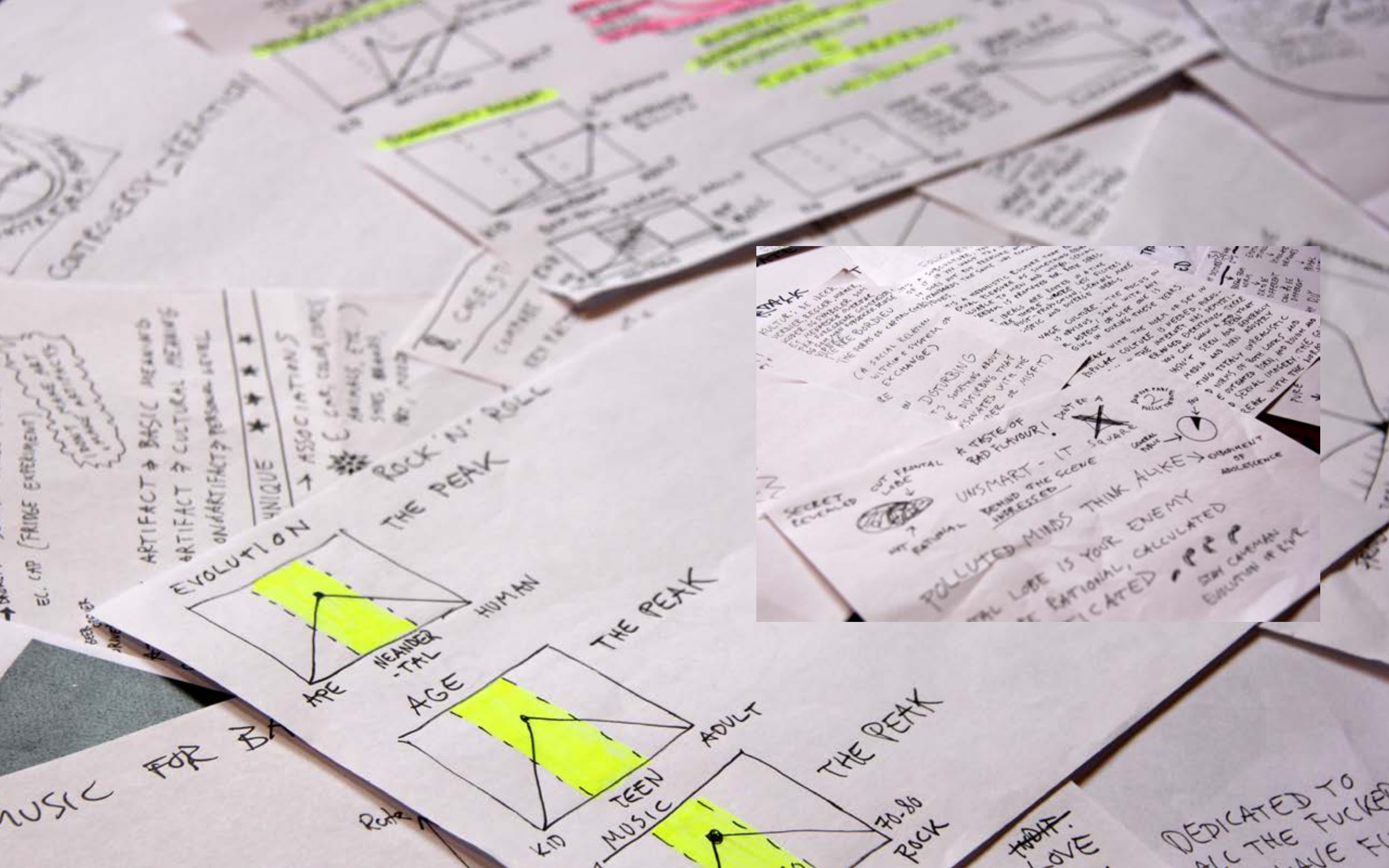
HEDONISM

PERSONALITY TRAITS

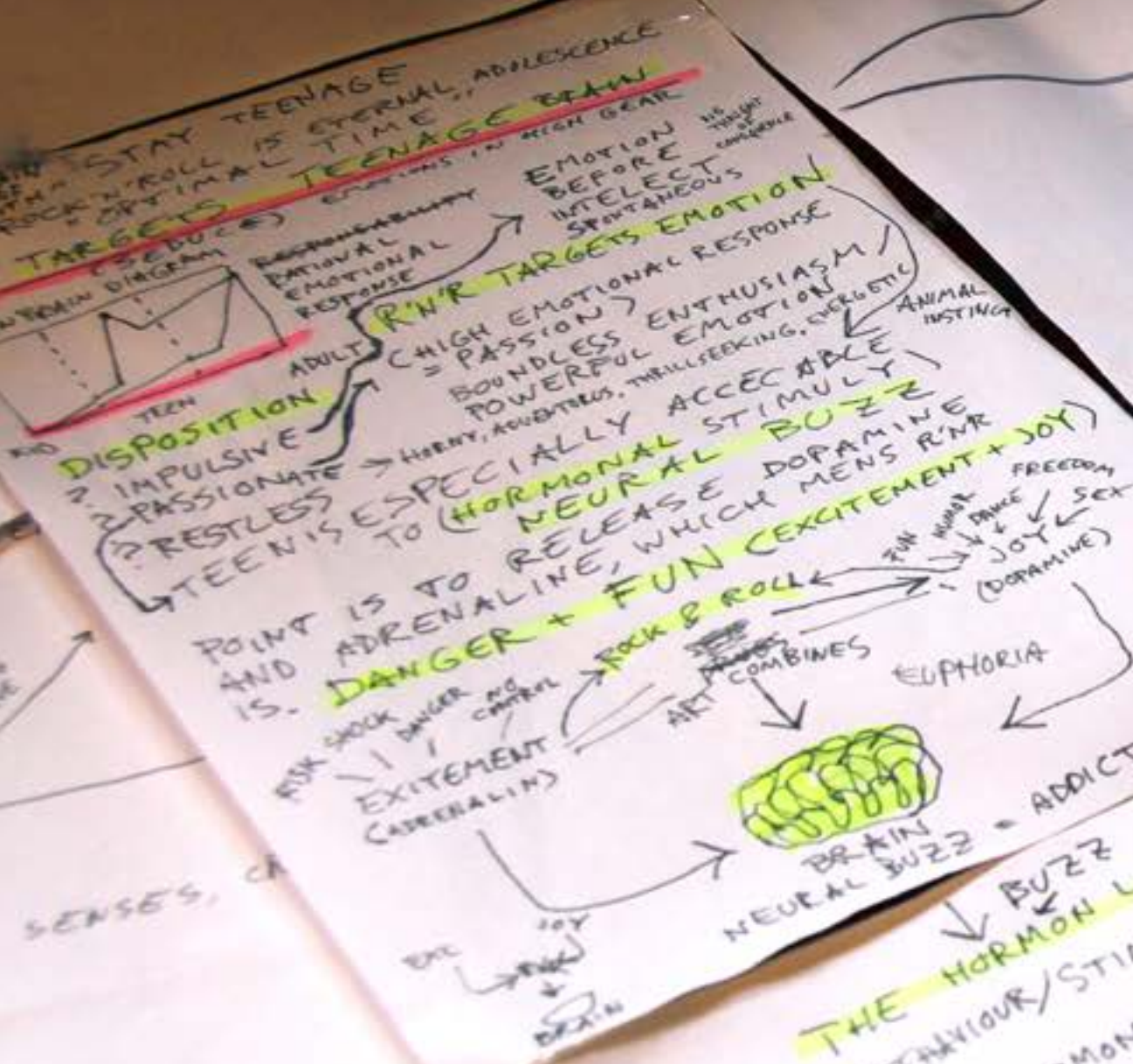
R'N'E CULTURE

REACTIVELY

RELATIONSHIP



CULTURE: THE INEV...
 A SOCIAL SYSTEM...
 POLLUTED MINDS THINK ALIKE
 THE LOBE IS YOUR ENEMY
 BE RATIONAL, CALCULATED
 COMPLICATED - PPP
 DEDICATED TO ALL THE FUCKED...
 HAVE F...



IMPULSIVE LIVE FAST QUICK-FIX

CONOTATIVE VALUE WILL STRENGTHEN IDENTITY WITHOUT NECESSARILY PROVOKING.

INDIFFERENCE = NEUTRAL
 ROCK AND ROLL SEEKS TO BE INTENSE AND STIMULATE STRONG EMOTION / PASSION

IT TARGETS LOVE OR HATE
 LIKE IS NOT AN OPTION YOU CAN FUCK OFF! BUT MAKING THE RIGHT PEOPLE LOVE IS AS CRUCIAL AS HAVING THE WRONG PEOPLE HATE IT
 STIMULATING BOTH SIDES AT THE SAME TIME, IS DOUBLE EFFECT OR PROVOCATIVE TECHNIQUE.

ROCK N ROLL (GOLDEN AGE) TEENAGE 60S

KEEP YOUNG, KEEP HORMONE LEVELS IN CHECK
 KEEPS YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT THE SOURCE (ADDICTION)
 CONTINUING TO DO HORMONE STIMULATING
 YOUR WILL KEEP YOU YOUNG

