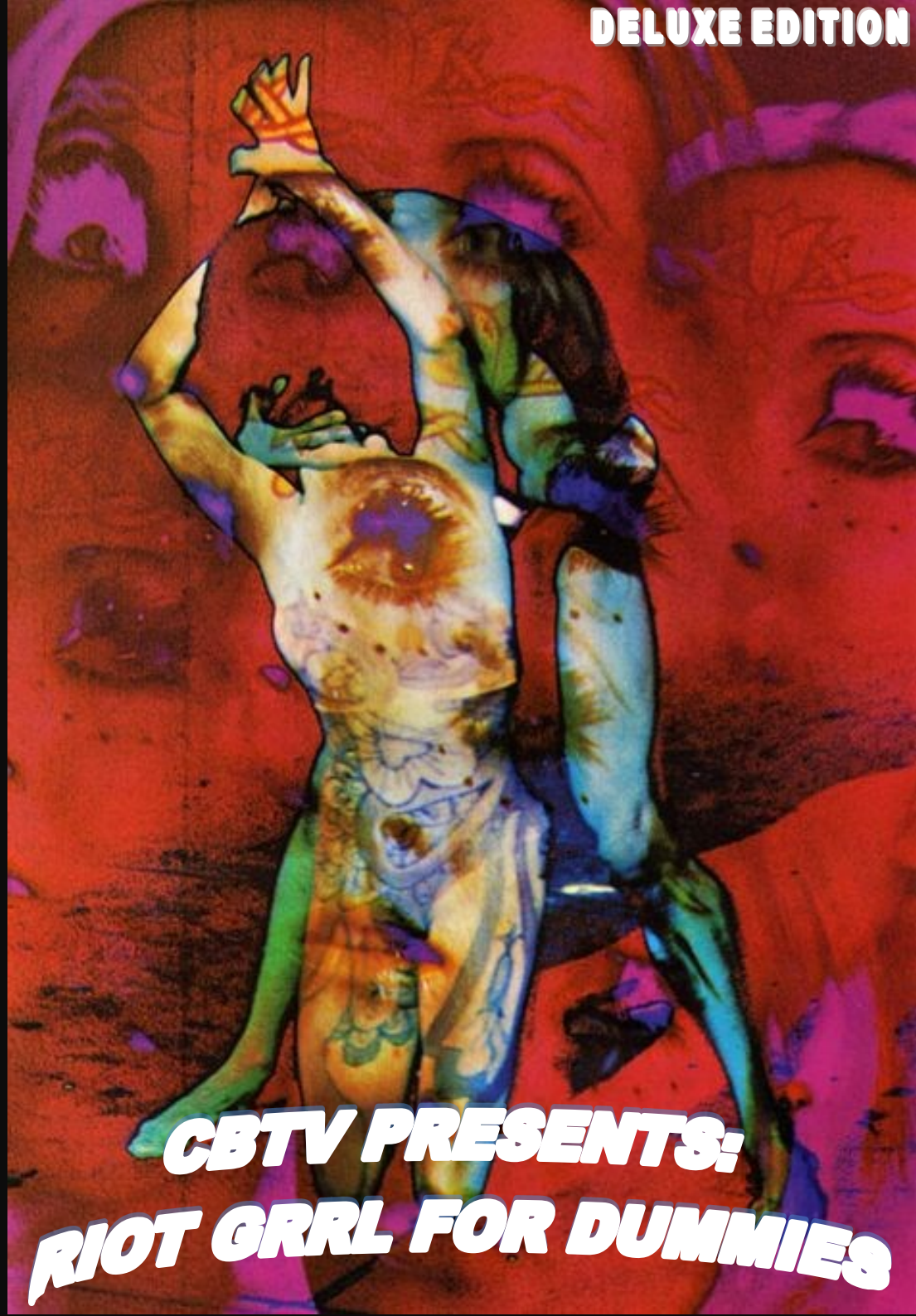
