



*contortion*  
*mag*

*Cameron Irish*

# *The Origin of Screamo*

Screamo (Or Skramz when referring to the new wave of Screamo) is a term used to describe a genre of music deriving from hardcore punk which began in the late nineties. To understand the origins of this sub-sub-genre we must look at its name through an etymological lens. Screamo, an amalgamation of “scream” and “Emo” helps trace its origin to the Emo sub-genre of hardcore. Emo, is of course, also an abbreviation originally standing for Emotional Hardcore, then abbreviated to Emocore, then simply Emo.

Emotional Hardcore, or first-wave Emo originated in the eighties DC hardcore scene with bands like Rites of Spring, Moss Icon, Embrace, and Dag Nasty who felt that hardcore was too angry and wanted instead to express their sadness.

This was done through slowing down songs, making them more melodic, and having lyrics focusing more on interpersonal struggles and self-reflection; and with this Emo was born.

Later, in the early 90s, this formula was done again, bands like Sunny Day Real Estate, Texas Is The Reason, and Cap 'N' Jazz took emotional hardcore, and made it slower, more melodic and more whiny, creating second-wave Emo.

Once again, people felt like this didn't fully connect with them. This was too slow, too whiny, and arguably couldn't even be considered hardcore anymore. So bands, like Antioch Arrow, and Heroin blended the idea of interpersonal lyricism from Emo and blended it with the explosiveness of Power Violence, a genre known for extremely fast tempos, short songs, and yelled vocals; Gaining the name Emo Violence.

As these bands grew in popularity, so did the amount of bands emulating and developing their sound. By the late

nineties bands like Orchid, Saetia, and Pageninetynine had established themselves and developed the genre's now characteristic screeching lyrical styling.

By the mid 2000s this genre had all but died out, but its name remained. Bands with no connection to this scene began to be labeled as screamo, for having similar, yet distinctly different vocal styles. This coupled with most of the original bands breaking up, worsened the problem of misuse of this term.

Pop bands like Panic! At The Disco, and Fall Out Boy began to be labeled to be labeled as Screamo and Emo whilst being made fun of by both the mainstream, and the underground.

This quickly resulted in what was left of the original Emo scene dying out.

Following the COVID-19, this genre was miraculously revived through bands like Vs Self, Catalyst, and Knumears gaining large underground followings through TikTok. This inspired a whole new generation of people to listen to and make screamo music creating an explosion of new screamo bands.

This new wave was dubbed Skramz to separate themselves from the often misused term Screamo, though both terms are still used. The last four years have seen this scene flourish and expand all across the world.

Today, Skramz is hard to characterize, its most fast and, it's mostly loud, but many bands have pushed against this and expanded what Skramz could be by blending the sound with other genres. Being an active member in the New York City scene I would describe the scene as extremely caring, often doing charity events and releases, and extremely unserious as the irony of beating each other up in the moshpits to song about introspection seems to be intertwined into everything from the merch, to song titles.





Greatest Hits: Vol 2  
xclocktowerx



Demo  
Ted Williams



Everything Wants Me  
To Write in Cursive  
onewaymirror



Sisters of The Blessed  
Sacrament  
herlovebeheadsdaises/edith pike



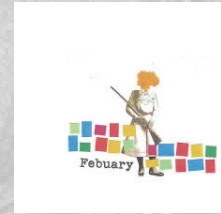
Demo  
Coquette



Split  
silk/BLOUSE



Split  
beforeyouleave/  
septemberistheonlytimeidontthinkofyou



February  
February



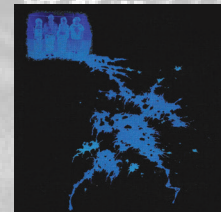
Self-Titled  
Widowdusk



Artificial Bouquet  
Frail Body



Solace  
solace



Bled Out and Painted Blue  
Clay Birds



The Lights Never Lie  
bulletsbetweenounges



Daughters of Eve (Demo)  
daughters of eve...



And When I Close My Eyes,  
Im Still Spinning  
/hospitality/



Rosary Promises Lead Us To  
Inconsistant Damnations  
Law of Inertia



Demo  
my hands yr heart



fire dOve/ xO  
OLTH



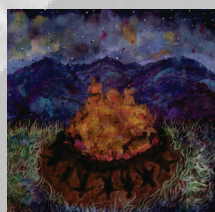
We Have The Answer  
Heavenly Blue



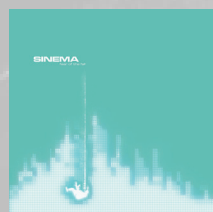
Breakup Songs  
GXLLIUM!



