

Collage

When does it stop being completely isolated from the rest of the universe and step into the world of collage, adding another patch to the huge quilt of sounds that have gone before? People Like Us "start at the very beginning" and try to find out. Features sounds from Noah Creshevsky, DJ Earlybird, Brion Gysin and Kid Koala, amongst many others.

Here we receive a compacted history of collage, a practice which dates back to Japan in the twelfth-century, where Japanese calligraphers cut-out elements of different papers to create backgrounds for their brushstrokes, through to the 19th century when collage became a popular pastime, people cutting and pasting photographs from the family albums into arrangements of images. Hans Christian Andersen created images using collage, as did other writers and collectors of folktale. By the 20th century the Dada art movement began to see collage as a way of liberating the artist (or, as they put it, anti-artist) from the confines of rationality and bourgeois art. Tristan Tzara cut-up words, leading to the cut-up techniques of William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin, who wrote entire novels using collage.

In music and sound, there have always been forms of collage through composers referencing other compositions in their work (see particularly the works of the remarkable American composer Charles Ives). However, it was not really possible to collage music in a literal sense until the invention of magnetic tape, leading to the tape experiments of the aforementioned Burroughs & Gysin and also the musique-concrete movement, where artists began to treat sound as "concrete" and could physically cut, paste, and manipulate these "sonic objects".

Since then, primarily an avant-garde practice, sound-collage has become more familiar. With the coming of hip-hop it became completely assimilated into popular culture.

And here we are now. And isn't it fun.