

The problem with a movement that forms as a reaction to a problem is that it tends to attract a lot of different types of people with one similar value. It makes it hard to define collective principles without alienating some of the people that made the movement possible—especially if there's no one able to solve these disputes. It makes the movement disorganized and dysfunctional. White girls who came to confront sexism, unprepared to confront their own biases and bigotry. Straight girls who came for female empowerment, unprepared to accommodate the differing needs of queer girls.

Some important questions facing girl-punks in the 90's... How can we make our scenes less white in both numbers + ideology? How can we best support/educate + draw from non-punk feminists? Should we? How can we draw up a program (fluctuating) that encompasses race class + gender relations (specifies too?) w/out have any been seen as a central or most pressing... ie, for expediency sake NOT doing outreach w/ punks of color NOT including music/zines by lesbian punks NOT having 2nd hand or used clothing racks in punk stores... ie, incorporating from the 80's punks... etc... These issues MUST BE INCORPORATED FROM THE BEGINNING.

At the same time, Riotgirl is notably undefined. There was often internal discourse about the principles and politics of RG, as is typical of punk-related movements. Who exactly was welcome? Who was unwelcome? Were there exceptions? How should a feminist movement confront other political topics? Sex work? Homophobia? Racism? How can the primarily white movement confront their racial privilege, while also recognizing that there are all oppressed for being women? How open should they be to outside media? Who will enforce these principles, anyway?

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Thank you to "The Riot Grrrl Collection" edited by Lisa Darms, and "Girls to the Front" by Sara Marcus for teaching me about the incredible era of the Riot Grrrl!



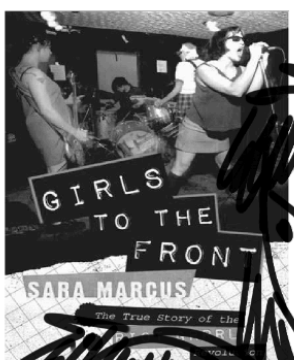
A ZINE ABOUT GRRRLS

**The Most Frequently Asked Questions/Comments "Girls of Color" Are Assaulted With & The Responses**  
(Including the "Nice N' Usual" Answer vs. the BE Answer) a quick list of rules for you to keep in mind:

1. fat is not ugly
2. fat people do not lack control
3. fat people do not need to lose weight
4. fat people do not need to "eat less"
5. fat is punk rock "fat jokes"
6. you do not call yourself "fat" if you're not.
7. diets are 20 times more unhealthy than being fat
8. I am not ashamed of my body
9. I am susceptible to pain, don't try to hurt me.
10. if you consider me a threat, if you fear me now, then just wait, the fat girl revolution has begun.

(The rest is all questions...)  
FAT GRRRL = Punk Fukin' Rebel

But despite the movements larger issues, associated members and zines explored the ideas that some other members failed to. In "Girl Germs Vol. 3" (a zine by Molly Neuman and Allison Wolfe of Bratmobile), one section outlines a Chinese riotgirl's family history, her mother and grandmother, their life in China and their immigration and assimilation to the USA. In her zine "I (heart) Amy Carter no. 1", Tammy Rae Carland writes about her queerness, how it intersects with her femininity. She intersperses long reflections on her queer feelings for Amy Carter with dictionary entries for queer terms, news articles about lesbian marriage, media discourse about androgynous women, and so on. "I'm So Fucking Beautiful no. 2", Nomy Lamm highlights societal fatphobia and smashes it with lengthy praise of her own body and rejection of 'fat' as a derogatory word.



common experiences lounging in the security of one another. Its an interesting chasm in how we think of alternative scenes, more inside than out, but like a perpetual motion thrown into a lake, but also like a bunch of people with this shit than meets the eye. It's like a stick of dynamite movement too heavily, I'm just saying that there's more to Karen. I dont wanna highlight the guys in a girl-centered Fugazi, take part like Bikini Kill's guitarist Billy Ferguson. I wanna defend the riot grrrls like Ian MacKaye of of the same feelings I've had living as a trans and queer Wobensmith. I'm not a girl, but riotgrrrl speaks to a lot what I'm saying is that sometimes I feel like Matt

