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NOISE IS BEAUTIFUL

Noise is Beautiful.

The hiss of a tape. The feedback of an amp. The quiet inbetween the scratch. Noise is supposed to be the unwanted part of a signal, the interference that disrupts clarity. We are trained to reduce it, cancel it, clean it up. But in noise music, noise is not interference. It is the point.

And the word noise rarely stays confined to sound.

Noise is beautiful because its boundaries are endless. Look no further than pop culture or debates surrounding censorship. The phrase "Turn that racket down" or "It's just a bunch of noise" has been used to dismiss everything from rap music to the television revolution to political thought. The word noise becomes a tool. It marks something as excessive, disruptive, or outside the accepted order. Once something is labeled noise, it becomes easier to ignore, regulate, or silence.

For myself, delving into noise has meant moving toward the things that are usually pushed aside. What is dismissed as chaos often contains its own form. Noise expands the field of listening. It makes room for sounds that were never meant to be polite, and it refuses the idea that only certain forms of expression deserve attention.

In that sense, noise is not simply a style of music. It is a way of approaching sound and culture more broadly. It asks us to question why certain sounds are welcomed while others are rejected. It asks who gets to define the line between music and noise in the first place. When those lines shift, entire new spaces of creativity open up.

Stepping into that space has been an invitation rather than a rejection. It allows expression in a near-infinite fashion. It welcomes the virtuous and the amateur, the engineer and the DIYer, the naturalist and the mechanical, the punishing and the defending, the spiritualist and the nihilist. It can be the home of isolation and community. Asexual or pansexual. It is ever expanding, and can transcend the human experience. It exists without humans, and can be found throughout nature on a geological scale, and deep in the recesses of space. Noise is eternal because it is both life and beyond it.

Noise is beautiful.

Interview w/ Yuma Takeshita

NW: Could you explain to our readers who you are and what you do?

YT: I'm originally from Osaka and now based in Tokyo. I perform live, build my own instruments, and also work with exhibitions and installation pieces. Most of what I do revolves around sound, but it often expands into physical objects and spatial setups.

NW: There is very little information out there about you, specifically in the West. What I could find says "Yuma Takeshita started playing experimental / improvised music around 2001. After moving to Tokyo in 2011 he began constructing his own instruments by modifying an electronic-bass guitar with different sound modules and machines." I'd like to dive into this background. If I'm correct, that puts you at about 19 when you started to play experimental/improvised music. What were you doing before then?

YT: At first, I was just playing guitar casually, following instruction books. Then a friend invited me to join a band. I started as a guitarist but quickly switched to electric bass. The band originally aimed at mixture rock, but due to member changes and various constraints, we slowly drifted into more experimental territory.

After the band broke up, I focused on exploring what I could do alone with just an electric bass. At the same time, I started to feel the limitations of the instrument.
The year after the Great East Japan Earthquake, like many people in Japan, I found myself reflecting on a lot of things. I decided to move to Tokyo. There, I met musicians with very different values and approaches, and that's when I first encountered the idea of self-built instruments. I had already been feeling the structural limits of conventional instruments, so I began modifying mine little by little.

NW: Was there a pivotal moment or artist that introduced you to experimental music?

YT: There wasn't one single moment. Band members introduced me to free jazz records. I often played at Namba Bears in Osaka, which has a strong experimental scene. After moving to Tokyo, I was exposed to even more diverse ideas. Looking back, it feels less like a sudden decision and more like a gradual, maybe inevitable shift.

NW: As someone who has built their own instrument, I know the amount of work that can go into the design. What made you pursue designing your own instruments?

NW: It definitely takes time and effort. But to me, an instrument is also a kind of restriction. Following its fixed structure without questioning it feels suffocating. Building my own instruments simply felt like a more natural direction. While I'm making them, I don't really experience it as hardship.

NW: You design and build your own instruments. When you begin creating a new instrument, what usually comes first for you? A sound you want to hear, a physical mechanism you want to explore, or something else entirely?

YT: Sometimes it starts with a sound image. Other times it begins with a mechanism or even a visual form. It can also come from a frustration during performance — thinking, "I wish this could behave slightly differently." I often play with musicians who use very different instruments, and their sounds and structures influence me as well.