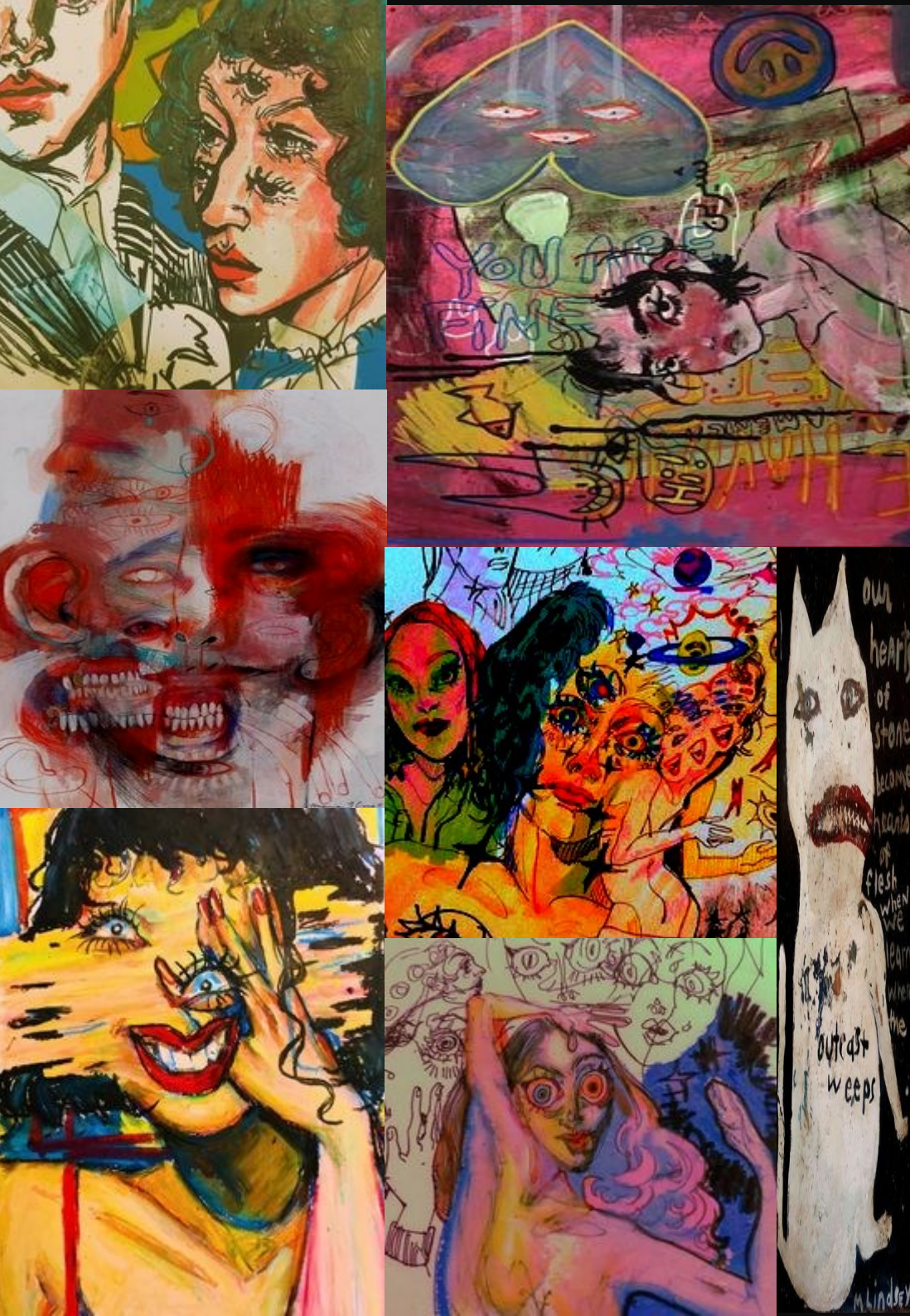


