Chapter 11 - Nightclub

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Preamble. I can hear the bass-heavy beat of the dance music while I wait in the queue. There is a security system to filter access to the club, depending on various parameters based on desired patronage. Passing by a ticket booth and cloakroom, I walk towards the door from which direction the muffled sound of the music seeps through. On opening, the damp heat of dancing bodies hits my face, and the amplified dance music hits my body. It's late at night and the room is crowded, making it almost impossible to reach the bar for a drink. I look around for the dancefloor, its dynamic lighting sweeping through the dark space. Finding the DJ booth is not always easy at an event that depends on forms of organised chaos. The dancers are feeling the music, swaying to the groove. I'm offered a drink — strangers adopt me into their party. I'm at the nightclub.

The discussion that follows addresses the nightclub as a private venue that offers dancing to music. Historically also known as a "discotheque", "dance hall," or "dancing", the nightclub initially developed in an urban nocturnal setting, as a members' club that can legally conduct its business of entertainment during opening times that may differ from public venues. As a contained cultural space, the nightclub is a venue in which music and alternative night-time identities play central roles, that can be extending into the daytime. From a design perspective, (s)ince the 1960s nightclubs have been epicentres of escape and experimentation, these sealed-off spaces of nocturnal leisure offering opportunities for artists, architects, and designers all over the world, and creating places for partygoers to design their experiences and identities' (Rossi & Eisenbrand, 2018: 16). A description of Andy Warhol's

1960s club night, *Exploding Plastic Inevitable* (EPI), held at New York's venue Electric Circus, aptly summarises the experience of such a space as 'a delirious yet illegible atmosphere crowded with discontinuous bits of sound, light, and flesh' (Lavin, 2009: 101). This chapter will address elements – such as night-time, sensory dynamics, and DJ engagement – that make up the concept of the contemporary nightclub as a dance club, an immersive 'total-environment,' as leading New York club *Studio 54* was described in 1977 (Gifford & Wallace, cited by Schrager, 2017: 29), in which one can abandon one's daily sense of self.

The rise in popularity of the nightclub as discotheque via the New York dance club scene in the 1960s and 70s is well-documented (Fikentscher, 2000; Lawrence, 2003; Shapiro, 2005; Goldman, 1978) replacing "former ballrooms, dance halls and cabaret clubs as the big bands and the dancing styles that went along with them went out of fashion" (Kronenburg, 2019: 197). Arguably, such venues responded to a rapidly changing world, in which the nightclub became a place to celebrate a new-found sense of freedom marked by the paradoxical twin developments of neoliberalism and civil rights movements. Nightclubs have a historical connection to the illicit otherness of the night, yet as registered businesses, they are important drivers in the legislated night-time economy, and are recognised as such in policy reports, such as *The Music Cities Manual* (S. Shapiro, 2019). Economically and culturally, they act as hubs in creative networks that include music, fashion, design, advertising, alcohol, and catering industries, as well as the international tourist industry; see, for example, the commercialisation of countercultural nightlife on the Spanish island Ibiza (Armstrong, 2004; Serra-Cantallops and Ramon-Cardona, 2017; Morrison, 2010) or the gritty experimental atmosphere of nightclubs in Germany's capital Berlin (Garcia, 2016; Stahl, 2014). The focus of published discussions of such venues vary widely, from the promiscuous, escapist, and even life-changing pleasures of the insomniac dancer (Jackson,

2004; Malbon, 1999; Morrison, 2010; Raine et al, 2019; Rietveld, 2004a; Rief, 2009), to DJ histories (Brewster and Broughton, 1999; Poschardt, 1998; Fikentscher, 2000; Lawrence, 2003; Farrugia, 2012), dress codes (Smith, 2008), and graphic design (Banks & Brewster, 2018; Rose, 1991); and from club journalism (Aletti, 2009; Benson, 1997), club histories (Cheren, 2000; D'Andrea, 2006; De Wit, 2013; Hill & Nourmand, 2015; Hook, 2009; Ligura & Langenbach, 2007; Savage, 1992; Schrager, 2017; P. Shapiro, 2005) and architectural design (Kelly, 1982; Kronenburg, 2019; Lavin, 2009; Loben et al, 2020; Rossi & Eisenbrand, 2019), to the strategies of urban regeneration as part of the night-time industry (Kolioulis, 2019; Lovatt, 1996; Rymajdo, 2020; S. Shapiro et al, 2019).