Usually, I sketch a vague idea in 3D CAD, then build a rough prototype using a 3D printer or basic machining tools. After that, it's trial and error. Most of the testing happens on stage.

NW: Many of your devices look as if they introduce elements of unpredictability. How important is surprise or loss of control in your performances?

YT: Uncertainty is central. As you become more skilled, habits develop. Those habits can become style, but they can also become a trap. I design my instruments so that unpredictable elements can occur. When something happens outside of my expectations, it opens new directions.

NW: How does performing solo differ from performing collaboratively, especially when you're using custom-built instruments?

YT: In solo performance, I feel like I'm in a duet with the instrument itself. If the instrument reacts in a certain way, I respond. It's a conversation. In collaboration, the space becomes wider. The basic attitude is similar, but listening becomes more important. The focus shifts outward.

NW: You began performing in the early 2000s. How have you seen the experimental and improvisational music scene change during that time?

YT: There's simply more variety now — more instruments, more approaches. The internet and social media changed access to information dramatically. Many musicians today are technically very skilled. In the past, things felt rougher. Now the scene feels more refined.

NW: Are there particular communities, venues, or collaborators that played a significant role in shaping your approach to sound? Perhaps Bar Ishee?

YT: Namba Bears, Ftarri, Shichoshitsu, and Bar Isshee were important spaces for me. As for collaborators, there are too many to name.

NW: Are there artistic or non-musical influences, such as engineering, architecture, or visual art that strongly shape how you think about sound?

Anime, games, and manga had a big impact on me. Especially things like Dragon Ball and Gundam, particularly the robot design aesthetics. Those visual and mechanical imaginations are deeply connected to how I think about sound.

Devon Michigan is a multidisciplinary artist based on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Sḵwx̱wú7mesh, & Sel̓íl̓witulh Nations in 'Vancouver, Canada' who has been performing as The Ghost Taco since 2007. The setup is minimal but the impact is not. A microphone, a small chain of pedals, a body in a room. The sound is generated live and shifts with the acoustics, the PA, and the proximity of the audience.

NW: I don't want to go too much into how Ghost Taco first emerged because it's well documented in an earlier interview you did with Kate Rissiek, which I encourage everyone to read, but I am interested in where you are now with the project?

GT: Over the Fall of 2025 I completed a really awesome training program through the Notebook Platform that taught me to use Ableton as if I were a techno producer. It got me closer to the things I talked about in that Untitled interview re: making actual listenable recordings and possibly turning this project into a melodic live input project.

NW: Could you elaborate a bit on what you learned from that program, and why it was awesome?

GT: I have no idea where I first learned to use DAWs– probably film school at some point– and I had only a rudimentary understanding of mixing and mastering prior. It was intimidating so I often just stuck to what I knew. My AV training took place right at the cusp of the analog-digital switch. That was a lucky break for sure. So I can read a meter fine and I learned to efit sound on like, Adobe software 20 years ago or something. But I didn't really understand things like knees etc in multiband. And I've spent a lot of time with guitar pedals, but I've never had like, one-on-one help from knowledgeable folks who can answer my questions about sound waves and digital production best practices. Ableton is just a massive program too, and they got me the whole Suite for like $200 and showed me how to make techno with it. And I'd never used Ableton or made beats with synth software so that was a huge skills upgrade. I also met a whole bunch of local music producers who were all so lovely. Mostly rave DJs or VJs and some really wonderful collage musicians and some awesome goths. Shoutouts to the Notebook 2025 cohort!

NW: Do you feel like you're steering Ghost Taco, or does it sometimes feel like you're being carried by it?

GT: In the moment of performance it's a bucking bronco or a melodic taffy loop that I have to hold the reigns on. But more broadly and in terms of practice, I'm driving.

NW: Do you want this to still exist ten years from now?

GT: I don't think that far ahead about this, to be honest.

NW: Or is it meant to burn out?

GT: *shrug* Over the eighteen years, I've gotten bored for years at a time and stopped doing it with no commitment to pick it back up. One day it'll be the last time I do it. Again, I'm not really that committed to an outcome.

