

This is BLTN, a non-comprehensive bulletin of art, places, and music in Boston. Find more show reviews, interviews, and read last month's issue on wretchedpress.com.

<3 BLTN team

PLACE REVIEW: COMICAZI

It's not hard to get into comics, but if you're an adult, it's difficult to get the *opportunity* to get into comics. Someone has to pique your interest, you need an accessible shop, and you have to find a comic you like (right away). Once you're there, it's a one-way ticket to developing a love for the medium, which is wildly underrated, by the way.

If you're lucky, you like superheroes. There are so many stories to read about them, and so many niche characters to explore. But if you don't like superheroes, it'll be tougher. Don't get me wrong, there are other avenues to nerdery (they're just poorly lit). You can find indie presses printing insane art and smaller, new series telling unique stories if you look for them.

All that said, I'm not here to talk about any specific comics or characters (though the local Bad Kids Press has some cool stuff out). I want to tell you about Comicazi, the comic shop in Davis Square. Well, it's a lot more than a "comic shop," but I like the comics section best.

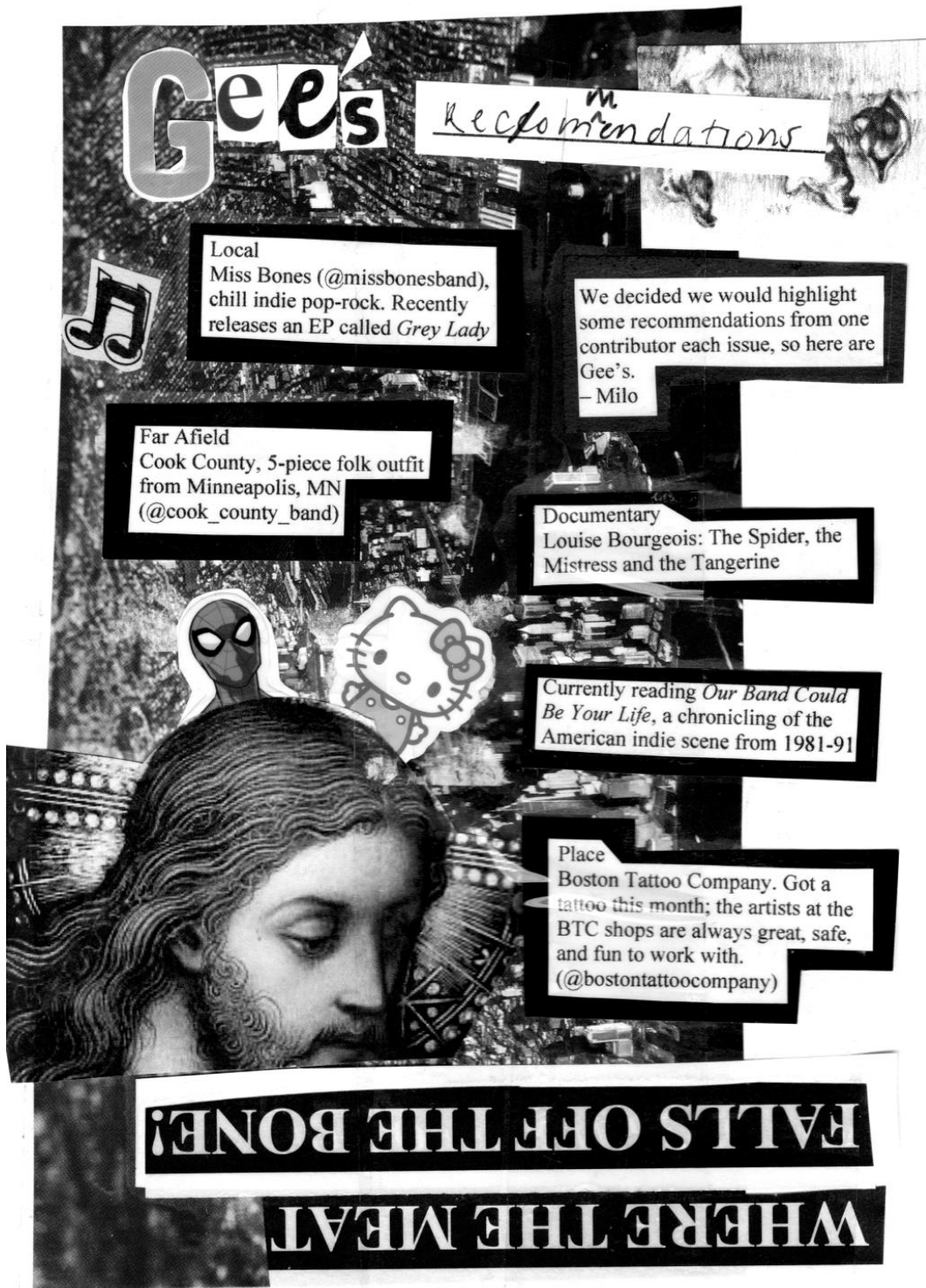
They have games, vintage art, toys, cards of all kinds, graphic novels, books and tons of other media - even pins and zines. They host/sponsor events as well, like the Ladies of Comicazi's LadiesCon 2023 and a Friday night Magic tournament.

