

Nora Gouma

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Interview with artist Derek Piotr



Derek Piotr is a folklorist, performer and composer based in New England, whose work focuses primarily on the human voice.

Exit Sense is a sound, video and net artist and a project whose URL is exitsense.net. You can contribute by emailing life@exitsense.net.

[Exit Sense](#) sat down with [Derek Piotr](#) to discuss the inspiration and influences behind Piotr's forthcoming solo album [Making and Then Unmaking](#), as well as the forthcoming single „The Stake”.



Exit Sense: Which version of The Stake do you prefer, and why'd you decide to release both versions in this manner?

Derek Piotr: I definitely prefer the newly-recorded single version to the album version. Being unable to perform live since covid started has been extremely frustrating, and while I haven't been able to regularly gig, I have been singing these songs a lot since I finished the record and I think the single version sounds much more relaxed, confident and „lived-in“. It was nice to tackle this song from what I imagined it would sound like as a live performance angle. I partnered with British label [Bit-Phalanx](#) for the album release; and they requested one more advance single (following „Invisible Map“) to be released ahead of the record.

ES: When you write music, who do you intend or imagine your audience to be?

DP: I never write with regard to an audience; I guess I take for granted that „if you build it they will come“, but simultaneously feel the opposite: nobody is ever going to hear the music (while I am writing it), so I imagine zero audience and just write what I would want to hear. Once you send it off into the world, it becomes a different animal, but that is so removed from the writing process from me that I don't even really consider it. I hope my listeners are as open and receptive as I try to stay.

ES: You don't shy away from getting artists from many different backgrounds to remix your music. Maybe half of what you put out is music remixed by other artists. What do you enjoy most about this process?

DP: Remixes have always been a big part of my process; I was definitely coming of age in the era of maxi-singles and bought many by the pop harlots of the time: Gwen, Cher, Madonna, Björk, etc.... so I think my ethos around remix has always been: more is more. I was initially hesitant to make remixes for this folk album, techno felt like it had no place here. But, after hearing Territorial Gobbing's work tape mangling, I decided it was a fit. And it falls into a long lineage of remixes I have commissioned. I guess old habits die hard!



ES: What's your surroundings and headspace like when writing songs? Where do you normally get inspiration from?

DP: That's a tricky question. My first instinct is to say I always want to write from a place of absolute beauty, but I think the rough-and-tumble of daily life kind of stunts that no matter what. Above all, I write from a place of emotional honesty, and try to transcend the practicality of whatever situation I'm mired in.

ES: Designer stores or thrift stores?

DP: Always, always thrift !

Derek Piotr – The Stake (Version) from *The Stake – Single*

<https://derekpiotr.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/01-the-stake-version.mp3>