NW: I want to ask you about your other practices - academic, artistic, even cooking, but I'll start with your animation. When I previously asked about it, you described your style as "really juvenile." As someone who was kicked out of art class in grade 10, I relate to that feeling.

When you say "juvenile," what do you mean by that? Is it a limitation, a strategy, a refusal of polish, or something else entirely? Because for me, it comes down to a perceived lack of skill compared to a traditionally trained artist, which I thought was a negative, only to later come around that I prefer it.

GT: By 'juvenile', I meant that my work embraces unserious and childlike emotions and imagery and tries to use incredibly simple production techniques. It's also just my honest aesthetic as a DIY working class punk artist. It might have been the wrong word choice. But I guess what I meant was:

1) I am deeply inspired by kids drawings.

2) I grew up with a lot of lowbrow & psychedelic and postmodern animation and surreal, B sci fi movies from the mid20th century because my parents are hippies. Like I saw Pink Floyd's The Wall and The Beatles' Yellow Submarine as a literal toddler. And I was a punk and a raver and a video nerd in the 90s. So I come by punk, neo-expressionist, counterculture, cartoon, collage aesthetics very honestly and it's the kind of work I want to make.

3) As a kid it was my dream to work for ILM or Henson Studios, so I gravitated to stop motion animation as a teen in the 90s. I studied animation under Richard Reeves from the Quickdraw Animation Society, and his very aesthetically messy but conceptually enormous cameraless animation had a massive influence on me. He's someone who had a day job while maintaining an incredible practice. Richard told me that he worked on his films for up to four hours a night after his day job, and he completed around 5 minutes a year. He really inspired me to maintain a practice as a working class person, and to not let a lack of money ever slow me down.

There's something really earthy and tactile and fun about keeping my techniques rudimentary. So I'll redo a drawing 15 times if it looks bad to me, but it still might just be a brightly coloured scribble that looks like shit from a butt to someone else.

4) Virtuoso animation is absolutely admirable, of course. My favourite animated films are bolexbrother's 'The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb', Akira, and early Ghibli. My early non-clay stopmotion work was heavily inspired by Svankmajer's Dimensions of Dialogue and Meat Joy. If I was rich or funded I'd want to make at least one work that tried to be that perfect. As someone trained in stop motion I really admire that level of detail and perfectionism.

5) *But* the stuff that really turns me on on an emotional level is like, Bruce Bickford's work on Baby Snakes. Or Brian Chippendale's collages, or Chad Van Gaalen's animations from the 00s. There's something really exciting and giddy about things that gallop along but might collapse into chaos at a moment's notice. Things that are both chaotic garbage and psychedelic masterpieces at the same time. It's a really hard note to hit. Lighting Bolt is really good at it. Skee Mask is really good at it. And I think one of the purest emotions is when something makes you laugh with giddiness and nervousness at the same time— like when you're about to pull a really hilarious prank that might get you in a lot of trouble as a kid. If I was to boil down my core emotional motivation as an artist, it's wanting to elicit that feeling in people. Like I think Eric Andre is doing God's work and bringing joy back to the people. It's the difference between doing 300mph on the autobahn in a well-tuned sports car and bombing down a washed out logging road in a honda civic. I am absolutely from honda civic on a logging road culture, and I own that.

NW: Can you tell me about Bitchin' Nukes Fest?

GT: Bitchin Nukes Fest is about a self-replicating nanobot AI city that's trying to recreate humanity millions of years after the oligarchs nuke us all (the titular 'Bitchin Nukes Fest'). It's a thing I've been writing and keeping to myself for a long time as a way of dealing with my big feelings about climate change and being a person in the world. Major inspirations include Moomin, Superjail, apocalypse movies, and The Wire. I don't want to talk too much about it because it's taking me forever to make and release. It's not fun to talk about things when I'm not working on them. I have a great team of voice actors standing by. I need a rich benefactor so I can stop selling my time to companies.

NW: Do you still cook for a living? I ask because I used to cook for a living, and I found this quote from you interesting: "Line and prep cooking in busy restaurants has become an extension of all my body work." Could you explain what you mean by that?

