

Writing Zines, Playing Music, and Being a Black Punk Feminist: An Interview with Osa Atoe

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This interview with Osa Atoe delves into her thoughts on the massive questions around punk, race, and feminism. Atoe discusses her fanzine *Shotgun Seamstress* and her experiences in various punk scenes in the U.S. The “feel” of the interview concerns punk magazine aesthetics and academic ecology.

Keywords: punk; feminism; race; racism; class; music; zines; festivals; community

Since 2006, Osa Atoe has turned out six issues of her zine *Shotgun Seamstress*; issue six was in the *Maximum Rockroll* zine top 10 (no. 344, January 2012). In addition to punk rock, the *Shotgun Seamstress* zine series covers the topics of Money, Outsider Art, D.I.Y., Hair, and Traveling, among others. The main focus of Atoe’s zine is, of course, Music, Art, and Performance, and she includes numerous reviews, comics, and articles written by herself or other black punks as well as interviews with some of her favorite artists such as ESG, Aye Nako, Poly Styrene, and Purple Rhinestone Eagle. Each *Shotgun Seamstress* issue is available online or in paper form as a limited-edition box set through Portland, OR-based M’Lady Records.

Atoe is a frequent columnist and contributor to *Maximum Rockroll* and is working on a new fanzine, *Hiss & Shake*. She is also a musician, and her bands The New Bloods and Firebrand have several releases available. The New Bloods, an all-female project with many jagged yet fluid layers, have a 7" that is still available through Raw Sugar Records and a full-length record on Kill Rock Stars. Firebrand has a demo tape out on No More Fiction tapes. Although The New Bloods are no longer performing, you can still catch Firebrand.

She spoke about her zine work at the “Meet Me at the Race Riot: People of Color in Zines from 1990 to Today” event that took place at Barnard College on November 17, 2011, organized by the Barnard Zine Library, the POC Zine Project, and For the Birds Collective. After hearing her talk, Fiona Ngô and I decided to include an interview with her in the issue. The interview was constructed over email during the first half of 2012. During this time Atoe was on tour with “Meet Me at the

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Figure 1. Osa Atoe/*Shotgun Seamstress*.

Race Riot,” an ongoing event that includes other POC (People of Color) zinesters, including contributor Mimi Nguyen.

Elizabeth A. Stinson

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Elizabeth Stinson (ES): At the “Meet me at the Race Riot” event last year at Barnard, you revealed that the recent issue #6 of *Shotgun Seamstress* (SS) would be your last release of this particular zine. At the beginning of SS #6, you state that you started by wanting to make a more celebratory zine about being a black punk and

move away from angry, personal zines. And, in the end, you express a personal assertion of that awareness, which you came to through the process of making the six issues of SS. In what ways did this choice and focus provide this transformation?

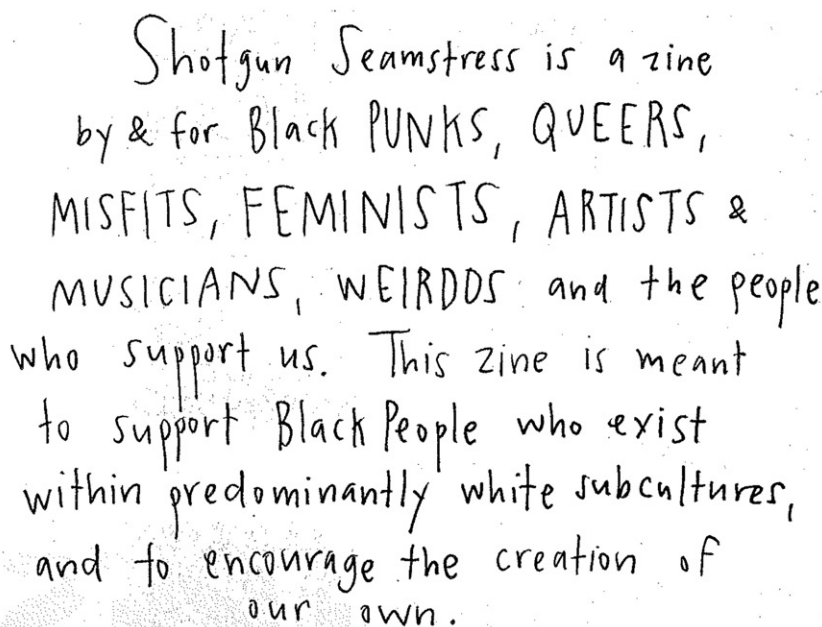
Osa Atoe (OA): Instead of focusing on criticizing or critiquing my peer group, I wanted to provide images and writing that reinforced my own identity as a black, queer, punk musician and also that made D.I.Y. culture and anti-consumerist ideals accessible to other black people. My own identity was strengthened through the process of providing six issues worth of examples of other black queers, feminists, punks, artists, and musicians. Instead of seeing my own identity as some sort of novelty or error, I found comfort, empowerment, and pride through interviewing folks like Kali Boyce, Mick Collins, Rachel Aggs, and many others.