REBELLION → FREEDOM
 AUTONOMY WITHOUT RESPONSABILITY

ALL IMPULSES HORMONES YOU TO

INTENSE
LOUD
TARGET
INSTINCT
OPEN MINDED
ANTI PREVENTIOUS

HUMOR

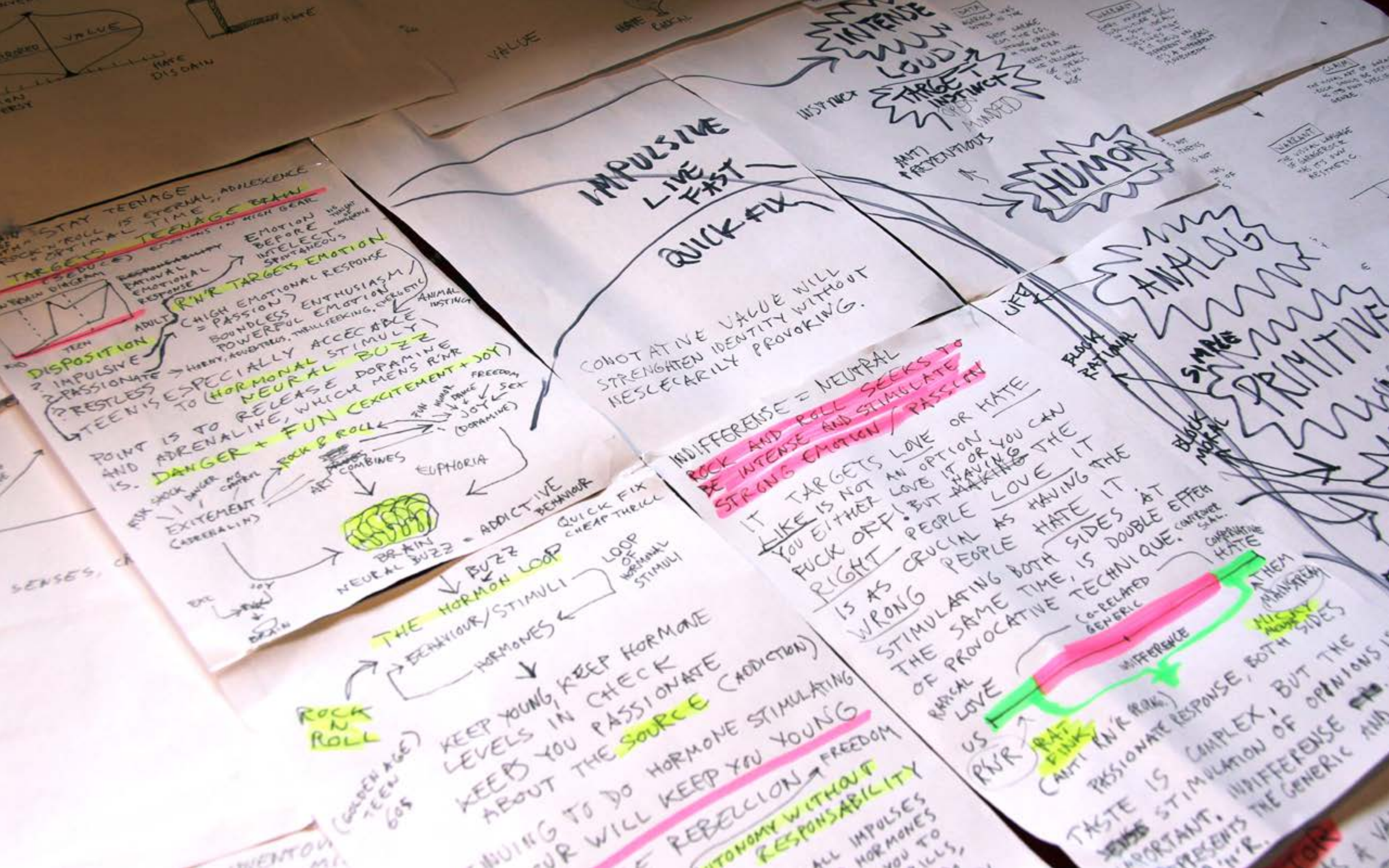
ANALOG
SIMPLE
PRIMITIVE

US RNR (ANTI RNR) (ANTI RNR)

INDIFFERENCE

PASSIONATE RESPONSE, BOTH SIDES AT THEM (MARRIAGE)

TASTE IS COMPLEX, BUT THE STIMULATION OF OPINIONS IS IMPORTANT. INDIFFERENCE AND PRESENTS THE GENERIC AND RNR.

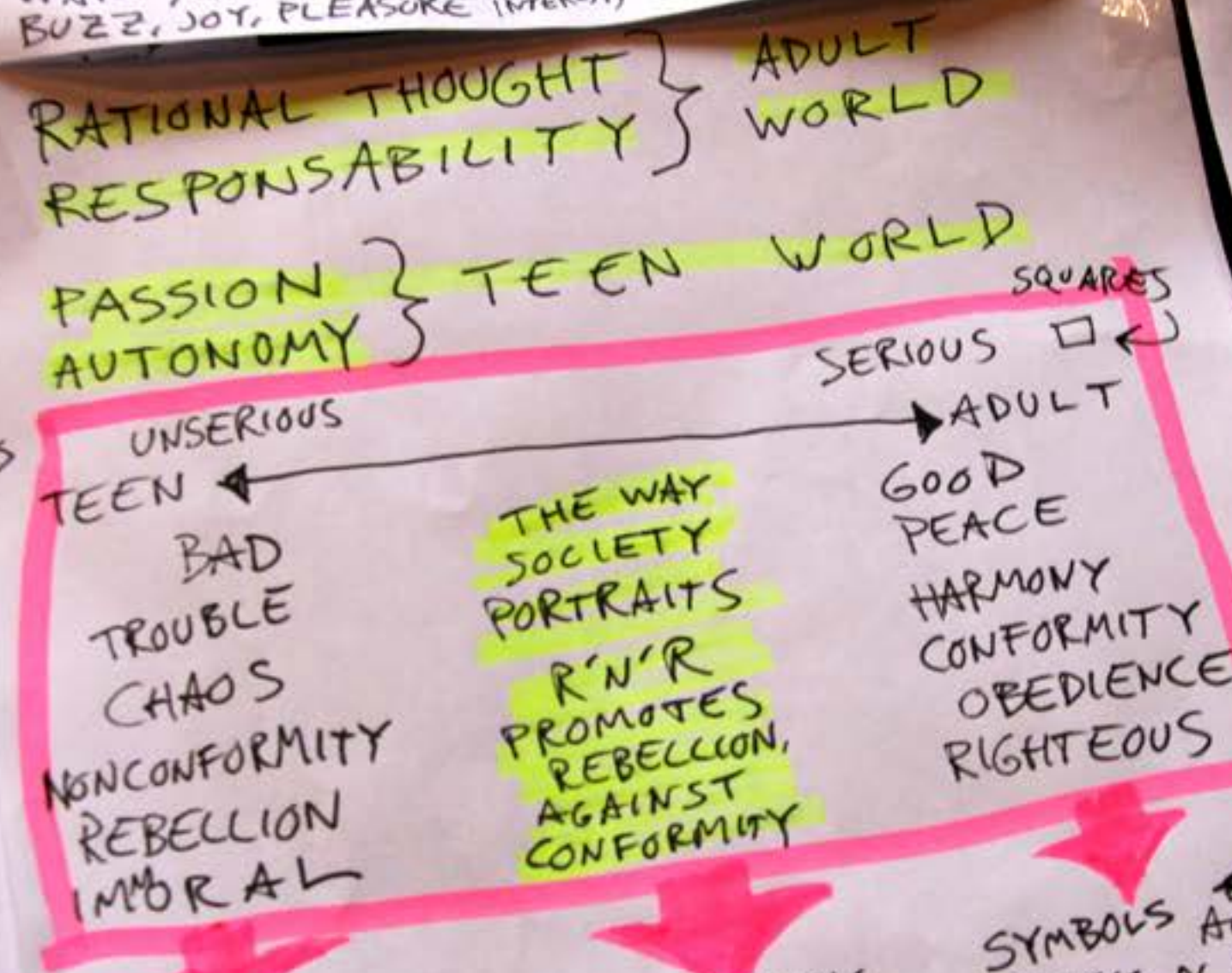


INSTINCT LET
 IS THE
 DANGEROUS
 ALL.

ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT
 ADULT VALUES ARE IN DIRECT CONFLICT WITH VALUES OF ROCK AND ROLL
 FREEDOM NON-CONFORM
 HEDONISM PHILOSOPHY FITS WITH STATE OF MIND & INTERESTS
 ESCAPES FROM "REAL" WORLD
 RESPONSIBILITY NOT DO WHAT YOU WANT

SO YOU CHOOSE A VALUES, NORMS. WHAT HAPPENS IN THE INDIFFERENCE ZONE???

THE PRIMITIVE PRIMAL JE
 RESONATE WITH
 BRAIN. PRIM
 INSTINCT



IDENTITY IS ENFORCED BY SHOWING WHERE YOU BELONG. AND DEDICATION
 THE INDIFFERENCE ZONE GETS BIGGER AND BIGGER THE MORE LIBERAL AND DIVERSE THE MAINSTREAM CULTURE GETS.
 IN MY OPINION ROCK 'N' ROLL MEANS DO WHAT THE FUCK YOU WANT, DON'T CARE WHAT PEOPLE THINK

BUT TO MAKE A STATEMENT, PROVOCATION AND CONTROVERSY HAS A VALUE OUTSIDE OF PURE CIN MODERN)
 ONLY BY TOTAL ALIENATION FROM NORM CAN YOU COMMUNICATE A CULTURAL STAND. PLAY EFF ON THE "US & THEM" MENTAL
 THEIR HATE IS A STAMP IT MEANS ALIENATION FROM WHICH IN TERMS SHOWS CL YOU SUPPORT OPOSING

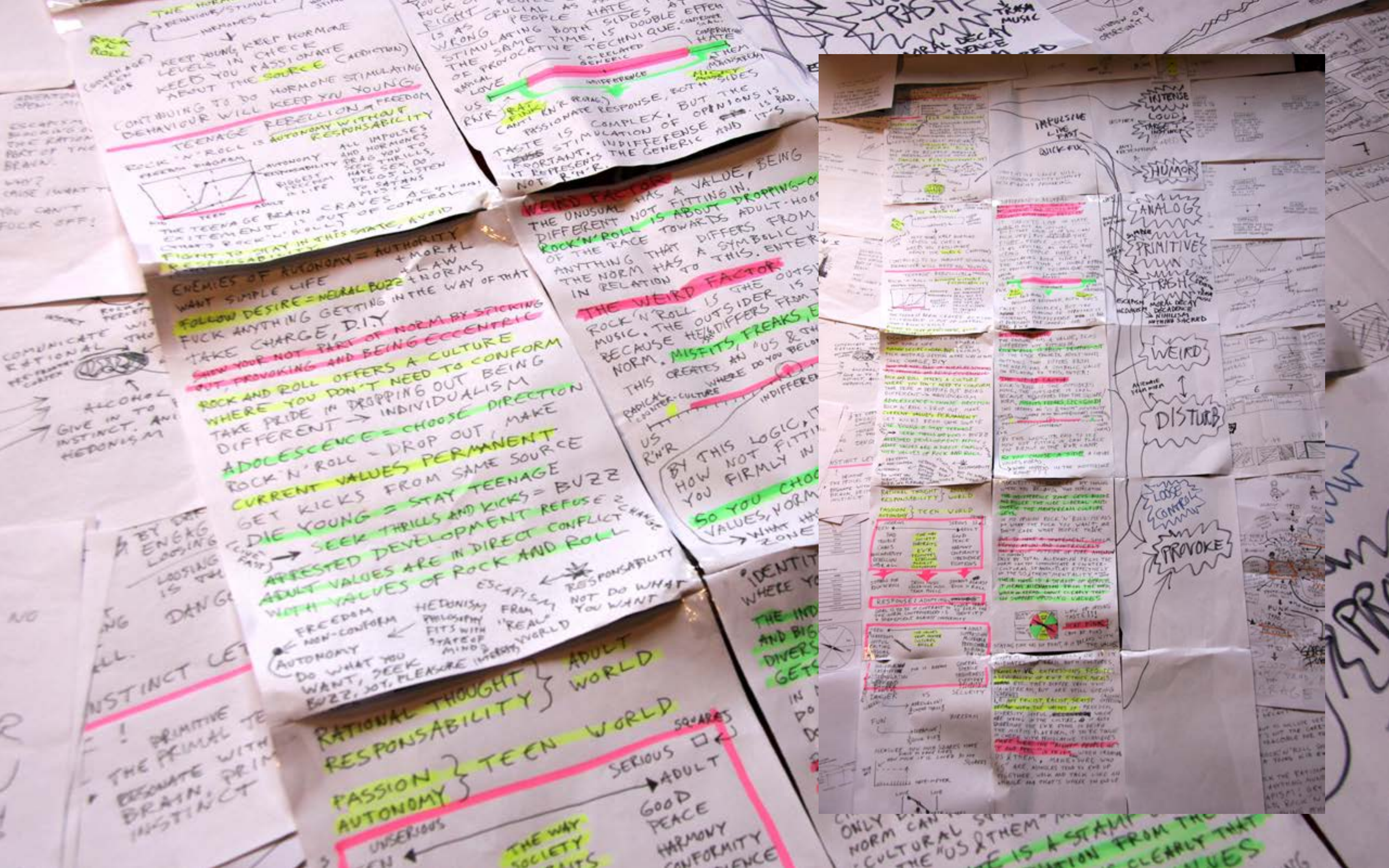
RESPONSE: ADOPTING VALUES
 GOAL IS TO BE IN CONTRAST TO THE NORM, CONTROVERSERY IS STATEMENT AGAINST CONFORMITY
 THESE TRAITS TO FORM THE IDENTITY
 ADULT SUPPRESSION



| |
|---------------|
| Righteous |
| Obidient |
| Peace |
| Good |
| Serious |
| Sophisticated |

adulescent point of view

| |
|-------------|
| Adult |
| Suppression |
| Mundane |
| Boring |
| Normal |
| General |
| Secure |



