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# Why I love NYC: Le Tigre

The New York rockers and feminist icons share their favorite spots throughout the city.

By Karen Iris Tucker Mon Mar 28 2011



whyiloveNYC01letigre

Though its members were bred elsewhere, feminist electropunk trio Le Tigre is firmly rooted in New York City: Frontwoman Kathleen Hanna resides downtown, guitarist Johanna Fateman lives in Harlem, and keyboardist JD Samson represents Brooklyn. The band even featured an ode to the city's subway system, "My My Metrocard," on its 1999 self-titled debut album. The group has been on hiatus since 2006, but fans clamoring for a fix can relive Hanna & Co.'s frenetic live performances with the upcoming release of Who Took the Bomp? Le Tigre on Tour, directed by Kerthy Fix (Strange Powers: Stephin Merritt and the Magnetic Fields). The documentary, which is out on DVD on June 7, follows the band's 2004 tour, and celebrates the trio's ability to lyrically pulverize homophobic bigots, Rudy Giuliani and misogynistic jerks—all while playing fun, danceable beats. The Museum of Modern Art will show the film on Monday 4 (as part of the exhibit), with Hanna and Fateman on hand for a postscreening Q&A. We asked the band where they find inspiration in NYC.

#### **KATHLEEN HANNA** Queens Museum of Art

"I love the diorama of New York [The Panorama of the City of New York]. It's [twice the size of] a basketball court and the lights work. It makes you feel like [you're in] *Gulliver's Travels*. It's like you're this huge person and the city becomes very small. I like the way space changes when you're in there. Part of it is because I'm from the Northwest; I'm used to walking into these huge spaces. New York has always felt like a big city but with little spaces. I'm used to it now, but when I first came here, and the Kmart on Astor Place got built, I hung out there a lot because it was really big. [Laughs] Jo and I actually went to the grand opening." New York City Building, Flushing Meadows--Corona Park, enter at 111th St and 49th St, Flushing, Queens (718-592-9700, queensmuseum.org). Wed--Sun noon--6pm; suggested donation \$5, seniors and students \$2.50, children under 5 free.

## Joe's Pub at the Public Theater

"It's kind of a grown-up place to go because there's chairs, and you can eat while you're watching a show. I've become a crazy groupie. I got to know a lot of the performers, including Kenny Mellman of Kiki and Herb. We became good friends and now we're all collaborating and in a band together. I just have such a good time when I go there. I actually once got to go to Yoko Ono's birthday party at Joe's. I was having a really hard time that week; everything was going wrong. I was standing by the corner of the stage and she was singing a song where she was just like, 'It's gonna be all right/It's gonna be all right,' and I had tears running down my cheeks." 425 Lafayette St between Astor PI and E 4th St (212-539-8778, joespub.com). Next Our Hit Parade show: Apr 27 at 9:30pm; \$20.

## JOHANNA FATEMAN

## Seagull Salon

"Aside from being a shameless plug [Fateman is a co-owner of the salon], it's actually a labor of love having to do with the idea of community: the old-fashioned beauty parlor as a secret world where women exchange ideas, gossip and feelings. A cultural hub. As the band stopped touring, it kept me linked. People visiting the city come to check in, get their hair cut, have a real conversation. There's a mythical New York: The West Village is famous for artists; the West Side for gay liberation. Now, it's kind of luxury condos on the water. Seagull is a pocket of the old Village where I meet up with writers, musicians and neighborhood people." 240 W 10th St between Bleecker and Hudson Sts (212-989-1807, seagullhair.com). Tue, Wed, Fri, Sat 11am--9pm; Thu, Sun 1--9pm.

## Participant, Inc

"It's a not-for-profit gallery, an alternative art space. The director, Lia [Gangitano], is a good friend of mine. She used to be the curator of Thread Waxing Space. I was her assistant before I quit to go on tour full-time with Le Tigre. It's still this very alive part of the art world for me that's not commercial. I guess the party line would be "underrepresented art," which doesn't have enough exposure within the commercial gallery system. It's definitely not the Damien Hirst art world. It's people really committed to what they're doing. It just doesn't feel like big money there." 253 E Houston St between Norfolk and Suffolk Sts (212-254-4334, participantinc.org). Wed--Sun noon--7pm; free.

## JD SAMSON

## Minetta Lane

The subway

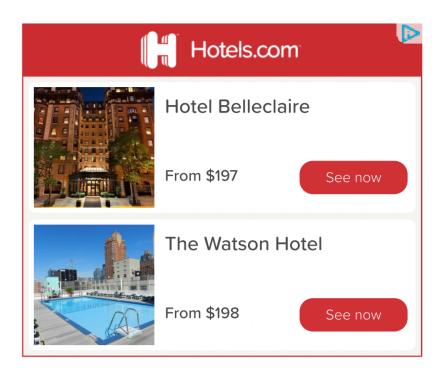
"This quiet alley is a weird gem of the city. I was lucky enough to live [near] there for a little while a really long time ago, like in 1999. I think it's a beautiful place. You just step onto this tiny street and all of a sudden you're in a totally different city. It almost takes you back to what New York was 100 years ago." Minetta Ln between Sixth Ave and MacDougal St

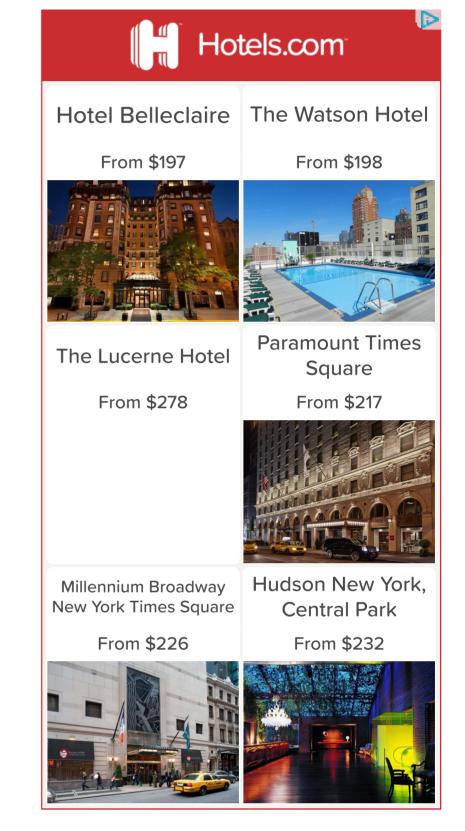
"In the train, you can't really use your phone, so people just have to look at each other. I've gotten really good at looking away at the right time—before [people] find out that I'm staring at them. I love looking at other humans. I'm inspired by seeing all the people moving around and going to work, and wondering what they're doing."

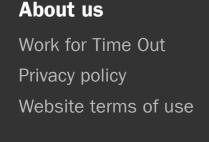
HOT TOPIC! Who Took the Bomp? Le Tigre on Tour screening and Q&A, Museum of Modern Art, 11 W 53rd St between Fifth and Sixth Aves (212-708-9431, moma.org). Mon 4 at 7pm. Film tickets free with museum admission; screening only \$10, seniors \$8, students \$6, children under 16 free.

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