ES: Did you make a shift in your own perception of punk by doing that? How was your identity strengthened as a result of this shift? Was there something more than empowerment, pride, and comfort? The discomfort is still there and there are still claims of being anti-racist, but you reached out to other black punks. Through this shift did you find other punk ways to counter those hypocritical claims? I mean, it's obvious to me that the anti-racist claims of those punk peers were not so punk after all; your zine did demonstrate this even though that was not your intention.

OA: I will say that making *Shotgun Seamstress* put me in touch with more black punks than I would have met if I hadn't made the zine. I don't think I found a "new punk identity" through making the SS zine. Like I said previously, I made the zine to reinforce an already established identity, not to form a new one. And I definitely wasn't trying to counter those hypocritical anti-racist claims. The point of making that zine wasn't to have more dialogue with white people. The point was to put all of the emphasis and attention on black punks; not to continue arguing with or criticizing white people. The whole point of the zine was to quit thinking about what white people think about because I don't care. If my perception of punk has changed at all, it's due to moving all around the country, not to making that zine.

ES: How would you find sources for your zine? Do you think of yourself as an archivist? In your opinion, what does archiving do?

OA: No, I don't consider myself an archivist, nor a collector. I make a fanzine so I cover stuff that I am a fan of. I've loved the Gories for years, so I interviewed Mick Collins. I've been a Void fan for years, so I wrote a little piece on Bubba Dupree. As soon as I heard Trash Kit, I knew I wanted to find them and interview them, and so on. It's all very natural. For images, I used the hell out of this book called *Banned in DC*, which was a photo-history book of the Washington, DC early 80s hardcore/punk scene made by Cynthia Connolly, Sharon Cheslow, and Leslie Clague. I used images from the Internet and from library books, too. Also, the article "Black Punk Time: Blacks in Punk, New Wave and Hardcore 1976–1984" has been invaluable. I'm not really into the idea of archiving, although I'm sure it's a great thing for some. I am actually embarrassed by how many records I have and I'm always trying to get rid of the ones I haven't listened to in a while. I'm embarrassed by how much I love them. In my opinion, it's more important to just enjoy art than to aspire to own it.



Shotgun Seamstress is a zine
by & for Black PUNKS, QUEERS,
MISFITS, FEMINISTS, ARTISTS &
MUSICIANS, WEIRDDS and the people
who support us. This zine is meant
to support Black People who exist
within predominantly white subcultures,
and to encourage the creation of
our own.

Figure 2. Atoe from SS #2.

ES: “Black punk time” is an invaluable resource; at least someone is archiving. I think you do a little of it. There is totally a distinction between fanzines and archives, but I think (fan)zines can behave like archives at times – documenting a time, a scene, numerous sites and sources, etc. You too have compiled invaluable material about black punk.

OA: Okay, so the term archivist instantly made me think of grabby little “punk” Internet shoppers that need to have every little limited edition, out-of-print piece of punk paraphernalia. If you want to see me as an archivist, that’s fine and I’m not offended, but for the record this is what Wikipedia says an archivist is: an archivist is a professional who assesses, collects, organizes, preserves, maintains control over, and provides access to information determined to have long-term value... And I have to say that I maybe only relate to a quarter of that definition.

ES: What’s the story behind the title?

OA: The title *Shotgun Seamstress* came from my mom. When I sew, I usually do a pretty quick, shoddy job and so my mom called me a shotgun seamstress. When I told her that the name of my zine came from her, she had no recollection of ever calling me that.

ES: Do you consider yourself a feminist? How is feminism defined for you and lived?

OA: Hell, yes. I guess at this point, feminism is just another term for social justice to me. It's most commonly defined as a movement that advocates equal rights for women, but it's so much more than that. I wrote a column called "Feminist Power" for *Maximum Rocknroll* last year that defines more thoroughly my ideas about what feminism means exactly. It's a couple of pages long – I don't think I have the space here to be that thorough. Also, my politics are anti-consumerist and anti-capitalist in their very foundation. How is this lived for me? As I get older, it gets harder and harder to explain it because it's become second nature. I live communally, I have deep platonic, romantic, and artistic relationships with women, I am constantly aware of how capitalistic ways of thinking and behaving are present in everyday life and I try my best to steer clear of that. Honestly, you asked too big of a question!