THE WEIRD FACTOR
 YOU FOCK UP PEOPLE AS YOU AT
 RIGHT CRUCIAL AS HATE AT
 IS AS WRONG PEOPLE HATE
 STIMULATING BOTH SIDES
 THE SAME TIME, IS DOUBLE
 OF PROVOCATIVE TECHNIQUE.
 RADICAL LOVE
 US
 RNR
 CANTI KN'R ROLL
 PASSIONATE RESPONSE, BOTH SIDES
 TASTE IS COMPLEX, BUT THE
 IMPORTANT. INDIFFERENCE IS
 IT REPRESENTS THE GENERIC AND IT'S
 NOT R.N.R.

ROCK 'N' ROLL IS ABOUT DROPPING-OUT
 THE UNUSUAL HAS A VALUE, BEING
 DIFFERENT NOT FITTING IN,
 OF THE RACE TOWARDS ADULT-HOOD
 ANYTHING THAT DIFFERS FROM
 THE NORM HAS A SYMBOLIC V
 IN RELATION TO THIS. ENTER

THE WEIRD FACTOR
 ROCK 'N' ROLL IS THE OUTSIDER IS
 BECAUSE HE DIFFERS FROM
 NORM. MISFITS, FREAKS, E
 THIS CREATES AN 'US & TH
 RADICAL
 US
 RNR
 INDIFFERENT

ENEMIES OF AUTONOMY = AUTHORITY
 WANT SIMPLE LIFE
 FOLLOW DESIRE = MORAL BUZZ + MORAL
 + LAW
 + NORMS
 FUCK ANYTHING GETTING IN THE WAY OF THAT
 TAKE CHARGE, D.I.Y
 SHOW YOUR NOT PART OF NORM BY SPICKING
 PUT, PROVOKING AND BEING ECCENTRIC
 ROCK AND ROLL OFFERS A CULTURE
 WHERE YOU DON'T NEED TO CONFORM
 TAKE PRIDE IN DROPPING OUT BEING
 DIFFERENT -> INDIVIDUALISM
 ADOLESCENCE = CHOOSE DIRECTION
 ROCK 'N' ROLL - DROP OUT, MAKE
 CURRENT VALUES PERMANENT
 GET KICKS FROM SAME SOURCE
 DIE YOUNG = STAY TEENAGE
 SEEK THRILLS AND KICKS = BUZZ
 ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT REFUSE 2 CHANGE
 ADULT VALUES ARE IN DIRECT CONFLICT
 WITH VALUES OF ROCK AND ROLL

THE WEIRD FACTOR
 BY THIS LOGIC, IT
 HOW NOT FITTING
 YOU FIRMLY IN
 SO YOU CHOO
 VALUES, NORM
 -> WHAT HA
 ZONE

IMPULSIVE
 LIKE
 FAST
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BY DEF
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 INSTINCT LET
 PRIMITIVE
 EQUATE WITH
 BRAIN, PRIM
 INSTINCT

RATIONAL THOUGHT
 RESPONSIBILITY } ADULT
 WORLD
PASSION
 AUTONOMY } TEEN
 WORLD
 SERIOUS
 ADULT
 GOOD
 PEACE
 HARMONY
 CONFORMITY
 SERIOUS
 ADULT
 GOOD
 PEACE
 HARMONY
 CONFORMITY

IDENTITY
 WHERE YOU
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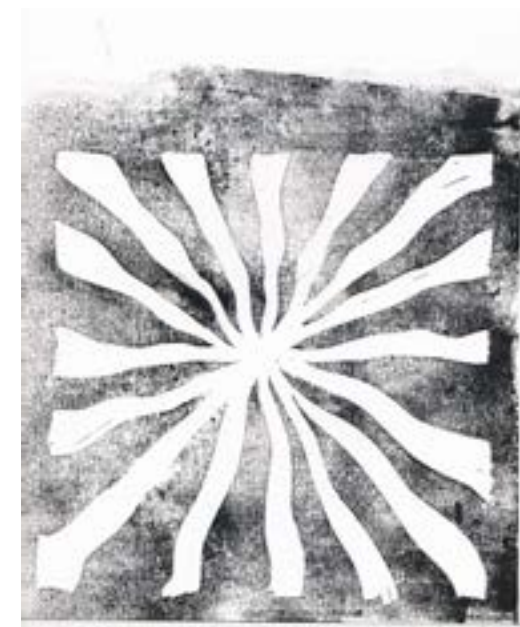
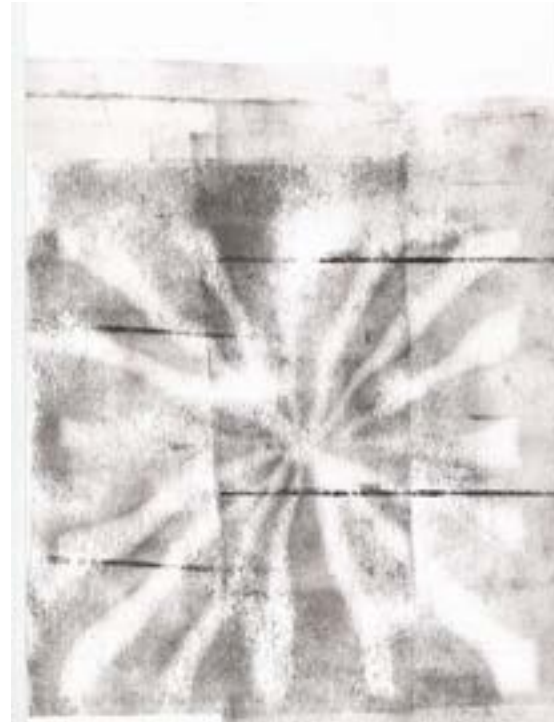
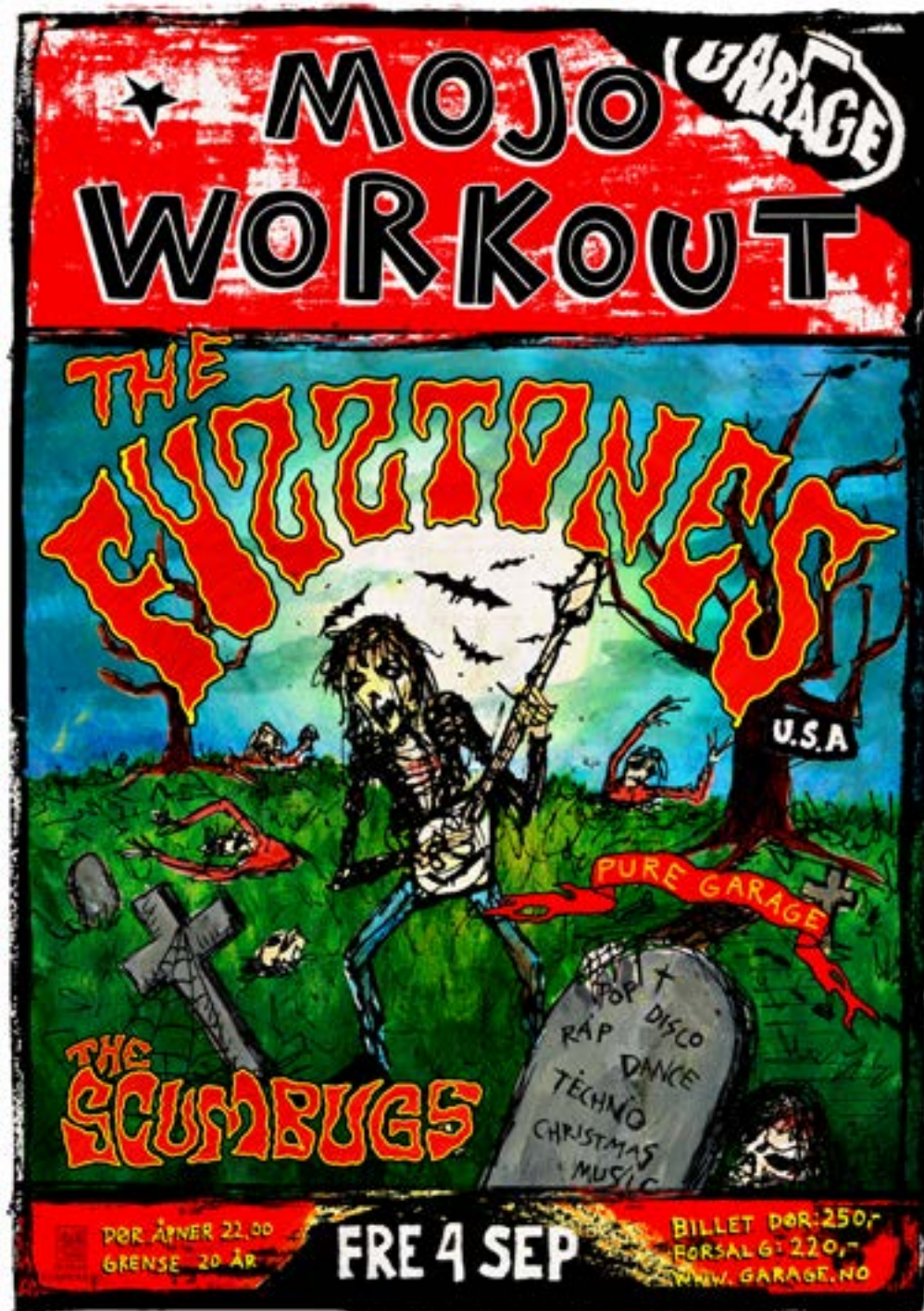
5.2 VISUAL