A Fenestrated Fantasy  
silk



Obsidian Wreath  
Infant Island



Fear of the Fall  
Sinema



I Will Turn, I Will, I Will  
Sesame



# *Releases of The Year*

*(In my opinion)*

From the explosive to the somber, 2024 saw many incredible releases. Connecticut-based mathcore inspired band xclocktowerx's incendiary 3 song debut release *Greatest Hits: Vol 2* is frantic for its entire 4 minute (including a 40 second sample from the movie *Casino*) runtime. *Artificial Bouquet* is a dissident post-rock masterpiece from the Illinois-based *Frail Body*. Demo from New York favorites *Ted Williams* is the group's debut project, *Demo* is a hyper-ironic eruption of heavy instrumentals and screeching vocals. *Fear of The Fall*, the newest release from Texas-based *Sinema*, is an ode to early 2000s post-hardcore blended with *Skramz* creating a sound of their own. California-based *February's* debut EP *February* is an instant classic beautifully blending seemingly contradictory guitar styles, and inconsistent tempos topped with gut-wrenching vocals. *Everything Wants Me To Write in Cursive* is California's *onewaymirror's* newest EP filled to the brim with breakdowns and some of the best drumming I've ever heard. *A Fenestrated Fantasy*, the debut LP from NY three piece *silk*, is an intimate-yet-harsh work of art.

# *What about Screamo connects to you?*

"It's visceral, it makes me feel something"  
-Shane, 26

"The rawness in a lot of the recordings and the aggressiveness from hardcore while having more "emotional lyrics" i would say"  
-Kyle, 19, of Coquette

"The community aspect of it, and the music, the emotion, it just connects with me"  
-Alex, 17

"I love to get emo"  
-Javier, 17

"The culture of the music, the vocals, the sound of the guitar"  
-Jane, 19, of Newd

"I've always been into heavy music growing up and got into hardcore around 14 and screamo just kind of naturally came from that, it's very emotional while not being weak in a way that I think growing up with a lot of mental shit it kinda felt like something to connect to"

-Skunk, 20 of BLOUSE

"For me its the emotional content of the music, I dont like lyrics that posture about shit that isn't real"  
-Micheal, 51, of Kirkby Kiss

"It is the most cathartic music for me"  
-Kyle, 33, of Vs Self

"The raw emotions"  
-Jason, 19, of Widodusk & Ted Williams

"Theres a lot of emotion behind it...its a different type of feeling, you connect with it so deeply, its comforting"  
- Helen, 19, of Newd

"I like the emotions... it's kinda an outlet for me"  
-Jordy, 19, of betweenyouandthesun

"For the most part it's just how raw the genre is overall... Whether it be instrumentally or vocally, screamo just tends to feel more genuine than any other genre"  
-Carter, 18, of Coquette

"It lets out all the built up emotions"  
-Robin, 20



# *How did you get into screamo?*

“My friends were in bands, so I’d go to their shows, the Hardcore to Skramz pipeline”  
-Shane, 26

“Metallica in seventh grade, it’s been a pipeline since then”  
-Quinn 15, of Parry Romberg

“pageninetynine’s album document 8 I listened to that album on repeat in high school such a great record”  
-Kyle, 19, of Coquette

“I remember my friend putting on Orchid in the car one day on the way to the skate park and that was the first time I heard screamo and ever since then it has been a big part of my life” -Skunk, 20 of BLOUSE

“Cap ‘n’ Jazz in a skate video, I Hate Myself in a skate video”  
-Luke, 21, of Widowdusk and Ted Williams

“Skate videos”  
-Jason, 19, of Widowdusk and Ted Williams

“It started off with me going to punk shows, a lot of the people I knew were going to screamo shows, so I was like “shit I might as well,” and I started going to shows”  
-Helen, 19, of Newd

“I’ve been playing since a child and I’ve had open ears for all types of music, so skrams is definitely part of it... I heard Minor Threat, and was like, “thats three chords?” and I went out and bought a shitty Les Paul rip off, and my two friends did the same, and two weeks later we were in my garage and we were a band, and a month later we did a show in my grandmother’s living room, and it’s just kinda evolved, I’m not any better any my instruments”  
-Micheal, 51, of Kirkby Kiss

# *Why do you think it's so popular right now?*

"I feel like Hardcore is too extreme for some whiny people, it's easier to cry over something than to beat someone up over it"

-Jordy, 19, of betweenyouandthesun

"It's accessible, anyone can go...I used to follow cars with cool stickers to shows"

-Tom, 43, of Kirkby Kiss

"I think with the internet it's so easy for kids to see a couple bands doing stuff and want to do the same thing so it snowballs"

-Skunk, 20, of Blouse

"Because it's seen as different and outsider, and kids still wanna be different, and thats cool"

-Shane, 26

"People like to shit on TikTok, but its bringing a lot of people to the scene, and I think that's a good thing, people say its a bad thing, but I think the more people the better"

-Alex, 17

"I'm not sure honestly. I'm not a mind reader, trends come and go and I'm sure screamo will go back to where it was a few years ago once power metal or some shit starts trending on Tik Tok instead of screamo"

-Carter, 18, of Coquette

"I think the internet has made niche and more distinct sub-genres and subcultures more accessible through the internet. I also think screamo fills the gap for kids who like heavy music that want more emotion than what other genres offer."

