

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Time Out

Leave London for this exhilarating heavy metal exhibition in Birmingham

Eddy Frankel

28 August 2019



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Long before it tried to turn itself into the UK's biggest shopping centre, Birmingham was the birthplace of a hugely important cultural movement. In the late 1960s, the city's combination of grim industrialisation and poverty gave rise to a musical force of untold power: heavy metal.

Out of Birmingham and the surrounding area's steel mills and factories came Black Sabbath and Judas Priest and, later, bands like Napalm Death, Bolt Thrower and Godflesh. That's the birth and evolution of a whole genre, right there.

Now, Home of Metal – a season of exhibitions and events – is celebrating that legacy.



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Over at the New Art Gallery Walsall, artist Alan Kane has brought together artists including Sarah Lucas, David Shrigley and Mark Titchner for a look at the domestic side of heavy metal, featuring full recreations of metal fans' merch-adorned bedrooms. Back in Brum itself, Midlands Arts Centre has pulled together a show of adorable/terrifying heavy metal quilts sewn together from band T-shirts by American artist Ben Venom, while Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery has dedicated a whole exhibition to the masters of the genre: Black Sabbath.



Every exhibition has something different going on, from fine art to historical artefacts. It's a genuinely fun, exhilarating, whirlwind tour through heavy metal and the influence it has had on culture.