



Punk House: Interiors in Anarchy

Abby Banks (Editor), Thurston Moore

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The punk house may come in any number of forms. The most common type is often where a large group of like-minded punks cram into a house usually intended to accommodate two or three people, resulting in low rent and, thus, extended hours of leisure for the residents to pursue their true interests.

"Punk House" features anarchist warehouses, feminist collectives, tree houses, workshops, artists studios, self-sufficient farms, hobo squats, community centers, basement bike shops, speakeasies, and all varieties of communal living spaces. In over 300 images of fifty houses in twenty-five cities in the US, photographer Abby Banks finds the already weathered face of a seventeen-year-old runaway; the soft hands of a vinyl junkie (record collector); the mohawked show-goer; the dirty dishes in the sink; silk screened posters on the wall; and many other revealing glimpses of these anarchist interiors.

Punk House: Interiors in Anarchy Details

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From Reader Review Punk House: Interiors in Anarchy for online ebook

carissa says

Great paper/size for the next sketchbook/journal...

Allisonv says

Most of the bad reviews seem to be from people who are butthurt that their crew/house/free range dirtclod collective was not included. I guess I am just as guilty; I like it and MY crew is totally in it. There are some very fascinating, tender, and funny images included. I really love all of the kitchen photos. Overall, the photo quality is not so hot. I am not a photographer, and I could probably do better with my 1970s SLR. Also, what the hell did Thurston Moore have to do with this project? Did he bankroll it? His introduction is short, abstract, kind-of unrealted, and overall not worthy of having his name on the spine.

Robert Beveridge says

Abby Banks, Punk House: Interiors in Anarchy (Abrams, 2007)

Ever since I began to be aware of them, I've had a very strong desire to live in a punk house. I'm long-married now and full of all those silly responsibilities, so it's probably not going to be happening any time soon, but the longing is still there. Thus, this was pretty much the perfect book for me, a photoessay covering a number of punk houses around the country. I mean, how cool is that?

The best thing about the book, by far, is that Abby Banks gets it. This isn't your mama's book of architectural photographs, this is DIY madness. While the book is as professionally-produced as you'd expect from Harry N. and company, the photographs themselves have an appealing variance in quality that speaks directly to the punk-house mindset without ever calling into question Banks' competence as a photographer. In other words, they're not just photos of places, they're photos of philosophy, of attitude, of worldview. How cool is that?

This is obviously something of a vertical-market book. If you don't get it, you won't get it. But if you do, this is something you'll leaf through time and again. Fascinating and beautiful. ****

Bobby says

I wasn't actually impressed by this coffee table photo book, and was particularly confused by the totally out of place introduction by Thurston Moore. Admittedly, I only gave it four stars cause I thought it was a novelty to see friends/acquaintances, houses I've been to, and flyers for shows I've played. I'm especially sentimental about the Farmhouse in Mississippi.

Milo says

The photographs are amazing. It's a very interesting look at interiors based on punk subculture. A lot of the spaces are super chaotic, messy, filthy, and alive.

lola says

The long version: Fuck this fucking book. There was an incredible opportunity here to talk about the activism of punk houses, how they're run, how to run one, chronicle past and present "alternative living collectives," mention/analyze significant ones such as fort thunder or something like c-squat, the content of who lives in these houses and why, etc. etc. Abby Banks seems to have politely declined and instead chose to make something real boring. There is very little text--no communication as to what goes on in these houses, what makes them punk, or anything else beyond "Look how filthy this toilet is!" "Look at all these show flyers on the wall!" "Look at how they store all their records!"

"But Lola," you ask. "This is a photo book, it doesn't need lots of text." Okay, fair. But the photos are flat. They are seriously uninteresting. Oh, and Banks didn't even get rid of the JPEG distortion on some of these shots. Embarrassing!

The short version: Excuse me, sir, I don't mean to be rude about what you choose to read, but I'd like to point out that URBAN OUTFITTERS gave this book a five starred review.

Haras says

not meant to be a political critique, just pictures of punk houses from around the country. you get what she says is there: documentation and some pretty awesome images. she's a photographer, this is a photography book. for anyone who has always been totally intrigued by the insides of other people's houses.

