More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction (2nd edition)


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Abstract or Description

More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction is one of the most extraordinary books on music ever written. Part manifesto for a militant posthumanism, part journey through the unacknowledged traditions of diasporic science fiction, this book finds the future shock in Afrofuturist sounds from jazz, dub and techno to funk, hip hop and jungle. By exploring the music of such musical luminaries as Sun Ra, Alice Coltrane, Lee Perry, Dr Octagon, Parliament and Underground Resistance, theorist and artist Kodwo Eshun mobilises their concepts in order to open the possibilities of sonic fiction: the hitherto unexplored intersections between science fiction and organised sound. Situated between electronic music history, media theory, science fiction and Afrodiasporic studies, More Brilliant than the Sun is one of the key works to stake a claim for the generative possibilities of Afrofuturism. Much referenced since its original publication in 1998, but long unavailable, this new edition includes an introduction by Kodwo Eshun as well as texts by filmmaker John Akomfrah and producer Steve Goodman aka kode9.

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Like the title, much of what Eshun does here is bring us back to those intimate moments in recent and distant past and highlight the unforeseen outcomes and influences in the bodies of work of those that came before, via interpretation, stimulation or simply to just snap into the world around us. This is a fiercely intellectual take on African diaspora through music and visual. The title of the book refers to the hook of a 1992 UK breakbeat record entitled “Valley of the Shadows” or “31 seconds”.

More Brilliant Than The Sun: Adventures In Sonic Fiction: Concept Engineered By Kodwo Eshun

More Brilliant Than The Sun is a machine for travelling at the speed of thought, a probe for drilling into new levels of possibility space. Its mission is to undermine the concepts this present has of “Health” and “Culture” and to excite mockery and hatred against these hybrid monsters of concepts. More Brilliant than the Sun's achievement, therefore, is to design, manufacture, fabricate, synthesize, cut, paste and edit a so-called artificial discontinuum for the Futurhythmachine.