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PUNK'S NOT DEAD IN EAST LA: EXPLORING THE EAST LOS SERIES AND IT'S USE OF LOCALITY AND CULTURAL HYBRIDITY FOR EASTSIDE CATHARSIS

Introduction

Depictions of Los Angeles emphasize an obsession with beauty, wealth, and fame; a media fueled superficiality that gives a myopic view of the city itself. For its inhabitants, the realities of this City of Lights seem unrecognizable from the fairytales its own neighborhood of Hollywood tries to disperse to the world. Sure, the rich and famous reside amongst luxury and comfort, but take a few steps outside of this glimmering bubble, and the disparities of millions of *Angelinos* become apparent. Such marginalization is experienced throughout the county, but the current Punk scene of East Los Angeles may be one of the biggest indicators of the existence of such urban problems. Some may ask, “hasn’t Punk been dead since the early 80’s?” Much like its unending fervor against conformity and uniformity, Punk continues to live; offering teens of the Eastside an escape against the

harsh realities that comes with living in the city of luminous yet scathing lights.

What makes East Los Angeles such a harboring niche for Punk Rock? Punk seems to be completely counterintuitive in a location where out of the Eastside's approximately 126,496 residents, 97.07% are of Latino heritage¹. In order to understand the emergence and impact of Punk on the Eastside, its long and extensive Latino history needs to be explored. Punk being an angst-ridden medium for the discontent and alienated, started attracting the world's youth in the late 70's; but the Eastside teens had already been rebelling against the status quo for decades. During the transformative ages of the 50's Rock N' Roll craze, Hispanic-American youths, with the help of pop icons like Ritchie Valens, started pushing the boundaries of how Hispanic-American youths could express their identity². With the samplings of Latin beats and Mexican folk songs, an initial sense of hybridity hit the airwaves. Although the emergence of Latino influences in more mainstream music in the 50's began to be recognized by a larger audience in the United States, communities of predominantly Latino origins, like those residing in East LA, continued to experience active discrimination and marginality. Unable to fully be recognized as uniquely bicultural by those outside their neighborhoods, those of Hispanic heritage often failed to assimilate into a singular dominant culture.

The process of assimilation often requires individuals to abandon parts of their identity; a pressure into choosing either the Hispanic culture or that of the North American culture³. East Los Angeles has historically been a particularly interesting sociological and anthropological location due to its

¹ United States Census 2010: As of 2010, there were 122,784 people of Latino origin.

² Viesca, V.H. (2004). The battle of Los Angeles: the cultural politics of Chicana/o music in the Greater Eastside. *American Quarterly*, 56(3), 719-739.

³ Lipsitz, G. (1986). Cruising around the historical bloc: postmodernism and popular music in East Los Angeles. *Cultural Critique*, (5), 157-177.

strong resistance against such expected, and sometimes mandated, efforts towards picking “a side.” This becomes evident in the 1960’s and 1970’s, when East Los Angeles became the hub of Hispanic rhythms and production of Chicano bands; a devotion to keep the Mexican roots alive in the community⁴. With the continual rise of the Postindustrial economy in East Los Angeles, the Eastside contained work in Steel plants, auto shops, and factories, while providing cheap housing. Just as new waves of immigration populated the Eastside suburbs with those originating from Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador, a reinvigoration of the American Dream seemed like salvation during the tumultuous times stemming from the civil wars and dictatorships in Latin America⁵. But, instead of fulfilling the often times romanticized ideals of white-picket fences and financial stability, the Postindustrial economy crashed, and the dismantling of major labor employment sites like that of East LA’s Bethlehem Steel Mill created massive unemployment⁶.

Serving as a metaphorical Rio Grande, crossing the Los Angeles River over to the Eastside helps situate the emergence of Punk in East LA. Often times called an, “anomalous ethnic curiosity”⁷, Punk satisfied a need that the Hippie and Glam Rock movements could not; unity of Punk teens rooted in their inability to fit in. The Punk scene was especially attractive to the Latino/a of the early 80’s due to an ambiguous self-identity stemming from issues of biculturalism. In 1976, the self-titled album, *Ramones*, marked an

⁴ Viesca, V.H. (2004). The battle of Los Angeles: the cultural politics of Chicana/o music in the Greater Eastside. *American Quarterly*, 56(3), 719-739.