GT: I have a really great union job as a part time cook for a fancy caterer. Cooking professionally is a physical discipline. It's kind of a team sport. You have to take care of your body, and you have to know the best ways to move it to get the job done. You get stupid injuries and there's a lot of non-verbal communication to master. When I've worked the same station on a busy line for longer than about three weeks it becomes a dance where the movements and the timing doesn't really change, it's just the order you do things in. Tiny optimizations in movement and mis en place can make huge differences. When I clear my chit board during a rush I do a dismount because I'm a silly weirdo. I'm not sure how to elaborate any more than that.

NW: Your academic work, which, please correct me if I'm wrong, relates to the discipline of "the human environment." That seems like a fascinating field, kind of a mix of psychology, physical geography, and urbanism. Could you tell me a bit more about that field? I've been really fascinated by how environments can change human psychology ever since I found out that grocery stores, malls, and casinos don't have clocks in them to influence behavior. I could also be way off here and asking you about two separate fields that are only related in my head.

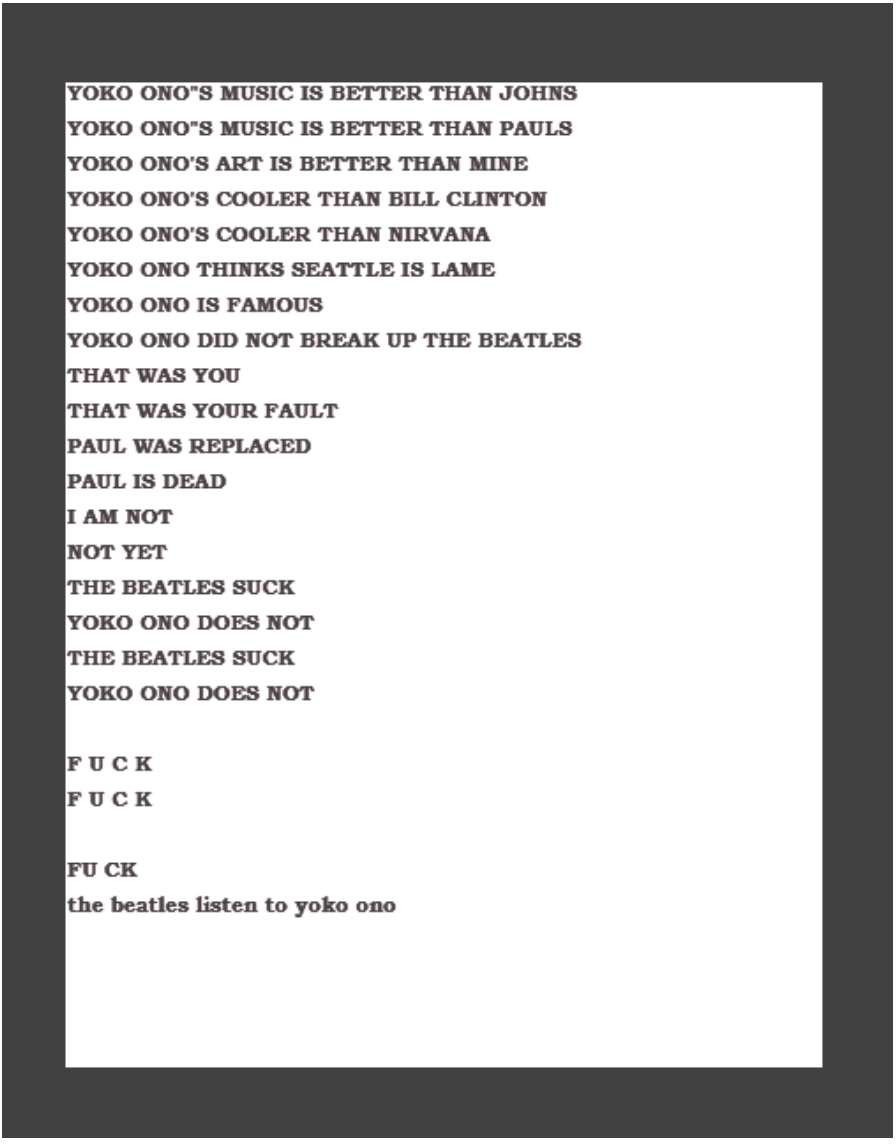
GT: Geography is an annoying discipline, because it can be basically anything. "The human environment" isn't itself a discipline, that degree title is just a way of explaining that my work blended physical geography, environmental sciences, and urban studies. Like it denotes that I studied how people and their environments interact with the world rather than how rocks fall on a hillside or how traffic patterns are formed. The kind of psych you're talking about is called environmental psych, and it's absolutely a big part of urban studies. I did a lot of architecture and urban behaviour classes that explored the way people use the built environment, and how built environments reinforce certain behaviours like in your example. That stuff is fun. A lot of that field was advanced by marketers and business psych people in the last forty years. Urban design is so much more insidious than people realize.