DELUXE EDITION



**CBTV PRESENTS:
RIOT GRRL FOR DUMMIES**

I WANNA BE A RIOT GRRRL

But, but, but what is RIOT GRRRL?!

Riot Grrrl is an underground feminist punk movement that began in America at the beginning of the 1990s. This subcultural movement is an influential combination of feminism, punk music and politics. Riot Grrrl songs often address issues such as rape, racism, sexuality, domestic abuse and classism.

The word “girl” was intentionally used in order to focus on childhood, a time when children have the strongest self-esteem and belief in themselves. Riot grrrls then took a growling “R”, replacing the “I” in the word as a way to take back the derogatory use of the term.

In this fanzine we will explore the rise of the Riot Grrrl movement, the impact it had on the world and the misconceptions surrounding it.



From left to right: Courtney Love, Kathleen Hanna and Cher. Ha ha ha.

The Origins of RIOT GRRRL

Riot Grrrl began in Olympia, Washington when a group of women held a meeting about sexism in their local punk scenes. At this time punk rock was incredibly brash, loud and was characterised by fast tempos, shouted vocals, distorted riffs and involved frequent power chords. Riot Grrrl was in part a reaction against the male-dominated music scene of the Pacific north-west. It was always meant to be a revolution. "We need to start a girl RIOT" wrote musician Jen Smith in a letter to friend Allison Wolfe (Lead singer of Bratmobile), in 1991. Smith was not alone: "I believe with my whole heart, mind and body that girls constitute a revolutionary soul force that can, and will, change the world for real," said Kathleen Hanna (Member Of Bikini Kill).



LUNACHICKS, August 1997 at Michigan Womyn's Music Festival in Hart Township, Michigan.

Although Riot Grrrl emerged in Washington, D.C., it became mostly popular in Washington, specifically Olympia through the use of fanzines. Fanzines became an important part of the punk scene in the early 1970s because it was a way to produce a publication “*unhampered by corporate structure*”. However, zines acted as a platform to discuss issues that were considered taboo in mainstream culture such as rape, incest, and eating disorders. Zines allowed women to form connections with other women that shared similar ideas and experiences and ultimately created a community. In Washington D.C., some of the band members from Bikini Kill and Bratmobile, held weekly meetings for women to attend, express their frustrations, and show support for one another.

The first major Riot Grrrl event occurred in August 1991 at the International Pop Underground Convention in Washington, D.C., which boasted an all-female lineup including Bikini Kill, L7, Bratmobile, and Heavens to Betsy. Approximately two years after the introduction of Riot Grrrl zines, a small Riot Grrrl network formed which spread to New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Richmond. These were groups of high school to college aged girl that met often to discuss ideas, plan Riot Grrrl festivals, and support each other’s music.

Misconceptions and Criticisms

As more and more people discovered Riot Grrrl through zines, it eventually reached the level of mainstream press. The increased publicity of the Riot Grrrl movement led to much confusion amongst the public. Tabloids began to play to the name of the movement by illustrating the Riot Grrrl members as a “*violent, man-hating, and dangerous feminist youth subculture*” (Downes 2012). This justification led to associating Riot Grrrl as a violent girl gang that terrorized men through their man-hating confessions. These false accusations then led to the media questioning the integrity of Riot Grrrl and the type of culture they were creating for young women. Further questioning the motivations behind the movement relates to the idea of moral panic.



Countless people became concerned with the Riot Grrrl movement and assumed members promoted messages that would affect the well-being of society. Mass media induces this type of fear around ideas against hegemonic society into public opinion by reporting false information that perpetuates fear.