⁵ Zilberg, E. (2014). Fools banished from the kingdom: Remapping geographies of gang violence between the Americas (Los Angeles and San Salvador). *American Quarterly*, 56(3), 759-779. In the article, Zilbert discusses how Latin American *barrios* are relocated internationally to the United States; the creation of cultural borders within a city.

⁶ Viesca, V.H. (2004). The battle of Los Angeles: the cultural politics of Chicana/o music in the Greater Eastside. *American Quarterly*, 56(3), 719-739. The deindustrialization of East LA displaced minority workers, Latinos constituting 57% of the low-wage sector.

⁷ Alvarado, J. (2012). Backyard Brats and Eastside Punks. *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, 37(2), 157-180.

ending to the Zeppelin-esque stylings; early Chicano Punkers like, the Stains and Thee Undertakers, moved the evolution of rock into a more volatile, stripped down art form⁸. The question is asked again, "Isn't the Eastside Punk scene dead *today*?" On any given Friday night, wander the streets of the Eastside, listen closely and you will receive an answer. In the East LA Punk backyard shows live on and continue to use locality in order to unite the spheres of Punk, race, and space.



Fig.1. Jeremy Gravedoni, *A Punk show in a Backyard*, 2014. Courtesy of Jeremy Gravedoni, Los Angeles.

⁸ Gunckel, C. (2012). "Vexing" Questions: Rethinking the History of East LA Punk. *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, 37(2), 127-156.

Space and its Communal Significance

How can physical spaces have profound meaning to a community? Particular locations have specific personal and communal significance; experiences formed due to a collective sense of identity, tradition, and memory⁹. Particularly, the Eastside has experienced continual segregation from the Westside, limiting its contact with the other geographies and resources in Los Angeles. Being that East Los Angeles had no stable club dedicated to Rock bands, most of the dispersion of Punk occurred in backyard shows. Even with the emergence of The Vex (1980-1983), the first and only East LA club dedicated to Punk at the time, the Eastside scene continued to be fueled by the massive backyard shows. This has caused the Eastside to look within its community in order to find meaningful ways of changing their social spaces. Thus a mutual recognition of what the needs and hopes of the community causes spaces of conflict to also embrace spatial entitlement¹⁰. Being that the Eastside has been an invisible factor to what many consider “true Los Angeles,” the Punk shows that continue every weekend are a direct fight towards spatial entitlement and ultimately a proclamation that the Eastside exists. As Johnson (2013) discusses, “Spatial entitlement is the right to exist as, and express the frustration and liberation associated with being simply punk or unproblematically Chicano.”

⁹ Johnson, G. T. (2013). Spaces of conflict, sounds of solidarity: Music, race, and spatial entitlement in Los Angeles (Vol. 36). Univ of California Press.

¹⁰ Johnson, G. T. (2013). Spaces of conflict, sounds of solidarity: Music, race, and spatial entitlement in Los Angeles (Vol. 36). Univ of California Press.



Fig.2. Underground Alliance, *A full backyard on a Saturday night at the Voltage House*, 2014. Courtesy of Underground Alliance, Los Angeles.

