

DECAY CAST Interviews : STATIC AND SOUND; An Interview with DEREK PIOTR

On [September 7, 2018](#) / By [decaycast](#) / In [Interviews](#), [Writings](#)

Sound artist Derek Piotr is releasing a new record coming out in late September on the DSPR imprint, titled “Grunt”, so we decided to have a short conversation about Piotr’s work as “Grunt”, specifically on their new record.



“A grunt. That most primal and animalistic of utterances. The new project by Derek Piotr, his eighth solo record and a set of short-form brutalist shards of human-digital noise, is named for this sound. Had Xenakis bought a laptop in 1999, he may have produced something comparable to Grunt and its post-human #voicenoise aesthetic. Yet this is a wholly unique piece of work. As with Xenakis, Piotr takes recognisably analogue sounds – particularly the voice, but also drawing on acoustic instrumentation and found-sounds from nature – and reconstructs them into 21 intricate ‘electroacoustic’ miniatures. Yet Piotr is less interested in dissolving these boundaries between electric and acoustic than he is in hybridising the organic and the digital. Grunt is subversively queer in its post-human composition”

Dr. Decaycast: “A grunt. That most primal and animalistic of utterances” would you say that this quote sums up the Ethos of the Grunt project perfectly?

Derek Piotr: Grunt has a separate meaning in Polish which is “earth” or “ground”. In general this project is trying to remind people of awareness of the physical body and reconnecting with

nature in a really direct, almost clumsy way. I feel society has totally gone ethereal with apps and phones and I wanted to hit listeners lightly over the head with this project.

DD: Can you talk a little bit about the strategies of creating the sounds on this new record?

Piotr: Granular synthesis and heavy edits. In my earlier work I did a lot of very klobig cut and pastes, just lines and lines of small repeated glitches, then got further and further away from that idea as I moved on in my work. I wanted to return to some of the earliest ideas I had about sound, but in a way that is closer to my own vision than it was before...it always takes many tries circling around something before you reach the center.

DD: Would you consider yourself a concept based artist? If so, How does this record differ in concept from your previous seven full length albums, if at all?

Piotr: I think every record does fit into a concept. Drono was about drone music, Forest People Pop was of course more of a Pop record. I think I need a fence to work in or I would just be utterly lost. It would be interesting to me to create an album with no borders, every track a different flavour or feeling, but I feel ultimately that may result in a very uneven album. Something close to this happened with my fourth record Tempatempat. I tried many different sonic environments and, to me, that effort is my weakest. Consistency is important. I think grunt may be my most thematically consistent record. Most of the tracks are within the same parameters of length, and very similar processing is applied to the sounds across the entirety.

DD: Xenakis was mentioned in reference to this album. Can you talk a little bit about the impact his work has had on your process and aesthetics, if any?

Piotr: Xenakis is amazing, the press release was not written by me, but I definitely suggested that visual "if Xenakis had a laptop" to the PhD who wrote the liner notes. I think a lot of Xenakis' work is very rough and direct in a way I tried to be on this album. I was not thinking of Xenakis when writing, more after I had the record done I tried to tie touchstones to it. Some of the work on this record sounds like Xenakis chamber music. Some of it sounds like Stockhausen. Some of it sounds like Pita. Some of it sounds like Kit Clayton. But I only drew those threads together after.

DD: The last track on this record is a reworking of a Kevin Drumm track. Can you talk a little bit about that collaboration and how that came about?

Piotr: I've known Kevin for years and we've emailed back and forth. We're on the same label with some of our stuff. As I did with Drono (where I collaborated with Thomas Brinkmann for the last track), I invited Kevin to edit some of the material I was working on for this noise album. I sent him a bunch of demos and he chose Redirect to work with.

DD: Any collaborations planned for the future? Did you learn anything from that particular collaboration with Drumm?

Piotr: Didn't really learn anything from Kevin, we work pretty similarly...that said I do have more collaborations coming in the next few months...

DD: What is some of the best new music (noise or other that you have heard)

Piotr: AGF – *Dissidentova*

Dirty Projectors – *Lamp-Lit Prose*

anything from Don't DJ

but i am bad to talk about "new" music, I mostly lately listen to Jean Ritchie and old Thai music on youtube.

DD: Do you think queerness plays a big enough role in noise?

Piotr: No. It's very much a boys club still. I wanna wag my finger a bit: many successful noise artists feed into boys club energy; use guitar and have kind of a postrock shoegaze situation going on. I think it pulls in people and feels like stretched out major power chord business, just made slightly weirder or dilute. Then you have harsh noise which is almost mosh-state sometimes. Definitely macho-ness going on, at least with some of the noise scene figureheads. I wish for more alertness sonically, use of differing tonal systems, general freakiness, softness and sensuality.

DD: What are the next plans for your project?

Piotr: Tour and remixes and videos...