The nightclub is marked by its nocturnal existence. Hodge and Kress (1988) observe how the syntax of our everyday values dissolve during the night. During a spoken word presentation in 2019, sound artist LaBelle described the night poetically as an ambiguous space, and a time of transformation, in which one can disappear and renew one's sense of self—erotic, monstrous, magical, liminal, criminal, the night takes us to "the edges of being", to"'intensities of freedom", and into a "zone of altered subjectivity". Writing about the nocturnal city, Shaw (2018) observes how the night is a time-space of pre-modern myth and ritual. Music enhances this experience and is simultaneously enhanced by lowered light-levels light during the night. While our vision is dimmed, our hearing sharpens, foregrounding sound in the process. The resulting sensory state enhances haptic aurality, in which sensitivity to cyclical textures may be emphasised over linear narrative melodies. Add to this a somnambulant preference for trance-inducing repetition (Rietveld 2018), and the dancer can be prepared to enter a realm of sonic oblivion (see Sword 2021), making a night out not only a welcome distraction but also a potential near religious experience to some. Henriques (2011) introduces the term "sonic dominance" in a study of Jamaican sound system culture, in which music is amplified across the full range of hearing, with emphasis on

outer, marginalised, frequencies. Nightclubs cater for the transgression of, and an escape from, everyday realities and the exploration of other ways of being. Under the cover of night, in the relative safety of invisibility, away from the glare of day, marginalized groups, such as LGBT+ or migrant communities, are enabled to meet more freely than would be possible during the daytime. As Kolioulis (2018: 209) states, "(a) network of nightclubs shapes alternative geographies of affect, making urban night-time more conducive to social inclusion". The nightly escape from the tyranny of daily life created a lifestyle in its own right, leading Mel Cheren, business partner in New York's Paradise Garage, to observe that during the 1970s and early 80s, "(d)isco denizens became the ultimate night people, and those who partied several nights a week found themselves living in a time zone of their own, the graveyard shift of dance" (Cheren, 2000: 106). Yet, Stahl and Botta (2019: 4-5) explain that although music cultures flourish particularly well at night, they do so in a paradoxical relationship to regulation determined by daytime values:

> Night is where social regulation meets social ritual, often doing so most powerfully and paradoxically around music. As an expanse set aside from the day when identities can be more fruitfully explored, boundaries blurred, social norms questioned or even upturned, night also exists as a place of fear and danger around darkened spaces and places, of certain noises/sounds that must be tamed, insulated or mitigated and, more pointedly, a zone marked by the policing, containment or neutralization of particular identities.

In addition, Shaw (2018: 30) writes that, "(d)uring the 19th century era of industrialisation, the introduction of electric lighting changed the cultural relationship to the darkness of the night: cafés, bars, operas and theatres opened to unprecedented late hours". By extensively lighting up the night, the night can both be enjoined and colonised by broader social and

cultural groups, and values, eventually enabling daytime values to intrude on its opaque realm (Rietveld, 2013).

As a place for dancing, the nightclub usually offers a dancefloor, a space to dance, however small. When dancers abandon their daytime selves to the music, they respond musically by dancing out its rhythms, textures and sentiments. Mainly for logistical and economic reasons, since the 1940s, the nightclub gradually replaced live musicians by the DJ, or disc jockey, who selects music recordings. This led the French naming such a club a "discotheque" during the 1940s (P. Shapiro, 2005), or "disco" in short. Whereas a *bibliotheque*, or library, is a place to engage with an archive of texts, the discotheque resembles a space where one can physically engage with an archive of music recordings. Fikentscher defines "the disco concept" as "denoting a particular performance environment in which technologically mediated music is made immediate at the hands of the DJ, and in which this music is responded to via dance by bodies on the dancefloor" (2000: 22). Due to parallel developments in the enhancement of music production technologies, from the 1970s onwards dance music often only existed as studio productions. As electronic music technologies became increasingly ubiquitous during the 1980s, this eventually led to development of the electronic dance music as generic term for most club music (Leloup et al, 2020). In this context the DJ, in combination with a powerful sound-system, has become a performative interface between the recorded sonic simulacrum and its dancing audience (Middleton, 2006).