So my thesis was an interdisciplinary study of how this 200 million year old landscape structure in Montreal— the Sherbrooke Escarpment and the ephemeral wetland that used to cover the SudOuest— was terraformed to help make the colonization of Canada possible.

It involved a lot of different areas of research: retracing the path of an ephemeral river; reading soil cross sections and geological maps; looking at building archives and colonial history; researching the history of riots and sex work and sexual deviance in the area; learning how racialization was used to divide the working class; researching urban control strategies like Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari and Scott talk about; and then I did a case study of how my subcultures conceive of post-industrial aesthetics and how real estate developers in turn use those same aesthetics and subcultures to sell brownfield condos. It's pretty complicated, and honestly I'm starting to lose all my fancy academic lingo. Time to go back to school. I started that degree thinking there were going to be tons of climate change mitigation jobs to be had by now, and there just aren't.

NW: You seem like you're very busy. What new projects can we expect from you over the next year?

GT: Oh I don't want to overpromise. I'm working on new stuff with Nerve War, my cross-country industrial band. I'm working on music. I'm finishing up a bunch of old projects. I don't really focus on output, I just do stuff. Hopefully I'll submit some work to Destroyed Cinema this Fall.



An Exhaustive Review of Yoko Ono's Music by JP Meldrum

It bares me no pleasure to tell you this, but Yoko hardly made any noise, even if the principals of noise, as your dad might understand them, stem from Ono and her Fluxus contemporaries. Ono was stuck in an awkward time for avant-gardists and experimental art - pop art made pre-60s experimentalism apres-garde: Warhol had bent the Dadaists into water cooler fodder, and the Beatles, of course, had taken the tenets of John Cage's New Music and Pierre Schaeffer to expand their hifi production and increasingly progressive tendencies on tracks like "A Day in the Life" and "A Day in the Life". But these artistic transgressions, when removed from the massage of four-chords and lyrics about love, are easily avoided by the uncurious rockist and continue to provoke the uningratiated. That is, except for Yoko.

For me, the quintessence of rage-bait is Reddit comments about Yoko Ono. Misogynistic boneheads repeat "Yoko Ono is to music what abstinence is to sex positions" without any context of the Fluxus movement, her incredibly inspiring Grapefruit book, or her Abrovichian Cut Piece; though, I'm coming from a highbrow, university graduate, bottom-of-the-iceberg-meme art history position in which my broken brain no longer receives stimulus from "Yesterday". Yoko Ono is the stop-gap for most rockists' exposure to the avant-garde. Everyone knows Yoko because everyone knows the Beatles. Many a boneheaded father purport that Ono broke up the Beatles, and for that, she is but a leper, and by proxy, so is her art and any art like it. Paretextual bullshit is superimposed onto expressive, conceptual art and closed off an entire generation to alternative modes of creativity; the 'my kid could draw that' of it all. But, really, the only thing cool John Lennon ever did was Yoko Ono; that, and die by gunfire. However, due to her superimposition as wife and widow of the 'greatest songwriter of all-time', she had the unlimited access, clout, and attention to pursue more commercial and pop avenues from the vantage point of an avant-gardist. The results are deeply experimental in the broadest terms - Ono never stuck to one thing and toyed with genres across the spectrum. Ono understood her position and abused it to the point of beautiful abstraction; wherein there is no clean throughline across her oeuvre. Her music categorically matches the contemporaneous moment while rejecting the dominant conservatism evolving throughout her lifetime.