EXPERIMENTS

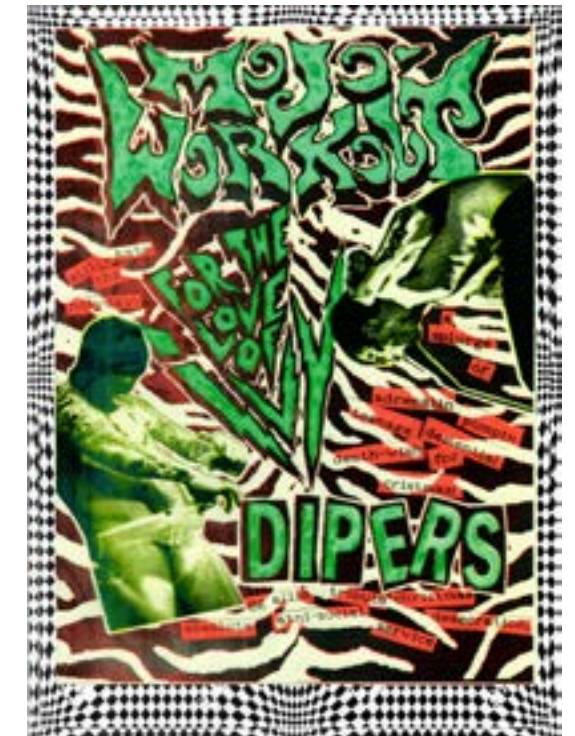
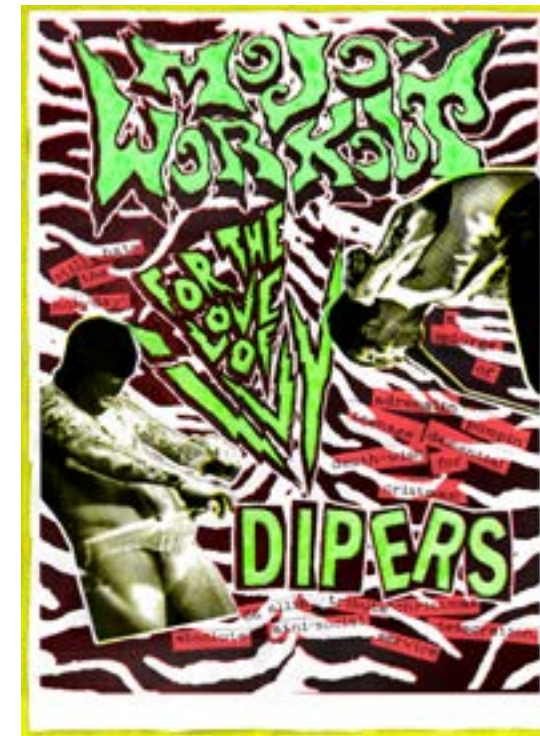
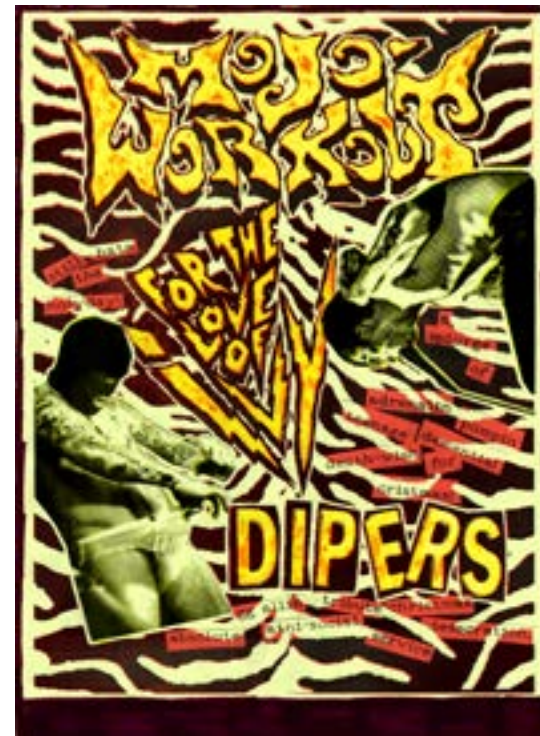
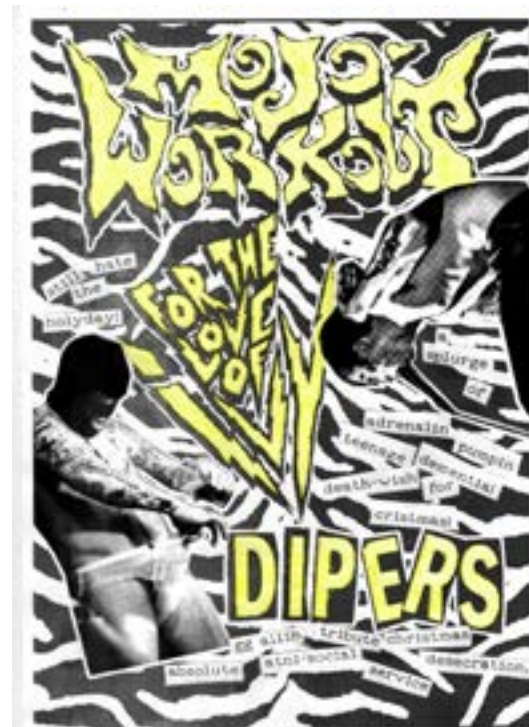
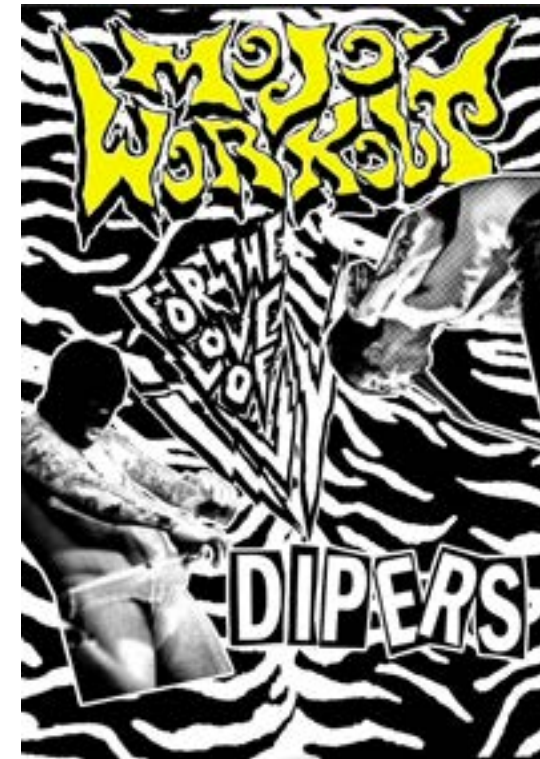
In the visual experimentation phase I tested out a variety of analogue techniques. I explored different drawing styles, different drawing tools and also collected some interesting textures with the use of DIY printing techniques.



In this phase the focus was on testing techniques outside of my comfort zone. While the printing techniques gave good results and proved to be useful, I didn't feel that the drawing resonated with my design strategy

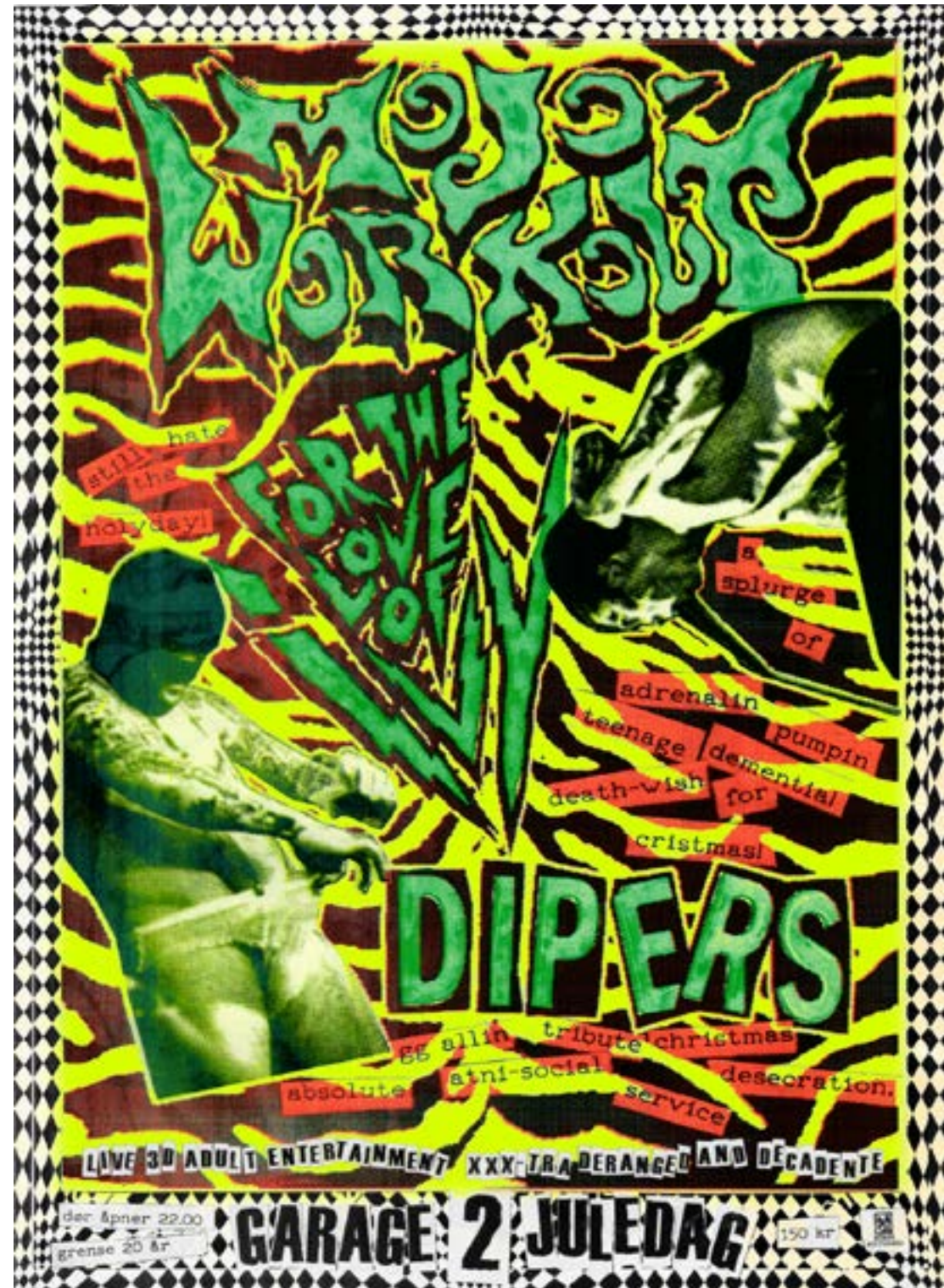


A mix between collage, printing and drawing inspired a more interesting process. That provided a highly needed variety in technique and also brought a more chaotic and eclectic expression to the design.



This project gave me the opportunity to explore risograph printing. This was a new technique to me, and that presented a challenge, but I was positively surprised by the aesthetic qualities. My design strategy

encourages a hands on approach and also to challenge yourself, be carefree and spontaneous. While working with this project I decided that the risograph printing would be the technique used for my end result.



