“Ask a Punk”

Ambiguous Enforcement, Temporality, and the Informality of Desire in the New York City DIY Music Scene

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D.I.Y. = “Do it yourself!”

Punk / anti-corporate ethos of independence

Oftentimes transgressive, experimental, explicitly political, or “out.”

Sometimes consciously re-appropriates urban spaces
“Ask a punk”
Joe Sly
bostonbeatgang@gmail.com
What's the point

Add to circles

Hey, hear your coming to my town. Looking to check the show out? Where you playing?

Joe Sly <bostonbeatgang@gmail.com> to beespellingbee

Hey thanks for getting back to me. Too bad you were not here this weekend. Patty's day is a mad house. I am still picking green bear. The cops do break bails something wicked here. What's the address for Saturday Night. Love DIY concerts.

Joe Sly <bostonbeatgang@gmail.com> to Spelling

Say it ain't so, tonight show has been cancelled?
D.I.Y. Venues

538 Johnson
“East Williamsburg”
Active

Shea Stadium
“East Williamsburg”
Inactive

285 Kent / Glasslands / Death by Audio
Inactive

Williamsburg
D.I.Y. Shows

538 Johnson
Former doll factory, current metal treatment center. Home to loft apartments.

Shea Stadium
Above a wholesale beverage warehouse space. Home to 1 loft apartment.

285 Kent / Glasslands / Death by Audio
Former satellite building of the Domino Sugar Refinery, now Vice HQ (not for long).
ILLEGALITIES

“What’s illegal? You mean you didn’t get 100% on this un-aceable test?”

Non-licensed, non‐taxed drink / liquor sales
- More commonly enforced
- “Donation” loophole

Noise
- Most commonly enforced
- Laws are deliberately vague.
- Cops will usually tell you to shut up

Improper zoning / over capacity
- Less commonly enforced
- It’s an open secret that most nightlife venues in NYC go over capacity limits.
AGENTS OF ENFORCEMENT

FIRE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF NEW YORK

POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF NEW YORK

NYC Health

NYC Buildings

NEW YORK STATE
State Liquor Authority
GHOST SHIP (OAKLAND, CA)

- Artist collective community / show + practice space in a former cement-block warehouse.
- Notoriously dangerous building
- 36 were killed in a fire in 2016.
"An operation that swarms and shutters venues during peak weekend hours, it has been described as *unpredictable* and *SWAT-like*, employing a mystified style of enforcement that keeps venues and business owners living in *perpetual fear*. The *violations* and *fines* are often numerous, and they come all at once, meaning the *raids* are often deployed as a tool for swiftly closing bars and venues."

Political Realities of DIY Venues

Discriminatory Policing
- Predominantly white spaces are given more free reign.
- Raids often happen at historically black genre shows (hip-hop, house, etc)
- Unequal application of ambiguous laws.

Speculative/ Transient Ground Rent Capture

Greenpoint corner, 2013 vs. 2021
Thoughts?