Unfinished Music No. 1: Two Virgins (w/John Lennon) (1968)

Revolution No.9 is by-in-the-large the average music listeners only exposure to Musique Concrete and noise music principals. Two Virgins listens as Fluxus tinged extension of No. 9's reductionist repetition, but not without a little bit of proto-noise-rock guitar slammering and krautrock-like vocal gesticulations. Ultimately, this is somewhere between Stauckhausen worship and a lesser Keiji Haino release.

Unfinished Music No. 2: Life with the Lions (w/John Lennon) (1969)

A lot more free improvisation here than sound collage, though its no-doubt some feedbacked-out noise. I'm impressed most by Yoko's non-stop expressive gibberish throughout the first (25 minute long) track, though I wish John Tchicai's saxophone was closer to the microphone. I'd love to avoid all the paratextual bullshit Beatles nerd focus on when writing about these Lennon/Ono collab records, but it is truly shocking that one of the most well-regarded artists in modern history made a record of shit I'd hear in a community centre.

The second is essentially a photo-dump of experimental recordings; more so than the sound collage of volume 1, there is a real sense of play on side B of No. 2. Most notably the hymnal "No Bed for Beatle John" in which Yoko sings a press clipping about a car-accident they were in, and another about their Two Virgins album. It's sardonic, haunting, and brings to mind the kinda thing a jaded Mark Kozelek would do 40 years later.

Wedding Album (w/John Lennon) (1969)

John and Yoko revel in self-parody. Side A, entirely composed of "John & Yoko", is a dadaist extension of the Kozelekian ragebait of "No Bed for Beatle John" wherein Ono and Lennon scream each others first names at each other over recording of their heartbeats and the accredited "rare sounds".

It comes across as cynical, as a 'fuck you' to the smear campaign against Yoko, and a heedless dismissal of the negative reception to the first two entires in their collaborative catalogue. It's not particularly interesting without the paratextual context, nor is it particularly spirited experimental music.

This first trilogy of records is so tied to Lennon's position as hippie-hero and Beatle superstar, and almost exclusively works in conversation with the Vietnam war's end of flower-power mirroring the dissolution of the Beatles as a symbolic end of an era. That is to say, Ono and Lennon recognize that you're gonna have to push people a lot harder if you want to make a change. The Fluxus Lennon-Ono trilogy reads as nothing more than an intentional provocation - not that that's a bad thing in of itself, but it's a cynical attack on Beatles fans from the ultrafamous that fans the reputational flames this kind of art fosters from rockists.

Plastic Ono Band (w/Plastic Ono Band) (1970)

This first trilogy of records is so tied to Lennon's position as hippie-hero and Beatle superstar, and almost exclusively works in conversation with the Vietnam war's end of flower-power mirroring the dissolution of the Beatles as a symbolic end of an era. That is to say, Ono and Lennon recognize that you're gonna have to push people a lot harder if you want to make a change. However, sound collages and performance art were never going to capture the imagination of the everyman, so Lennon and Ono rejigged their provocative formula to fit around the contours of traditional rock music with their Plastic Ono Band duology.

Technically, Yoko's first solo album though John, Ringo, and the Ornette Coleman quartet play throughout the record. Here, Ono has made the first No Wave record; motoric Krautrock bass, improvisational expressionist wails, moments of free jazz & Stoogian protopunk and an unhinged Lennon playing feedback guitar storm together in an experimental rock flurry akin to the Teenage Jesuses to come than Luc Ferrari. To the laymen Rolling Stones reader, this is at least recognizable as rock music, and much braver rock music than most American music preceding it; Coleman never played on a Velvet Underground record. Yet, something about its rock 'n' roll form undermines the Fluxus cynicism of her concrete records with John.

Ultimately, the Plastic Ono Band better acts as an extreme transitional marker between 60s flower-power and 70s new wave as punk and noise formally enter the lexicon of popular rock music as punk and metal and the New York CBGBs scene begin to form more so then it is a watershed record unto itself. A particular highlight in the driving octave and fifth deep psych grooves by bassist Klaus Voormann, while Coleman's collaboration with Ono is half-baked, uninspired, and leaves far more boxed then you'd expect from a collaboration between the Grapefruit author and the projector of free jazz to be.