BRATMOBILE

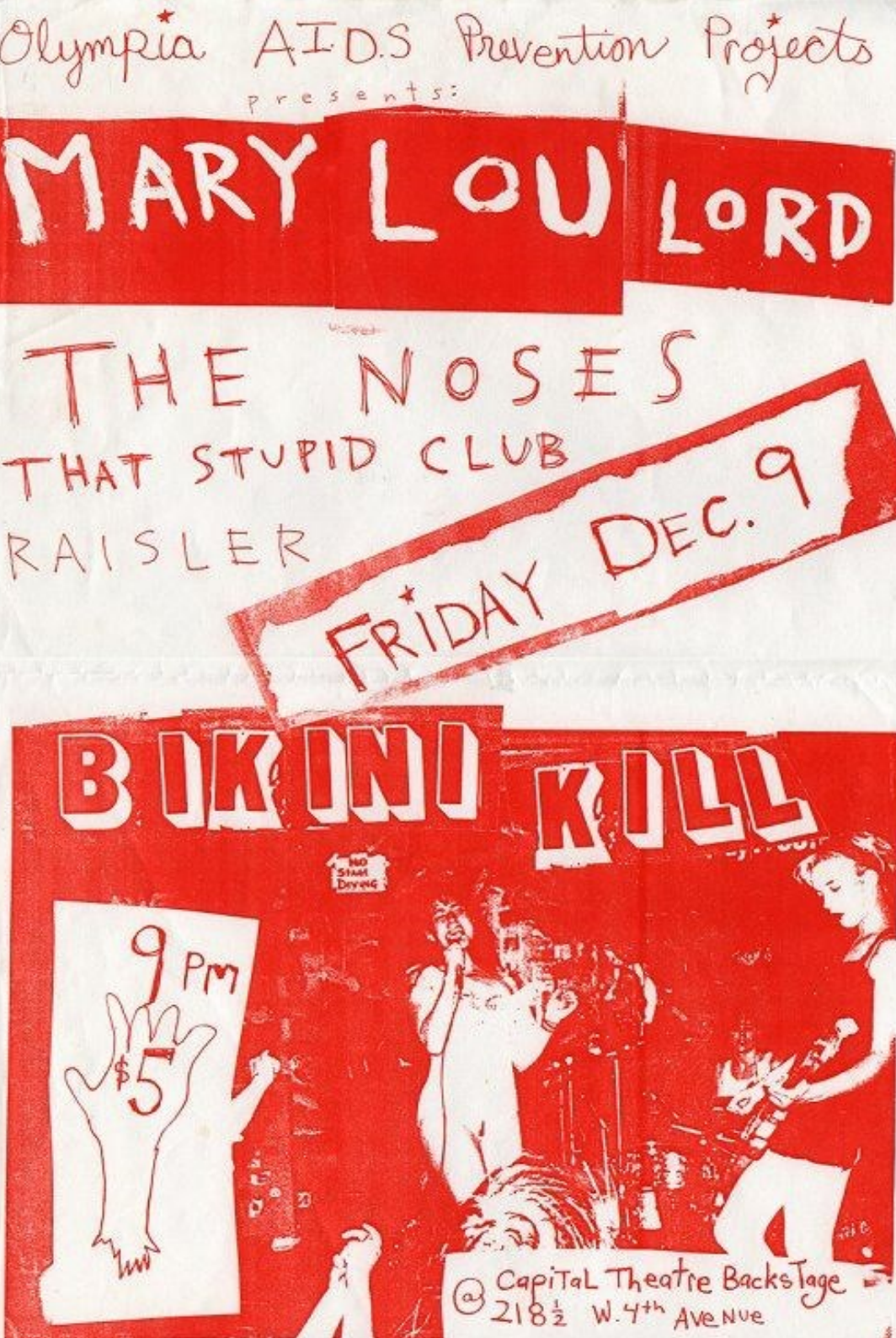
The first ever RIOT GRRL band was Bratmobile, founded in 1991 in Olympia, Washington. Allison Wolfe and Molly Neuman met at university, it didn't take them long to discover they had a lot in common, along with shared musical influences. They also had both been raised by activist families. Wolfe was raised by her lesbian activist mother and Neuman's father worked for the National Democratic Committee and introduced his daughter to leaders of the Congressional Black Caucus. Together, Neuman and Wolfe took classes in women's studies and music, travelled to Olympia on the weekends, and started collaborating on influential feminist fanzine Girl Germs in 1990. In the beginning Wolfe and Neuman thought of Bratmobile as an organization that would have multiple branches scattered across different cities.



