

Sorry, Punks: The Mission's All-Ages Punk Venue Has Shut Down

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Daniel Bromfield | Photo: Courtesy SF Weekly | July 9, 2015

SUB-Mission submits to landlord, but regulars vow "The scene will never die."



Southern California punk band Dangers at a SUB-Mission show earlier this year.

It's the final night for SUB-Mission. In the shadow of towering, psychedelic murals in the back courtyard, teens and older punks light smokes, laugh, yell, and get ready for the multi-band blowout that will be the last for the Mission's beloved punk rock venue.

Two in the crowd—Fabrizio Incerti, drummer/vocalist for psychedelic rock band Clumsy, and his friend Sam Velarde—suggest rallying slogans for the soon-to-be-scattered contingent of SUB-Mission regulars. "#Submissioninexile" is Incerti's suggestion; Velarde's is simply "Free SUB-Mission!"

SUB-Mission began as an art gallery known as Balazo 18, but it soon expanded to hosting local and small touring bands. Most shows are only \$5, in line with the venue's adamantly non-profit stance. But with rents in the Mission skyrocketing, non-profit began to mean non-viable. "The landlord was willing to negotiate, but he wanted to charge \$40,000 just to sit and talk with him," said the current space manager, who goes by Kay Two. (We asked for his real name and he told us "Lou Sypher," so that'll teach us.) "That wasn't guaranteeing we had a lease when the meeting was over. So we decided not to burn that money."

This isn't the only Mission music venue to give up the ghost lately: the Elbo Room is still fresh on everyone's mind. But SUB-Mission is one of the few with an all-ages policy, which always provided a starting point for local teenage

bands. All three members of Clumsy, which formed in 2013, are only 17; they played many early shows here. "Even if you snag a show [at a 21-and-older club], if the majority of your fanbase and friendbase can't get in you're a little screwed," said bassist/keyboardist Adam Wilson.

Spencer Owings plays in three of tonight's bands, an incestuousness that points to a larger truth about the venue: there's a scene at SUB-Mission, a small one but a tight one. He's in the Strangers, punk band Pit Stains, and psych-pop group Mayya and the Revolutionary Hell Yeah. He only recently turned 21 and if not for SUB-Mission would have been without many of his best bookings. "This was a place to come together as underage people and collaborate in a live environment," he says. But that's all in the past now: "Landlords would rather have tech people than grungy dudes opening a rock venue."

Kay Two is more optimistic, citing the positive feedback on the [GoFundMe account](#) he's set up for potential relocation. He's eyeing a few new locations at the moment, though nothing definitive has come up yet. "We have a lot of supporters, which gives me some hope."

Even if SUB-Mission fades away, its regulars mean to take their scene elsewhere. Clumsy and Owings' other band Kabara are rapidly becoming regulars at [the Honey Hive](#), a similar DIY venue in the Outer Sunset that opened in 2013. "We're all still around," says Clumsy guitarist/vocalist Matthew Horton. "We all know each other. We're going to keep going. The scene will never die."

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