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# Punk Shows

Invitation to the Adventure

CrimethInc.

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July 30, 1999

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comedy, spoken word, staging unexpected performance art... For that matter, try mixing up the lineups of bands a bit, so things won't be so predictable.

- Set up shows as part of larger events, or with greater themes than just music: have a potlatch (in which everyone brings gifts for the bands and each other, instead of money), a costume party, a feast, absurd competitions...
- Bring your own adventures to other shows: stage scripted events, introduce unexpected elements, refuse to accept the rule of expectations, strain against the fabric of reality itself. What else is punk rock for?

*This was originally distributed as a pamphlet, after the CrimethInc. action at the Atom and His Package show last summer, before the His Hero Is Gone show, which ended up featuring mass nudity and wild dancing during the E-150 set. The pamphlet included a lovely picture of our friend Sally breathing fire at a Gilman Street show, which we lack the technical skills to include here. Please feel free to adapt this flier for your own community!*

Punk shows. Punk shows us what we're capable of in tight-knit communities, it shows us how to have more fun, more experiences, more life. If we let it, punk can show us just how much is possible in this world. And punk shows are exactly the place for this to happen.

Do you remember when you went to your first punk show? It probably felt like you'd discovered a whole new world, carefully hidden from the eyes of your parents and teachers, where people danced and screamed and dressed and talked and thought in ways that you'd never imagined before.

You kept going back because they kept challenging you, kept introducing you to new things. Pretty soon punk was your secret world, where you had adventures beyond anything that could happen in a classroom or an office.

But there comes a time in every kid's life when punk shows start to feel stale. You feel like you know exactly what's going to happen: some kids will come together and talk about the same stuff, some bands will play while people stand around or dance a bit, maybe a little rhetoric will be thrown about, and then everyone will go home. Why even go anymore, except out of a sense of duty, if you're not going to be challenged and surprised anymore? That's why many people drop out and stop going to shows.

## **THE ATOM AND HIS PACKAGE SHOW WAS JUST A WARNING SHOT**

We can either accept that punk shows have lost their novelty value and are no longer entertaining (like the passive fucking spectators this society has raised us to be), or we can do something to make them entertaining and challenging again.

The Atom&H.P. show was fun because the audience got to participate in their own way, to be creative and active too, rather than just dutifully following the instructions of the performer or standing in slack-jawed boredom. This made the show better for everyone. What we did together that night wasn't enough to revolutionize the concept of shows itself, perhaps, but it was a little tiny taste of how much less predictable they could be. **THE HIS HERO IS GONE SHOW MIGHT BE SOMETHING MORE**

We're not encouraging you to just start heckling bands-that's inexcusable. We're challenging you to contribute as much to these shows as you expect the bands to. For each show, it should be possible for us to add to the atmosphere with surprises of our own. This is a challenge to you to outdo us, to surprise and and challenge us even more than we can entertain and shock you with our tricks. If we all surprise each other, then shows will be profound again for everyone, not just the youngsters, and we'll all have reasons to keep going.

## **JOIN US IN TAKING BACK THE SHOWS!**

A MESSAGE FROM THE CRIMETHINC. REVOLUTIONARY DANCE PARTY

## **Here are some examples of things other people have done to keep punk shows new and fresh:**

- Stalag 13 (Philadelphia) has held punk rock proms, where everyone dresses up and dances (other theme shows include Halloween and Valentine's Day).
- Some place (I don't remember where) put on a show where all the bands had only ten minutes to set up, play, and pack up. Six bands in an hour! It would be awesome to make everyone's favorite bands write songs just for an occasion like that, or according to some other theme...
- Fort Thunder (Providence) used to have demolition derbies, including one show at which the first band set themselves on fire, the second band set the stage on fire, and the final band performed with a tube filling the room with carbon monoxide from a running car outside. The idea of making a punk show a place to explore the boundaries of life and death is as thrilling to me as it is scary. They've also hosted punk rock professional wrestling (complete with a cage, etc.) and a hundred other crazy events.

## **And here are some things you might want to try yourself:**

- Try dancing to bands in ways that you never have before (or that no one has before). Make up your own dances. Explore the freedom in moving your body in new ways and shaking off the weight of self-consciousness and routine.
- Incorporate things besides bands into shows. Try putting on puppet shows, showing homemade films and videos, theatre,