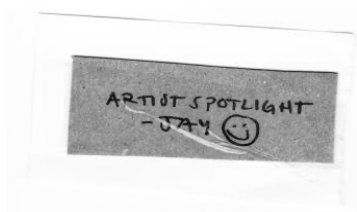
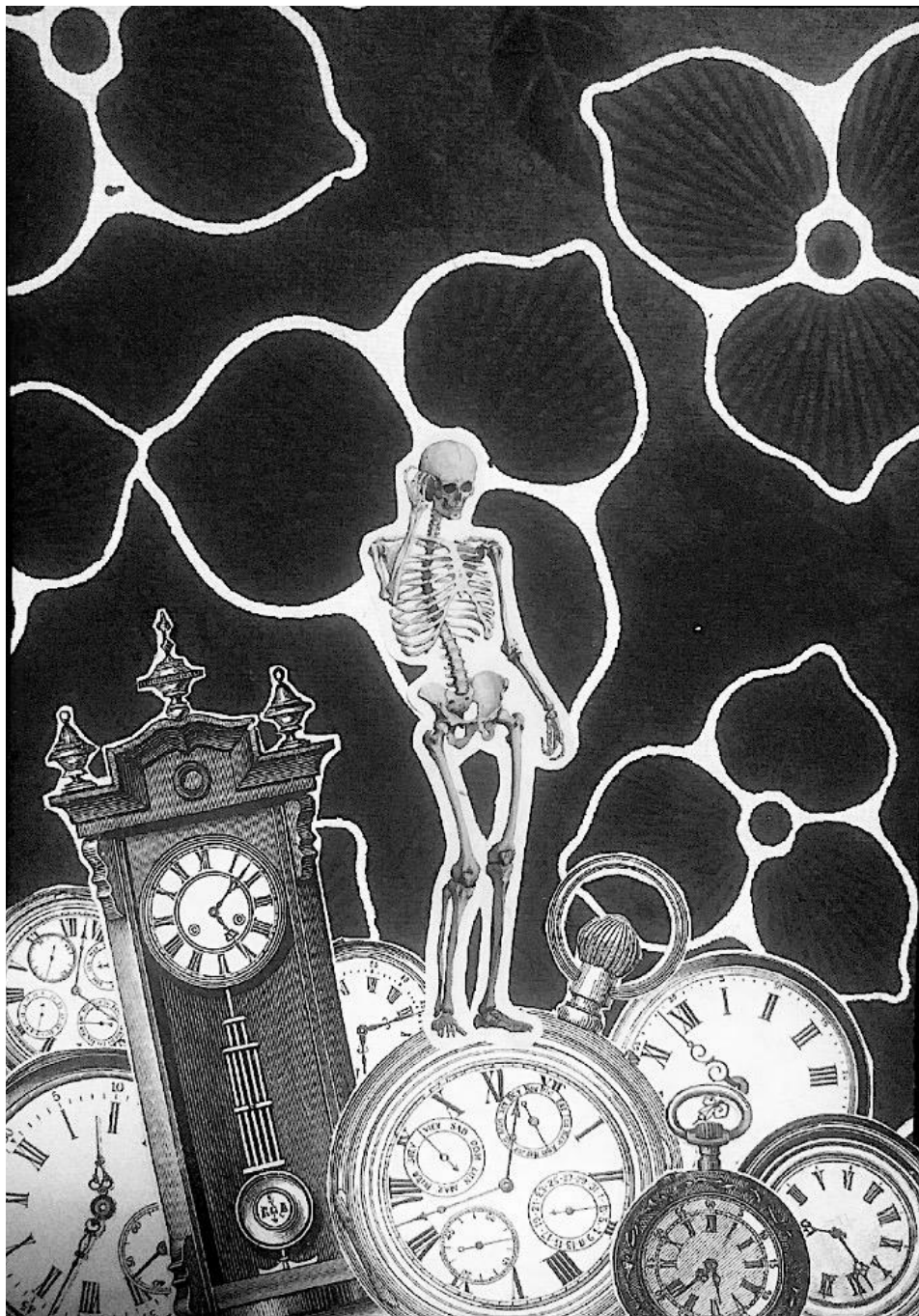
If you're ever near Davis Square, you need to visit this place. It's filled to the brim with things to look at, even if you don't want to buy anything (but you should). I recently made a little Comicazi monthly budget because I can't stay away.

