

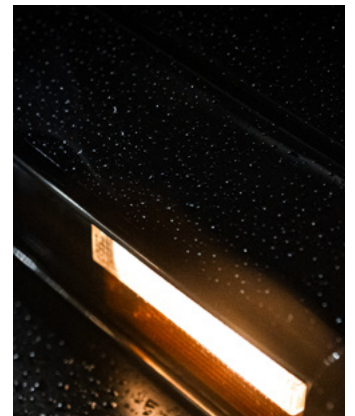
LAGONDA CAR SYNTH – RECLAIMING CONTROL IN THE AGE OF AI

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Digital solutions have taken over more and more of our everyday tasks. The advent of artificial intelligence will accelerate this trend. Stephan Sigrist from the Swiss think tank W.I.R.E. and Swedish artist and designer Love Hultén have developed the 'Car Synth' together. Integrated into a 1985 Aston Martin Lagonda, the design project is a statement against the disempowerment of humans in the age of digital automation – in mobility as well as everywhere else.

Progress is increasingly equated with the possibility of outsourcing tasks and activities to digital solutions to make life easier for people. Yet this increased convenience comes at a price. The consequences are a steady decline in individual skills and self-efficacy. The trend is particularly evident in cars, where the focus of innovation is shifting towards assistance systems that are designed to autonomously control not only the driving itself, but also the interior design and entertainment systems. Artificial intelligence will fuel this development even more.

Stephan Sigrist from W.I.R.E. had the idea to bring back the control over our devices through music and driving – inspired by the many control options and skills required to operate synthesizers and drive classic cars. Together with Gothenburg artist and designer Love Hultén, who builds handmade musical instruments for artists including Kat von D, a 'Car Synth' has been created: a system consisting of two Roland AIRA components with a drum machine (T8) and a small synthesizer (S-1) and an additional oscillator that displays the waves – placed in the back of a car. This allows the passengers in the back to make live music for the driver in the front. *"I wanted to develop a counter-position to the digital cars that do everything for you nowadays, that virtually disempower people",* says Stephan Sigrist, W.I.R.E.



The carrier of the mobile sound system is an Aston Martin Lagonda, 1985, a model of the second series, which was customised by the British specialist Tickford for the Sultan of Oman with a screen, a VHS recorder and a crystal bar – which were now replaced by the ‘Car Synth’. This car was chosen for the project because it is a symbol of independence and courage itself. After Astron Martin went bankrupt in 1974, the new owners, together with designer William Towns, set themselves the goal of building a car that radically broke with the past and clearly differentiated itself from other brands.

The ‘Car Synth’ is intended as an inspiration for shaping a future in which people are at the centre. The project aims to transport the idea that strengthening human abilities as well as maintaining and regaining self-efficacy are among the most important tasks in the age of artificial intelligence. The machines are therefore operated by using knobs and buttons that control oscillators and envelopes without any digital displays. The result is a unique and complementary aesthetic to the largely homogenised interiors of new vehicles, which can hardly be distinguished from one another.

Pictures: Andrea Klainguti for Classic Driver © 2025

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W.I.R.E. is an independent think tank that has been curating the shaping of the future at the interface between business, science and society since 2007. Systematic early recognition and analysis of relevant developments, trends and technologies form the basis for the development of long-term strategies and differentiating positioning for public and private organisations and their decision-makers.

Love Hultén is an audiovisual artist and woodworker. He lives and crafts in Gothenburg, Sweden. <https://www.lovehulten.com>, Instagram: @lovehulten