5.3

DESIGN

SKETCHES

While working with the research for the cultural analysis I decided to present the content in a style that resonated with my theories on Rock & Roll design. This was early in the process, but it gave me a good opportunity to explore relevant techniques and aesthetics for my end result.





else, which
ing a punk
ralising.
rbulent 60s
band. Play
conservative but still pointing
America could in itself be a strong
vy harassment
ocal community.
ene in the 60s.
e forces were
Involved in the
n might be the
front man thrown
tical statement to
sex, drugs and rock
ason was indefinite-
hospital, a mar-
riminally insane.
ected to forced
d spent his days and
wn on Therasine in
and rapists who were
mal prison. In the book
rumpnd gives an elab-
y's band, The 13th Floor
band commonly credit-
chedelle rock, and the
ed to both the band and

Jumping back to my own personal experience, my obsession with 60s garage eventually gener- ated a strong passion for many related genres and especially the most formative genres with- in rock and roll like 50s R'n'B, surf, beat and instro-rock which inspired the whole garage scene in the first place. Even though it's a far- step from 70s punk to 50s r'n'b, I think my trav- el back in time has been a natural progression in the search for the roots and origins of that essence that captured my interest in punk music in the first place. I believe this ring true for a lot of garage-heads. If you enjoy the ener- gy, passion and unsophisticated rawness of the 77 generation of punk and onwards, it's likely you'll want to investigate its origin, and you'll

end up on a trace leading back to the 60s in the aftermath of the violent birth of rock and roll. That will open up a door to the world where these essential traits were in their prime stage of development and at their purest and most original, but at the same time at their most spontaneous and unpredictable. If my assump- tions are true, as a generalising conclusion, one could say that the typical garage fanatic is a punk with an obsession for the roots and or- igins of the genre, a punk who identifies with the pioneering stages and lack interest in the later development. In many ways the garage fa- natic is a punk without the stigma and clichés associated with the 70s and beyond, stuck in a different time, dropped out and left behind.



The Clash, The Wailers, The Ednices and The Monks. The Fuzztones and The Mummies are also included in the book. The book is available in paperback and hardcover. The book is available in paperback and hardcover. The book is available in paperback and hardcover.

NOBODY SPOIL MY FUN

Earlier I talked about garage rock originally being part of a controversial counter culture, more or less in war with society at the time. Even though this is true, the music itself did not target politics anywhere near what other genres like the folk revival or hippie movement did. Playing in a rock and roll band in the 60s could be seen as a statement in itself, yes, but in garage rock the lyrics are, with very few exceptions, entirely apolitical. For teens and young adults playing in garage bands the biggest motivation for being a musician probably boiled down to personal taste and preferences: what they thought was cool and fun, plus an extreme distaste for anything getting in their way of pursuing this. In effect their movement became a riot against the social norms and values of the conservative forces, and they attacked it by total escapism, taking no part in the "real" world.

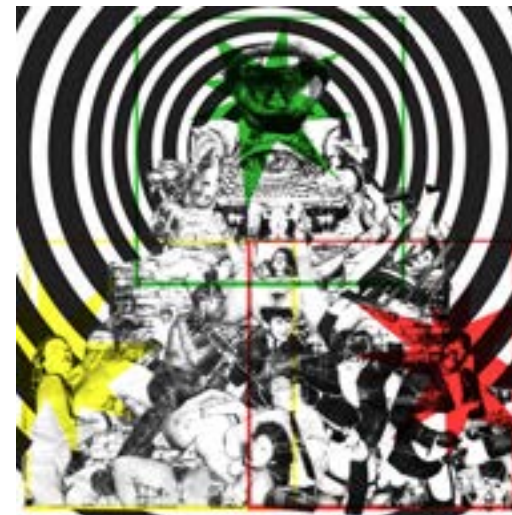
no-counts. The rock and roll teens would take pride in disconnecting from the serious world, and become outsiders, fuelling their escapist soundtrack with the anger and frustration caused by those harassing and pressuring them to participate. They wanted entertainment and rock and roll provided the perfect valve that could release the pressure of everyday issues. One of the more successful garage bands "The Seeds" provides us with a great example of this attitude in the tune "Nobody Spoil my Fun" of their self-titled debut LP from '66. The lyrics are just as simple and unintellectual as you can get: find a girl, run away, dance all night, have sex and nothing can stop us. It's a total escapist pathos, and it neatly sums up one of rock and roll's most important motivations: to get away from it all through doing what you enjoy. Utopian? Perhaps. But why shouldn't an escapist art form be flooded with a utopian undercurrent? Within the garage rock subculture rock and roll is seen as an escape from reality. Intellectual or politics have no place here. It's just about fun. You can be angry, but don't drag

don't blatantly express them. Garage rock lyrics generally appeals more to emotions and instinct rather than cognitive thought. And the simple messages are often universal just because of that. Even if the social circumstances were totally different in Detroit in 1965 I can still totally relate to a song like "City of People" by "The Illusions" with simple lyrics like: "if they vanna laugh and stare / go ahead cause I don't care" and "you know you can never bring me down". It's not because I think it's such a great lyric, it's because it speaks a pure universal language. You want and if you embrace it. That's why it's universal.

fit in or can't find comfort in the society or popular culture. The bands were hated and harassed. The message also generates a sense of the boundaries of time. It's a garage rock to know that it's fuelled the band's lust for excitement, and looking elsewhere gives them even more interest in that within rock and roll there has been a more suitable destination than the 1960s, the



5.4 EXAMPLE OF DESIGN PROCESS

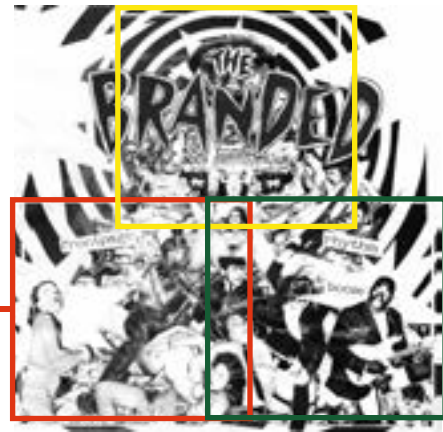




cock-eyed graphics



Two examples of posters including the graphics for a series of three 7" record covers. The Branded, Beluga Records, 2016.