-Devin, 29

"I think because of how cathartic the music is. The scene is full of very young people who were stuck inside because of Covid when they should have been having the most formative times of their lives going to middle school or high school. I think that understandably left them with a lot of pent up emotions they needed to let out"

-Kyle, 33, of Vs Self

"TikTok"

-Quinn, 15, of Parry Romberg



# *What do you hate about the scene?*

“There’s a lot of cliques”

-Spike, 19, of betweenyouandthesun

“What I hate is there’s a lot of people who come here just to get intoxicated, not really for the music, they treat it as a party rather than an intimate show”

-Jane, 19, of Newd

“A lot of new people to the scene have no etiquette, last night I probably stage dove 15 times and was only caught once, every other time I hit the floor”

-Alex, 17

“Kids that cant dance and kids that dont know older bands but it doesnt bother me that much because as long as they are at shows is what really matters”

-Kyle, 19, of Coquette

“At shows there’s a lot of kids, so there’s no concert etiquette, there are a lot of little kids escaping their parents for the night, so they’re going to go crazy and not care about the fact that they’re around other people”

-Shane, 26

“The current popularity of the genre has made a rise of bands that are more or less riding the wave and diluting the waters of what the genre contains. It’s harder to find good bands when it’s more than just the passionate nerds making the songs.”

-Devin, 29

“Gatekeeping can leave a sour taste in your mouth sometimes, but in other instances its necessary, if it used properly it’s to protect people or to protect the scene”

-Micheal, 51, of Kirkby Kiss

“I’ve definitely met a lot of shitty people but at the same time I’ve met some of the best people I’ve ever met who are here for the right reasons”

-Skunk, 20 of BLOUSE

“Drama”

-Helen, 19, of Newd

“The sheer amount of people who seem to be into it just because it’s popular rather than actually enjoying and being involved with the music”

-Carter, 18, of Coquette

# *Sub-Sub-Genres*

Obviously, screamo, like any other sub-genre of hardcore has its own sub-sub-genres under the screamo umbrella. These sub-sub-genres have their own distinct musical styles, and often clothing styles.

## *Post-Screamo*

Post-screamo is a style of Screamo heavily inspired by the Post-Rock bands like Slint, or Godspeed You! Black Emperor. Post-Rock is characterized by heavily layered, noisy droning guitars layered with a minimalist lyrical style. Post-Screamo takes the psychedelically dissident instruments and layers in screaming vocals. Examples of this style would be envy, Infant Island, Frail Body, and Othiel.

## *Kittencore*

Kittencore is a style of Screamo characterized by its higher-pitched, softer vocals. Some earlier examples of this would be Portraits of Past, In Loving Memory, and ...of Death, and a contemporary example of this style would be the New York band silk.

## *Bedroom Skramz*

Bedroom Skramz is a combination of the lo fi indie pop genre Bedroom Pop and Screamo. Bedroom Pop is characterized by lo fi, often self produced beats, and soft vocals. Bedroom Skramz takes the instrumental styles of Bedroom Pop, and swaps the soft vocals for



Screamo Vocals. Some examples of Bedroom Skramz would be Your Arms Are My Cocoon, Flowers Taped to Pens, and departmefrombearisland.

## *Emogrind*

Emogrind is the combination of Screamo, and Grindcore. Grindcore is a genre originating in the 1980s which combines Crust Punk, Thrash Metal, and Extreme Metal. Grindcore is characterized by growled vocals, overdriven bass, down-tuned guitars, and blast beats. Emogrind takes the Grindcore formula and blends it with Screamo characteristics to make an extremely heavy and extremely fast style of Screamo. Examples of this style would be Tears of Avarel, daughters of eve..., and Coquette.

## *Blackened Screamo*

Blackened Screamo, like Post-Screamo, is a blend of two genres, Screamo and Black Metal. Black Metal is a genre of metal known for its loud, fast-tempo guitars, dark themes and shrieking vocal styles. Blackened Screamo finds an unhappy medium between traditional Screamo vocals and Black Metal shrieks, and takes influence from the tremolo guitar-picking style and double-bass drumming style. Some examples of this would be Zmar, Slowly Building Weapons, and Zorn.

