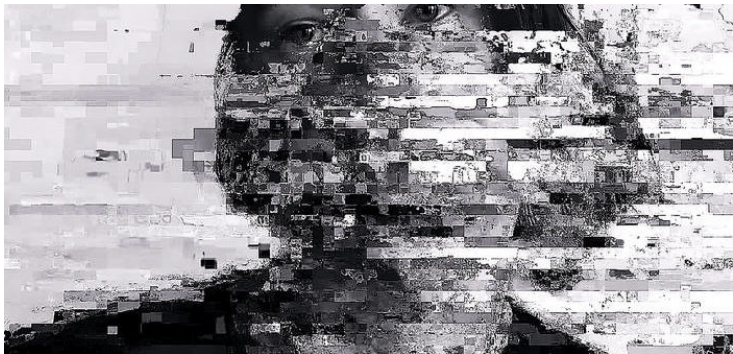




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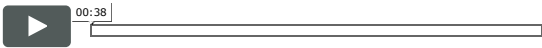
BY CHRIS DOWNTON ON OCTOBER 6, 2018 REVIEWS

Polish-born and now based in the United States, Derek Piotr previously graced us with last year's vocal manipulation-centred 'Forest People Pop', and scarcely a year on, this latest collection 'Grunt' on Piotr's own DPSR label offers up the eighth album in total from the ever-prolific electronic producer. As its title suggests, 'Grunt' is themed around the most primal and animalistic of utterances, though Piotr uses far more than just the human voice as source material for the intricately constructed and frequently jarring tracks here, none of them ever reaching past the three minute mark.


As is characteristic for Piotr, there's an emphasis on fusing the organic (whether in the form of sources such as found sound, field recordings, voice or instruments) with the digital realm, resulting in headspinning, occasionally brutalist soundscapes. Opening track 'Voice II' evokes the glitchy digital explorations of Mille Plateaux's 'Clicks N' Cuts' series (a comparison that recurs here) as flickering digital detritus clicks and stutters, and splintered vocal elements get reshaped into wordless tones against the occasional sonar-like synthetic blip.


By comparison, 'DZ' gets far more frenetic as contorted vocal elements get tweaked into flitting angelic trails against a backbone of hammering kickdrums in a curious juxtaposition between gentle playfulness and violence. 'Violin 1' sees the titular instrument being digitally treated to the point where it feels like sheets of tearing metal, the atonal buzzes and howls punctuated by stuttering rhythmic flickers, doomy piano keys and flashes of static, before 'HVAC' offers up a dark ambient wander that sends busy electronics and crumpled sounding source samples rushing against droning bass presence as bleeping electronics build up into a frantic pace.


Elsewhere, 'Pure' offers up the rare appearance of Piotr's relatively untreated and naked-sounding sung vocals, their warm human presence vividly counterpointing the implacable digital chatter and monotonous thumping rhythms that surround them. Add a reworking of 'Redirect' by Kevin Drumm that sees him throwing in Buchla synth and piano elements to create a characteristically immersive and bracing wash of sound, and you've got an excellent album from Piotr that definitely deserves exploration.





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