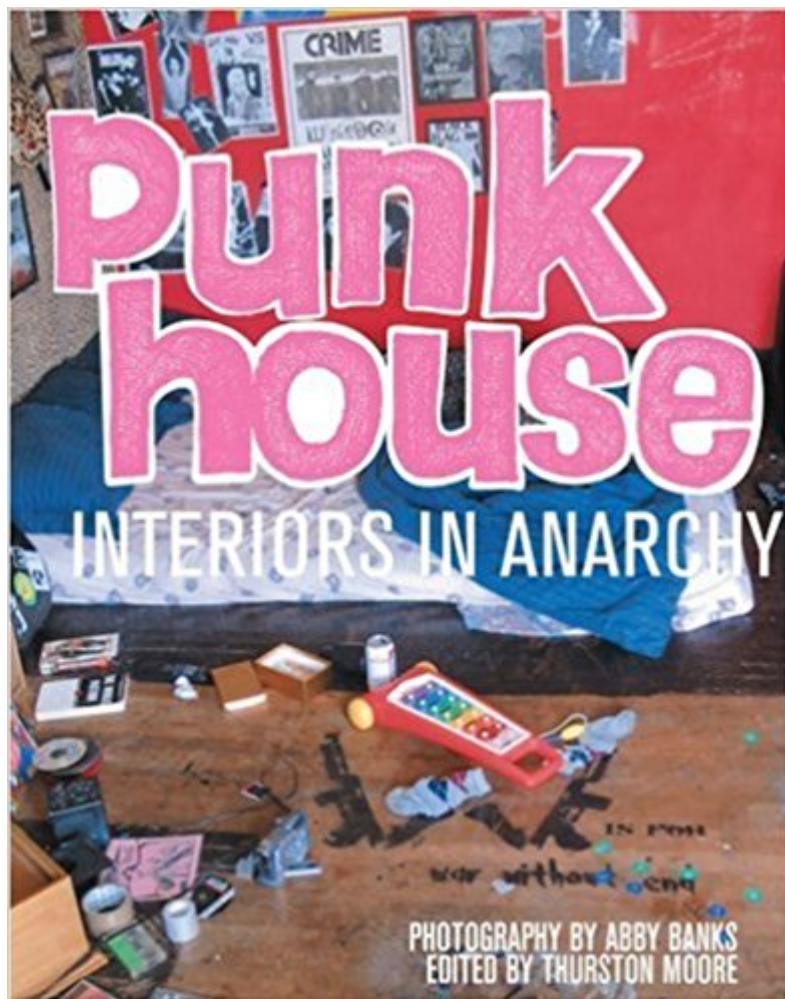


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# Punk House: Interiors In Anarchy



## Synopsis

The "punk house" may come in any number of forms. The most common type is often where a large group of like-minded punks cram into a house usually intended to accommodate two or three people, resulting in low rent and, thus, extended hours of leisure for the residents to pursue their true interests. Punk House features anarchist warehouses, feminist collectives, tree houses, workshops, artists' studios, self-sufficient farms, hobo squats, community centers, basement bike shops, speakeasies, and all varieties of communal living spaces. In over 300 images of fifty houses in twenty-five cities in the US, photographer Abby Banks finds the already weathered face of a seventeen-year-old runaway; the soft hands of a vinyl junkie (record collector); the mohawked show-goer; the dirty dishes in the sink; silk screened posters on the wall; and many other revealing glimpses of these anarchist interiors.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Abby Banks is an artist based in Brattleboro, VT. Abby traveled to over fifty punk houses across the nation in preparation for this book. Thurston Moore is an artist, poet, and musician. He is a founding member of Sonic Youth, and the editor of a book *Mixtape: The Art of Cassette Culture*.

Some art is ephemeral and I find that sad. I suspect that Abby Banks does too. Punk House provides a window into a world that most people will never see in person -- in many ways as

mysterious and remote as the Serengeti. Photography is all about access and Ms. Banks was able to get access to 42 homes across the country populated by a an insular and distinct group of people. Her photos are stark and beautiful, the layout simple and attractive -- and the result is all visual, as thick as a Sears catalog. The sad thing about Punk House is that most of these places probably won't exist next year -- it is an ephemeral culture. In photographing them, Ms. Banks has saved some bit of what they were in a style true to the subjects, with great care, and with obvious love. Punk House would have made an incredible zine but it would have been impossible to produce.