Address:
407 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA
02144

@comicazi
@ladiesofcomicazi









The Burren – as part of The Burren Backroom Series – hosted The Nervous Eaters on Saturday, June 10th. They played one of the best sets I've heard this year, and I don't say that lightly. It was a masterclass on putting on a rock show – but I'm getting ahead of myself.

The Burren is an institution in Boston (well, Somerville), which sits happily in the center of Davis Square. You can find music there every day of the week, which makes it really valuable as a community space, though it is mostly just an Irish bar. If you're not a bar person, it might not be the venue for you, but the back room is set up to naturally focus everyone's attention on the stage. I appreciated that, but more importantly, I appreciated the kindness of the Burren staff. They were very welcoming and sweet to me as I set up shop at the bar, pulled out a comic book, and ordered a plate of garlic mushrooms. I was having a weird day.

I went to the show because the Nervous Eaters have an interesting history and because they're actively making music. I was surprised – and thrilled – to see their last release was in 2022, with their album *Monsters + Angels*. Though the album is a fun listen, what the Nervous Eaters are best at is playing live.

The night's opener, Dennis Brennan, is a Boston staple. If you're in the scene, you'll probably run into Dennis at some point, because he is very talented and seems to know everyone. Dennis has a gorgeous voice. He's not flashy about it, but he's an all-around musical person. He played a great, low-key opening set.

I mentioned earlier that the show was a masterclass, and I mean it. The Nervous Eaters are much more professional than I expected, and I had high expectations. Everything about their set was tight, including their harmonies (three-part), and improvisations. They didn't go over-the-top with anything, but their talent is undeniable. They were...*tasteful*. It was refreshing.

I could go on and on about the mix in the room (fantastic) and their obvious ease on the stage, but I want to highlight a couple things: their inter-member communication and the ageism we tolerate in the music community.

These people know one another and can predict one another. It's something you see with many bands, I'll admit, but with the Nervous Eaters, I found myself a little awestruck. Like most professional groups, they communicated quietly and well. There were no awkward moments, and I never felt like any member got lost. Part of that is practice, of course, but a lot of it is intuition and years of understanding your bandmates. I didn't hear many mistakes, but I wouldn't be surprised if something *had* gone off the rails and I just didn't notice.



Though the original crowd was smaller, by the end of their set, several more people had coughed up the \$20 cover (steep, but worth it) who didn't seem familiar with their music. The center of the room, previously empty, had bodies in it – dancing bodies. The dancers, many quite young, were really going for it. It was great to see.

That said, the best people in the room were original fans. I mentioned before that I started the night in the corner with some mushrooms and a comic book, but I was quickly adopted by two punk rock elders who were by far the coolest people I've ever met. One of them has a metal music podcast, and the other spent the time between sets telling me about watching the band cut its teeth in a disgusting punk bar in the 70s. She bartended.

One of the first things said to me was "I'm 75 fuckin' years old," like it was the best thing you could be. Honestly, she might be right. The Nervous Eaters are in the same age bracket, and the practice/years they've put into their instruments is obvious. They're stupidly good at what they're doing.