ES: I know, being a feminist is immense! I suppose the self-conscious reflection is as well, but since this is a punk issue in an academic feminist journal I thought I'd dive right in to how they might speak to one another. In your experience, are they one and the same? In that column "Feminist Power" you are responding to *Venus* magazine's new *post-feminism* approach and mentioned that you read Amy Allen's book on feminism and talked about the relation between power and skill-sharing – "fostering growth" rather than submission. I wonder if post-like responses like *Venus*'s are simply removing that fostering aspect altogether because it's too much "work"?

OA: It is my assumption that the creators of magazines such as *Venus* do not define feminism as a redefinition of power. I assume that they think of feminism in the second-wave sense of women being seen as equal to men in society. I wrote that article so that people, especially young people, have a piece of writing to refer to that describes feminism in a more nuanced way that is also still practical and accessible. My feminism doesn't use the traditional male role as the standard to which we should aspire. I don't care to see more women falling into traditionally male roles. I mean, it's fine when that happens, but that's not the point. The point is to "subvert the dominant paradigm." (Did hippies invent that phrase?) Marginalized groups in society always make the error of thinking that liberation from oppression comes through mimicking the values and activities of white, male, heterosexual, middle, and upper-class America. I disagree. I think that there needs to be a new standard based on anti-materialism and mutual aid. Those are concepts that actually liberate people.

ES: And by living communally, do you mean in a group house with a name and all?

OA: Yes, group house, but no name.

ES: So then, how do you actually define punk? Is it just aesthetics? Do you agree with Chris Sutton (from SS #2) that punk is "black music played fast"? What draws you (in)to it? You mention many of the art and political aspects of punk in your zines, but how does a punk contribution move away from mass consumption of art and education that you critique in issues three and four? What keeps the "critical rebellion" approach active, as Don Letts implies in issue two? How might the "black radical tradition" collide with punk? And what annoys you about punk's narratives and histories? In your *MRR* column in issue two you talk about the subtle racism and disturbing ways other punks around town mistake you for Brontez or Jamilah;

i'm not trying to start a dialogue. i'm just calling you out on your hypocrisy because i'm sick of it. the same people who think i'm brontez think it's so fucked up that police always use that "you fit the description" bullshit to racially profile people of color. the same people who think i'm brontez participate and benefit from gentrification, live in formerly all-black neighborhoods but manage not to know black people, not even their neighbors. the white punk scene is so self-serving, self-involved and useless to me. you claim to be a white ally, you claim to be anti-racist. if you're operating out of an

overwhelmingly white scene, what does being a white ally mean? everything you do only benefits other white folks, particularly straight white men. every time a group of folks (typically women and queers) try to make any positive changes in the punk scene, we end up addressing a bunch of white dudes who aren't really listening anyway, and who don't really have to change because they're surrounded by other white people all the time who are exactly the same and who support their half-assed politics and fucked up behavior.

i hate putting all this energy into pointing out to white people how they're fucked up. but i also hate the idea of all of you walking around all smug, thinking you're so radical, so punk, so anti-oppressive, so different from every other dominant culture white person with their head up their ass. it's not fucking true! i've been in so many different predominantly white spaces and it's always the same. and no, i don't have any tips on how you can be a better white ally. i don't care if you never figure it out. i'm done..

Figure 3. Atoe from SS #1.

how do you think these and other forms of racism might become incorporated into the histories and narratives told about punk and what gets archived?

OA: I don't define punk, but then again I do. In this article I wrote in SS #5 called "DIY or DIE!" I said this:

Punk is a slightly different beast depending on what country, city or town yr in and even within the same city, there might be several different punk scenes that are more or less separate. As soon as I start saying things like, "This is what punk rock is really about," I know I'm already getting into trouble because no one gets to say what punk is. No one owns it. And in reality, punk rock ranges from Christian punk to radical queer punk; from drunk white boys annihilating each other in a mosh pit to anarcho-feminist reading groups. These characteristics can be found outside of punk rock too, in the lives of activists, artists, hippies and other wingnuts who are not necessarily affiliated with

any “scene” per se. Things like communal living; anti-consumerism; DIY music and art making; feminist, anti-capitalist (including but not limited to socialist & Marxist), anarchist, anti-war, and environmentalist beliefs.