The disco concept may be applied to both nightclubs and dance parties. In an ethnographic study titled *Clubbing*, Malbon (1999) focusses on the space of the nightclub in London during the 1990s, yet his description of his participants' nights out dancing at the club could resonate as well with the experience of ravers, the participants of large dance parties that have been taking place in abandoned postindustrial workspaces as well as in rural

settings since the late 1980-s. Similarly, in Jackson's 2004 study *Inside Clubbing*, the experience of the club dancefloor sounds almost indistinguishable from an urban weekend rave in terms of dancing all night long to DJ-led music selections, while under the enhanced influence of stimulating and psychoactive dance drugs (O'Hagan, 2004). It is therefore not be surprising that the term "clubbing" and notion of "club culture" has been generalised as a term associated with DJ-led nocturnal dancing events, even though a more precise term would be "electronic dance music culture", a term consistently used by the specialist journal in the field, *Dancecult*, or "dance culture" as it has been known over the last three decades within the English-speaking realm. Even going to a dance festival is described by some as "clubbing". Both Thornton (1995) and Rief (2009) titled their monographs *Club Cultures*; yet, despite taking different approaches to the study of electronic dance music culture, both seem to neglect the boundaries between the nightclubs and rave dance events that existed at their respective times of writing. According to Rief (2009: 3) clubbing,

> may refer to dance and music events in nightclubs of variable sizes and capacities (up to several thousand); to go out in smaller, hybrid venues [...]; to dances in venues previously designated as discotheques; or to open-air parties in the open countryside, on beaches or in the mountains.

This is further illustrated in a 1997 collection of 'club writing' from style magazine *The Face* (edited by Benson, 1997), which ranges from the spectacularly dressed Blitz Kids in early 1980s London, to English free dance parties of the late 1990s. Redhead et al (1998) stretch the idea of clubbing further, using the term "clubculture" to signify a range of post-subcultural youth cultures. Here, though, I narrow the definition of the club as a delineated space, with walls and social boundaries that are protected and enforced by door staff, also known as "the bouncers". The nightclub normally requires a set of licences, to sell tickets; to allow dancing; to allow the selling and consumption of alcohol; to allow a certain number of

people in at any one time; and to open its doors at a certain time of the day and week. Subject to surveillance, it is policed both internally and externally. A rave, by contrast, can be semi-legal. In the case of commercial dance festivals, the policing is a different story, as also their licenses are in place, keeping the event in check. However, as illustrated by Loben et al (2020), some currently globally successful clubs attempt to simulate the darkly lit cavernous space of a warehouse rave, while others opt for a spectacular festival-style DJ stage, complete with theatrical set pieces, dancers, and impressive lighting rigs.

Historically, a club's dining and socialising guests may have been seated around a dancefloor, entertained by professional entertainers on stage, including a band of musicians, singers and even dancers. Precedents of enclosed spaces for the purpose of social dancing may be found in the dancefloors of pleasure gardens that catered for the gentry of London, England from the 17th into the 19th century, followed by ballrooms and dancehalls that gained wider audiences during the 19th century (Kronenburg, 2019), when major cities were first lit by gas lamps, and later by electric light (Shaw, 2018). In contrast to such legitimate dance spaces, during the early 20th century in Chicago and New York City, in the USA, the format of the nightclub as we recognise it now can be found in speakeasies, members clubs that illegally served alcoholic beverages, liquor, during the American alcohol prohibition of 1920 which lasted till, roughly, 1933. Many of these venues were literally underground, in basements and cellars. In the more upmarket New York establishments, cabaret and jazz music was offered as entertainment, while provocative social dance styles like the Charleston gained popularity (Smith, 2008). Jazz and dance clubs owe some of their arrangement of space, including the bar, the stage, the dancefloor, the cloakroom, the membership system, the door staff (bouncers), to such diverse precedents. This illicit network of lucrative venues tightened the connection between nightclubs and an organised criminal underworld, which seemed to remain in control after the prohibition was lifted.

Not all dance clubs and club nights offer alcohol though, especially if they want to cater for a younger clientele for which an alcohol-serving licence cannot be obtained, as can be the case for gay dance clubs in the USA. Alcohol and all-night dancing do not necessarily combine well; alcohol can produce an initial energising effect, but ultimately slows the drinker down. Despite an often-problematic relationship with local legislation, stimulating and psycho-active dance drugs are preferred to enhance the dance experience by dedicated all-night dancers, whether all night Northern Soul dancers (Raine et al, 2019), queer underground clubbers (Lawrence, 2003), jazz dancers, or ravers. The resultant aesthetics resonate throughout purpose-made electronic dance music in the form of intense repetition, other-worldly textures, and simple drone-like chord progressions. Nevertheless, for licenced venues contracts with breweries can bring financial stability to a nightclub, while illegal drug use is suppressed; the alcohol industry is politically powerful, affecting legislation on intoxicating substances to maintain its economic position. Shaw (2018) even goes as far as to define the night-time economy as a "late night alcohol and leisure industry".