East Los Angeles is a unique mix of suburban and industrial; where shared community spaces are limited, yet the residential capacity is larger than those found in other LA locations such as in Downtown. Following a DIY (Do-it-yourself) mantra, East LA bands worked with the spaces available to them: residential backyards and abandoned industrial warehouses. Thus, local backyard shows have become the most accessible space for discourses of anger and disillusionment. This intimate interaction between the members of the band and the crowd are further implemented with the personal space that is a backyard; backyards being typical spaces for family get-togethers, a place for barbeques, discussions, and even fun-filled children games. A blurring of lines occurs at these DIY shows, melding unique identities with that of the social significance of collective frustration. The fact that these shows are held outside of an establishment/formal venue definitely ties in the community sense of activism where people of similar

pasts want their grievances to be acknowledged; highlighting issues that seem disconnected to the surrealist wealth of Los Angeles. It is this separation from the Westside's resources that cause the Eastside to look within its community in order to find meaningful ways of changing their social spaces; such spaces of conflict being embraced into spatial entitlement¹¹. Being that the Eastside has been an invisible factor to what many consider "true Los Angeles," the Punk shows that continue every weekend is a direct fight towards spatial entitlement and ultimately a proclamation that the Eastside exists.

What makes these Hispanic-American Punkeros distinct from their Caucasian counterparts? Teens will forever continue to crave the power to speak against the oppressive ideologies in their lives, but for those of Latino backgrounds, the Punk Rock scene in East LA has allowed for cultural negotiations; a hybridity of both Hispanic and Caucasian values that connects to Johnson's ideas about not having to choose between being a Punk or being Chicano/a. One of the first indications of such cultural blending is seen when bands sing in both English and Spanish; the means of expression broadened beyond the limits of one language. As with the lingual expansion of some Chicano bands, the rhythms played also show a mix of Latin beats with the rough and industrial sounds of Punk; evoking a wonderful sense of uniqueness. Proyecto Makabro, a Gothabilly Punk band uses ghoulish imagery and musical tonality that is reminiscent of the Mexican tradition of Día De Los Muertos. In Mexico, the Day of the Dead festivities allows celebrators to connect with dead ancestors; keeping their memory alive while instilling a certain amount of mysticism into the newer

¹¹ Johnson, G. T. (2013). Spaces of conflict, sounds of solidarity: Music, race, and spatial entitlement in Los Angeles (Vol. 36). Univ of California Press. Gaye Theresa Johnson discusses how the urban spaces of Los Angeles have allowed for a platform for not only spatial entitlement, but a liberation against the idea of having to conform to one culture, one identity.

generations. The Punk played at these East LA shows thus becomes more personal for the young attendees; Punk becoming a way to express their biculturalism through music.

Dialogue & Storytelling

Martin Sorrondeguy, a Uruguayan-American Punk rocker from the 80's, details that at Punk shows, "there are no rock stars or bouncers separating who is part of the band with who is part of the crowd . . . we're always dialoguing"¹². It is difficult to imagine any sort of conversation occurring amidst the chaos of a Punk show, but unconventionally, it is through storytelling that these East Los Angeles Punkeros not only promote their shows, but also share who they are as individuals. Even before arriving at a show, a sense of Punk networking becomes necessary in order to make contacts that can share show dates, band suggestions, and possibly food and shelter. LA Punk enthusiast, Jeremy the Pirate Punk¹³, describes the importance of dialoguing and networking, "The scene is all about keeping shows alive through word of mouth. It's all about communicating face to face, through Facebook, email, whatever. That's what I love about Punk, it's that you can go to any part of the city and you can end up squatting at someone's apartment." Punk shows are notorious for beginning hours after their intended and promoted start hours, but it gives the chance to meet new people, hear life stories; Punk adventures that attract others through oral storytelling. It seems unlikely that these apparent hardened young adults would be willing to share personal aspects of their lives, but it all begins with establishing a connection by discussing their favorite bands and songs.

¹² Johnson, G. T. (2013). Spaces of conflict, sounds of solidarity: Music, race, and spatial entitlement in Los Angeles (Vol. 36). Univ of California Press.

¹³ Jeremy's real name is Jeremy Gravedoni. Personal Interview conducted January of 2015.

This initial connection creates a metaphorical gateway, a bonding experience that forms an atmosphere of trust. For centuries, storytelling has linked peoples of different generations; storytelling becoming a way to introduce diverse subject matters, to keep certain traditions alive, to immerse yourself in space of acceptance and comfort.