Fly (1971)

Ono has all but abandoned the noise at the conceit of this article - my sincerest apologies for straying off theme. However, with such comes a record recognizable as in-step with the heavy psychedelic music in the step with our transition away from flower-power and towards the brute-punk aesthetics of the 70s. Ono has not abandoned her signature yelp, but it finally sounds like a free-wheeling saxophone as opposed to normie-leveling weapon of Fluxus contempt. Fly features Clapton doing his psych'd out locomotive blues rock thing on "Don't Worry, Kyoko", which is perhaps the most boring part of this record; it's like an abandoned b-side from Patti Smith's Horses

Sometime in New York (w/John Lennon) (1972)

Sometime in New York's first disc is much more a John record than a Yoko. Finally, the two lovers have fully relented and largely dropped the experimental modalities in favor of a still-jammy straight-ahead protest-blues-rock record on

side A. These are some of John's most biting and enjoyable post-Beatles tracks, particularly the pro-Ireland "Sunday Bloody Sunday" which sounds like "Come Together" by way of Primal Scream. and "The Luck of Irish". Ono finds an accessible voice in Phil Spector's 'wall of sound' - which sounds like it would mean noise music but really it means cinematic girl group/brill building aesthetics down to Yoko doing a remarkable impression of The Crystals.

But they can't help themselves - Side B is psychotic! A live free jazz jam band version of Fly's "Don't Worry Kyoko" blew my fucking head-open as Bobby Keys sax carefully locks in Yoko's fearless freeform yelp as Clapton, Harrison, and Lennon all shred away in epic feedbacked glory. The Zappa jams from '71 slapped at the end feel out of step with the whole record, but the last two jams "Scumbag" and "Au" are welcome Zappian freakouts tinged with muted shrieks from Yoko. This is, overall, a very generous record that touches on what people love about the Beatles, 70s prog-rock, free jazz, and the Fluxus movement

Approximately Infinite Universe (1973)

I'm beginning to wonder if Yoko was seeking validation from the rock press or if she decided to weaponize her fame and make something with mass appeal to channel her radical second-wave feminist message into the mainstream after being ridiculed for the "elitist" leftism of the preceding New York record. Infinite Universe sees Yoko almost completely avoiding her legendary shriek instead opting for undersung pop melodies that bring to mind Leonard Cohen, Nico, and while writing some pretty straight-ahead hippie-dippie folk rock baked in stoner-feminist adages. I personally have no interest in the record, but a Beatles fan might see this as Ono's first 'real' album. Yoko sells out.

Feeling the Space (1973)

Feeling the Space is a sister record to *Infinite Universe*, though slightly more soft-rock and AM jazz then the trippy cafe folk of its sibling.

Moments of experimental rear on "Woman of Salem" which quickly fades out as it begins to descend into atonality and Fluxus repetition. For those nostalgic for the acid-drenched second wave feminism of yesteryear, Universe and Space might be your speed, but I find they sit as middling artifacts of 60s baggage echoing into 70s music.

Double Fantasy (w/John Lennon) (1980)

Through the rise of The B-52s, Blondie, and the New York-Punk-New-Wave intersection, Ono finds a balance between the mainstream -isms of her previous two records and her Fluxus roots. "Kiss, Kiss, Kiss" is her best song thus far - as both a pop record and as an experimental oddity akin to something Laurie Anderson would've done on Big Science next year. En-masse, though, Double Fantasy is another record plagued by exterior context: the assassination of John Lennon. There is a stark contrast to the renewed sense of love, optimism, and groove in contrast to his grizzly demise that certainly gave this record new life after its muted reception; its dripping in potential of what Lennon could have been in his later career. But that's the John of it all - as a Yoko joint, it's her most engaging, eccentric, and joyous radio-friendly work yet worthy of many-a playlist saves.

Season of Glass (1981)

Almost as cathartic as Mount Eerie's grief-journal album A Crow Looked at Me.

