

Opening at MAD: “Too Fast to Live, Too Young to Die: Punk Graphics, 1976-1986”

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by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

The Museum of Art and Design (MAD) is taking on the Punk Generation. On April 9, 2019, MAD opens “Too Fast to Live, Too Young to Die: Punk Graphics, 1976-1986,” an exhibition that explores the punk and post-punk movements through the lens of graphic design. Continuing on view through August 18, 2019, the exhibition will feature over 400 works capturing punk’s most memorable graphics including flyers, posters, album covers, promotions, zines, and other ephemera.

“Too Fast to Live, Too Young to Die: Punk Graphics, 1976-1986 is organized by Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, and curated by Andrew Blauvelt, Director, with the assistance of Steffi Duarte and Andrew Krivine.

“The exhibition carts punk’s explosive impact on design and examines its complex relationship with art, history, and culture,” Chris Scoates, MAD’s Nanette L. Laitman Director, explained in the exhibition announcement. “Punk questioned everything, and it’s that spirit of inquiry that is driving MAD forward today, presenting and debating innovative works and ideas with lots of energy, color, and noise.”

Originating at the Cranbrook Art Museum, the exhibition has been adapted for its arrival at MAD. Additions include selections that highlight the visual output of New York City’s punk scene including flyers from the famed East Village punk venue CBGB; early issues of Punk magazine plus concert posters and memorabilia from Blondie, the Ramones and other artists.



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“Since its rebellious inception in the 1970s, punk has always exhibited very visual forms of expression,” Andrew Blauvelt, Director of Cranbrook Art Museum and Curator-at-Large for Design at MAD, stated. “From the dress and hairstyles of its devotees and the onstage theatrics of its musicians to the design of its numerous forms of printed matter, punk’s energy coalesced into a powerful subcultural phenomenon that transcended music to affect other fields such as visual art, fashion, and graphic design.”

Arranged thematically, “Too Fast to Live, Too Young to Die” examines a variety of visual design strategies, including parody and pastiche, and techniques including appropriation and collage. The works also reveal influence from film, including science fiction and horror genres, as well as from comics as realized in punk and post-punk graphics.

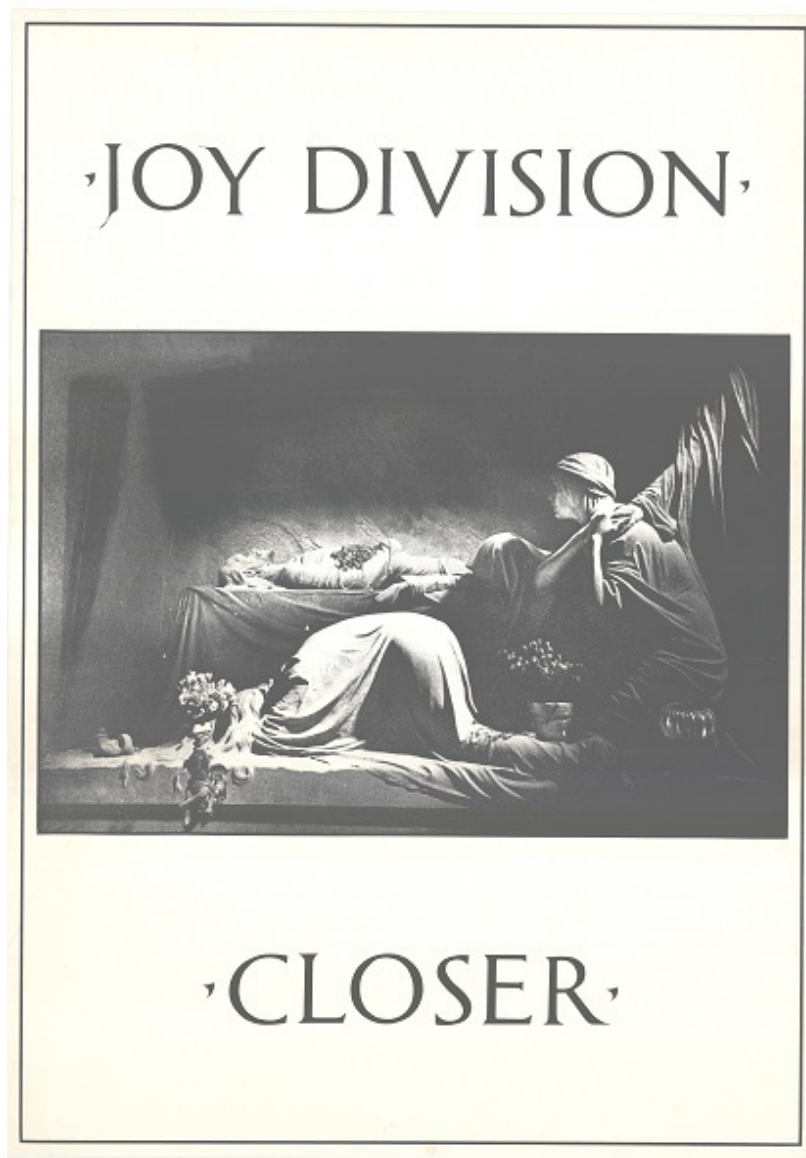


“Too Fast to Live, Too Young to Die: Punk Graphics, 1976–1986” installation at Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield, MI. Image courtesy Museum of Arts and Design.