Once the bands start playing, the crowd's way of dialoguing with each other shifts from orally to physically communicating with each other. A mosh pit becomes much more symbolic than it's collision of bodies and exaggerated moves; its therapeutic nature continues the connection that was started before the show. Listening to these young adults talk about their issues sheds important psychological and social insight into the minds of these teens, but it is through observing their counter-clockwise movement, theatrical and dynamic, that a collective catharsis can be explored. By physically letting out the aggression they may typically feel throughout the day, it is as if they are combating against their inner turmoil and social conflicts in person; it's as if these adolescents are physically punching their metaphorical ghosts and demons. Through the years, the impact Punk has had in the Eastside communities resonates, and Jeremy describes that, "In the summer time, the windows in [East LA] are open, and there are children not sleeping, laying bed, listening to these bands, starting to get interested in the music, the people, the stories. It's there, every weekend. They can hear it. They grow up and what do they want to do? Attend these shows and continue a new wave of backyard scenes." It is this acceptance of nonconformity that continues being an attractive pull towards Punk shows, and as Angela Boatwright's Van's Off the Wall documentary, *East Los*, displays, backyard Punk shows survive as a way for Latino teens to speak about their daily and communal struggles.

Vans Presents: East Los

Angela Boatwright¹⁴ presents *East Los*, a six part documentary showing audiences a snapshot of Los Angeles; a looking glass into the Punk scene in East LA. Released in 2014, Boatwright's episodes create an attachment to the three young adults interviewed: Anthony, Lauren, and Alejandro (Nekro). Beginning with a seemingly simple aerial shot of the sun setting over the world-renowned skyline of LA, this image captures a glimpse of a recognizable Los Angeles with its tall and glimmering skyscrapers. The majority of the foreground is darker than the sunset seen in the higher angle of the image. This presents viewers to East Los Angeles, with its residential homes, lower apartment buildings, and no observable Hollywood landmarks. Perceptually, the skyscrapers embedded by the orange glow of the sun, seem incredibly distant from the residencies of East Los Angeles; an impression of how the natives of the East LA may feel disconnected from the glamour and wealth of the surrounding areas. Although only a couple of miles away from Downtown Los Angeles, the high-powered towers in the horizon seem like a lifetime away. As the scenes shift, the audience's attention is focused on a typical Saturday night at a backyard show; with jagged and chaotic movements, kids laughing, hugging, and moshing; the perception of a romanticized LA begins to be deconstructed. Like the initial image of the sunset, the lives of the adolescents living in East LA may not seem inherently difficult or unstable, but as the camera pans away from the viewer, the audience realizes that the lives of the young adults interviewed in the *East Los* series are far from the hyperrealist image

¹⁴ Angela Boatwright is a filmmaker from Ohio. During her 2014 interview with Van's Off The Wall, she discusses her initial attraction to the East LA Punk Scene project because of her own experiences of being "a heavy metal teenager." For more on her interview use the html link provided: http://offthewall.tv/video/interview_with_the_director_-_angela_boatwright

¹⁵ Traber, D. S. (2001). LA's "White Minority": Punk and the Contradictions of Self-Marginalization. *Cultural Critique*, 48(1), 30-64.

of perfection. By understanding the dynamics of their homes, friends, and backyard shows, one can begin to understand the problems of the city and why these punk shows can be a desirable escape for the young residents of East LA.

“Your friends are the family you choose”

