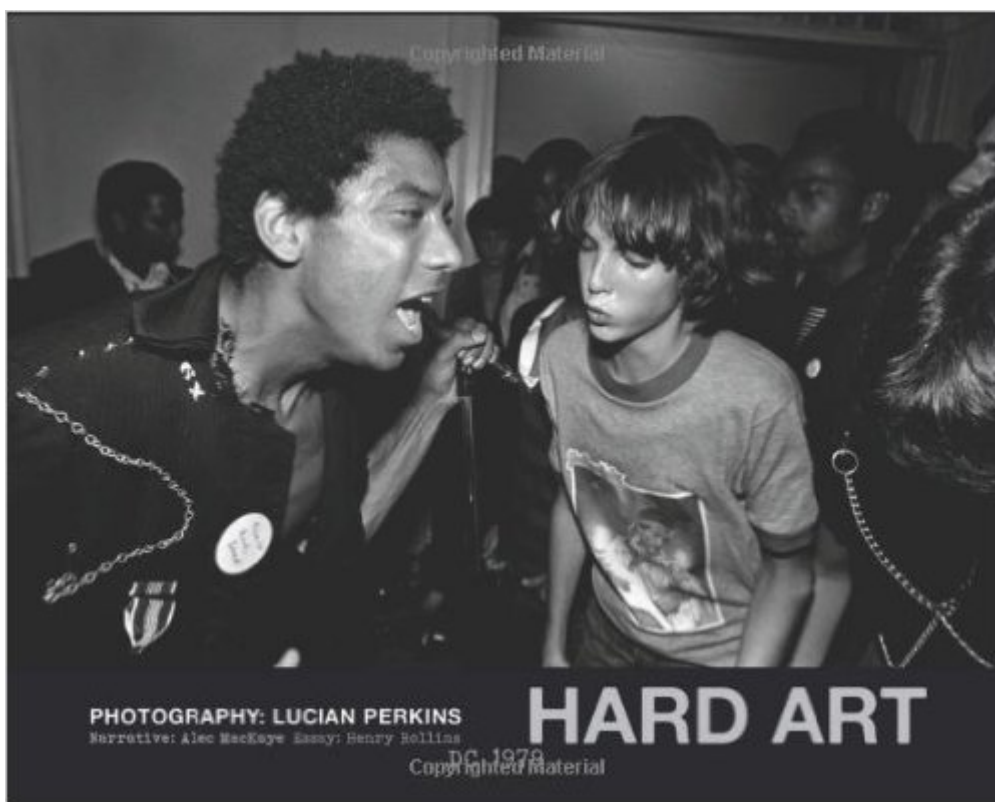


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# Hard Art, DC 1979



## Synopsis

Capital Gift 2013, DCist "Photos capturing the raw magnetism of performers like Charlie Danbury of Trenchmouth and H.R. of Bad Brains signal the power of the music. Perkins is also fascinated with the audience at these events, showcasing dingy stairwells and sweat-glazed faces. In telling shots, performers and audience blur into a frenzied mass. Musician MacKaye, of the Untouchables, gives a firsthand account of being a 14-year-old at these shows, crossing dangerous parts of D.C. in order to stand with strangers in derelict buildings and hear live music. Musician Rollins's brief essay on one of the bands, the Teen Idles, speaks to the intensity and commitment of those involved."--Publishers Weekly "What do punk rock, a Washington Post reporter and books have in common?...For the most part, nothing--except for books by Washington Post reporters about punk rock."--Huffington Post "Many punk fans will purchase *Hard Art* for the novelty of seeing H.R. as he was before Bad Brains moved to New York and became legends, or Ian MacKaye as he was before he shaved his head, and formed Dischord Records, Minor Threat, and Fugazi. The book deserves a wider readership than that. Perkins's skill as a portraitist is such that you can see the energy and potential in these young men's faces even without the context of their future roles as icons. Equally worthwhile are the portraits of those who did not become icons, but participated in the shows."--Philadelphia Review of Books "A great document for the DC scene."--TRUST Fanzine In 1979, a soon-to-erupt punk scene took hold in Washington, DC, with bands like the Bad Brains, Trenchmouth, Teen Idles, the Untouchables, and the Slickee Boys, among others, at the forefront. Lucian Perkins, later a Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist for the Washington Post, was then an intern who photographed several pivotal shows over a short period of time. His now iconic photos of these shows are complemented by punk rock musician Alec MacKaye's narrative that runs throughout the book and an essay by Henry Rollins. *Hard Art, DC 1979* is both a book and a traveling exhibition of photographs by Lucian Perkins. The exhibition is curated and edited by photographer and photo editor Lely Constantinople and Jayme McLellan, director of Civilian Art Projects, Washington, DC, with photographs being shown as a group for the first time. In 1995, Lely Constantinople was hired by Perkins to manage his extensive photographic collection spanning a twenty-five year career with the Post. While looking through negatives in his basement, she found the punk images and recognized MacKaye, her then boyfriend (now husband). She asked to make contact sheets to show him, thinking he might recognize himself and others, and was surprised by how excited MacKaye was to see the images. "Those pictures were the holy grail! Not that many people brought cameras to shows then so I always wondered who he was and what happened to the pictures he took. He was at some of the best shows." MacKaye's text offers an intimate