You keep asking big questions, so I’m giving you big answers! No, it’s not just aesthetics. The Blues birthed Rock N Roll and RNR birthed punk, but punk rock is kinda like starting from scratch. It’s a deconstruction. I love a subgenre that some people call “post-punk” or “art punk” because it’s even more of a deconstruction. I’m not sure what draws me to it. So many people I know say “anger” but I’ve never been that kind of pissed off. I think initially, it had to do with the fact that it combines art with politics. I think that if I wasn’t so in love with punk music, I wouldn’t be so in love with punk in general. But also, like I said, before I identified as a punk, I was a teenager reading *Adbusters* and thinking about how rampant and wasteful consumerism ruins everything. So, punk was a way for me to combine good music with good politics. It helped me live a life of integrity but not in a dry, martyr-like way. Punk is fun. I love punk music because it’s so obvious and simple. No frills, no production, no big budgets, low-technology, no pretenses, more emphasis on passionate delivery than technique. Anyone can do it.

You’d have to define what you mean by the “black radical tradition” for me to be able to tell you how and if I think it collides with punk. I think that punks, especially young ones, sometimes assume that D.I.Y. practices were invented by other young white punks when in fact brown folks, poor folks, etc. have been using these techniques out of necessity for years. That’s why I wrote that article about go-go music in Issue #2 to show that black folks have always participated in D.I.Y. music making. Bo Diddley built his own instruments. So did white old-time mountain musicians in the south...

I don’t get very annoyed when I read punk history. I either skip it if I think it’s going to be boring or I get really excited about it because I love punk. In the *Decline of Western Civilization I*, Darby Crash uses the term “wetback” when he’s talking about a Mexican person. Yet, he also formed Germs with a person of color, Pat Smear, who is bi-racial. Do I think Darby Crash hated people of color? No. Did hearing him use that word make me uncomfortable? Yes. Darby Crash is probably one of the most revered figures in punk rock. I can see his genius and I can see his shortcomings. That’s pretty much how I feel about punk history in general. I see the genius and I see the shortcomings. But my approach has always been to take what I need from an ideology or a movement and leave the rest behind. Also, that’s why making my zine was important to me... because I found punks who were black and queer and radical and I didn’t have to have mixed feelings about what they were saying because they were coming from a similar standpoint as me and I largely agreed with them. So in that way, it was my way of not letting white folks define what punk is for me. I got to talk to other black folks about their relationship to punk rock. I got to hear other black folks talk about how formative and important punk rock was for them and it helped me feel comfortable with my own love for punk.

I think the main way that racism is incorporated into punk narratives and punk history is through omission. Like how that new riot grrl book left out the

And this third thing. Let me start by saying that part of the irony of classism is that poor people work like hell. My dad has done shift work/on-and-off night shift for the past 16 years. He works as hard or harder than any doctor or lawyer and ten times harder than a multinational CEO, I can guarantee you that. He doesn't get praise for this, he is tired and he is sick from this. He believes in freedom, he believes in fairness and liberation. But he is not an activist. What I'm saying is that we cannot expect to include working class people in community organizing movements while expecting that people do work for free cuz it's "for the cause" and cuz we "don't believe in capitalism". Not believing in something doesn't stop it from being a reality for those who are directly affected. Working class people don't have time or money and—like everyone else—need to feed families and hold down lives. It is classist to pay people late, to expect people to work for free, to expect people to work free overtime etc. cuz it's "for the revolution". It is not revolutionary to reproduce oppressive patterns by expecting people of colour to have a model minority work ethic and take one for the team. We need to seriously examine what the goals of our movements are and where our movements and communities are exclusionary.

Figure 4. Leah Newbold, "On Class, Punk, Organizing and Anti-affluence Activism" from SS #3.

contributions of so many brown riot girl feminists. That shit is frustrating and unacceptable.

All in all, I see punks as being more open-minded than our mainstream counterparts. I don't like to spend too much time nitpicking about what's fucked up inside punk because as soon as I set my gaze on mainstream society, I am far more horrified. Punk's not perfect, but nothing is. I think we're all doing a pretty good job.

ES: I definitely agree with the omission and the shortcomings of punk genealogy, which is something that continually happens in most historical narratives. Why should this punk manifestation be any different?

Interesting that you say big questions... I'm imagining us sitting on top of a mountain overlooking the ocean way into the horizon talking about whether we believe there is life after death – the BIG questions. Seriously? Maybe my awkward struggle to reconcile graduate school and punk is the culprit.