THE BRANDED



COCKE

BRANDS



rabble

deranged

Rock

&

rousing

delinquent

Roll

untamed

shameless

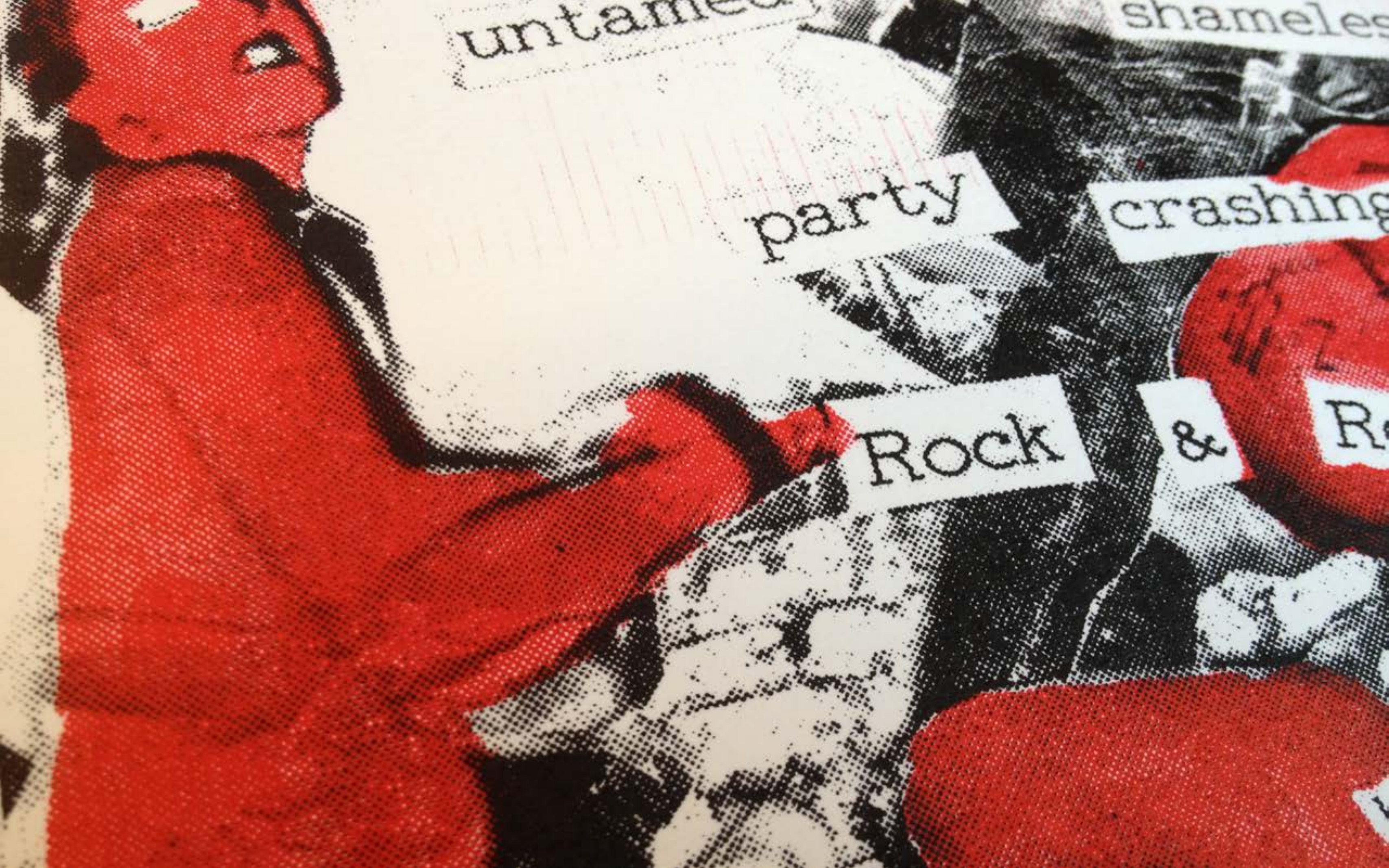
party

crashing

Rock

&

Re



THE BRANDED

frontpage

news

rhythm

&

booze

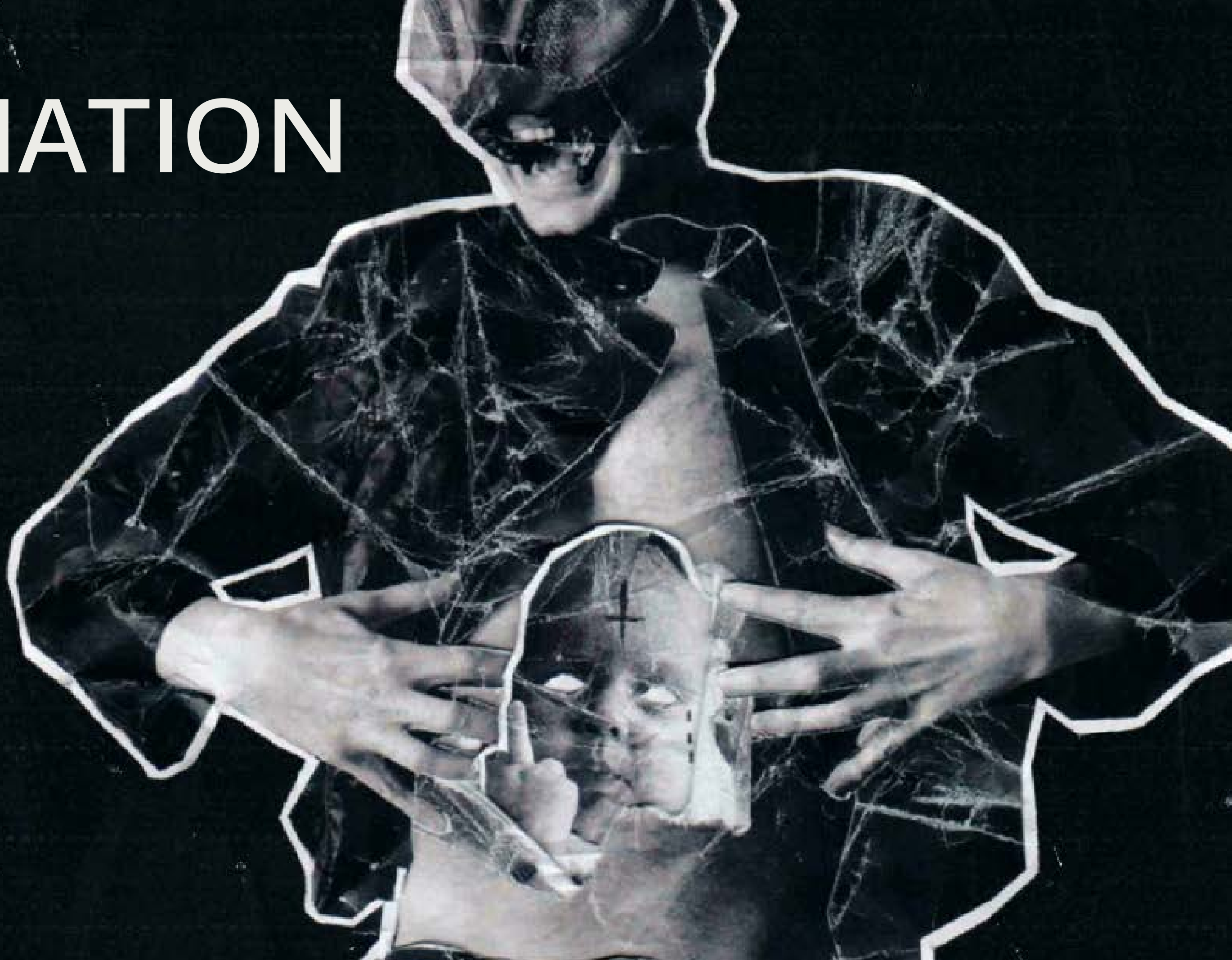


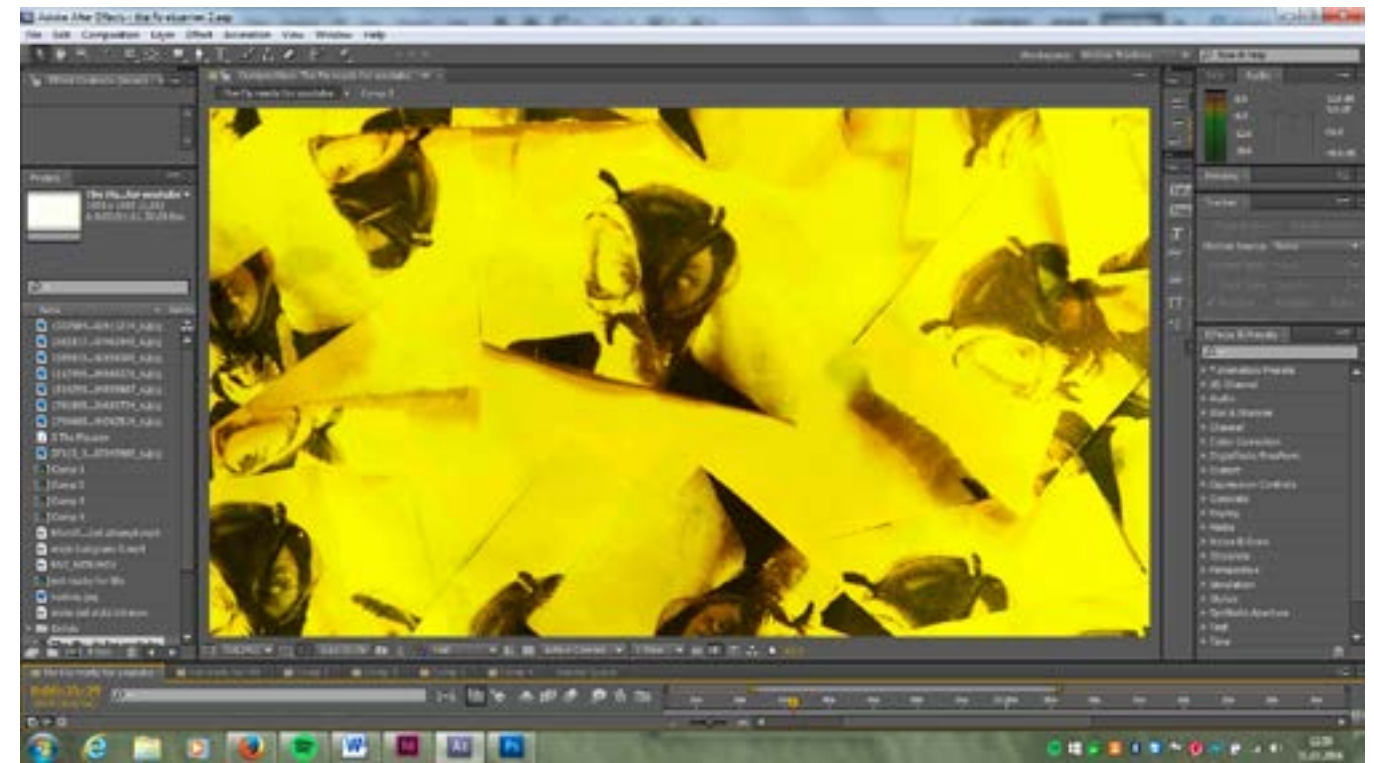
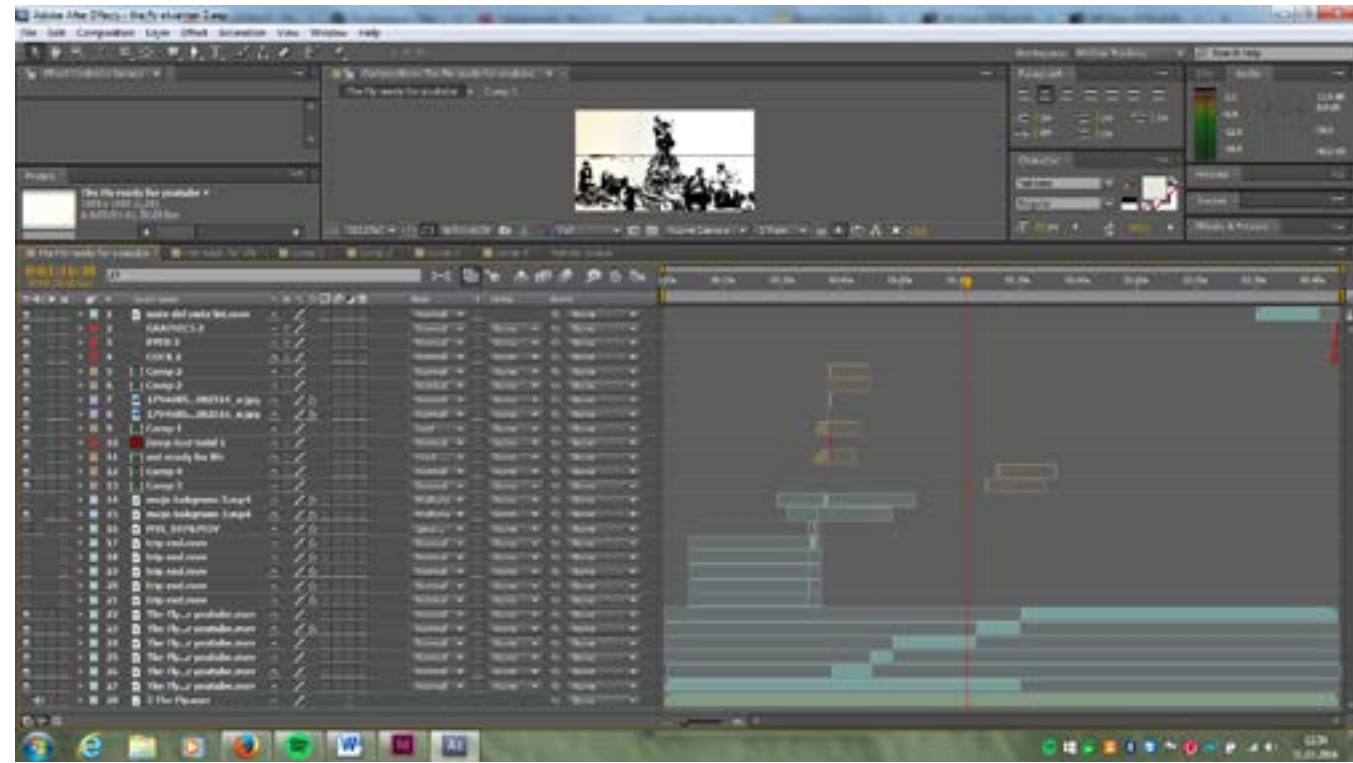
5.5

EXAMPLE OF

ANIMATION

PROCESS









STOP MOTION





click picture to play video



In this clip my theories and design strategy are applied to video and motion graphics. This media is not my field of expertise, but in compliance with my design strategy, I challenge myself, trust my own taste and capability to express myself artistically without being restricted by lack of technical abilities. While making the video I experimented and after a while found my own way to work intuitively within this media as well. It turned out to be a very interesting and satisfying process.

5.6
 SOME MORE
ARTEFACTS
 MADE DURING THE PROCESS



The Scumbugs promotional material and LP, Screamin Apple Records, 2015.

5.7

REFLECTION 2

I've experienced this process as truly engaging, interesting and rewarding. It has been challenging, but I have stayed persistent and positive, and fortunately that has paid off. There have been a lot of realizations, and they have typically surfaced almost subconsciously along the way. My understanding of the culture and art-form has grown progressively throughout the process. When I re-visit the early phases of the project it's evident how huge the progress has been. When I started out I had absolutely no idea of what direction this project would take. Defining the essence of a whole subculture and artistic tradition seemed like an immense challenge. Translating this essence into visual expressions was just too abstract to wrap my head around, and even though my thesis problem was formulated very early in the process, it took a long time to figure out exactly how to

approach it. I can honestly say I've worked extremely hard while developing my theories, and they are based on extensive research, analysis, a lot of subjective interpretations, but also discussions with many people who have a vast subject knowledge. In my opinion, the theories presented in the reflection provide solid answers to the first thesis problem:

"What is the essence of garage?"

While I'm fully aware that these theories are predominantly based on my subjective interpretations of the culture, I have gained confidence in their relevance because of the acknowledgment they get from people within the garage rock community. I'm not uncovering any revolutionary findings in my research. But the theories I present do seem to identify and clarify sever-

al essential aspects of the Rock & Roll culture and mentality that, from my experience, most people within the scene only have a vague, or subliminal, awareness of. Which makes perfect sense, of course, as the attraction to this type of expressions are driven by emotions more than anything else. This awareness has had a huge impact on the way I work and express myself artistically within the genre.