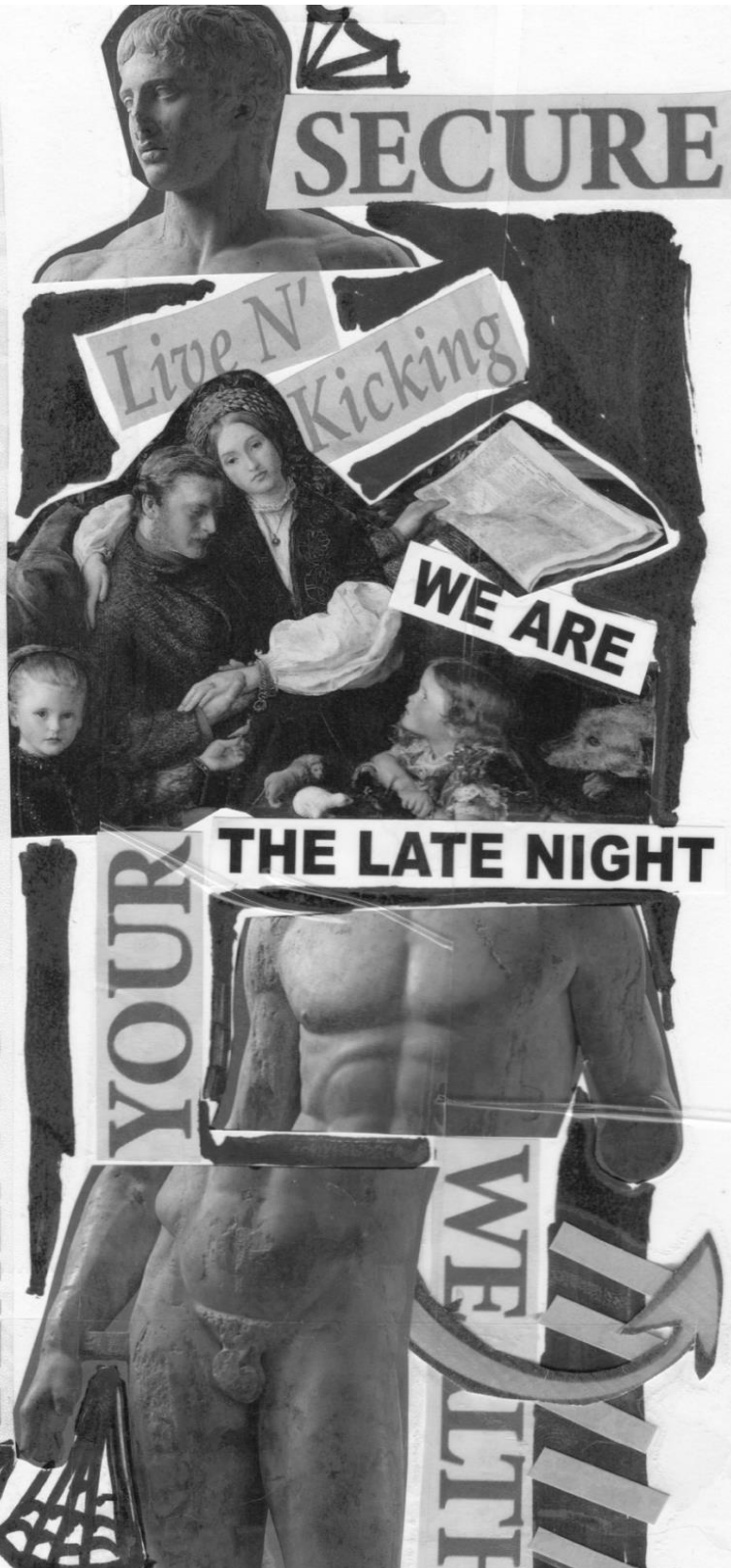
I sometimes worry about young bands because they often have a "tightrope" vibe while playing. It's like they know, and know we know, that something's going to go wrong. Maybe someone's staring at their instrument, desperately hoping they play the right notes, or maybe the mix is really, really bad, etc. I just want everyone to do well. I get anxious.

I was so relaxed at this show. I even let my new friends pull me into the center of the room to dance. I want every band in the area to see these people live. The show was fun, impressive, and the band just looked *comfortable*.

There are so many things the scene can learn from the older crowd. I wish I saw them out – en masse – more. There are music-specific lessons you can take away, of course, but their sheer lack of shame and bravery is liberating. They are *way* more punk rock than the rest of us and it's high time we admitted it.

Anyway, my point is this: go to these legacy shows. Maybe you'll learn something.

BENEFITS THAT WORK FOR YOU



EDITOR'S

NOTE

I used to write for a proper magazine - one with a purpose and something to prove. It wasn't an awful experience, but it wasn't a great one either. It was something I had to do to learn how to write inoffensively. In some ways I'm trying to unlearn the lessons I was taught during that time, but I will say that formal training in any art is generally beneficial.