In the "DIY or DIE!" section of issue #5 you comment on capitalism's role in racism and the poverty and incarceration of black people. I'm not an expert in the "black radical tradition" either, but I know that Cedric Robinson began talking about it in his book, *Black Marxism*, as a combination of black intellectual life and ethical/political resistance through discursive living. I was thinking of your reference to being drawn to the relations of art and politics, along with the race and queerness strands of belonging in punk as a "critical rebellion." I tend to gravitate towards the notion that punk has been around for an extremely long time, that any form of underground or counter expressive and aesthetic form is punk in some way, we just don't hear much about them. Of course, the word "punk" also has numerous meanings that perhaps all lead back to the underdog, perhaps with his tail between his legs, but I mean the one who bites back in some way.

Becoming comfortable with punk is another thing entirely, and it just seems singularly ill-matched to what punk is ostensibly, that one would have to go through an individual process of becoming comfortable with punk. There are those external trappings and situated shortcomings that aim to articulate punk for you.

OA: That is an interesting comment. Yeah, punk isn't about being comfortable and I'm understanding that on a whole new level now that I'm 33 years old. When I first

got into punk, it was an impulse, not a decision. It was something I gravitated toward, related to, and found myself surrounded by accident. It wasn't until later that I had to rethink that impulse. And that didn't have so much to do with punk as a tool, a way of doing things or an aesthetic. I've never had to rethink D.I.Y. I was just dealing with the contradictions of an all-white punk and activist community that also considered itself anti-racist. It felt weird and fake because I was in Portland, Oregon, you know? And then in the midst of that, I got my hands on *Evolution of a Race Riot* zine and other zines by brown punks who were also noticing the contradictions and hypocrisy and were pissed about it. It led me to begin rethinking my own relationship to punk. At some point, I felt pressure to leave punk behind and find a people of color community. I moved to Oakland, California when I was in that phase. I ended up just hanging out with brown punks who were all sick of hanging out with only white people all the time. But I couldn't hack it in Oakland so I came back to Portland and that's when I started making *Shotgun Seamstress*.

ES: In issue #4, in Dymo-label-gun lettering, during an interview with James Spooner, I think it was you that stated, "Honestly at this point I don't know how punk you could call afro-punk." Is this thought due to the corporate sponsorship of the festivals? On your blog, you talk about how you wish it were a scene; is it a scene, as some in N.Y.C say it is? Do you find it to be more of an after-thought in some way or indicative of something more interesting? Do scenes even matter? Did you want to create or contribute to a scene or a community through your zine?

OA: James Spooner said that, not me. And yes, I believe he said that because of the corporate-sponsored festivals, or more specifically because Afro-Punk festivals and the Afro-Punk website are not D.I.Y. phenomena. The shows happen in clubs with security, the websites advertise Afro-Punk products like Vans sneakers with Afro-Punk logos on them and expensive Afro-Punk posters. I just want to say that Afro-Punk is a worthwhile thing and something I myself have benefited from. When I made SS #1, I went on the Afro-Punk message board and announced that I would send a free zine to any Afro-Punk kid who wanted one. Before the creation of such a forum, there would have been no way for me to reach 60 black alterna-culture folks at one time. However, Afro-Punk is not anti-capitalist or D.I.Y. in its foundation and that is sad to me. Black folks don't need another product to buy; we need personal, economic, and artistic liberation.

Scenes matter. Community matters. *Shotgun Seamstress* was an attempt to create community but in a non-geographical kind of way. Black punks will never have the numbers to form a tangible real-life scene . . . Although I heard from a friend of mine living outside of Chicago that they recently had a show where almost 20 black kids showed up and moshed their hearts out . . . That's something I've never seen with my own eyes. My black punk community is international. I write letters and e-mails and share two-hour-long phone calls with black punks in California, Illinois, Michigan, Quebec, London, and beyond. That's how badly we need each other and how much we love each other. *Shotgun Seamstress* helped to make this happen, and so did Adele Roberson's zine *Finger on the Trigger*, and so did zines by Lauren Martin, Bianca