In addition to sonic dominance, sustained dancing, and possible intoxication, also the manipulation of the visual field could produce a fragmentation of the self-conscious gaze. A mirror ball is a classic tool to send the dancers spinning, and the dancefloor may possibly be filled with artificial smoke within which strobe lights bounce. Some underground clubs take more minimalist approach by offering a dark space with incidental lighting to emphasise the sound of the music, enabling dancers to lose themselves into the total assemblage of the dancefloor (Ferreira, 2008; Rietveld, 2013). The use of visual projections and dynamic lighting are part and parcel of dancefloor technologies, to enhance a ritual of escape from daytime subjectivities within a sensory environment that makes participants oblivious to the passing of time. Bespoke set design and projections of video clips may also be part of a club night identity. In high-end commercial settings, visuals switch into a marketing spectacle,

blatantly emphasising brand identity, as is the case at larger venues in Ibiza, Spain, a popular clubbing tourist destination.

During the 1980s, the art of visual projections gave rise to the VJ, the video jockey, who in collaboration with the DJ creates a total immersive mixed-media experience. An American precedent can be found in American happenings that took place during the economic boom of the 1960s, which combined music performance with visual projections. For example, the multi-media events of Ken Kesey's acid-fuelled parties with the Merry Pranksters (Wolfe, 1968; Lee & Shlain, 1992) were combined with a journey or trip under the influence of the psychedelic drug LSD, which effect on consciousness is to disable the controlling ego and thereby enabling awareness of details and of sensory impressions that are normally ignored (Nutt cited by Cormier, 2016). Another example can be found in Andy Warhol's multimedia events in New York City, the *Exploding Plastic Inevitable* (EPI). These parties took place in nightclub and music venue the Electric Circus, musically supported by the band the Velvet Underground. Incidentally, EPI inspired media theorist Marshall McLuhan to develop the idea of *allatonceness* (all-at-onceness), "a regenerative and revitalizing unity of mediums and experience" (Lavin, 2009: p101), which summarises mediated information overload as well as its commensurate experience of dancing within a hi-tech club environment. For the then young Italian architect Fabrizio Fiummi, the fluid use of space and "pulsing mass" of participants at the EPI events was a revelation, regarding these as "the irruptive… solution to an emerging architectural critique of monumentality and power" (idem). Such fluidity was not only a consequence of LSD and changes in media technologies, but also of a wider context that included an increasing interest in yogic and meditative practices, as well as the liberal gay, feminist and civil rights movements that gained momentum during the 1960s and 70s.

Nomadic and promiscuous, the DJ's mix offers a corresponding act of sonic fluidity. The art of DJing, was refined by David Mancuso during his late-night held at The Loft, his New York home, the first of which was held on Valentine's Day in 1970 under the motto of "Love Saves the Day" (or LSD). For Mancuso, the transmission of energy or the vibe was central, through both music selection and sound quality, to produce an immersive sonic experience. As afterparties, the Loft parties were particularly influential as they were attended by young underground club DJs who set up their own leading clubs. Mancuso's ideas on how best to build the energy of a dance night with music were partly inspired by Timothy Leary's LSD-fuelled parties in at Millbrook's mansion in Upstate New York (Lee & Shlain, 1992; Kabil, 2017), which reinterpret yogic and Buddhist notions of vibrational energy. Explaining a psychic connection with participants through sharing a "sonic trail" of music, Mancuso refers to the vibrations of the mantra "Om": "Om is the source of all sound – it's a Buddhist chant where voices gel together and vibrate—and I felt we had returned h-om-e" (in Lawrence, 2003: 13). A well-tuned sound system at the relatively low volume of 100dB maximum loudness was assembled for The Loft by the innovative sound engineer Richard Long (Lawrence, 2016) and the acoustically comfortable room was decorated with a mirror ball and festive balloons. Eventually, Long would also design the sound system of New York discotheque Paradise Garage, a trendsetting underground ethnically mixed LBGTQ members club that operated between 1977-87. There, the sound was more forceful, particularly in the sub-bass frequencies, hitting the body as though attending an amplified live concert (Lawrence, 2016: 192), even though it was possible to maintain, simultaneously, a conversation with a fellow dancer. Notably, neither venue sold alcohol; instead, both offered free fruit and water to their dancers, reminiscent of yoga events.