# *What is the screamo look?*

Screamo, like any other punk derivative, has deep anti-capitalist and anti-consumerist ethics. This manifests in anti-fashion attitudes, seeing the industry as frivolous and consumer behavior, instead focusing on more DIY approaches to fashion; because of this many people say there is no “look” or “uniform” for the modern scene.

During its first wave in the late 90s to the early 2000s, the scene had a much more distinctive look. Skinny black jeans, tight t-shirts, chokers, and Converse Chuck Taylors, but almost thirty years since the conception of the genre, this is no longer necessarily the case.

So, in an effort to figure out what the elements of Screamo fashion are, I asked fans and musicians what they thought the look is, and they is what they had to say...



# Chokers





# *Septum Piercings*





# *Scene Cuts*





# *Camo*





# *Fur & Animal Prints*





# *Studded Belts*





# *Studded Bracelets*





# Essential Screamo Playlist

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I am Nietzsche - Orchid

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She's Only Yours For a Minute -  
onewaymirror

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Death of a Hemophiliac - Tears  
of Avarel

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Meow - Widowdusk

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hermosa, the only one i love -  
seahorsechoke

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Nice To See You - CATALYSTPVD

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Some Natures Catch No  
Plagues - Saetia

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No Way... - February

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Freshman Fifteen More Seconds of This  
I'm Swerving Into Oncoming Traffic - silk

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Ophelia - herlovebeheadsdaies

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Batter Up! - Kiowa

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Spontaneous Proverb: The Haunted  
Haunted Moment - xclocktowerx

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The Outlook is Bleak -  
Portraits of Past

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It's Like Holding a Ghost's  
Hand - herlovebeheadsdaies

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Aperture - Frail Body

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Death of a Modernist - Orchid

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Glass - grimplitter

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OH my gOd I HaTe THis feeLing, my  
Heart won't sTOp beaTing - OLTH

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I Watched You Die - solace

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Brand New Shoes - February

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Destination: Blood! - Orchid  
I Live... They Hate... But If I Off Myself  
I'm Wrong... - ...daughters of eve

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To Satisfy - Mohinder

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My Spine! My Spine! My Spine! -  
COMBAT WOUNDED VETERAN

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Fine Day to Die - Textbook Traitors  
IwishIdidnthatemyself.com -  
Kodak Armada

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Promise - Vs Self

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I'm a fufufucking Vavavam-  
pire - Usurp Synapse

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Oct. 26 - widowdusk  
The Second you opened your mouth I  
threw up in mine - BLOUSE

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Fashion Meets Passion - Orchid

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Lament - Gilligan Carter

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Three - iwrotehaikusaboutcannibal-  
isminyouryearbook

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I Am With You Always -  
bulletsbetweentongues

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Hey put your pants back on! (Tay-  
lors Version) - beforeyouleave  
Pave Tomorrow, Burn Today  
- herlovebeheadsdaies

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Living to Tell the Tale - Claybirds

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Two - The Spirit of Versailles  
Thank You DubNation! -  
herlovebeheadsdaies

---

One Dying Wish - Saetia

---

Alderan Was an Inside Job - septerm-  
beristheonlytimeidontthinkofyou

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This Is Not Mine - I Would  
Set Myself On Fire For You

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Abolition of a Monarchy -  
Coquette

---

Wish I Was - Knumears

---

Song A - BLOUSE

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Sleep Paralysis - I Hate Sex

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Amber Welts - silk

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Empyrean -  
herlovebeheadsdaies

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Cheers! You're the Reason God Creat-  
ed the Middle Finger - Ted Williams

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memOries LaST fOrever, sO  
dO scars - OLTH

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She Views Her Canvas - grimlitter

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Punk Rock In The Wrong  
Hands - pageninetynine

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Yesterday By Beatles Or: Imagination By  
Yoko Ono As Sung By John Lennon - Vs  
Self

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This Car Has No Seatbelts  
Let's Fly - Knumears

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Poison Thoughts - CATALYSTPVD

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Anatomy of a Teenage Hit List -  
Textbookl Traitors

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What Happened To Du-  
decare? - my hands yr heart

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Fourth Song - onewaymirror

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An Idea So Foreign - Coquette  
Save Me From The Outside World -  
Love Lost But Not Forgotten

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Looking Back At How You Want  
to Be in the Future - Niel Perry

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Old New Girlfriend - I Hate Sex

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Untitled - CATALYSTPVD

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A Visit from Dr. Goodsex - Orchid

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Limitation - evny  
Forget It ill Figure It Out -  
CATALYSTPVD

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Venus and Bacchus - Saetia  
There Goes Rhymin' Simon -  
The Spirit of Versailles  
In Love With an Apparition -  
pageninetynine

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Voodoo Dool of Old Friends -  
I Hate Sex

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# *contortion mag*

