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**Derek Piotr Interview (New Album "Grunt" 9/28/18)**



Derek Piotr is releasing his latest album later this month entitled "Grunt." As the name may hint at, it's guttural, gritty, noisy, even gross at times. At least once while listening in my car, I had to stop to make sure the sound I was hearing wasn't coming from my engine. It also seems to have a footing in the glitch music world, although it's perhaps too abstract to really belong there, or anywhere in particular. Machine-like noises and frequencies higher than the enjoyable range are juxtaposed with more organic, intimate field recordings to create a sort of amorphous, microcosmic world of its own. I sent Derek a few questions ahead of the album release about this unique world he had created.

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**Caliper (C):** I guess for a textural album like this my first question is: how did you achieve these sounds (equipment used etc.)?

**Derek (D):** Neumann KMS mic, radial (c74 software) and Ableton. Some tracks are studies on a particular sound: Voice I and II are vocal only sounds; Violin I and II are mainly based around violin playing (courtesy of Jason Boada) XA is all mostly saxophone I played myself, and the title track is recordings of a Fort Troff Raw Pup (NSFW!). In general I was using radial a lot and some of these tracks came forward very quickly; Main Body and Redirect came forth in the space of a day. Some of the other tracks took a little longer editing but in general I was trying to find the ugliest sounds I could and I had to keep erasing what I'd done because it sounded too pleasant... I am not actually sure this record is the ugliest it could be.

**C:** Why is the album called "Grunt?"

**D:** "Grunt" is both an ugly, direct human utterance, and in Polish: "earth" or "ground." This work is pretty guttural, clumsy and heavy. I think both meanings of the title very much fit. I think the zeitgeist has vaporized our connection to the earth and to our own bodies to a large degree and I very much wanted to remember both of those things, also the idea that technology is so greased and smooth now. There is the capability to do a lot of very polished work with very little effort. That feels sort of wrong to me and I sought to subvert it. I think it's incredible we can do such high power things just on our phones but I also think it removes some kind of connection or dug-in effort between artists and medium now.

**C:** Do you consider this work more art or music?

**D:** 110% see it as music.

**C:** You probably don't care much for labels, but how much does this album's aesthetic owe to glitch music?

**D:** Oh, very very much. I definitely see this album as something that references stylistically a lot of releases from the early 2000's, and the software radial that I used a lot on this album is in fact from 2000 or 2001. I hope this continues the conversation in a way and doesn't just repeat ideas. Maybe the aforementioned idea of being very fluid and greased with technology informs this record necessarily because we've spent decades on laptops now - so the angle is a little fresher or more evolved? I can't really judge this, but I will say that I am forever inspired by the idea of glitch. This album owes a lot to noise music too.

**C:** Talk about the role of rhythm on the album.

**D:** Most of the songs are in non- or anti-rhythm, free time, but a few (Despot, Repeating Bloom, Earth Edit) are rhythmic in a way that is the opposite of freetime: extremely repetitious. I wanted both. I tried not to have any repetitive rhythm in most of these pieces because I feel like that's a trap I fall into as a producer often.

**C:** More than halfway through the mostly wordless album there's some singing on the track "Pure." Was that to throw a wrench in the machine, so to speak?

**D:** Absolutely, but it wasn't planned. I am glad for the interruption. Early in the album I sing a little words on the track "DZ": "only to fall into eye-depths". This record works similarly to Drono in that there are almost no words on it. More and more I enjoy working that way.

**C:** Drono being a 2016 release of yours... Where does Grunt place on a spectrum with your previous work?

**D:** I think it's the most evolved I have sounded; the truest to what I think music should be or what I hear in my head. It's also definitely a reaction to my last album, Forest People Pop, because I wanted absolutely the opposite of that record with this one. This feels much more me.

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Grunt is available for pre-order from [Derek's home page](#).

*Derek Piotr, Matt Ackerman*