The Haçienda FAC 51, Manchester's flagship nightclub between 1982-97, is a nightclub that I experienced closely at first-hand. Much inspired by the buoyant underground club scene of New York, it nevertheless offered a very different sound system in a challenging acoustic environment. Despite efforts to control the sound when devoid of an absorbent mass of bodies the music scattered into fragments against its glass industrial ceiling and hard walls. The Haçienda was an odd case in terms of its 1982 visual space as well; it was not a generic black box or a glamour disco by any means. Designed by Ben Kelly (Savage, 1992; Kelly, 1982), the club's included idiosyncratic use of diagonally painted yellow and black caution stripes on its load-bearing iron pillars situated on the dancefloor, and an overall bold industrial colour scheme. The club's consistent use of logos and fonts and overall graphic presentation that made use of the diagonal stripes gave the impression of a powerful company: "The Haçienda was both trend-setting and avant-garde with a desire for what [graphic designer] Peter Saville has described as "educating the audience". It was a branding blueprint for the future" (Banks, 2018: 2). Spin-offs of the design can be seen, for example, in Yamamoto's Y3 design of Adidas (Cooper, 2007), as well as the 2019-20 away kit of Manchester City FC (Avelar, 2019). Simultaneously, the club venue was versatile in its offerings and had a theatre lighting system installed, rather than the usual dynamic spotlights one would see in a discotheque. The stage was set in a recess at the side of the dancefloor, so as not to dominate the main club space. The DJ/VJ booth was initially set in a bunker at the side of the stage, with narrow windows to see the stage and the crowd, rendering it virtually dysfunctional (Wilson, 2012); most dancers did not even realise a DJ was present. Eventually, the DJ and VJ and light technicians moved to their own respective booths on the mezzanine opposite the stage; a good position to oversee the space. By 1988, during its 5th year, the combination of acid house and the dance drug ecstasy (MDMA) broke old habits as dancers took to the stage during DJ-led club nights, making participants the

centre of attention rather than the music bands (Rietveld, 2004b) — although eventually dancers used the stage to look upwards to the DJs, as though gazing towards the pulpit of a church. Overcrowding during its popular dance nights led to condensed sweat raining down from the glass roof. According to one of its directors, Peter Hook (2009: xii), "it was the scene of too many great nights and gigs to recall — not that you were in any state to do so."

As the example of the Haçienda shows, the relationship between entertainers and their audience, between the DJ and the dancers, between all the participants, depends on their relative position within the club space. Some clubs offer a stage for performers, including their guest DJs, but most clubs have a DJ booth somewhere to the side of the dance floor or just above it. In a discussion of Canadian clubs, Straw (1995) shows that a DJ booth by the side of the dancefloor enables requests, situating the DJ as a human jukebox, while a DJ in a closed-off space or in an elevated position above crowd emphasises the role of the DJ as auteur. In the latter role, the DJ is encouraged to attend to sound manipulation, and even bring in additional instrumentation and musicians. Taking creative control, some DJs create remixes of music recordings adapted to a specific club sound system, and to taste of their crowd. According to Cheren (2000: 102), during the disco days in 1970s New York, "(a) dance floor was like a ready-made focus group, with an unforgiving and sometimes fanatical audience that was quick to vote with its feet." Eventually, the DJ's role shifted from being an entertaining record collector and music archivist to that of the music remixer and, eventually, to the creative role of music producer. As digital DJ technologies and music production technologies have started to converge especially since the turn of the millennium, the difference between mixing, producing, and performing is starting to blur (Butler 2014; Rietveld, 2016). As DJ is increasingly placed in the spotlight, the DJ is no longer the hidden sonic enabler and more a marketable artist. What happened to the democracy of the 1970s

disco dancefloor, one may ask though, “where anyone could be a star, as long as they had the right attitude and flair” (Hillard, 2015: 9)?

