

In Conversation with Alida Jekabson

Sadia Zaman, Sophie Foley, and Darius Barnes 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: Museum of Art and Design, New York City

Audio Excerpt #1:

Sadia Zaman: So the activism that came from [the punk era]...so was that, do you think, intended by the artists who were making these pieces?

Alida Jekabson: I mean, I don't think they're sitting there like, oh, we're gonna make this to cause social change, but I think for a lot of people, especially someone like David King who was working in the UK creating, um, you know, the anti-Nazi League, posters for Rock Against Racism, like, that was absolutely a concern of theirs. I think someone, like, a designer like Jamie Reed was maybe less concerned with creating social change and more about commenting on the inequalities or the absurdities.

Audio Excerpt #2:

Alida Jekabson: I mean, I think it's [Peter Saville's *Unknown Pleasures*] become such an icon, right? Of...this postmodern...culture, you know? A lot of post--our imagery coming from this idea of the post modern really...appropriates or engages in some way with imagery from a totally different world, like science, and brings it into the realm of, you know, visual or audio. I mean, when I first saw it, I thought it was mountains.

Sophie Foley: Yeah.

Darius Barnes: [laughs] Me too.

Alida: Right? Um...I think that is something that the art--the musicians and designers were definitely thinking about, it's like, what...you know, this is a very enigmatic...visual strategy, right, it's like...kinda looks like a landscape, but it kinda looks like an abstract painting, but it's--it's advertising a band. You know, I also, it really speaks to the visual--like the auditory, um, quality...of the music, I think. And I...if you figure out why it's become such a pop--a cultural icon, let me know? [laughs] Because I feel like I see it everywhere.

Darius: Yeah.

Sophie: Everywhere.

Alida Jekabson: Everywhere, because I think it's engaging, it's interesting, but it's not overpowering.

Darius: Right.

Alida: Right?

Darius: It's simple.

Alida: It's simple. It's very--it's minimal, it's simple, it's not like, some of those really, really intricate posters that we saw, right, where the like, that visual, like, really hard to translate to a t-shirt and fanny pack.

Darius: It's just some lines.