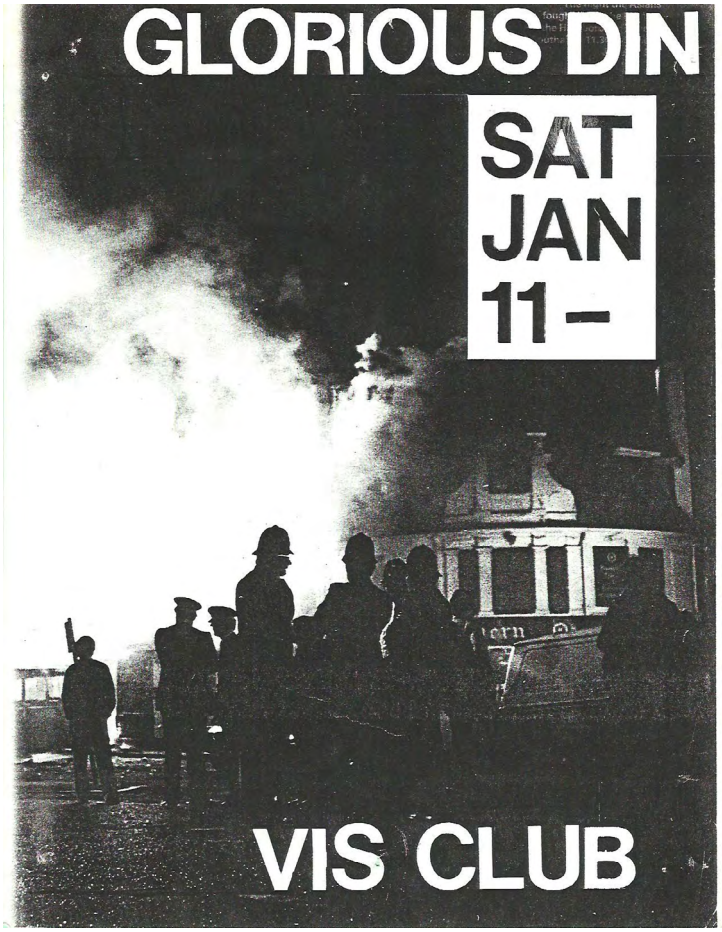
When you hear the word goth you might think of cultural icons like Robert Smith of the Cure, the death-obsessed Beetlejuice character Lydia Deetz, and the dark camp of Elvira. Goth is synonymous with wearing all black, reveling in melancholy, and celebrating the macabre. But it's also often incorrectly thought of as a subculture that's rooted in whiteness or comprised mostly of white people.

What began in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a rejection of the mainstream and capitalism's co-opting of punk, gothic subculture has continued to evolve and flourish over the years. Its influence has altered the landscape of pop music, fashion, and art. Almost 50 years later, contemporary goths embody the representation they yearned to see when they were younger. For them, beauty is a way to center marginalized voices and live their truth, a way to look beyond whiteness and uplift the many identities and histories that exist within the goth community, past and present. By doing so, they remind us that people of color have been a part of the scene since the very beginning—from Glorious Din's front man Eric Cope and the Cure's drummer Andy Anderson, to more recent icons like Princess Nokia and Light Asylum's Shannon Funchess to name a few—and that they are inarguably a part of its future.

In celebration of that future and the legacy that precedes it, we asked 10 goths of color about the power of the goth aesthetic, their favorite products, beauty routines, and why diverse representation within the goth community matters to them.



Although the top picture belongs to the previous incarnation of Glorious Din, (White Front) they were both fronted by singer Eric Cope, who is said to be Sri Lankan. Not much is known of this band, and they have only two releases: Leading Stolen Horses, and Closely Watched Trains. Cope founded a record label called Insight, which the two Glorious Din records are on, as well as other punk and post punk artists of the SF scene during the late 80s. He also edited a San Francisco underground zine called Wiring Dept., copies of this zine are somewhat rare. The Glorious Din take obvious inspiration from Joy Division, and Eric Cope often emulates Ian Curtis' vocal styles, however, they have a much grittier feel, at least to me.

Here is a live performance.

Glorious Din