



## Hard Art, DC 1979

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Capital Gift 2013, *DCist*

"Photos capturing the raw magnetism of performers like Charlie Danbury of Trenchmouth and H.R. of Bad Brains signal the power of the music. Perkins is also fascinated with the audience at these events, showcasing dingy stairwells and sweat-glazed faces. In telling shots, performers and audience blur into a frenzied mass. Musician MacKaye, of the Untouchables, gives a firsthand account of being a 14-year-old at these shows, crossing dangerous parts of D.C. in order to stand with strangers in derelict buildings and hear live music. Musician Rollins's brief essay on one of the bands, the Teen Idles, speaks to the intensity and commitment of those involved."

--*Publishers Weekly*

"What do punk rock, a *Washington Post* reporter and books have in common?...For the most part, nothing--except for books by *Washington Post* reporters about punk rock."

--*Huffington Post*

"Many punk fans will purchase *Hard Art* for the novelty of seeing H.R. as he was before Bad Brains moved to New York and became legends, or Ian MacKaye as he was before he shaved his head, and formed Dischord Records, Minor Threat, and Fugazi. The book deserves a wider readership than that. Perkins's skill as a portraitist is such that you can see the energy and potential in these young men's faces even without the context of their future roles as icons. Equally worthwhile are the portraits of those who did not become icons, but participated in the shows."

--*Philadelphia Review of Books*

"A great document for the DC scene."

--*TRUST Fanzine*

In 1979, a soon-to-erupt punk scene took hold in Washington, DC, with bands like the Bad Brains, Trenchmouth, Teen Idles, the Untouchables, and the Slickee Boys, among others, at the forefront. Lucian Perkins, later a Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist for the *Washington Post*, was then an intern who photographed several pivotal shows over a short period of time. His now iconic photos of these shows are complemented by punk rock musician Alec MacKaye's narrative that runs throughout the book and an essay by Henry Rollins.

*Hard Art, DC 1979* is both a book and a traveling exhibition of photographs by Lucian Perkins. The exhibition is curated and edited by photographer and photo editor Lely Constantinople and Jayme McLellan, director of Civilian Art Projects, Washington, DC, with photographs being shown as a group for the first time.

In 1995, Lely Constantinople was hired by Perkins to manage his extensive photographic collection spanning a twenty-five year career with the *Post*. While looking through negatives in his basement, she found the punk images and recognized MacKaye, her then boyfriend (now husband). She asked to make contact sheets to show him, thinking he might recognize himself and others, and was surprised by how excited MacKaye was to see the images. "Those pictures were the holy grail! Not that many people brought cameras to shows then so I always wondered who he was and what happened to the pictures he took. He was at some of the best

shows."

MacKaye's text offers an intimate exploration of the moment from two perspectives: that of a fourteen-year-old experiencing music on his own terms for the first time, and a look again at a movement that fueled an underground generation musically and philosophically. His examination is not a nostalgic review of glory days gone, as much as a present conversation about the continuation of a way of thinking that still endures. *Hard Art, DC 1979* is an intimate snapshot of "the time before the time" that punk rock found firm footing in the US. These images capture the cathartic, infectious energy present in any group of people who seek to change their communities through music and art.

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