

NYU Steinhardt | Department of Art and Art Professions
Costume Studies, Exhibition Praxis

DIY *grrrl*
CONSTRUCTING, DISRUPTING, AND
RECLAIMING GIRLHOOD IN THE 1990s

January 17 – March 7, 2026

Often imagined as innocent or naïve, girlhood is a complex terrain where self-discovery and joy coexist with the pressures and restrictions of adolescence. **DIY Grrrl: Constructing, Disrupting, and Reclaiming Girlhood in the 1990s** examines how women and girls in the last decade of the 20th century confronted dominant social expectations and redefined ideas of femininity through handcraft, community building, and a Do-It-Yourself approach. With a new millennium on the horizon girlhood became a landscape of possibility rather than a predetermined stage of life.

DIY Grrrl reframes girlhood as a political condition concerned with issues of representation, bodily autonomy, and the right to self-definition. The term “girl” is understood as encompassing multiple possibilities across lines of gender, sexuality, race, and lived experience. Historical objects that pushed boundaries such as the works of Riot Grrl artist Tammy Rae Carland, the designs of Betsey Johnson, and an American Girl doll are placed in conversation with contemporary objects ranging from a home scrapbook to a SKIMS thong. Girlhood emerges in this exhibit not as nostalgia but as a contested and continually reconstructed space.

DIY Grrrl is free and open to the public.

Exhibition Credits

DIY Grrrl: Constructing, Disrupting, and Reclaiming Girlhood in the 1990s is curated by the NYU Costume Studies Masters Candidates: Erika Airikh, Ariel Bleakley, Rebecca Kaufman, Sloan Mulloy, and Kai Sweeney, under the instruction of Keren Ben-Horin.

Press Contact

Kai Sweeney
eas10102@nyu.edu

80WSE Gallery

Founded in 1974, 80 Washington Square East (80WSE), NYU is a not-for-profit gallery presenting contemporary and historical exhibitions. The gallery exhibits in two further locations, at Broadway Windows at Broadway and East 10th Street, and Washington Square Windows adjacent to the main gallery.

For more information, please visit 80wse.org or contact 80wse@nyu.edu

NYU Steinhardt

Located in the heart of New York City's Greenwich Village, NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development prepares students for careers in the arts, education, health, media, and psychology. Since its founding in 1890, the Steinhardt School's mission has been to expand human capacity through public service, global collaboration, research, scholarship, and practice.

To learn more about NYU Steinhardt, visit steinhardt.nyu.edu.

DIY *grrrl*

CONSTRUCTING, DISRUPTING, AND
RECLAIMING GIRLHOOD IN THE 1990s

ITEMS

Pink

1. Escada (1978 - Present)
Printed Pink Power Jacket, 1990s
Wool
NYU Costume Studies Study Collection,
New York University, CS.1990.090
2. Posh Hooking
Pink PussyHat, 2025
Acrylic, Yarn
Purchased, 2025
3. Bratmobile
(1991–1994, 1998–2003, 2019, 2023–
present)
Ellen Smith (b.1972), Molly Neuman (b.
1972), and Panacea Theriac (b.unknown)
photographers
Bratmobile's debut album Pottymouth,
June 8, 1993
Cardboard and polyvinyl chloride
Kill Rock Records
Purchase, 2025
5. Mimi Thi Nguyen (b. 1974)
Evolution of a Race Riot, c. 1990
Reproduction
Fales Library and Special Collections,
New York University,
Mimi Thi Nguyen Zine Collection in
Collaboration with the People of Color Zine
Project
6. Unidentified authors
Selected letters sent to Riot Grrrl, ca. 1990
Fales Library and Special Collections,
New York University,
Mark Andersen & Positive Force DC
7. Frances Duncan (b. unknown)
Original layout for a page from the zine
Grit (#1), ca. 1994
Original layout for a page from the zine
Grit (#2), ca. 1995
Original layout for a page from the zine
Grit (#3), ca. 1995
Facsimile
Fales Library and Special Collections,
New York University,
Frances Duncan Riot Grrrl Collection

Voices

4. Kathleen Hanna (b. 1968)
Excerpts from Manifesto, 1991
Originally published in Bikini Kill Zine 2, 1991
Reproduction
Fales Library and Special Collections, New
York University, Kathleen Hanna Papers
8. Jolie Ruin (b. unknown)
Slut Doll, 2025
Mixed Media
Purchase, 2025
9. Sini Anderson (b. 1969)
The Punk Singer, 2013
Two-channel video (color), 3 min. 40 sec.
Sundance Selects

Undress

10. Tammy Rae Carland (b. 1968)
Detail, **Horror Girls**, 1994
Reproduction
Fales Library and Special Collections,
New York University, Kathleen Hanna Papers
11. SKIMS (2018 – present), maker
Faux Hair Micro String Thong, 2025
Nylon, elastane, synthetic fiber
Purchase, 2025
12. Tammy Rae Carland (b. 1968)
Chest Binding, 1994.
Reproduction
Fales Library and Special Collections,
New York University, Kathleen Hanna Papers
13. Kathleen Hanna (b. 1968)
Self-Portrait Kathleen Hanna Sailor, 1994
Reproduction
Fales Library and Special Collections,
New York University, Kathleen Hanna Papers

Modeling Girlhood

14. American Girl (1986-present)
Addy Walker Doll ca. 1993
Vinyl, Cotton, Polyester fill, Kanekalon
Loan, Personal Collection of
Elizabeth Morano
15. Betsey Johnson (b. 1942), designer
Black tube dress with bows, ca. 1995
Polyester
NYU Costume Studies Study Collection,
New York University, Gift of Daniel J Cole,
CS.1990.087
16. Rebecca Kaufman (b. 2001), maker
Scrapbook, 2008
Multimedia
Personal Collection of Rebecca Kaufman

17. Valorie Lee Schaefer (b. 1960)
**The Care & Keeping of You:
The Body Book for Girls**, ca. 1998
Paper, ink
Purchase, 2025

Autonomy

18. Linda Rosier (b. 1964)
Kathleen Hanna, ca. 1991
Reproduction
19. Vans (1966 - present)
Signed Sneakers belonging to Sloan Mulloy,
2019
Cotton, rubber, plastic
Private Collection of Sloan Mulloy
20. Z-Brand (active 1990s)
“Screw” T-Shirt, c. 1990s
Cotton
NYU Costume Studies Study Collection,
New York University, CS.1990.199