

Discuss the
relationship between
dada and punk.

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Discuss the Relationship Between Dada and Punk. Within this essay I will be exploring the close relationship between Dada and Punk. Dada and Punk are both movements which were used to express a social change within their time, through art, fashion and music. Although the Dada movement was at its peak in 1916 to 1922 and the Punk movement started in the mid 1970s, both show the same ideologies and techniques towards they work.

Throughout the essay I will break down each of the movements into certain groups and analyzes the similarities between both of them. To understand the developments of both movements, you need to understand the environment in which they were formed. Dada started in 1916, two years after World War 1 started. World War 1 was a complicated war, involving many countries taking sides due to the conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, the conflict was brought to a head in the battle of the Somme, France, 1916. This was when many artists, writers and others took refuge in Zurich, Switzerland, which was neutral during the war, many were angry at what was happening to the world, within the book Dadaism, Huelsenbeck (2004, pg 8) stated ' None of us had any understanding for the courage that is needed to allow oneself to be shot dead for the idea of the nation...', they were disgusted by the war and the idea that the nation's public would support such violence, and they were frustrated with having no control over what was happening, a similar feeling the punks had in the 1970s. Dadaism was about rebelling against the war, they wanted to take the control back and the only way they could was through art, Huelsenbeck (2004 pg 17) quoted ' DADA means nothing. We want to change the world with nothing', it is easy to see Dadaist felt the modern world they were now living in was meaningless and so wanted to reject all traditions, especially art tradition, so <https://assignbuster.com/discuss-the-relationship-between-dada-and-punk/>

they decided to create non-art which had no meaning to go with the meaningless world, they took some control back. The Punks had a similar attitude, they wanted to take back control of their future. The Punk movement started in the mid 1970s, a reaction against the recession. A recession which affected most of the working class, due to strikes, three day weeks and lack of opportunity, very different if you compare it to the days of the 1960s, where youth culture exploded on to the scene, free love and England was swinging. Due to the recession the youth of the working class felt failed and disillusioned, a feeling shown in the Sex Pistol's song ' God Save The Queen'(1977) ' Don't be told what you want, Don't be told what you need, There's no future, no future, No Future for you'. The punks felt like they had no voice, no power and no future so they wanted to make a statement, and like Dada, they wanted to take back control and the only way they could do this was through art, music and fashion. Image 1, ' Dada' It seems both movements were angry over the situation they were living in, and people will only live under that strain until an outburst happens, and when society does snap, people will want change. For the two movements they protested, Dada protested against the War and the bourgeois nationalist who they felt was the root of the war, while punks protested against the establishment. The Dadaist, George Grosz once stated that his work was a protest ' against the world of mutual destruction', a quote which fits well with the Dadaist but also the Punks, they used destruction of tradition as the protest against the destructive world. It is clear to see that the Punk movement looked up to Dada, just looking at Jamie Reid's work and you can Dada's influence by their use of type and the DIY look, same ideologies, there was even a fanzine issue called Dada which compared Punk <https://assignbuster.com/discuss-the-relationship-between-dada-and-punk/>

to Dada, shown in 'Image 1' on the right. The Punks were well known for having left winged views, but really like most movements had many different political views. The main ideas of the movement was individual freedom and anti-establishment, Dada also had the same ideas to this affect, they believed in freedom, that's why they started in Switzerland, a neutral country, they wanted to create art in their own way without using any of the 'tradition' rules. Other Punks ideas were anti-authoritarianism, DIY ethics, direct action, non-conformity and not selling out. All relevant to Dada, but I feel the idea of non conformity Image 2,'The Punk Look' describes the movements best, the 'Image 2' best shows how the Punk didn't conform, they use shock fashion to state who they were and what they stood for, fashion like this in the 1970s scared people, no one had seen fashion like it, the safety pins, ripped edges and bondage like clothes was a very violent looking dress sense, but Punk wasn't the only movement which use shock tactics, Dada used shock art, well what would have been shock art in the 1900s, About. com (2012) stated, 'The Dadaists thrust mild obscenities, scatological Image 3, 'Fountain' humour, visual puns and everyday objects (renamed as "art") into the public eye.', the public still used to 'traditional' art found Dadaism disgusting, a example of this is Marcel Duchamp 'Foundation', Image 3 on the right, by today standards very normal by the art world but in the 1900s, ready-made art wasn't hear of, wouldn't been classed as art, and so Duchamp shocked people by suggesting this is art, begging the question 'what is art?', something which hadn't been questioned in such style. Image 4, 'God Save The Queen' Within both movements shock art was used to state they ideologies, the best two examples I feel show how the movements are similar are, Jamie Reid's 'God <https://assignbuster.com/discuss-the-relationship-between-dada-and-punk/>