exploration of the moment from two perspectives: that of a fourteen-year-old experiencing music on his own terms for the first time, and a look again at a movement that fueled an underground generation musically and philosophically. His examination is not a nostalgic review of glory days gone, as much as a present conversation about the continuation of a way of thinking that still endures. *Hard Art, DC 1979* is an intimate snapshot of "the time before the time" that punk rock found firm footing in the US. These images capture the cathartic, infectious energy present in any group of people who seek to change their communities through music and art.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Even if you aren't familiar with these bands, the backstory of the Bad Brains' impact on punk or the impact of the Teen Idles and Dischord Records on the DC scene, Perkins' photos offer a fascinating snapshot of a time when it was still rebellious, even dangerous, to declare yourself a punk." All in all *Hard Art* is a pretty incredible peek at a scene that helped launch 1,000 bands and DIY labels that existed for their love of the energy and the music, not as any means to an end."--Mother Jones "A great concert photograph finds a way to communicate all the stuff your retinas can't detect. Noise. Humidity. Claustrophobia. Young minds being shaped inside sweaty skulls. Lucian Perkins captured all of that on Sept. 15, 1979, when Bad Brains unleashed its radioactivity on a scrum of artists, punks and other assorted weirdos at Hard Art Gallery, a rowhouse near 14th and P streets NW."--Washington Post (feature) "Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington Post photographer Lucian Perkins has turned his lens on everything from the high fashion runway to the Persian Gulf

War, but it so happens he also shot the heck out of D.C.'s young punk scene on one night in 1979; Call it a must for the D.C. punk historians out there."--Pitchfork/Nothing Major "Hard Art"; is another entry into the swollen literature of D.C. hardcore self-documentation. So the obvious question is, what can Perkins add to a subject? Two things: First, a very narrow and early focus. The photos document just four shows in 1979 and 1980; Second, it's only half self-documentation. Perkins, a career Washington Post photographer who covered wars from Yugoslavia to Afghanistan, photographed this scene but was not of it. As intimate as they are, his pictures benefit from a certain distance that a curious outsider can lend to his subjects: anthropological though never exploitative...capturing all the energy of those shows without trying to explain it."--Washington City Paper "The photos; capture the energy of punk and its symbiotic relationship between the performers and the crowd. (Also, we have to admit the outfits donned by rebellious youth in the '80s are truly priceless.)"--AOL Huffington Post "The live shots are stunning but the photos of the audience are just as important; reflecting a real sense of community and not just a star factory."--Giant Robot "Stick some smart, passionate kids near the halls of power and you'll probably end up with some amazing punk. Proof of that can be seen in Hard Art, DC 1979, a photobook featuring the work of D.C.-based lensman Lucian Perkins. (Henry Rollins contributes an essay.) As the title suggests, the tome collects striking images of the likes of Bad Brains, Trenchmouth, and other firebrands from the early days of the city's soon-to-be-thriving punk scene."--SPIN "A particularly interesting and important moment in musical history."--Baltimore City Paper

Lucian Perkins, a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, worked as a staff photographer for the Washington Post for twenty-seven years until 2007. While at the Post, Perkins covered many of the major events of the time, including Russia since 1988, the wars in the former Yugoslavia, the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Currently Perkins is an independent photographer and videographer concentrating on multimedia projects. Alec MacKaye is a singer and musician best known for his bands the Untouchables, Faith, Ignition, and the Warmers. In more recent years, MacKaye has focused on other artistic pursuits such as painting and writing.

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