



CULTURE DIGEST - 07 NOV 2016

You Say You Want a Revolution?

This week's Culture Digest looks at three London shows revisiting movements and revolutions: first up, the V&A's survey of 1966-70

BY ELLEN MARA DE WACHTER

'You Say You Want A Revolution? Records and Rebels 1966-1970' at the V&A, London, is a packed exhibition bringing together more than 350 artefacts relating to some of the key cultural and societal changes that took place during those five transformative years. Curated by Geoffrey Marsh and Victoria Broackes, the director and the curator of the V&A's Department of Theatre and Performance, the exhibition uses immersive scenography and a soundtrack compiled from John Peel's record collection to steer visitors through six chronological sections. The journey starts in 1966, the year London gained the accolade of 'Swinging City', in a Carnaby Street populated by mannequins in outfits from Biba, Mary Quant and Granny Takes a Trip, which embody radical

shifts in youth identity. Next comes the nightlife of the time, with its drugs and psychedelia, and a replica London's UFO club, where Pink Floyd was the house band.



Poster for The Crazy World of Arthur Brown at UFO, 16 and 23 June, by Hapshash and the Coloured Coat, 1967, London (Michael English & Nigel Waymouth). Photograph: © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

So far, so obvious, but the first few overcrowded galleries give way to a more intriguing section devoted to radicals and activists, from the Paris rioters of 1968 to the Black Panthers. Video footage and artefacts relating to civil rights and Pan-African campaigners such as Martin Luther King, Eldridge Cleaver and Stokely Carmichael have renewed importance in light of recent racially-motivated police violence and casual mass media racism. A display about the rise of consumerism features the 1967 Montreal and 1970 Osaka World Expos, and also includes the UK's first credit card, the Barclaycard. Indistinguishable from the present-day plastic that

overpopulates our wallets, it is probably the least auratic object in the whole show. The final gallery compares two alternative communities that set up on the West Coast of the United States: environmentalist communes and Silicon Valley. An Apple 1 computer sits near Stewart Brand's *Whole Earth Catalog* (1968-72), the quintessential counterculture magazine and product directory that focused on ecology and self-sufficiency, which Steve Jobs once described as 'Google in paperback form'. It's a neat – perhaps too neat – analogy that shows just how far the revolutionary ideals of the 1960s have become co-opted into the mainstream.

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<<https://www.ruinart.com/en-uk/erwinolaf>>

'You Say You Want a Revolution: Records & Rebels 1966-70'

<<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/exhibition-you-say-you-want-a-revolution-records-and-rebels-1966-70/>> at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, runs from 10 September 2016 – 26 February 2017. Lead image: Anti-Vietnam demonstrators at the Pentagon Building, 1967. Photograph: Bernie Boston / The Washington Post / Getty Images

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