Nightclubs seem to have come a long way from places where one can hide in secrecy and melt into the crowd within the darkened haziness of a sonically dominant culture. As is the case across the night-time economy, the visual world of daytime culture is re-interpreting the once opaque cultures of the night, exploiting yet regulating it (Shaw, 2018; Stahl and Bottà, 2019; Kolioulis, 2018). The nightclub can provide a safe haven for marginalised identities and subjectivities, and to imagine that another world is possible; yet for many of its clientele, the nightclub offers a gated environment to let off steam, a safety valve for the pressures of everyday life. Although the disco concept already existed, for current successful nightclubs, the dance concept of raves, electronic dance music styles, and associated DJs were brought into the regulated club space during the 1990s, where its “subcultural capital” (Thornton, 1995) can be safely celebrated and commercially exploited. In turn, this adds value to economically deprived areas of post-industrial cities (Lovatt, 1996), making the reclaimed sites of nocturnal dance events particularly attractive, not only to teenagers, as Thornton argues, but also to "upper-income social groups”, as Kolioulis (2018: 209) points out in a case study on London’s club multimodal venue Printworks. A previous newspaper print factory, Printworks’ large set of flexible spaces are not only utilised as a nightclub and can be hired for trade fairs and corporate events. Ultimately, what was once a deserted area becomes attractive for property investment, an example of harnessing nighclub culture to raise the economic value of a forgotten and run-down part of London. This is just one example of how nightclubs play a role in the processes of gentrification. Manchester’s nightclub FAC 51 The Haçienda was part of an earlier process of gentrification; after it

closed its doors in 1997, the building was replaced by a block of flats, proudly named Haçienda Apartments.

The attraction of a successful nightclub can, eventually, be its undoing, as gentrification can results in the rise of rents and rates (for an Australian example, see Williams, 2019), and followed by complaints about noise pollution. The actually club venue that underpins the international nightclub brand of Ministry of Sound, was crucial in the gentrification of the area around Elephant and Castle in South London, yet battled for five years with a building development across the street in order to remain in its location (Hubzin, 2014). After the past decade, there has been a trend for nightclubs and other music venues to close down, in London and elsewhere, partly due to gentrification, while simultaneously, cities acknowledge the economic value of its nightlife, installing night mayors and equivalents. In Berlin, its nightclubs have going further, though, gaining protected status equivalent to cultural venues such as theatres (Coney, 2021; Connolly, 2020). A more recent, and new challenge is the lockdown of public social life during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 and 2021 resulting in club closures across Europe and elsewhere.

Not only has daytime society repeatedly entered night-time culture, in its commodified and hyperreal form, the nightclub has also entered daytime culture. Electronic dance music, which has dominated the dancefloors of nightclubs for over three decades now, has become the soundtrack of everyday life, heard in clothes shops and during broadcasts, while the hissing "ch-ch-ch-ch" of its hi-hat sound gives away its presence in mobile headphones. Despite the homophobic, racist, and misogynist "Disco Sucks" slump of the late 1970s, DJ-led dance culture has carried on regardless, described by house music DJ Frankie Knuckles as "disco's revenge" (see Rietveld, 1998). The soundtracks of club nights are commercially available in imaginatively packaged CD-series, reconfirming the brand identity of particular clubs (see also Banks and Brewster, 2018). Since the 1990s, dance DJs have

extended their marketable visualisation on stage and on the front covers of club magazines. They post their mixes online and make video appearances, performing their DJ sets in front of the camera for online platforms such as *Boiler Room*, a practice which has intensified across social media platforms during the Covid-19 epidemic related lockdowns, revealing an intensification of global club culture online. Club culture even appears in the ultimate venue of visual exposure: the exhibition gallery. For example, in 2007, exhibition space Urbis in Manchester, England, showcased The Haçienda Club, twenty-five years after it had opened, including perspectives from participants, images, flyers, and directional speakers to illustrate the images with restrained audio (see Cooper, 2007). In 2018, iconic nightclubs were featured from an architectural design perspective at the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany (Rossi and Eisenbrand, 2018). And in 2019, Cité la musique-Philharmonie in Paris featured the exhibition *Electro, De Kraftwerk à Daft Punk* on dance culture, including night clubs. In 2020, this was repeated at London's Design Museum as *Electronic, From Kraftwerk to the Chemical Brothers* (Leloup et al, 2020) – a rare opportunity during that Covid year to share amplified dance music in London. Although one can be immersed in the space and exhibits, and appreciation and cultural gravitas is finally bestowed on the concept of the nightclub, this does not quite convey the experience of losing oneself into the haptic shared experience of the dancefloor. It is the secluded experience of the total environment that counts, the shared feeling of the music while the world whirls around in fragments of light, where everything, for a seemingly endless yet fleeting moment, is all right.

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