

Kate Buck Essay – Eccentric Clothing, Little Bands, Killayoni Club,

After opening a shop in 1980 called '**Eccentric Clothing**' for fringe art & clothing, myself & four male friends decided to open an independent club in 1982 for art & live original music in Flinders Lane Melbourne CBD. It was separate to all the other established venues that were around at the time. The owners wanted a huge bond as we were so young (early 20's) & they didn't trust us, so we took out a loan for the amount & one month's rent. As we were broke artists we also had to live there & hold down day jobs to make ends meet. We called it the '**Killayoni Club**' & worked hard to set it up for bands. We installed a mixing desk & speakers & built a huge stage & painted it all beautifully. We got our tables & chairs etc. from hard rubbish & from window displays that were thrown into back alleys. When we opened for the first time, we realized we badly needed carpet on the floors as the sound was feeding back.

Being broke we nicked carpet in the middle of the night from the bank up the road which was outside & ready for laying! The sound was ok then, but we still needed spotlights to film the bands/performances etc. so we put white overalls on & took a ladder to the Myer shop window...we climbed the ladder & unscrewed the lights without raising suspicion & took them back to the club. Ditto with Beta tapes.... when we ran out & couldn't afford more, we would head to a department store & steal the promo tapes from out of the video players.

I was working as a waitress & my boss always let me take the leftover food back to the club to feed everyone. This was the height of D.I.Y. the 'punk' ethic.....we figured we were doing no harm....in fact we were providing a service to the artists. A year later when we were just getting a name & popularity for our club (in fact we had just been to court & the Liquor Licensing Commission had granted us a BYO license) some drunken patron lit a flame under the fire sprinklers & flooded the basement where the owners kept their stock of fur coats. Of course, they threw us out & unfortunately we lost our bond.

It was rare for a woman to be doing this sort of thing back then but honestly gender never crossed my mind. I just believed in freedom of expression & independence & tried my best to get on with it. I was in a band that started in the 'Little Bands' scene that would meet regularly & play experimental music in sympathetic venues, swapping instruments & making a racket! This was how a lot of us learnt how to play/perform onstage without any formal training. 'Little Bands' had a few women playing in the bands so to us it was no big deal & anyway that was what 'Punk' was all about.... not about where you came from or what gender you were. It was all about attitude & it swept away past gender definitions of the sexist '70's. It all just seemed a natural progression.... there was no political intent behind it apart from just being who you were naturally.

It did challenge the status quo obviously....people would cross the street if they saw you were wearing strange clothing/hair...they weren't used to it and they were scared for the most part. We wanted to change perceptions. Looking around nowadays there are so many office girls & bank tellers with coloured hair & tattoos.... it's become mainstream. The next wave has their own boats to rock in order to change today's perceptions & all power to them! Across the road from 'Killayoni' was a punk clothing shop run by designer Jenny Bannister. She was doing the same as us but in fashion. Missing Link Indie record store/label was also on Flinders Lane. It was a great time to be a part of the art scene & know that were part of a movement that would change things forever.