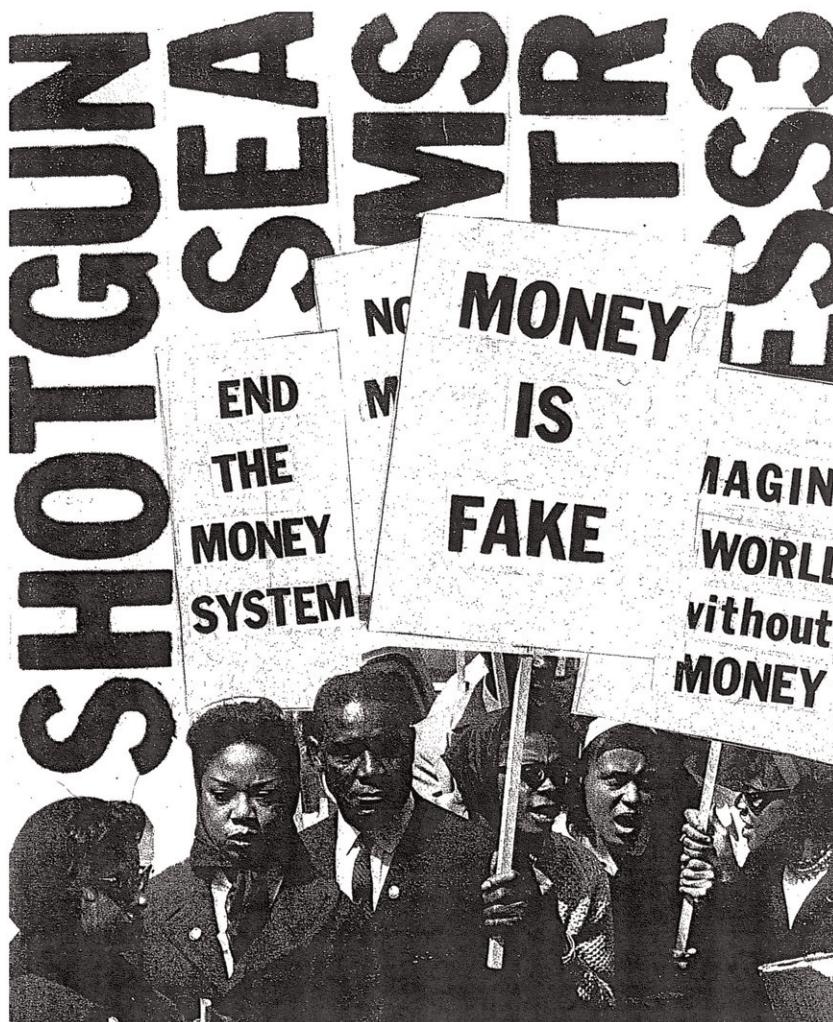


Figure 5. Cover of SS #3.

Ortiz, Leah Lakshmi, and many others. In the same way that zines connected riot girls internationally, zines create an international community for brown punks.

ES: Reading other zines and letters in *MRR*, not to mention the *Afro-punk* movie and Tremblay and Duncombe's book *White Riot*, there are some specific discussions about the duality and doubleness of being black AND punk. In your experience, why is this coupling, or often even discrete identifications, necessary or not? When do they overlap? Or, is it necessary for the two to remain in flux and unsettled?

OA: While most concepts remain, in reality, in flux and unsettled, I kind of hate to admit it because then the conversation seems to become abstract and academic and

therefore inaccessible to most. Additionally, I thought we already learned from third-wave feminist writers like Audre Lorde that identities can't and shouldn't be dissected. I'm not sure if I find a "duality" or "doubleness" in being black and punk. I find a wholeness in it. Punk and black are just two of many identities that comprise me. The *Shotgun Seamstress* zine shows how the identities black and punk flow seamlessly within a number of different individuals. The point of my zine is to show that these identities co-exist naturally and effortlessly within the bodies of artists like Vaginal Creme Davis, HR of Bad Brains, Brontez Purnell of Gravy Train & The Younger Lovers, and many more. James Spooner had a different experience than I did. He writes about having been asked to decide between identifying as black or punk. I was never confronted with that choice. I always knew I could have it all and that's what I tried to show other black kids through my zine, so maybe that's why this question is difficult for me to answer.

ES: Yes, I agree, there is no *one* identity; everybody has many different experiences and beings. Perhaps the subtle racism that occurs in scenes, the desire of appropriation, authenticity, and even property in punk, leans on a homogenized version of punk and comes across as a white culture thing and (in)directly asks for that distinction.

In the last issue of *SS*, you had a chance to interview Poly Styrene, the "Captain of the Brown Underground," before she died; what did you make of some of her responses regarding race and racism in punk? Some women of color punks from the 1970s tend to highlight a more "integrated" scene of acceptance and camaraderie at that time; have you noticed this as well?

