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Voodoo People: Halloween weirdness in New Orleans

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In recent years, Halloween in the States has become the unofficial herald of the party season. So when 100,000 revellers converge in New Orleans in late October for Voodoo, a three-day festival of music and bespoke artworks, you can imagine the atmosphere.

Voodoo Experience has been running since 1999, and this year returns to New Orleans' City Park with Green Day, Neil Young & Crazy Horse, Jack White and Skrillex, as well as innumerable Louisiana musicians and bands. So far, so good. But what singles this festival out is its artistic focus.



World-class installations, interactive multimedia, craft booths, parades and mind-bending light shows are incorporated into the beautiful landscape of City Park. In this respect Voodoo has more in common with UK festivals such as Glastonbury, where local and international artists exhibit their work; most likely due to the input of co-curator Stefan Beese, an award-winning architect and production designer.

The list of installations is currently under wraps but if past festivals are any indication this year will not disappoint. In 2011, monstrous moving sculptures were lit up in bright neon colours, including a giant bird whose wing motion was powered by a lone cyclist, an ever-evolving mural wall and huge glowing balloons nestled in City Park's 200-year-old trees. Think a less-arid Burning Man and you're getting close. VIP camping is also now available, with safari-style tents already pitched and (working) toilets, showers, electricity and security.



As with many Crescent City festivals, there is also a clear carnival atmosphere; this is a city known the world over for its diverse Mardi Gras celebrations. The city's French colonial origins are reflected in the four separate areas of the festival; 'Le Ritual' (mainstream music), 'La Plur' (electronic and dance music), 'Le Flambeau' (home-grown jazz and blues artists) and 'Le Carnival' (indie bands, burlesques shows and circus acts).

The festival runs from 26 to 28 October 2012. For the full line-up as it is announced and tickets, visit www.thevoodooexperience.com. You can also follow on Twitter @VoodooNola. Laissez les bons temps rouler!

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