In 1991, Wolfe and Neuman went to Washington D.C. to work on a new form of the organization, which included musicians such as Jen Smith, Christina Billotte and Erin Smith.

Erin Smith was co-author, with her brother, of the much-revered TV pop culture fanzine Teenage Gang Debs when Neuman and Wolfe asked her to jam with them.

Bratmobile played their first show as a 3-piece with Neuman on drums, Wolfe on vocals, and Erin Smith on guitar. Bratmobile were just in time to play at the historic International Pop Underground Convention in Olympia in August 1991, becoming the only band to appear twice.



BIKINI KILL

Bikini Kill was made up of singer/songwriter Kathleen Hanna, guitarist Billy Karren, bassist Kathi Wilcox and drummer Tobi Vail. Hanna published a fanzine called BIKINI KILL for their first tours in 1991.

Quote from Riot Grrl manifesto from BIKINI KILL ZINE 2 (1991) –

“BECAUSE doing/reading/seeing/hearing cool things that validate and challenge us can help us gain the strength and sense of community that we need in order to figure out how bullshit like racism, able-bodieism, ageism, speciesism, classism, thinism, sexism, anti-semitism and heterosexism figures in our own lives.”

EDITOR'S SONG PICK: Rebel Girl (1993)

The band always encouraged a female-centric atmosphere at their gigs. They urged women to come to the front of the stage as they handed out lyric sheets to them. One of my favourite facts about Hanna was that she would dive into the crowd to personally remove male hecklers. Often, these men would buy tickets to the concerts while they were inexpensive and accessible, solely to assault Hanna verbally and physically during the shows. However, Bikini Kill still had a large male following. Hanna was the reluctant face of the movement, embracing babydoll dresses, scrawling 'SLUT' across her stomach and putting on a Valley Girl accent to face off with the men that slut-shamed, belittled and sidelined her and the scene.



Kathleen Hanna pictured with SLUT across her stomach, 1992.