The interviews of the three young adults featured on *East Los* begins with Anthony, a twenty-three year old from Boyle Heights. Episode two of this documentary begins differently than the introduction where the first shot of Anthony’s episode is of an apartment complex near the projects of H Street and Lorena. There are no skyscrapers in sight, just a rectangular space that looks like many of the homes in East Los Angeles. The scene jumps to a group of six friends, a way of introducing Anthony with the family he values; his friends. As the camera pans away from the chaotic show, a third setting, one in connection to Anthony’s relationship with his father is explored. Already a different dynamic is seen and it soon becomes clear that this paternal bond is tumultuous. Anthony grew up with his grandfather as his main paternal role, a clear indication of a broken family unit. With the death of his grandfather, Anthony became lost, unable to connect with other individuals in order to get some guidance during the difficult times of being an adolescent. It is at this time of frustration and hurt that Anthony began attending Punk backyard shows, replacing his broken family unit with his friends; a Punk surrogacy. As the audience views this replacement of unsatisfying familial relationships, it can be noted that Punk, similar to other musical genres, continues to be relevant amongst populations of adolescents because of this unity between equally unaccepted and rejected youths¹⁵. Interestingly, by forming part of this Punk family, Punk highlighting individuality as an important focus, many of these youths join a seemingly

faceless crowd. The enticing solidarity of the Punk scene to some extent can be viewed as a need for comfort and not necessarily a search for uniqueness. It is this metaphorical nurturing that becomes an important unifying theme in Angela Boatwright's documentary.

“What do you have to be angry about?”

In the third episode of *East Los*, Lauren is a fourteen year old dealing with the unfortunate effects of the disruption of the family unit stemming from her father's incarceration. Lauren's episode begins similarly to that of the Intro episode with East LA being presented in the foreground; but the recognizable city landscape is now closer to the viewer, at reach. The lights are shining brightly and the attention is focused away from the dimmer foreground of the Eastside. This is the LA everyone envisions; no problems just glamour. Lauren's life is paralleled to this initial image; on the surface she seems to be living more comfortably than the majority of the other Punks of the Eastside; but aside from her apparent financial stability, Lauren lacks a paternal figure. Her father, Gio, is in prison during a critical developmental stage in Lauren's life where guidance is essential. Similar to Anthony who lost his grandfather during his adolescence, Lauren craves a connection to her father. Gio in the past attended Punk shows and seems to have positive memories of his adolescent experiences in the backyard scene. For Lauren, the backyard shows not only become an unconscious mechanism used to feel more connected to her father, but Punk becomes an enticing method of catharsis for her frustrations. In the Van's interview, Lauren seems hesitant to fully explore her anger or even unaware of how much angst is truly lingering within her. The Punk shows thus allow her to tap into that frustration physically and emotionally in ways that she may not feel comfortable expressing in her day to day life.

Lauren's episode also provided insight into the changing dynamics of single-parent homes in Latino communities. Since being incarcerated, Gio's responsibilities have been thrown into the hands of Lauren's mother, Rose. Rose has had to assimilate both the typical feminine and masculine gender norms of parenting. These expected gender roles are still heavily set in tradition amongst those of Latino origin where the father is expected to be the disciplinary and protective figure, while the mother is customarily the more homebound and supportive parent. As can be seen in Lauren's interview, the traditional definition of a family doesn't necessarily become applicable anymore and the parental roles for the diverse communities in the United States are also changing.

Changing the Values of the Extended Family

Such hybridization of the norms within the Hispanic-American family is well portrayed in episode four of *East Los*, with Nekro's (Alejandro Vargas) interview. Alejandro (Nekro) is portrayed to have a complete family unit in the traditional sense: his parents are still together, and it seems that his relationship with them is positive and understanding. Nekro describes that, "I may mouth off to them sometimes or seem like a bad kid, but deep down inside I do love them." It isn't the issues he has with his parents, but the fact that his grandmother is in nursing home that weighs down Nekro emotionally. With Nekro's episode the importance of the extended family in Mexican American households is not only explored, but the changing relationship due to cultural hybridity is examined. As was seen with Anthony, grandparents in the Latino culture can be thought of as equivalents to second parents. Often times due to tradition and low economic status, Latino families depend more heavily on each other in order to take care of

