

MACHINE

This compilation was initiated by the love for Elektron music machines: the Machinedrum, the Monomachine and the Sidstation. These electronic instruments have built up a following of avid users that value their abilities. We think these machines are unique vehicles for carrying the culture and heritage of electronic music through their use of grid-based sequencers, creative qualities and man-machine potential and we regard them as cross-cultural, genre-defying machines for generating motion and emotion. These machines inspire us.

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So what is so magical about these instruments? There are many ways of explaining and exploring this, but for this compilation we've chosen to investigate the term MACHINE; a core term in Elektron's most successful instruments, as well as inspiring a wide range of metaphorical meanings. We would like to take a closer look at various meanings and interpretations of the term machine, and use these thoughts as inspiration for our music.

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The simplest meaning of the term machine is just another object of everyday life designed to fulfill certain tasks. They surround us; coffee machines, copying machines, computers etc. We are so adapted to them that we don't take notice of them anymore. However, with the Machines compilation we want to take a look at different side of this worn image.

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Machines have intrigued man from the beginning. Not only have people built machines for helping ourselves, we have also tried to bring them to 'life'. As early as 18th century Jacques de Vaucanson exhibited several life-sized automatons, which were later considered to be the world's first robots. In a sense, Vaucanson gave life to everyday apparati and by doing so, also shaped the image of the machine in an important way. From there on the machine has had a life of its own. The word robot, or its Czech version 'robota', was later introduced to the public by Czech writer Karel Čapek in 1920. The word robota means literally to work or labor. Čapek's robots were characters in a play that takes place in a factory - the play eventually leads to hostile robot rebellion against the humans. Not only is Čapek an important inventor of the term robot, his play is also a good example of machines having a life, rationale and a certain sense of justice, which could lead humans to examine their values and to question their societal conditions.

Later in the 20th century, different art movements throughout Europe employed the idea of the machine in new ways. Bauhaus architects saw the metropolis as a machine, Le Corbusier's idea was to create houses which would be "machine a habiter": machines for living. At the same time, behind the iron curtain, socialist's avant-garde architects were designing network cities that would organize and connect human life to the rationale of a machine. these interpretations and expressions of the notion of MACHINE indicate that machines had not only captured our collective imagination, but that society and lifestyle were undergoing a fundamental shift as a result of the *concept* of MACHINE. Machine had some indisputable attributes such as entrusted rationality that required humans to adapt to them. Machine was a bringer of progress and rationality that transformed man to become, not as a user anymore, but as an object of the machine. The image of the machine began to dictate aspects of human life.

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It can be said that in the 20th century the machine intrigued, excited and inspired thinkers, artists, engineers and the population as a whole. Different thoughts, ideologies, values and wishes were communicated through machines and machine-images yet these ideas and thoughts were, of course, man-made properties: the beginnings of man-machine collaboration. In the 20th century machine had become an iconic image of the modern age, which dictated people's imagination and their expectations of the future. Today machine is a metaphor used widely to explain phenomena on many levels. We use machine as a term to describe how DNA replicates itself and produces the continuity of our life. We have explained the human consciousness through machine metaphors since the age of Descartes. Even man himself can be explained to be a complex system of connected machines. In general machine has become a strong metaphor for understanding nature and is today used to mimic the different processes of nature with great success down to the particle level.

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Bearing this long history of machines and their integration into society and consciousness in mind, these everyday apparatuses look a little different. We would like to view machines as a condensed form of human thought where ideas, emotions and values of human culture materialize: they are vehicles for our culture. Music machines in particular, whether they are classic instruments or synthesizers and samplers, carry the musical practices and emotional undertones of humanity within them. A dusty old piano in the corner of an old room is as much an emotional portrait as it is a machine designed to produce certain tones with the aid of mechanical hammers and metal strings. The electronic music machines address our emotions in very much the same way, because that is what they are: machines to express ourselves and invoke emotions in others.

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For further information on how to realise this concept please see these threads at the Elektron-Users forum:

'EUAlbum:MACHINES': http://elektron-users.com/index.php?option=com_fireboard&Itemid=28&func=view&catid=13&id=75967#75967
'EU Album: Track Titles': http://elektron-users.com/index.php?option=com_fireboard&Itemid=28&func=view&catid=13&id=75968#75968