

THE YOUTH CULTURE/PUNK

The punk subculture first emerged in the mid '70s (mainly in London and New York City) as a response to the commercialization of hippie culture. Contrary to the pot smoking hippie singers, punk youths were dissatisfied with their overall situation, the lagging support of the school system and insufficient prospects in the job market induced by the economic crisis.

Bands like The Ramones, Sex Pistols and The Stooges were heavily influenced by the situation at the time, which led to punk becoming one of the biggest subcultures to date. With their aspiration for individual freedom, punks developed their own fashion. Tartan and striped patterns, studs, piercings and safety pins added on their bodies, patent leather and ripped mesh tights became punk staples. They would also dye their hair in bright colors or wear mohawk hairstyles to show their nonconformist and rebellious attitude toward society.

And even today punk still has an influence on the fashion scene. Vivienne Westwood, the mother of punk couture, continues to incorporate punk staples in every one of her collections. Meanwhile Hedi Slimane showed bold tartan patterns and patent leather in his s/s '14 collection for Saint Laurent. In 2013 the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York even dedicated a whole exhibition to the punk culture and its influences on fashion named "Punk: Chaos to Couture."

[Photo: Ad for 'God Save The Queen' single by the Sex Pistols, 1977; Getty / Cooke Key Associates / Brian Cooke / Redferns]

