

Forest People Pop 7

by Mike Barnard July 13, 2017

- Derek Piotr
- Bit Phalanx
- 2017-07-13

When we last heard from Derek Piotr, he was making drone music with his own artistic take that has seen his output firmly framed in the experimental bracket. For his seventh solo record, he's stepped away from the abstractions his body of work has been built on in favour of an exploration of the melodies, rhythms and hooks of western pop music. That doesn't mean he's sold out looking for mainstream attention - interests in global sounds such as Egyptian electro-chaaba, Algeria raï and Indonesian gamelan can still be heard on *Forest People Pop*, only now he's underlying his fascinations with prevalent contemporary music such as hip-hop and club music.

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The playful and twee nuances of Piotr's compositions shine through on *Forest People Pop*, a sensitive album that alludes to a fragile frame of mind. It begins with 'Tonic/You Move' as a slow, organic broken beat blossoms into an electro-Egyptian sway. The hip hop flavours come from the percussive 'Light' and 'Ice Floe 2.0e' featuring the pure hip hop vocal talents of Banx, highlighting Piotr's skills at adapting to a lyricist with a very different rhythm to his own while retaining that ethereal electronica quality.

There's drama in the haunting computer space of 'Clear' and 'You Move/Timelapse' while a rare 4/4 beat drops for 'Crush on You' over Piotr's signature skewed vocal delivery. Piotr's music is both delicate and robust on *Forest People Pop*, a fascinating kaleidoscope which reveals itself differently on repeat listens. The shifts in tone within his songs would benefit from a little extra sheen to properly lose yourself in their charms, but it doesn't detract from the enjoyment.