Yes, sometimes it *does* warp your sense of self, but that comes with the territory.

For example, after years of journalistic writing/academia, I sound like this in real life. Unfortunately, I've learned to hide the worst of it.

If I hadn't tried so hard, do you think I'd be more tolerable? Would I want to be?

No use asking these questions, not now. At least I'm doing some rebelling these days. I'm using the toolbox I have to finally create something I believe has a net positive impact on my community.

It is terrifying, though. Becoming oneself is a painful process, especially if the person you're becoming also needs to be an adult. It's a long process, too. You start with big questions: Who am I? Why am I? And move down the funnel.

Eventually, you come to questions you've tried hard to ignore: Am I queer?

(If you're *there* then yeah, honey, you probably are.)

Once you've gotten over yourself, you move on to others. How do you treat them? How have they treated you? Who do you need to cut out? Who gets another chance, gets to learn that they hurt you?

Anyway,

I am envious of naturally brave people. I started this project terrified. I am still scared, because I've made it so you can truly see me.



EDITOR'S NOTE CONT.

But sharing art requires the sharing of oneself; I knew that. I've got no one to blame but myself.



I can't tell you what to do with your little piece of me. I'd like you to take care of it, but you don't have to. I don't want to impose. That said, this is not much to bear right now - I'm only these few words. We're only on the second issue.

This is a tender and sprouting thing. I expect this publication's focus and aesthetic will change and grow as its contributors do. Even the differences between the first and second issues are wild. I'm excited for the 15th issue, the 21st, 30th.

Most zines - I'll cop to it, that's what this is - have a really specific focus. We should too, and we're working on that. We're just having trouble keeping it brief.

If you have suggestions, please email us (bltnn.info@gmail.com). We'd like to put a couple album or art reviews in the next issue, but feel free to suggest anything.



KRASH!



L → R

A man who owns loafers and several expensive tie pins.

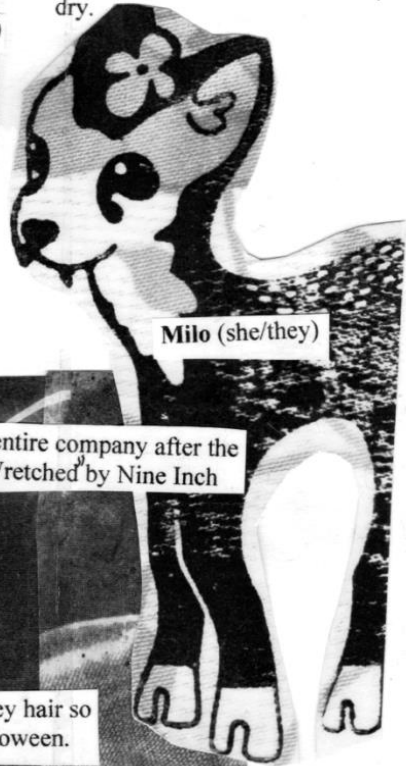
They're into tarot right now but keep giving ominous readings.

A PhD student whose degree program is sucking his creativity dry.



peanut (he/they)

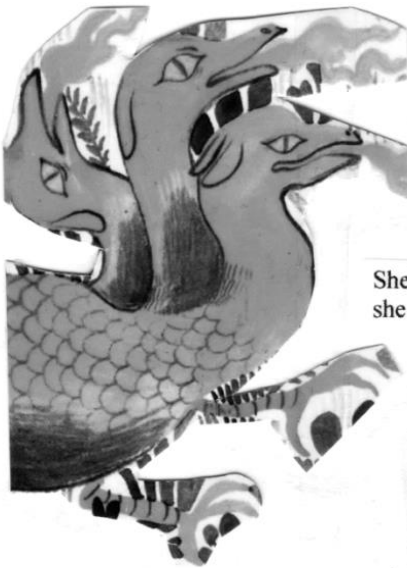
No more mohawk but the vibes remain.



Named an entire company after the song "The Wretched" by Nine Inch Nails.

Maggie (she/her)

She's growing out her grey hair so she can scare kids at Halloween.



Because we're an independent publication, we'd like to say: tell the police nothing, tell the paramedics everything, and asking for help is the beginning of your upswing.

WRETCHED PRESS