aging parents¹⁶. This means that commonly, in the past, there were lower rates of elderly Latinos entering convalescent home¹⁷. Children often grew up living with their grandparents, and as Nekro displays, his grandmother's artistic influence shaped his current love of music. In one specific scene of episode four, Nekro sings with his grandmother in the nursing home, an act that shows his *abuela* being an essential part of connecting Nekro to his Hispanic culture; music becoming a cultural tool for multigenerational bonding. Amongst Latinos, sending aging parents to independent living communities or even assisted living residencies is typically seen as an "Anglo idea," but as the number of aging Latinos increase in the United States, longer lifespans, increased employment for women, and a decline of the traditional two parent household, Latino children are opting to get professional help for their aging parents¹⁸. Specifically, researchers found that the number of Latino older adults increased by 54.9% in nursing homes from 1999 to 2008¹⁹. It is easy to imagine Nekro feeling conflicted about his grandmother's living situation; his Latino identity possibly feeling guilty by his inability to take care of her in his home while his hybrid Anglo identity understands the importance of familial independence and more appropriate health care. Nekro visits his Grandmother in the retirement home once a week and discloses in his *East Los* interview that, "I really have trouble thinking about the situation with my Grandma . . . sometimes I can't talk about it. You always feel better when you cry, but when you go and sing some music...it's like man....it's gonna get better." Boatwright's series

¹⁶ Burr, J. A., & Mutchler, J. E. (1999). Race and ethnic variation in norms of filial responsibility among older persons. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 674-687.

¹⁷ Torres-Gil, F., & Villa, V. (1993). Health and long-term care: Family policy for Hispanic aging. *Elderly Latinos: Issues and solutions for the 21st century*, 45-58.

¹⁸ Duncombe, W., Robbins, M., & Wolf, D. A. (2003). Place characteristics and residential location choice among the retirement-age population. *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 58(4), S244-S252.

¹⁹ Feng, Z., Fennell, M. L., Tyler, D. A., Clark, M., & Mor, V. (2011). Growth of racial and ethnic minorities in US nursing homes driven by demographics and possible disparities in options. *Health Affairs*, 30(7), 1358-1365.

captures Nekro and his Grandmother singing a classic Ranchera song, *Mi Ranchito*, written by Valdez Leal Felipe. In *Mi Ranchito*, the lyrics detail the heartbreak of leaving the narrator's native land and the melancholic desire to return to their heartland.

*Ay corazón que te vas,
Para nunca volver,
No me digas adiós,
Vuelve a alegrar con tu amor
El ranchito que fue
De mi vida ilusión.*

*Oh heart you are leaving,
Never to return,
Don't say good bye,
With your love returns a happiness,
To make the little ranch,
The illusion of my life.*

Felipe Valdez Leal²⁰

The meaning of these song lyrics go beyond the apparent abandonment of a previous home, it's the end of an era; the traditional ways of Mexico's past being transformed the ideals of the United States, the lyrics perfectly portraying the sentimentality behind the evolving concept of the family. For Nekro, singing with *Proyecto Makabro* at a Punk show, in both English and in Spanish is a way to combine his interests in both Gothic Punk while keeping his Grandmother's passion for music alive.

Being a Female Punkera

While Punk has been noted for its inclusivity of ethnicities, sexual orientations, and gender; interviewing East LA punkeras Apostasis show a different view of the romanticized Punk Scene in LA.²¹ In the documentary, Apostasis addresses the differences and sometimes difficulties of playing in local shows. For example, financially, backyard shows can be costly,

²⁰ *Mi Ranchito* was written by Felipe Valdez Leal and famously sung by Linda Ronstadt. To listen to the song, follow the link: < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGphn15gFK4>>

²¹ The following information was obtained from a personal interview conducted with Apostasis in February 2015.

between equipment damage and guaranteed pay, it isn't hard to imagine why bands are deterred from playing in backyards and abandoned warehouses, but for females, the costs are even greater.



