

A step into the creative world of Derrick Nenzo

Born out of one of the world's proudest cities, alt-rap producer Derrick Nenzo is keeping to his Scouse roots, doing away with 'normal' and embracing his anti-establishment attitude in his lyrics accompanied by beats you can't help but bob your head to. With two self-promoted sold out headliners under his belt, Nenzo has come far since his early days of using a bootleg copy of Logic Pro 9 and is seemingly on a warpath to bend and merge genres in the ever-changing music industry.

Dropping 'Had Enough' at the end of 2022, the anger young people are feeling due to the cost of living crisis was translated perfectly in the artists' words and elevated further with an independently made music video that portrays an exaggerated British nostalgia. 'It's beaconing back to British history but in a parody way, making fun of the government', Nenzo commented. 'A lot of the recent songs I've been making have been a jab at the authorities. I feel that it's important for me to be as open and real as possible about that and talk about the challenges that people like me are facing [right now].'

When you take the dive into Derrick Nenzo's catalogue of music, it's soon realised that he's not just sticking to one genre. A mix of upbeat, mellow and experimental use of instruments gives the listener an insight into whatever Nenzo is feeling during each creative process. 'People are doing away with genres, it doesn't matter anymore. As an independent artist, the power's in my hands. As long as I feel like it makes sense then it does'. From post-punk to hyper-pop, the possibilities seem endless for the young creative. Growing up on Soul, Motown, Pop and Hip Hop, Nenzo recollects the moment he gained consciousness hearing Superstar by Jamelia for the first time. His appreciation for infectious early noughties pop is captured perfectly in 'Beverley', which combines rap with soft vocal melodies performed by friend and collaborator, Amber Jay.

Nenzo's talents don't stop at music, however. Combining his skills in graphic design with a love for fashion photography, we take a step into Nenzo's world through the art and theatrical content he creates. British photographer and self-portrait artist, Nadia Lee Cohen, is a key inspiration behind the aesthetic of the Derrick Nenzo world. '[She makes] very saturated art and has a dystopian take on Hollywood', he commented on the subject of her aesthetic choices. For Derrick, a creative concept is carefully curated around each project, with him creating cover art and even props, including the iconic 'BANG' gun in the 'Had Enough' music video. Everything down to the outfits, makeup and props are meticulously thought through to bring his creative vision to bloom for the world to enjoy.

One of my favourites, 'Cut The Lights', is a quick, aggressive punk-inspired song with a hard-hitting personal message. Written in late 2019, Nenzo encapsulated the emotions he regularly feels due to suffering from OCD into a 2-minute 48-second shouty banger perfect for moshing. When asked the reasoning behind it, Nenzo responded 'It talks about upbringing and mental struggles but in an aggressive way. It's how I like to face things when hope is lost. It's thrashing out because I feel done wrong to with no explanation'. Notably, Derrick Nenzo shows can be unpredictable at times. Anything is to be expected, from mosh pits and missing teeth, to slow jams that bring your body into a gentle sway, every stage performance has a cleverly crafted hidden element to make it differ from the last. A comical highlight of a recent gig at Headrow House displayed Nenzo's sense of humour was his own rendition of 'I Want It That Way' by Backstreet Boys. The result? A crowd of 150 smiling faces waving their lighters and torches high in the air and belting out the lyrics wholeheartedly. Solid.