



JIMI SIMMONS

Julie Kramer holding prints of Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth and Chrissy Amphlett of Divinyls.

# Photo exhibition recalls a time when WFNX's Kramer, rock artists clicked

By Chris Triunfo  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Last year, Julie Kramer found herself surrounded by people and photos she hadn't seen in years. Throughout the '80s and '90s, Kramer — a seasoned photographer and former radio personality at WFNX — spent much of her time snapping photos of the artists that came through the alternative-music station: Debbie Harry, Paul Weller, the B-52s, Joe Strummer, Paul Westerberg, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Iggy Pop, Lou Reed, and Elvis Costello, to name a few. Once they were done being interviewed on air, she'd invite them to take a walk around the station's Lynn studio while taking pictures of them doing just about anything. WFNX went off the air in 2012, and the community it once fostered dissolved. But last year, station alums and listeners reconnected around photos that Kramer had dug out of storage and put on display. For her, it was an emotional and nostalgic moment. That's what she is trying to bring back with her second photo exhibition, opening Saturday at the Boston Center for Adult Education. Titled "The Basement Archives: The Ghosts of WFNX, Volume II," the exhibit will feature more than 100 images. The Globe chatted with Kramer about her time at WFNX and the origins of those archives.

**Q.** This is the second exhibit featuring your photos from WFNX. How did this all come to be?

**A.** We did the first one back in October, and we called it "The Basement Archives" because I had stored all my photos, cameras, and everything related to that part of my life away. Then my boyfriend found it and wanted to know if we could do something with it. We built out a space in Lynn, right around the corner from where the WFNX studio used to be, and created an environment that felt perfect for the exhibit. It was such a beautiful night. All the old DJs came, listeners were there, and everyone was just sharing stories. Some people were crying — tears of joy of course.

**Q.** You mentioned that you had to unearth your old photos and equipment. How did it feel when you started pulling everything out?

**A.** I was pretty indifferent at first. But then as my boyfriend and I were taking the photos out and looking at them, I started telling some fun stories and I realized I should definitely share them. I also found this big box filled with negatives. So we rented a darkroom, and we just started making prints. It was then that I realized just how much I have actually acquired over the years.

**Q.** Besides taking photos, you were also an on-air personality at the station. What was that experience like, and what is your relationship with radio?



LOU REED



IGGY POP



BJORK



LENNY KRAVITZ



LIZ PHAIR



PHOTOS BY JULIE KRAMER

KURT COBAIN and DAVE GROHL of Nirvana

**A.** I started radio back in college, over at WHJY [in Providence] part time. Then I went full time at WGIR in New Hampshire. After that I ended up at WFNX. Now I'm the music director for Indie617, an on-line radio based in Boston. But during my time at WFNX, I was part of a station that was at the forefront of alternative music. I was there for almost 25 years, and we broke so many bands. Nirvana, Florence and the Machine, Hole, Mumford & Sons. It was a time when the station was so focused on developing new artists, and we were just ahead of the game.

**Q.** How would you describe WFNX's community?

**A.** It was so creative, and so inspiring. It was truly just a big family. We did work all day and then we would go out five, six nights a week, going to see shows and local bands. It was so special, but the funny thing is that you don't realize it when you're in it. Now I look back and realize it was one of the best times in my life.

**Q.** It's amazing that you thought to document it all with these photos, despite not realizing that.

**A.** It really is. That's exactly what I was doing, I was documenting everything. I was able to always have my camera there. Two cameras, actually — one with black and white film and one with color film. In my head, I was just taking pictures. Now, I look back at these with a sense of nostalgia, and I have an entirely new perspective on it.

**Q.** So do you think there will be a third volume?

**A.** Well we definitely have enough photos. I'm also looking at making a book filled with the images and the stories that go around them. It's a lot of time-consuming work, but worth it.

*Interview was edited and condensed. Chris Triunfo can be reached at christian.triunfo@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter @triunfo\_chris.*

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