Fig. 3. Apostasis, *Practicing: West LA Show*, 2014. Courtesy of Apostasis, Los Angeles

Speaking with Apostasis in a personal interview in February of 2015, almost a year to the date of the release of *East Los*, the band was adamant about one particular subject: the inequality faced by Punkeras: "For every ten all male bands, there is just one all-female band. We are the minorities." While this Van's documentary portrayed a Punk scene thriving off the minorities of Los Angeles, race isn't the issue here, but gender is. Apostasis describes that they typically get remarks from men like, "Hey, need help carrying your equipment? Or, man you guys play really well for chicks." While these taunting comments don't necessarily affect Apostasis as they did when they

first started in the scene, they are becoming increasingly hesitant about playing at backyard shows: “We haven’t returned to the house where Van’s filmed part of the documentary. Crazy shit was going on and we didn’t feel safe. As females, we definitely feel safer playing in venues now. The majority of our shows are usually hosted by feminist rallies or shows, but it’s sad that we can’t play in backyards like we used to.” By just observing who the Punk show attendees are, it becomes clear that males vastly outnumber female show attendees. Even though Punkers see themselves as the promoters of change, a scene for the “other”; the Punk scene in East LA continues being a semi-hostile environment for women. Even with these reflections about backyard shows, Apostasis remains hopeful about the future of Punk, “[w]e were inspired by Brody [female lead singer] of The Distillers. I wanted to sound exactly like her. To have that power in my voice and even though we aren’t playing backyard shows right now, we are starting to see more females in the scene pop up, but it will take time.”

One Year Later...The Impact of *East Los*

It has been one year since the release of Boatwright's *East Los*, and some believe the documentary has definitely impacted the scene. Twenty-three year old Amanda Gonzales remembers stumbling across the first backyard show Vans filmed, “the first show was really cool! It was a great party with amazing people, many of them our friends.” But the more the Vans crew continued going to the shows, the feel of the environment shifted, Amanda describing that “the energy at the shows has really changed, especially where Vans has been filming. The more Vans came we started realizing that people were either A) you are here for the cameras or B) you were placed here by Vans because they were clearly not part of the scene. I remember

one guy was trying to start something, insinuating violence for cameras. Since the Vans stuff, a lot of gangs have been showing up at shows."

It's hard to determine the degree that *East Los* has impacted the community in East LA or even if the scene itself is actually becoming more aggressive, but with any popularization of an artistic movement, there are positive and negative aspects. As for the people interviewed for the documentary, they themselves have had interesting experiences since being on *East Los*. Some members of the Eastside Punk scene felt like the Punkeros interviewed by Boatwright, "sold out" and don't accurately represent East LA Punk. Others like Jeremy, feel that those featured got, "Unnecessary drama, I mean... we are talking about some East LA street punks making bucks for free. What do you expect them to say. . . NO WE DON'T WANT MONEY? They are getting royalty checks now! These are just dudes, getting paid for who they are." The opinions vary widely as with any subject matter trying to exhibit art, music, and people's behavior, but the popularity of the *East Los* documentary has definitely continued the discussion of Punk and its importance in diverse societies across the United States, even in communities that seem unlikely to be attracted to such a genre.

How has Punk changed in LA overall in the last couple of years? At Amoeba Records on the Westside's Sunset Blvd., vinyl records have increased 30% in sales²². The majority of those records being both classic and modern Punk LP's. The demand for Punk albums at Amoeba was so high, that in the last four years, a Punk section was included in the store, validating the popularity Punk continues to have amongst Amoeba's clientele. For futures studies, Punk historians will find it immensely beneficial to research how many East LA bands there are currently. How

²² This statistic was an estimate of the increase in sales at Amoeba. More detailed and accurate records were hard to find due to the re-selling and used nature of many of the records bought and sold at Amoeba.

many of these bands consider themselves Latin bands or bands with Latin influences? As Punk re-emerges into the conscious awareness of the mainstream population, its history and current impact on the diverse communities of Los Angeles will become an essential field of study in Ethnomusicology and other varied fields; Punk being an invaluable tool in understanding the dichotomies that actually exist and want a voice in LA. Los Angeles will forever be uniquely hybrid, extraordinarily diverse, and amazingly nonconforming; East Los Angeles is Punk Rock.

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