I am so sick of all this anti-riot grrrl hysteria. People are making such a big deal out of it, like they're so threatened by it. They develop these strange perceptions, as if Riot Grrrl is taking over punk and soon the castration squads will be sent in. Not that we couldn't use a few castrations here and there, but get serious everyone. People keep insisting that RG is somehow "separatist" and "sexist to men". First off, what is so wrong with being separatist? Why do you suppose people would behave that way in the first place (duh)? And so scared of the fact that others are aware of their sexism that they have to invent a scenario that makes them the victim. Until I see men being treated with the same hatred and oppression as women, I refuse to believe that men are capable of suffering sexism. Seems like every time a woman stands up for herself, people get threatened. Riot Grrrl tells it like it is, so deal with it.

The zine OUTPUNK by Matt Wobensmith is included in The Riot Grrrl Collection, an archive of zines from the movement. Wobensmith talks about his experience being gay in the punk scene, knowing a lot of other queer punks but feeling neglected by the movement nonetheless. He talks about how sexually matters to queers because having a fellow queer to look up to can mean a whole lot, in a world where you constantly feel abused and ostracized. What does this have to do with riotgrrrl? this guy's not a girl at all.

### THE GRRRL INSIDE

Make a zine. Start a band. Puncture the tires of cop cars. Stand up for people. Connect with your girl friends and help them feel bigger than the shit they have to go through, because goddamn they ARE. Be human. Be a grrrl.

Resist the internalization of capitalism, the reducing of people + oneself to commodities meant to be consumed.

of the people. As we all now know, Robin Hooch is definately not no Kevin Kostner- Robin Hood is a girl & she is your friend.

Riot Grrrl is so many things and has so much potential. we are a support & open & covert action group for any and all girls and womyn. we are coming together in full force because we know the world treats us like little girls dumb sluts Stupid whores ugly bitches old maids helpless creature PROPERTY. and we know what we really are.

and friends. We vow to struggle against the "J" word (jealousy) the killer of GIRL LOVE. We are not specail, anyone can do it. ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE FACE OF INSECURITY is a slogan of the revolution.

Riot grrrl is about uniting women. They rejected any attempt to label certain members as "leaders", regardless of their status or influence. They reclaimed the word "girl" after its rejection by second-wave feminists, specifically highlighting the problems faced by young women and teen girls, who are often silenced for being "too young". They embraced sexual freedom and bodily autonomy. They were loud about it, they wanted to shock people. Writing "pussy" or "whore" on their stomachs and screaming and sweating on stage. Riot grrrl encouraged girls to get to know each other, talk in regular meetings about their experiences as girls, open up about their trauma in ways that they never felt able to outside of the movement. Girls told girls to start bands and make zines, distribute and connect by mail, and unite with their fellow woman. RG wanted current issues changed quickly, through force if need be. They wanted revolution. They wanted it NOW!

Young women and girls found themselves trapped in a world that allowed men to do whatever they wanted, while they were meant to sit back with their legs folded and voices quiet. They took notice of the patriarchal system that feminists had been fighting for years before hand, but when turning to alternative subcultures to shelter the storm, discovered that the "progressive" politics of contemporary punks rarely differed from the norm. Boy punks crowded to the fronts of shows, showing girls out of the way with no respect for their fellow crowd member. They made jokes about rape and called girls sluts, they were racist and gay-bashing, and the girls wanted nothing to do with it.

### When the 90s media caught wind of a new kick-ass girl punk movement growing in Olympia, Washington- the first question they asked was "WHAT IS RIOT GRRRL?!"

But 90s media did a shit job, because riotgrrrl is not "feminism with a loud happy face dotting the 'i'",\* and its not professional pics of teen girls with spiked hair and torn tshirts and no bra. This misrepresentation angered the riot grrrls, once again boxed into expectations of what girls could and couldnt be, patronized and turned into a visual, rather than an idea. Riot grrrl is not just any girl-fronted alternative band\*\*, its revolution. Girl style. NOW.



\* Newsweek headline

\*\* While there are plenty of great woman-fronted 90s punk/grunge/alt-rock bands, riot grrrl is not primarily a genre of music. The main bands associated with the movement are Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, and Heavens to Betsy- whos members were all notable figures within the movement itself. The bands are a symptom, not the root