The works exhibited range from stripped-down, black-and-white minimalism to expansive color palettes and expressive forms found in New-Wave graphics.

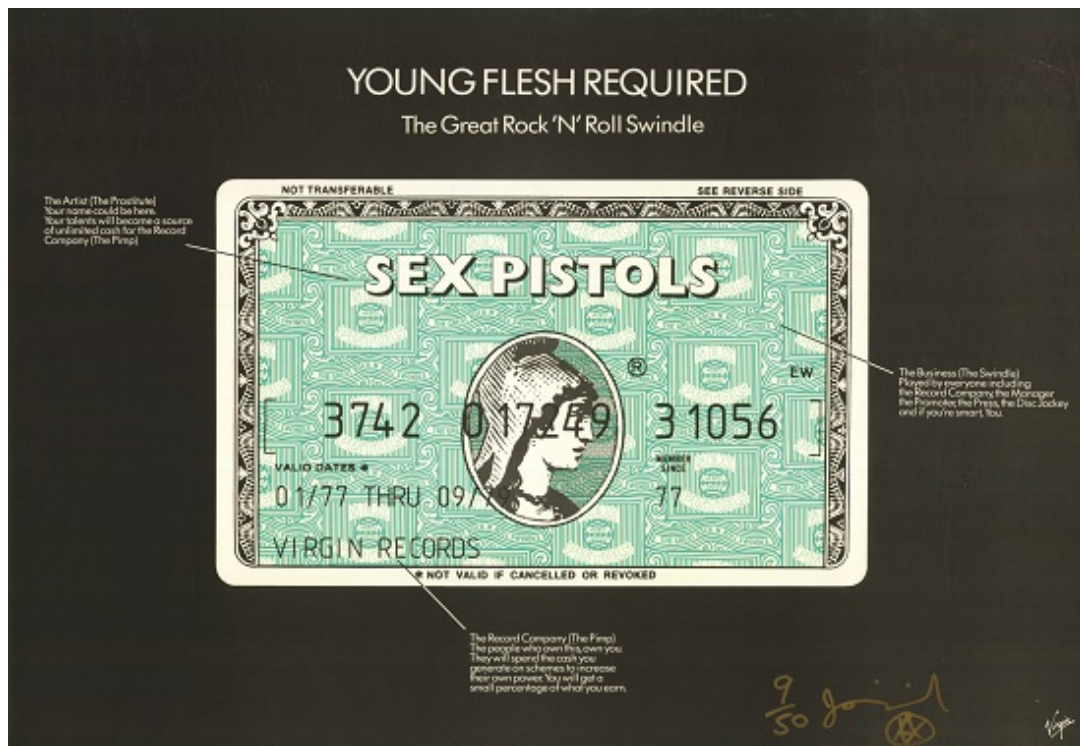
Legendary graphic designers Malcolm Garrett and Peter Saville, both of whom have work represented in the exhibition, collaborated with MAD to create original promotional materials, including a subway poster campaign, a three-story banner for the Museum’s facade and merchandise for The Store at MAD.

Garrett’s “Too Fast to Live” graphic—featuring bold black type on a metallic silver ground with a square pop of fluorescent orange—recalls his cover art for the Buzzcocks’ 1989 compilation album *Product*; while Saville’s “Too Young to Die” borrows its typographic treatment and high-contrast black-and-white colorway from his 1980 design for Joy Division’s *Closer* album cover.



Peter Saville (designer). Joy Division, Closer, 1980. Ink on paper, 24 1/2 x 35 1/4 inches. Courtesy Warner Music and Museum of Arts and Design.

A MAD member-only celebration on April 15, 2019, featuring John Rotten Lydon of the Sex Pistols, kicks off public programs spotlighting several of punk's iconic makers and agitators. Hosted by Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, co-authors of *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, events will include an evening on punk photography with David Godless, Bob Gruen, Marcia Resnick, and Paul Zone. Other events include a night of music with DJ Phast Phreddie; a conversation with Sire Records co-founder Seymour Stein and programs focused on punk fashion, band history, and more.



Jamie Reid (Designer), Trevor Key (Artwork). "Sex Pistols, The Great Rock 'N' Roll Swindle," 1979. Ink on paper, 39 1/2 x 27 1/2 inches. Courtesy John Marchant and the Museum of Arts and Design. Gallery Image: Jamie Reid. Copyright Sex Pistols Residuals.

MAD also presents a global punk cinema series, screening films from Mexico, Japan, Cameroon, and other countries. Selections underscore the variety of contexts in which punk music has galvanized youth movements for rebellion and social change.

During Museum hours, the documentary, "Please Kill Me: Voices from the Archive," will play continuously in the theater. The documentary, narrated by McNeil and McCain and compiled by filmmaker/artist Brendan Toller, includes interviews from Iggy Pop, Joey and Dee Dee Ramone, Debbie Harry, Jim Carroll, Billy Name, and others, combined with never-before-seen photographs and ephemera from Fred W. McDarrah, Adam Ritchie, Danny Fields, Bob Gruen, James Marshall, Godless, Leni Sinclair, Mike Barich, Natalie Schlossman, Zone, and Tom Hearn.

BASIC FACTS: "Too Fast to Live, Too Young to Die: Punk Graphics, 1976-1986" will be on view April 9 to August 18, 2019 at the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD), 2 Columbus Circle, New York, NY. www.madmuseum.org.

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