'Save the Queen', Image 4, one of my personal favourites, also one of the most iconic images of the punk movement, used for the Sex Pistol's cover 'God save the Queen', and Marcel Duchamp's L. H. O. O. Q , can be seen under image5. These two image show what the movements are about, Marcel Duchamp took one of the most iconic painting and defaced it, not as a joke or because he disliked the painting but he what to state what the Dadaist believed, that traditional art had been exhausted and it was time for a change. Although Duchamp wasn't anti-art but he wanted, and I quote Elger (2004, pg 82) ' to pose new, previously unasked questions about art.... While the border regions of art had not been explored.', Duchamp used the 'Mona Lisa' as a symbol of traditional art and wanted to deface it to show the art world that he has no respects for traditions, not even for 'Leonardo's untouchable masterpiece.', Elger (2004, pg 82). Image 5, 'Mona Lisa' The same idea was used in Jamie Reid's 'God Save the Queen', (Image 4), Reid took a image of the queen, which acted as a symbol of the establishment and authority, just like the 'Mona Lisa' was a symbol for Dada, and Reid deface her by blanking out the eyes and mouth, like a common criminal to make out she, the authority, committing a crime. Just like Dada was anti-art, Punk was anti-design, looking at image 4 you can see the DIY attitude and look allowing amateur designers to create own poster and fanzines, allowing everyone to be free to create what they want, about they own opinions, this is another link to Dada, slightly with the 'Mona Lisa' with Duchamp taking a ready-made image and pencilling on top, but mostly with other Dadaist work with collage. The ransom style lettering gives a threat on the queen, and so the design is acting like a threat to authority again showing the Punk anti-establishment ideas and how they want to take down the system, just like <https://assignbuster.com/discuss-the-relationship-between-dada-and-punk/>

the Dadaist wanted to take down the idea of the traditional art system. Within the design Reid uses a union jack for the background, which adds colour to the design but also the single was released the weekend of the Queen's silver jubilee and so the union jack marks a personal attack at Britain and our tradition, as the Punks saw the queen as the enemy. Dada wasn't the only one who used the 'Mona Lisa', the Punks used her for a gallery opening, again the image was defaced, with smashed glass and spray paint, like a riot had happened. I believed they used this image not because it was a gallery opening but she was a sign of the wealth and tradition of the art world and the rest of the world to show everyone the Punk movement is here and you can't ignore it, just like Duchamp's 'Mona Lisa'. Image 6, 'Rose Selavy' Image 7, 'Soo Catwoman' Dada and Punk were not only ahead in their art work and ideas, but socially and with the role of women too. When Dada was at its peak the role of women was changing, women were working, the suffrage movement, the idea of birth control and the decline in the male population, Dada was the perfect time for women to make a stand, seeing as it was a time for change. Even Duchamp appreciated the role of women and their creative role, even to the point where Duchamp dressed as a woman, 'Rose Selavy', as seen on the left. 'Rose Selavy' was used to shock but also show there is no clear boundary between men and women, and when you look to the Punks and the way they dressed, men and women's style was very similar. Image 7 is a photo of Soo Catwoman, she is very iconic to the Punk movement, she was the ultimate Punk. The Punk movement stated by Hickman (2011), 'The women of punk conceived new ways to interact with their bodies, gender and punk culture as a whole.' the role of women in the movement was very equal for the 1970s, it was a great

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way to show to the world that women had a right and a voice, so shock fashion like Soo Catwoman really stated what the punk women stood for, and the fact they aren't these delicate creatures who should be seen and not heard. Image 8, 'Orgasm Addict' It was during the Punk movement where female graphic designers were becoming influential. Linder Sterling is a well known punk artist, designing for the 'Buzzcocks', one of the designs is image 8, like Reid, Sterling uses collage techniques and the DIY look to create the cover, sterling (1977) quoted, 'It was made in a Salford bedroom, I had a sheet of glass, a scalpel and piles of women's mags.' This technique would have been used with most of the punk designer because it adds a raw edge to the design. This DIY techniques was also used with Dada, as seen in image 9, 'The Art Critic' by Raoul Hausmann, you can see the similarities between the two image, both use collage and in image 9, the eyes and mouth have been removed again defacing the person. The idea of collage was yet enough rebellion against the art world because it was a new idea and not done before, the technique was developed due to the war because art supplies were low so they used whatever was around them and this meant collage. Image 9, 'The Art Critic' From image 8 you can see the techniques used by many punk artists, within their work they usually focus on one figure in which they deface, like in image 8, although the iron may represent the idea of a woman's role, as the iron is a symbol of the home and house work, which is a role that has been assigned to women, while the mouths on the nipples suggest an idea of sexuality and this is the only part of the woman which makes people, mainly men, happy. With image 10 Hausmann has removed the eyes and mouth because of this it has removed the humanity of the person like Sterling's cover. Also with most Punk and <https://assignbuster.com/discuss-the-relationship-between-dada-and-punk/>

Dada work primary colours would be used to make the isolated image stand out and give it more of a contrast and give it more of a harsh, violent look. In summary it is clear to see the relationship between Dada and Punk. The movements had similar backgrounds, similar ideologies and similar techniques when creating their work. The ways they protested against their situation, Dada with anti-art and the Punks with anti-design, shows the two movements linked and for Punks it seems they looked up to Dada, just looking at the similarities between Reid's college techniques compared to a Dadaism piece like Raoul Hausmann's 'The Art Critic', you can see the influence. Personally I feel the two go hand in hand, both movements hold an important place in art history, and with me, I have always loved the Punk movement and learning about Dada has helped me understand the history of art and I feel without Dada we wouldn't have Punk.