

In Conversation with Alida Jekabson

Darius Barnes, Sadia Zamon, and Sophie Foley are Teen Thinkers at the Bard Graduate Center. They spoke with Alida Jekabson, Assistant Curator at the Museum of Art and Design (MAD) on July 23, 2019. Below are excerpts from their interview.

Location: The Museum of Art and Design, New York City

Audio Excerpt #1:

Sadia Zamon: Do they [visitors and people who lived through the punk movement] generally feel represented or do they have a lot to criticize?

Alida Jekabson: Well, I have gotten questions about representation of female designers, musicians of color, and female musicians in the show, and I think that really traces back to that this is a collection show.

Audio Excerpt #2:

Darius Barnes: How do you think that Camp goes with Punk being that they both come up around the same time of political issues?

Alida: I mean I think that they both have a lot to do with performativity. Right? I mean, initially off the bat that's a great question. I think performativity is a big part of it. You know, being able to--and this is another aspect of performativity--but literally wearing your opinion on your sleeve. You know, no one has to ask you what you believe in because it's very clear from the way that you look like what you are associated with, which is really, it's intense, you know that's an intense way of being in the world, and then it's an intense world that we're in right? Yeah, of course there are crossovers, especially when we think about some of the queer punk musicians maybe taking up some of the visual image of cap or vice versa.

Audio Excerpt #3:

Darius: How do you interpret punk?

Alida: Well, before I started working on this exhibit, punk to me was the, you know, Gang of Four tapes that my dad played in the car that would like skip over and I didn't really like how they sounded because the audio wasn't that great. It was you know, the spiked

hair, I knew a little bit about early punk history with Andy Warhol and The Velvet Underground, and like John Cale and this more experimental musical side. But I would say that I still have this, a little bit more stereotyped “understanding”. [But] now, when I’m in a museum setting, or really anywhere I’ll notice something. Like there’s a shop downstairs in the Turnstyle and they have a poster of a group of people and one of them is wearing a Ramones logo. So it’s like, everytime you work on an exhibition you become a little bit of an expert on this topic and that never leaves you, and it’s added to your visual vocabulary and you’re able to keep recognizing these things and connecting them.