All my theories of the Rock & Roll mentality have been absolutely crucial to the practical parts of my project where I have focused on developing the design strategy and also my own distinct Rock & Roll design style. I have performed visual experiments while developing the theories and purposefully applied the theories to my practical work throughout the process. According to my theories, a personal charac-

teristic in your artwork is absolutely crucial to Rock & Roll art and design. The ideology of the culture suggests that everyone has something to offer and everyone should participate. Diversity and individuality are core values within the culture. At the same time, the whole subculture is built around a shared passion for a certain type of aesthetics, so it was important to find a balance between a conservative and radical approach. Last but not least, I also had to trust my own taste and, in compliance with my design strategy, go with the expressions and aesthetics I felt excited and enthusiastic about. People with a limited knowledge of the artistic expressions within this culture might perceive my work as quite conservative in regards to the existing artwork seen in the genre. And I agree to a certain extent. But my intention with this work was not to merely challenge the artistic tradition and

aesthetic principles of the genre. My goal was first of all to develop a style that resonated with my definition of the Rock & Roll mentality. Secondly I wanted to highlight the aspects I found to be crucial within the artistic tradition. Besides from that I certainly wanted it to have a broad appeal within the community, but without simply relying on the replication of already existing artistic expressions. According to those criteria, I conclude that I have provided good answers to the second problem of my thesis:

“how can this essence be translated into visual expressions?”

To support this claim I would like to add that many of the artefacts I have developed during this project have already been displayed publicly and have received a very positive response

in the garage rock community. The response to both my graphic design and my work with motion graphics implies that I have found a balance where it stands out as “fresh” and “different” while still staying true to the original ideals. In other words, it suggests that my definition of the essence of garage, and my strategy to express this essence, makes sense.

This project has left me with a considerable expertise on the Rock & Roll phenomenon, that has given me a solid confidence in my ability to communicate the essence of this phenomenon visually. That concludes the first part of my project, the next step is to encourage others to gain that same confidence. Because this project was about more than just challenging myself. It was also about challenging others, and inspiring them to take part.

END RESULT

MANIFEST

In agreement with the Rock & Roll ethos, I want to inspire others to engage creatively in the Rock & Roll artistic tradition. As explained in the beginning of the thesis my motivation for this project is deeply rooted in my passion for the subject. That passion multiplies when it's shared. It was always my intention to share my findings and my hope that this project would benefit others. I could have chosen to simply promote and share my entire thesis. I could also have created a design manual and simply shown my process. But I have concluded the best way to express my ideas is by shaping the end product as a form of "manifesto". The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a manifesto as:

"A written statement that describes the policies, goals, and opinions of a person or group."

("Definition Of MANIFESTO" 2016)

That definition resonates well with my end product because it implies that the content addresses something more than simply the aesthetic principles. It also indicates that this is a subjective statement and that the theories and strategies presented are based on my opinions. But, since the Rock & Roll culture is an enormous movement, and the concept of Rock & Roll have such diverse connotations in the different branches of the Rock & Roll family tree, I didn't want to simply present "THE" Rock & Roll manifesto. That could imply that this represents the opinions of the entire culture and declare the absolute truth. It would definitely add an authoritarian character to the product. And I didn't want that. First of all, instead of just addressing the product as A "manifesto", I chose to present the word as just the title of the work with an added subtitle reading: (an inspirational guide

on) how to Rock & Roll your artwork. I also added a caption on the top saying: "This trash is tasteless, add ten tons of bad flavour" that gave associations to a cook-book, while at the same time playing on the Rock & Roll tradition of producing art considered amateur, useless and filthy by the masses. Next I removed the "o" from the end of "manifesto", giving the word a different meaning while still keeping the associations to a manifesto. Manifest has a different, but just as appropriate, meaning. As a an adjective it means something that is clear, distinct and obvious to the eye. As a verb it means to display or demonstrate. Both meanings resonate well with what I'm trying to achieve with this product, which is to display and demonstrate the essence of Rock & Roll, and present a strategy to translate that essence into something that is clear and obvious to the eye.

The contents of the “manifesto” will be predominantly based on the reflection and design strategy chapters of the thesis. But the entire product will be designed according to the same principles and strategies that are presented in the contents of the “manifesto” itself. At this point the product is still under construction. The risograph printing is scheduled in the next few weeks before the exhibition. The re-make of the design-strategy chapter is also yet to be produced.





Photo's from the design process.

GET ALL THE KICKS YOU CAN

The Rock & Roll mentality is driven by the craving for thrills and kicks. That's the idea. Stimulate the release of adrenaline and dopamine in whatever way you can.

In its pursuit from the purpose of Rock & Roll is to deliver a NEURAL BUZZ and spin the receiver out of control. The most effective way to do this is by targeting the emotions directly without delay of rational thought.

Adolescent behaviour and cognition

The teenage wiring of the brain is perfect for this kind of stimuli, it is naturally triggered to emphasize instinct over intellect. During the adolescent years hormones and emotions are out of control and hyper active. But the part of the brain that deals with rational thought is not yet fully developed.

This can turn the teenager into a thrill-seeking, boozecrazing beast who seeks instant gratification with little to no thought of the consequence.

PASSION VS. RATIONALITY

This conflict presents a classic dilemma that dates all the way back to ancient Greece

This Rock & Roll ideal resonates very well with the God Dionysius in Greek mythology. He represents the impulsive, ecstatic, orgiastic, creative, frenzied, intoxicated and undisciplined. He is the personification of passion without rationality. His counterpart Apollo, represents all the opposite values. The parallel to youth vs adult behaviour is obvious.

| Dionysian | Apolonian |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Feeling | Thinking |
| Passion | Self-controlled |
| Instinct, Irrational | Rational, logical |
| Chaos | Harmony |
| Excite | Restrain |

While most humans can relate to traits from both of these characters, Rock & Roll does not. It is built on Dionysian traits only.

It represents the chaos, and worships the wild and outrageous counterpoint to the rational and restrictive adult ideal.

Rock & Roll is based on a hedonistic philosophy, it wants pleasure, thrills and kicks. And anything standing in the way of that is its enemy!

The passion that is essential to Rock & Roll exists in the state of mind where emotions run wild and the rational is blocked out. To access the uninhibited primitive power of Rock & Roll, you must enter this state and keep the gap between rationality and passion at an absolute maximum. Rock & Roll encourages loss of reason and control and wants you to give in to emotions and primal urges.

YOUTH VS. ADULT

This CONFLICT between the adult and youth values is absolutely essential to Rock & Roll. Its whole identity emerges from the tension between rebellious youth and conservative adults. Rock & Roll refuses to "grow up" it refuses to conform, exchange the exciting for the mundane and the passion for rationality.

In Rock & Roll the ADULT world illustrates the SQUARES, those who only honour the complete opposite of YOUTH values. The squares are as far away as you can get from JOY and EXCITEMENT, therefore they don't understand the meaning, or value, of thrills and kicks. They see the rejuvenating power of Rock & Roll as disturbing, regressive, immoral and destructive. And Rock & Roll see them as BOREING.

| Adolescent | Adult |
|----------------|---------------|
| Non-conformity | Conformity |
| Immoral | Righteous |
| Rebellious | Obedient |
| Dislike | Peace |
| Bad | Good |
| Excitement | Serious |
| Primitive | Sophisticated |

| Adolescent | Adult |
|-------------|--------------|
| Freedom | Suppression |
| Joyful | Mundane |
| Exciting | Boring |
| Unusual | Normal |
| Individual | General |
| Imaginative | Serious |
| Radical | Conservative |


AUTONOMY VS. RESPONSIBILITY

The point of teenage rebellion is to question everything, break loose, and construct your identity without the forced influence of the authoritarian norm. You choose your own influences and find your own values, typically outside of the mainstream. This can't be done without neglecting the responsibility of fitting in, adjusting and behaving as expected. If you play by the rules and never act rebellious, responsibility and autonomy will go hand in hand through the adolescent years.

Autonomy vs responsibility

Rock & Roll idolizes the rebellious youth, and seeks to freeze this point in time. Not only because adolescence is the biological prime time of life, and the emotional peak, but it is also the time when a window, that offers the opportunity of TOTAL FREEDOM appears. This window of opportunity opens when the adolescent obtains a high amount of autonomy WITHOUT the responsibility of an adult. It is the gateway to Rock & Roll's Hedonistic and Dionysian ethos, because it allows the youth to pursue passion, follow instincts and ignore reason, with the least possible consequences.

This is the recipe to end up as a SQUARE. The squares welcome responsibility because it endures their rational and controlled mind-set. The squares do what's expected of them because they never question authorities, laws, norms or traditions. They go with the flow, grow up quick, are obedient and sensible, and therefore never fight to gain autonomy without responsibility. They miss out on the concept of personal freedom and totally fail to recognize the liberating power of Rock & Roll.

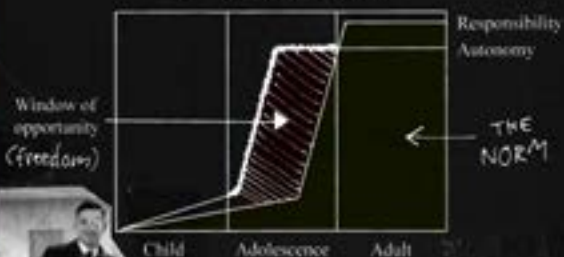


I WILL NOT BE BOOOOORING

It is the mission of Rock & Roll to give young people the tools and confidence to break the window of opportunity open and tell them it's ok and good to deviate from the norm if you want to. Rock and Roll is a platform for all the misfits, those who can't, or choose not to, adjust.

The mission of the norm is to keep the rebels under control and force them to conform into predictable obedient adults. A lot of the time the responsibility and pressure from the norm becomes too much, and the passion from the rebellious youth burns out. They end up seeing the adolescent years as a strange phase they went through that is separated from their ordinary and traditional adult life.

Autonomy vs responsibility



Responsibility
Autonomy

Window of opportunity (freedom)

Child Adolescence Adult

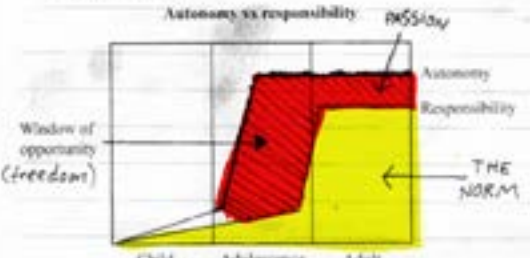
THE NORM

In this case boredom wins. The passion burns out, and as adults they are now out of reach from the power of Rock & Roll. To preserve this youthful passion in adult life one must always keep this window open, find a good balance with a healthy distance to the norm. This window is the emergency exit from the slow death of being stuck in traffic on the high-way of utter boredom. Rock & Roll will keep you young at heart, radical, adventurous, joyful and creative, as long as you choose not to conform.

FIND THE RIGHT BALANCE

After adolescence the social pressure from the norm really starts to increase. And it becomes a greater challenge to keep the passion alive. Rock & Roll should always aim to keep that youthful passion alive, and stimulate a sense of freedom.