OA: I think that I would've liked it if Poly Styrene had a more militant, "fuck you" perspective about being one of the only brown girls in a sea of white punks, but wanting that is selfish. I'm glad that she was much more well-adjusted than that, and in all honesty, I relate. She says she grew up being comfortable in a variety of racial contexts. I grew up the same way. My family is black, most of my friends in school were black or immigrants' kids, but my family went to a white church... I can roll with any group of people. Yes, I have noticed a bit of an attitude of color blindness with punks from the 1970s. I can't speak much about women of color specifically because their perspectives are few and haven't been well documented. (I haven't read Alice Bag's new book, but I am eager to.) While this attitude is most likely a bit naive, I also realize and relate to the fact that punk is a refuge for misfits and Poly Styrene was most definitely a misfit. It seems to me that as a teenager, her biggest battle may not have been with racism, but with the fact that she was probably considered completely nuts by most of her peers and sought refuge in punk. Instead of self-destructing she found a way to stay strong in her identity and celebrate her individuality. There's this thing when freaks meet other freaks or when punks meet other punks – they don't care if you're queer or black or whatever, they just want to unite around this freak identity or punk identity that they have in common. So to those who prioritize racial identity, this may seem like naive colorblind mentality, but if you're a punk rock misfit, you understand the power of finding someone else and relating to them on that level in spite of differences in other social identities.

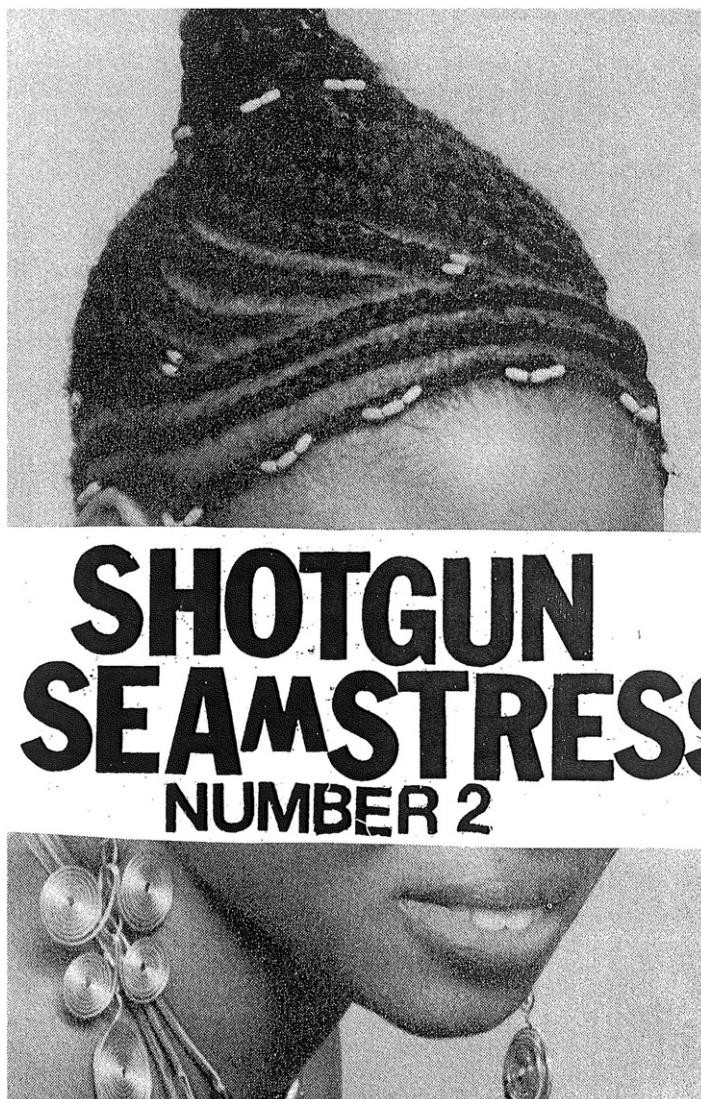


Figure 6. Cover of SS #2.

ES: It's a common intimacy almost, which sounds very utopic.

Your band based in Portland, OR, New Bloods, was that your first band? How did your creative participation and writing start? How did you like performing? What were your shows like?

OA: New Bloods was like my twelfth band! It started in a basement in NE Portland like any other band I'd ever started. No expectations, no goals, no concepts. I was an

anxious wreck – panic attacks and all – and my other two bandmates probably won't mind me saying that they weren't in the prime of their mental health either. But New Bloods made us all healthier somehow. When I played shows, I felt like I couldn't feel the music as much as I wished I could. I like our songs better now because I can listen and enjoy it and not worry about playing the wrong notes or the fact that there's a million eyeballs on me. Also, I think I hit my musical prime after New Bloods. I enjoy playing music even more now and I'm a more relaxed bandmate now than I was then. I can feel music more deeply now when I play it. Our shows were very diverse and I'll always be proud of that. We played living rooms, basements, art galleries, bike shops, bars, backyards, record stores, and maybe a tiny handful of big stages with bigger bands like The Gossip. We brought out lots of queer kids and brown kids that might not have typically come out for a punk show. I loved watching people dance and make out to our band when we played live.

