



NERVOUS GENDER -> NERVOUS GENDER RELOADED
an evolution of style



I was born in Dublin in 1957 and carried to London as a child, an Irish family in England during the years of the bombings, which is to say we learned early what it meant to be visibly wrong in the eyes of the street.



From London to Luton, from Luton to Cardinal Newman Catholic school, and in 1972 across the ocean entirely, to Glendale, California. I arrived a glam rocker, devoted to Bowie and Van der Graaf Generator, in loons and long hair, dressed for a scene that barely existed where I landed.





I went back to London for foundation courses in art at East Ham, and contemporary art rearranged something in me permanently. Money sent me home again, this time to fashion school, and from there into the trade: assistant designer, then head designer, producing for Sears and JCPenney. Having done everything in my life to avoid working in a factory, I found myself working in a factory.



Then punk arrived in Los Angeles, and I saw the Screamers. That night ended one version of me. I gave away the loons, cut my hair, and went looking for work that matched what I had just witnessed.

I found it running the design room at Poseurs on Sunset, producing the

wardrobe of the moment: bondage pants, plaid kilts, studded straps, leopard print with zippers. Those were not my designs, but I was proud to help make them well. They were the look of a scene finding itself, and I was part of the machinery that dressed it.





Punk gave a generation a shared language of dress, and there was real power in that; you could recognize your people across a crowded room.

But languages invite dialects. So while I ran the design room by day, I made my own work at night,



sold through Neo 80 and Tiger Rose: surrealist pieces in fake cowhide, closures shaped like bones, what I affectionately called new wave Fred Flintstone. It was ridiculous on purpose. It was also mine.



By then I was performing with Nervous Gender, and onstage the clothing became something else again:

militaristic S&M gear with a genuine edge of menace. We were making music with no interest in being liked, synthesizers where guitars were supposed to be, blasphemy where choruses were supposed to be,



and the clothes
did the same
work the songs
did. They refused
the comfort of
category.



Poseurs moved to Melrose and I stayed six years, but my designs had long since outgrown what the shop could sell. At Black Sealed I finally had complete freedom, and for two years I made minimal, austere clothing, proto-goth before the word had settled. By the late eighties I had



stepped back from the scene, though I never stopped designing. I made clothes for one client only: myself.





It took the formation of Nervous
Gender Reloaded to bring me back
to the stage, and this time...



... there is no
design room to
answer to, no
rack to fill, no
scene deciding
what rebellion is
supposed to look
like.



The music
reaches backward
and forward at
once, and so does
the clothing.





What you
see in
this
display is
fifty
years

of a single
argument: that
punk's great
gift was never
any particular
garment.



It was the
permission to
make your own
uniform,

and the
freedom to
forge your
own
reality.





**PUNK MUSEUM @ THE GOETHE INSTITUT
LOS ANGELES, CA 2026**

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Gender Reloaded

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