Autonomy vs responsibility





Window of opportunity (freedom)

Autonomy
Responsibility

Child Adolescence Adult

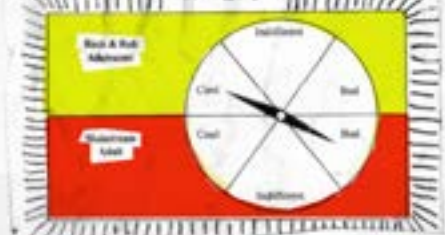
THE NORM

Therefore "grown up" Rock & Roll **CANNOT EXIST!** Responsible, sophisticated, intellectual Rock & Roll is impossible. This will appeal only to the SQUARES, and people whose youthful joy has burnt out. These are the ones who suffocate the Rock & Roll spirit. Domesticated, harmless, calculated Rock & Roll would not only fail to give thrills and kicks, but it would also do NOTHING to help break and keep the window open!

True Rock & Roll must distance or alienate itself from the rational, responsible and restrictive norm, because it should always function as an escape from the serious and mundane "grown up" life.

ENTER THE LAW OF OPPOSING TASTE




The law of opposing taste is also based on the separation between the "youth" and the "adult" world. Dionysian vs Apollonian, rebel vs the norm etc. It suggests that Rock & Roll aesthetics should not only appeal to, and unite, the people within the culture, but also distinguish it from the opposition.

The aesthetics should be used to separate the COOL from the SQUARES. In this way Rock & Roll becomes an artistic platform for all kinds of expressions outside of the norms, because what provokes the squares, makes a clear statement in support of personal freedom, individuality and anti-conformity.

The reaction to the provocation is of course always dependent on the social climate and tolerance of the norm. If excitement through tension and confrontation was a point, the 50s and 60s Rock & Roll had the ultimate enemy in white, middle class, conservative, Christian America. They despised the Dionysian values, wanted control, and fought against everything that provided the youth with thrills, kicks and personal freedom. Rebellion was **SERIOUS** because it meant confronting the powerful oppressive elite that used authority to enforce strict morals and values in total conflict with Rock & Roll.

Social climate 1950s and 1960s

Rock & Roll: Punk action and provocative reactions



Rock & Roll Punk

Action

Liberty/love (indifference)

Rebellion

Conservative Christian

Reaction

Long hair


Sexual deviance

Admitted to hell

After the terrible "adult music years" of the late 60s and early 70s, Rock & Roll re-emerged with the 77 Punk generation. Punk rediscovered the rebellious youth values of Rock & Roll, but faced with a more liberal society, it exaggerated everything to the extreme. Hedonism became nihilism, rebellion became violence, and the ethos of personal freedom through a break with the norm, turned into a total rejection of society as a whole. The same method of exaggeration was of course also applied to both the musical and visual aesthetics.

Social climate 1970s and 1980s

Rock & Roll: Punk action and provocative reactions



Rock & Roll - Punk

Action

Sexual rage

Long hair

Nihilism

Conservative adult

Reaction

Prison

Pleasure

The liberal society forced Punk out in the extremes in order to provide a reaction and trigger tension between the youth and adult world. It's a strategy that can actually limit the artistic expressions, because it suggests that the reactions are more important than the actions. While it succeeded in expanding the liberal zone in society even more, it ended up in a place with a lot less room for fun. Punk wanted to be dangerous and for rebellion to be taken serious. It focused too much on the thrills and forgot about the kicks. Rock & Roll rebellion should signal nonconformity, but also practice hedonism mixed with wit, humor and pure joy.

1000 COOL VS SQUARES

The basic values of Rock & Roll still apply, and "the law of opposing taste" still separates the cool from the squares, even if the squares have become more tolerant. In a liberal society there's a different quest for personal freedom, with less need of provocation. There's plenty of ways to signify a break with the norm, generate excitement, escape boredom and encourage personal freedom without a huge hostile authoritative opposition in society. Rock & Roll operates on the same values it always has. They might be the complete contradiction to conservative Christian 50s America, but it doesn't make them irrelevant today. The actions by far outweigh the reactions.

Degree of provocation in a liberal society

Rock & Roll

Action

Sexual rage and rage

Childish

Stupid

Mean

Disrespectful

Evil


The norm

Reaction

Rock & Roll encourage you to do what you want, be yourself, lose control, set on instinct, have fun, and challenge the true, traditions, morals, norms, rules and conventions that get in your way. The current social climate in the west clears plenty of room to explore all kinds of old and new expressions outside of the mainstream-culture and adult conservative world. Rock & Roll is a folk tradition for the sick, primitive, teens of all ages, it's the most powerful art-form in the world, and it will never change.

THE HOLY TRINITY OF ROCK & ROLL

THE TRINITY



TEEN AGE!

ROCK & ROLL

PRIMITIVE

SICK!

Stay teenage

Stay Primitive

Stay Sick

Seek thrills & kicks, danger and fun, bypass boredom, live fast!

Act on instinct, be passionate and fun, reject intellect, live wild!

Break free, never conform, be strange, Boycott the norm, live weird!

CONCLUSION

My ultimate goal with this “manifesto” is to help others gain the confidence to be creative and expressive by use of the Rock & Roll artistic approach, and through that find their own “voice” within this artistic tradition. I want my theories and strategy to be open for interpretations, so instead of providing a detailed step by step guide on how I choose to communicate Rock & Roll, I try to encourage the reader to find their own style. It is therefore the main idea to introduce the reader to the Rock & Roll mentality, and allow them to interpret this artistically, in their own way. My design strategy is provided to help get the ball rolling. It does of course suggest a few technical and creative approaches, but in my opinion it comes across as a lot more inspirational than instructional. And that is the point. The key element to any artistry is creativity, and that is inseparable from motivation and

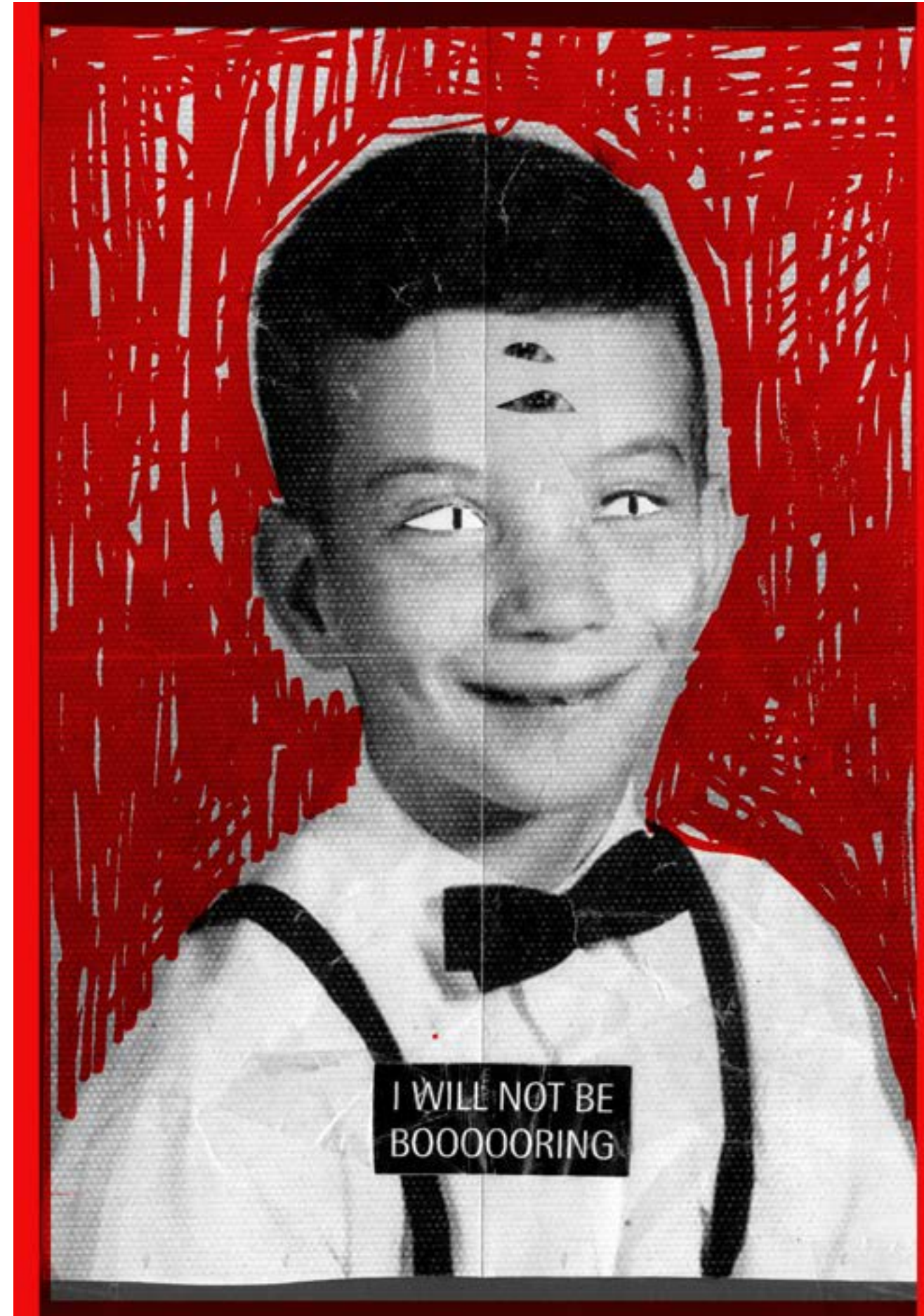
inspiration. I think the key to that motivation is to stimulate a relaxed and carefree approach to how Rock & Roll can be expressed. The way I have designed the “manifesto” is more than enough example of how I express Rock & Roll in MY artwork. There is no point in addressing this any further. If the reader likes my style, he/she should just steal and borrow whatever they want in the same way they should steal and borrow from anything or anyone else that inspire them.

In my opinion the Rock & Roll art-form is dependent on a symbiotic relationship between old and new. While it is absolutely crucial to the whole tradition that some parts of the culture stay conservative and keep watering the roots of the tree, it is equally important for the culture to foster creative pioneers that dare to be radical and challenge the aesthetic principles within

the genre. This is often what makes something interesting in retrospect, which is in fact the true sign of quality in art. And yes, I do define these designed artefacts as art, because they do not simply serve a functional purpose. Within this culture they are appreciated for their artistry, style and emotional power as well. And the life of the artefacts continue after they have served their practical purpose. If the Rock & Roll mentality is fully understood, I don't see a problem with challenging the aesthetic principles. I have introduced my theories to a lot of people during the project, both designers, musicians and people with no relation to the Rock & Roll culture. The response has been consistent. And even if the people with creative backgrounds, and association to the Rock & Roll culture are typically more enthusiastic, the general feedback is a sense of realization and they agree that it makes

sense. This produces a clearer idea of what Rock & Roll actually is about. I sincerely hope that this realization can be of as much inspiration to others as it has been to me. If it is, I see a great possibility of my project achieving the desired effect and fulfilling its potential.

To me personally this whole project has been a major source of inspiration, and I'm looking forward to getting started with new projects where I can apply the knowledge obtained throughout this process. My passion for Rock & Roll and its artistic tradition remains the same, but now I also feel a strong urge to test my theories and strategy in a more radical artistic context. I have no idea what's around the next corner yet, but I'm already excited. But one thing is for sure, whatever it is, it's NOT going to be boring.



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