Enjoy groundbreaking dance music visuals in this club-like exhibition

Design Museum celebrates the electronic history of Kraftwerk, Chemical Brothers and Aphex Twin.

The look of dance music may have started for some in the masks of Deadmau5 or the helmets and pyramids of Daft Punk, but a new show at London's Design Museum reminds us that the relationship between visual opulence and electronic sound has been a long one.

Starting this April, *Electronic: From Kraftwerk to The Chemical Brothers* is the museum's first music-themed exhibition, encompassing not just classic sleeves but also the light beam sights of Jean-Michel Jarre's laser harp and the more extreme end of Aphex Twin's videography.

Chemical Brothers visuals (photo: Luke Dyson)

Although adapted from last year's popular *Electro Expo* at Musée de la musique – Philharmonie de Paris, the show has been made into a beast of its own with the museum premiere of a Chemical Brothers 'sensory spectacle' from creative studio Smith & Lyall.

Featuring elements of the dance duo's legendary live show, visuals and lights interact to create a 3D immersive experience as inspired by the psychedelic duo's acclaimed *No Geography* tour. Those who checked out our recent Chemical Brothers music video feature will recognise some of the from Michel Gondry's striking promo to *Got To Keep On*, the seventh best Chemical Brothers video to date in our rundown.

The *Electronic* show also delves into the extreme visual world

created by Weirdcore for Aphex Twin's brain-bending *T69 Collapse* video (below), plus mask designs for him and fellow IDM titan Squarepusher. There's also a celebration of a half century of Kraftwerk history through a half-hour 3D experience, which'll no doubt be familiar to those who've seen the German group's amazing live performances.

[embedded content]

Those familiar with the original Paris version of the show will be disappointed that none of the Daft Punk ephemera seems to have made it across the pond, but French house aficionados can make do with a specially curated soundtrack by Parisian DJ Laurent Garnier that syncs with the club-like lighting and video of the exhibition.

Featuring over 400 items, *Electronic* is divided into four sections: Man and Woman Machine, Dancefloor, Mix and Remix, and Utopian Dreams and Ideals. Visitors' journeys will begin with a timeline of revolutionary instruments and the innovators who pioneered them, including Donald Buchla, Tadao Kikumoto for the Roland Corporation and Daphne Oram for the BBC Radiophonic Workshop.

There'll also be an 'imagined' music studio from electronic music innovator Jean-Michel Jarre (below), a dynamic light installation by 1024 architecture and the Moog 55 synthesiser and the iconic TR-808.

Photo: Gil Lefauconnier

Those more into graphic design can enjoy seeing how Peter Saville, The Designers Republic, Tomato, and Mark Farrow have responded visually to electronic music through cover art. There’ll also be club posters from the recent campaign that saved Fabric, and a chance to ‘travel’ to warehouses and dancefloors from across the world (look out for objects from the iconic Haçienda club in the show.)

Kraftwerk photo by Peter Boettcher

On a less sensual, perhaps more cerebal level will be a discussion of how club communities have addressed laws intended to halt rave culture, and the expressions of resistance that have empowered minority groups. Cultural movements have always been at the heart of defending club culture, and art works on display draw the connections between acid house and the post-industrial movement of the late twentieth-century.

On the show, curator Gemma Curtin remarks that “sound is only part of the story when it comes to this category of music: it has built communities on and offline, democratised music technology and provided a safe space for free expression.”

Other speaking on the show include the Chemical Brothers

themselves, saying “design is an essential element enhancing the experience of our live show. This new installation will give insight into how we work with Adam & Marcus (Smith & Lyall) on the visual aspect of our tours.” Smith & Lyall add they “are excited to translate this to a museum setting for the first time.”

Chemical Brothers visuals (photo: Luke Dyson)

will run from 1 April to 26 July 2020. If you can’t wait until then, then we recommend the similar if smaller *Culture Club: From Rebellion to Revolution* exhibition coming soon to London.

This new exhibition at the King’s Cross Visitor Centre explores the club history of the recently renovated Coal Drops Yard area, starting March 7 and finishing 30th April.

Related: Salmon, space dogs, skeletons! The Chemical Brothers' greatest music videos

https://www.digitalartsonline.co.uk/news/graphic-design/enjoy-groundbreaking-visuals-of-dance-music-history-in-this-club-like-exhibition/