Very cool book but if I'd known there was little in writing, I might not have bought it. I love to read and in all I think the book had about six pages of writing. This book does have very good pictures though. E-8

This book gave me TONS of ideas. I read it in an alternative clothing/book store about two years ago but couldn't afford it. So I bought it online cheap. I can't wait to get my own place now :)

You'll be hard pressed to find a real negative reaction to this book. Even supposed "critiques" such as the previous review admit that the content of the book is amazing. This alone should suffice as reason to buy the book. As to the allegations stated under the heading "What We Do Is Secret: For a Reason" I have every reason to believe that they are almost totally unfounded. Having known the author throughout the process of traveling and collecting photographs for the book, I can safely attest that she did everything under the sun to obtain permission from the subjects (a process that took months) and approached the topic with utmost sincerity. A recent book tour (that took the author through many anarchist book stores, house shows, and food not bombs feedings) revealed how many people were not only satisfied with the work but also grateful that someone had taken the time and labor to document punk house culture in a tasteful and nonexploitative manner. If this book has truly made a lot of people angry, I certainly haven't met them. Nor have I come across any "Beware of Corporate Zinester" bulletins. Perhaps its because most people who've read the book recognize it for what it is; an honest portrait of a unique cultural lifestyle. My guess is that these people have learned enough from 8 years of Karl Rove than to rely on unfounded accusations and "facts by implication". Don't Believe the Hype!!! The book is the Real Deal!!!

Abby Banks, Punk House: Interiors in Anarchy (Abrams, 2007) Ever since I began to be aware of

them, I've had a very strong desire to live in a punk house. I'm long-married now and full of all those silly responsibilities, so it's probably not going to be happening any time soon, but the longing is still there. Thus, this was pretty much the perfect book for me, a photoessay covering a number of punk houses around the country. The best thing about the book, by far, is that Abby Banks gets it. This isn't your mama's book of architectural photographs, this is DIY madness. While the book is as professionally-produced as you'd expect from Harry N. and company, the photographs themselves have an appealing variance in quality that speaks directly to the punk-house mindset without ever calling into question Banks' competence as a photographer. In other words, they're not just photos of places, they're photos of philosophy, of attitude, of worldview. How cool is that? This is obviously something of a vertical-market book. If you don't get it, you won't get it. But if you do, this is something you'll leaf through time and again. Fascinating and beautiful. \*\*\*\*

I don't usually write reviews on , but I wanted to say something about this book. I found Punk House to be one of the most beautiful, colorful depictions of punk life that I've seen outside of the zine world. Living in and visiting some of these houses, they certainly don't feel as vibrantly alive as Abby Banks' photography makes them appear. I was looking over one photo of dirty dishes with a vegan cookbook, mostly torn apart from overuse, and it made me fall in love with the punks again (not that I ever fell out of love, but like you would a lover who you see in a new light after years of relationship). So much heart is captured in this book, and so much life. Fleeting life. It says somewhere in these pages that 90% of the houses photographed are now gone. Maybe not the house itself, but the people inside and what made it a punk house in the first place-punks. So few think to document their lives, thinking that they'll remember or that there will always be time to take pictures. Then, as the years go by, they find that they'd wished they'd at least had a few momentos of a time gone by. Abby Banks took the pictures for us and presented them in a tasteful manner, with permission of those featured, that captures an ongoing moment, a piece of our history, and a slice of life that is usually marginalized at best. Punks don't need to see their pictures in print to know they matter. But it doesn't hurt sometimes. Hassled by the power structures that make our lives somewhat on the fringe, we need few reminders that much about our way of life is fleeting. I lived in one of the houses featured in this book and had no fewer than 50 roommates over 8 years (not including a dozen or so dogs, 4 cats, mice (some as pets and some living in the walls)). Some of the people who lived in our house are in other countries now, some became ex-punks before our eyes, some moved on to other houses, and others simply moved on with their lives. Memories are good, but photos are more clear. However, few took pictures or thought much about the unique moment they were living in. That's

why Abby Banks' book is so important. It's somewhere between a yearbook, anthropological study, and a beautifully illustrated history book. Everyone I have talked to, including many of those that were featured in this book that live in the houses featured, had nothing but praise for this work. Criticism from within the elite statospheres of anarcho-punk are certain to come, mainly because of how professional this book looks and because it documents something that some may feel protective of. But I have to say that the professional feel takes little away from how beautiful these photos are. It is not overdone and feels mostly like it was made by punks, which is was. While feeling protective of our culture is understandable, I feel that the fact that Banks documented a piece of our history is worth the very slight "intrusion" into our dirty laundry (literally) to show us realistically portrayed in all of our beauty. We're smart, well read, active, and political. All of that is captured here. From the books we're reading to the people we're seeing. And, not to mention, we look good! No use shying away from it. Punk, not only are good people (as Thurston Moore says in his introduction), but we look good. From the dirtiest crust lord to the musician with guitar, we look good. This book is a celebration of punk culture for once done by a punk. Not by some corporate jerk trying to make a buck off of us, or some has been aged ex-punk who happened to have glory years at the right time-later to become an accountant and come back to punk when it's profitable. This done by a punk, of punks, and inside their homes. I think that means a lot. I highly recommend Punk House to punks and those interested in our culture. Abby Banks Rules! Stay punk.

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