ES: I remember hearing about all the makeout parties in Portland when I lived in Olympia. The New Bloods had a lovely folky punk sound. Where does the name come from? Have you played many different instruments in your bands? What attracted you to the violin?

OA: The name came from a conversation we were having after practice. It was just about how Cassia and Adee were new to town...breathing new blood into Portland's music scene or something. New Bloods. That's how I remember it, anyway. We thought it sounded cool for a second and then we thought it was dumb but then we just kept it. Also, there's that post-punk funky early 80s NYC band called The Bloods and we liked that our name kinda matched theirs. I think of myself as a bass player but I've been playing drums a lot in bands lately. I've been playing violin since I was a kid. I learned in elementary school. I don't really play that often anymore. I don't like that the violin is such a novelty to people.

ES: In #2 (2007), a Women of Color Punk Workshop that occurred in Portland is mentioned, the B.A.B.E. (Breaking Assumptions and Barriers to Equality) Fest. Can you tell us more about your role in the workshop, what it was like, and what came out of it?

OA: I just decided to do a presentation on women of color in punk rock so I made my own list of ladies I already knew about and then I asked my brown punk lady friends for their input and then I made enlarged Xerox copies of pictures of people like Maddog Carla from the Controllers and Alice Bag and what not so that people could be inspired by the images of these bad ass ladies who had come before us... And I also had a zine table of all these w.o.c. zines I'd collected over the years. Near the end, we had lots of time to talk about our own experiences as brown ladies in the punk scene. It was pretty wholesome and inspiring. My biggest memory from the workshop was there was this Latina crusty punk girl who had a little rat running around her neck the whole time.

ES: There is always one person like that at punk events it seems. Do you think you'll have another B.A.B.E. Fest in New Orleans?

OA: Maybe.

ES: What projects are you interested in turning to now? Are there New Orleans communities you are involved in?

OA: I think I'm done with No More Fiction, or at least it's going to be less active than it was before. NMF is/was D.I.Y. all-ages shows for queer, all-girl, and female-fronted bands in New Orleans. I put on about 50 shows in a two-year span and now I'm tired. Good thing there are already lots of strong women doing great things in the music scene here... I'm also a part of the Crescent City Childcare Collective (<http://ccccollective.wordpress.com/>). We provide free childcare for community organizations and activist groups so radical parents can do the work they do without the added stress of worrying about childcare. I'm in an post punk band called VHS. It sounds like if Quix*o*tic and Flipper had a baby. I play drums but we can't play at the moment because our bassist broke her femur. In New Orleans, I'm a part of the D.I.Y./punk music scene and the punk scene in general (the political punks, the not-so-political punks, etc.) Also, I'm a barista and this is a small city so everywhere I go, someone's like, "Hey, it's the coffee girl!"

ES: Yes, that descriptive mix of your new band sounds amazing! I used to have a tape of Flipper that cracked me up every time. Wasn't there a No More Fiction festival last year that you were involved in?

OA: There was going to be but then it didn't happen. If it had, I would've felt like a hypocrite, anyway, because I kinda hate fests. Too many people, too much going on, too short of an attention span. I liked Ladyfest Olympia 2000, though.

ES: Thanks Osa, look forward to talking with you again one day.

OA: Thanks for interviewing me!

Notes on contributor

Elizabeth Stinson is a Ph.D. Candidate in Performance Studies at New York University. Her dissertation researches transnational networks, development, and postcoloniality. She grew up in Los Angeles, CA, where she used her brother, who was a bartender, to see free shows at the Starwood Club on Santa Monica Blvd, played in several bands, and wrote zines. After receiving a B.A. from California State University, Los Angeles in Theatre Arts, she went to University of California, Irvine for an M.F.A. in Acting/Drama, of all things. Prior to moving to New York for academic studies, Beth resided in Olympia, WA, where she performed with various groups and joined forces to organize several events and festivals including Ladyfest and Homo A Gogo. She recently published a chapter, "Zombified Capital in the Neocolonial Capital: Circulation (of Blood) in Sony Labou Tansi's *Parentheses of Blood*," in *Race, Oppression, and the Zombie*, edited by C. Moreman and C. J. Rushton. She is also on the Editorial Board for *Women & Performance: A journal of feminist theory*.