Mary says

I wish that there was more to this book than nameless and faceless punks with dirty houses. I wish that there were pictures of some of the amazing dance parties at 19th street. Or of bike club. Or of the screen printing projects that would go on for 72 hours straight, only to be broken up by practicing breakdancing moves and more coffee. Or the amazing random acts of food and feeding. I wish that I could have submitted some of my pictures of the diary reading/burnings in the backyard, or the pictures from the roof of the 100+ people who showed up for the show. The book was a good idea in theory, but it failed to show the community and creativity that make these places so inspiring and amazing. On the other hand, theyre probably best kept secret.

Harris says

I felt that this coffee table photo book was an adequate, if a bit uninformative, collection of images attempting to illustrate the beauty and quirkiness of the "punk house." Including vibrant pictures of houses and people across the United States, urban and rural, from coast to coast, capturing the cool, the weird, and the downright grody. Interesting but not very informative, other reviewers have certainly covered the books shortcomings (a superficial, even exploitative look at the subculture for the amusement of "outsiders" that does very little to explain the whos, whys, or hows of these experimental living spaces). To make matters worse, the images themselves are often rather fuzzy and of low resolution with poor organization, making it difficult to separate the specific locations, or even where the photos themselves begin or end. Still, I did enjoy flipping through the book, and as a quick read, it might be worth a check out from the library.

S.I.O.B.H.A.N says

Me swamps and princess went to some sellout neo-liberal, bookstore in berkeley to see if it was true that somebody would actually do this to our already challenged (sexist, politically despondent)community, I couldn't read any of the words mostly I just looked at the art that this person photographed (and didnt credit the artists)I got hella pissed and wait i STILL AM. If anyone knows a good reason why our filthy lives should be on the pages of some \$30 coffee table book in some yuppie house let me know so I can stop talking mad SHIT. and what the fuck is an anarchist interior gawd dammit

Bethtub says

Having been in many of the houses featured in the book, I felt it focused a lot on the grunge aspect and missed many key elements of alternative living that these houses offer. For example, at collective a go go it failed to depict the beautiful huge garden, the wood burning cook stove, the bike shop, the diy shower, the compost toilets, the library, art everywhere... smashing the state is only half the fun, the other is constructing different interactions and ways of living. The book seemed to show the social rubble but not what was built on top of/instead of it.

Ciara says

i am not a visual person by any stretch of the imagination (i even dream in words more than images), but i really liked the phptographs in this book. maybe the only thing that really ttracts my attention visually is lots of bright, contrasting colors, & color-saturated photographs of unkempt punk houses fit the bill. i also had fun trying to figure out if i was looking at houses i have been in, houses of my friends, if i could see zines or tapes i recognized in the background. good times! i wasn't into all the photos in here--some of them were boring, or focused too much on a person instead of a room or atmosphere, & a lot of the bathroom photos were just icky. i like the style & messiness of a punk house as much as the next guy, but i don't like feeling like i'm about to drop dead from typhoid or something just by looking at a photo. (& full disclosure--my own house is almost completely clutter-free, clean, & organized at all times because it's the only way i can really actually live. my punk house days are behind me.)

Dawn says

This book inspires me. I love the aesthetic. It's pretty much all color illustrations of images of people's living spaces. The photos are visceral & gritty, which matches the content.

Ward says

A detailed analysis of contemporary experiments in living, examining origins and workings, is a vastly different project compared to a photographic road-trip inventory of American punk houses. This book is the later, and in its defense, makes you long for the former.

Bruce says

I requested this book from the public library and loved it so much, I might just buy a copy for my personal shelves. So many beautiful photos of punk habitats from across the country, it made me want to get in a van and go on tour, just so I could crash on some of their floors and meet some of their occupants. While I understand that the author wanted the photos to speak for themselves, I would've liked more commentary and back story on each of the abodes (even just a few anecdotal captions)...especially since many of these homes have been a recording space, living space, party space, or one night flop house for so many musicians over the years.