LUNACHICKS

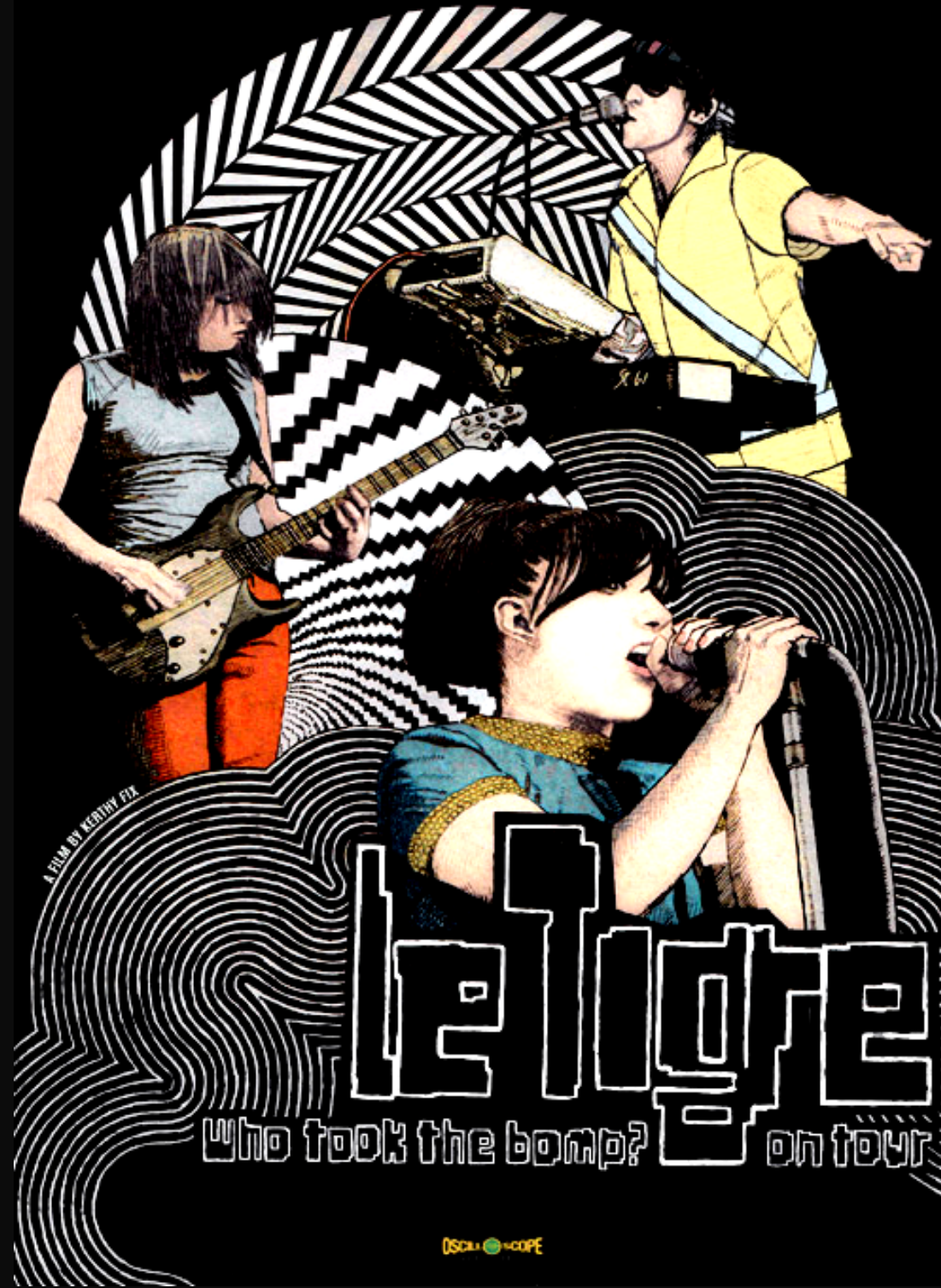
Theo Kogan, Sydney “squid” Silver and Gina Volpe were all students at a high school of music, art and performing arts in New York City when they decided to form a band. Shortly after, Sindi Benezra, a friend of Silver’s was asked to join. They wrote material and practiced in Gina’s room for about a year. Their first composition was a lengthy “theme song” about killing their English Teacher.

EDITOR’S SONG PICK: Less Teeth, More Tits (1999)

LE TIGRE

Although Le Tigre weren’t exactly a punk rock band, they explored common themes such as issues within feminism and the LGBT+ community. Le Tigre were broadly known for their left-wing sociopolitical lyrics. The band was formed by Kathleen Hanna (of Bikini Kill), Johanna Fateman and Sadie Benning. “Deceptacon” by Le Tigre went viral on Tiktok for months this year. Needless to say a lot of women/queer people hopped on the trend, making videos and cameos to the song.

EDITOR’S SONG PICK: Phanta (1999)



L7

Due to their sound and image, L7 is often associated with the grunge movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s. As an all-female band, L7 formed Rock for Choice in 1991 and have, at times, also been linked to riot grrrl, although they preceded and are outliers of both the grunge and riot grrrl movements. The band's name, L7, derives from a slang term for square, and was deliberately chosen as a gender neutral sign. This in particular stood out to me and comforted me as someone who struggles with identity often.

EDITOR'S SONG PICK: Pretend We're Dead

Thank you very much for subscribing to this months fanzine, I hope you enjoyed it and are considering becoming a RIOT GRRL. From gnarly feminist punk revivals to The Spice Girl's girl power buzz, each and every person is valid <3 Caoimhe Byrne xx