I understand the bad taste this left in many-a Lennonhead as it does feel a bit exploitative to make a record with your late husband's bloody glasses on the cover within six months of his assassination, but the record is largely about how complicated it is to be Lennon's widow, and how she can continue on in solitude - as in his death she is as shackled to him forever as she is as free of his interpersonal torment. Ono's songwriting has shaken off all the hippie dross and found an accessible place in a tragic new-wave/no-wave kitsch pop; one that signals the end of the 70s - John Lennon is dead; an 80s neon crypto-conservativism of electropop is upon us.

Season of Glass seamlessly blends her experimental impulses, evident in the discordant post-punk of "No, No, No" and flourishes of the Unfinished era in the tape recording on "Mindweaver" and "Even When You're Far Away", with her new-found new wave finesse. It's almost as if Lennon had pushed her towards these 60s psych aesthetics unconsciously - the lingering Sgt. Peppers of it all - while her tastes leaned more towards the vanguard: psychotronics, prototechno, and art-pop-eccentricity. Season of Glass is sophisticated, playful, and about as zany as an elegy can be, but it is not abrasive nor would I castigate it as experimental.

It's Alright (I See Rainbows) (1982)

'It was '82 and it seemed as though I was finally in sync with the world" said Ono about It's Alright in the linernotes for the Onobox. Here, Ono revels in her sovereignty. Her singing has never been more confident - she sounds like Let's Dance era Bowie here (which wouldn't be released for another year).

Milk and Honey (w/John Lennon) (1984)

Milk and Honey is nothing more than an extension of Double Fantasy - recorded in the months preceding Lennon's assassination. The John songs have an unfinished, bedroom charm akin to those early Tobias Jesso Jr tracks, while the Yoko tracks are drenched with that primitive new wave sound - an oxymoron, I suppose - defined in their previous collab record. Ono's pop sensibilities are a lot sharper on It's Alright, Seasons of Glass, and the succeeding Starpeace, but there are moments here that remind me of the glossy groove of a city pop joint. Still, the Yoko stuff is largely throwaway and free of meaningful experimentation. Milk and Honey is clearly a commercial product meant to suck the posthumous blood out of John for desperate Beatles devotees to drink.

Starpeace (1985)

Ono's cries for peace feel less baked in hippie sloganism than they do radical, sincere, and precinct over time. *Starpeace* - a clear response to Reagan's "Star Wars program" - is a kitschy synthpop record that borders on satire of the 80s aesthetic: kitschy 16-bit midi, a goofy green-screen space operatic album cover, and catchy hooks that hardly rhyme underscored by ultra-direct, tasteless progressivism:

“I'm a yellow girl, you choose to call me slanted eyes / I'm a white boy who fights for his roots and ties / I'm a red woman who cries over her child's hunger / I'm a black man who's come to terms with his anger” .

Ono’s got one of my favorites, Bill Laswell, on board as producer which drenches the overarching sound with a high-art ambition despite its gimcrack synthetics and neon veneer; carefully layered vocals, an album-cover appropriate outer-space reverb, though not overdone, and Laswell’s classic DI’d electric bass sound higher in the mix then most synthpop tracks ever would.

Rising (w/IMA) (1996)

After a decade, Ono returns with a 90s alt rock spearheaded by her son. “Warzone” suggested that Yoko had been inspired by the extreme music brewing in her absence, but the album pivots immediately towards milk-toast rap-rock college rock tinged with trip-hop gimmicks. Her vocal delivery, though, has returned to its abrasive origins and adds a certain experimental flair to this otherwise uninspired One Hot Minute era Chili Pepper’s dross. Most of Rising is like a really insufferable Jane’s Addiction tribute band that heard Portishead once in a movie, but stand-out experimental tracks like the post-rock slow-burn “Rising” and the aforementioned “Warzone” showcase Ono’s infamous yelp as a real instrument of punk spirit.

I’d be foolish not to point to the Rising Mixes EP’s inclusion of a Thurston Moore, Adam Yauc,. Keiji Haino, Masonna, Monde Bruits, Incapacitants, C.C.C.C., Hanatarash, MSBR, and The Gerogerigegege remix of “Rising”. The mix is super raw, inspiring washed out harsh-noise over a less reverb-y mix of the track, and its collaborators are totally indistinguishable, but nonetheless a cool piece of noise ephemera hiding in one of Ono’s least discussed albums.

Blueprint for a Sunrise (2001)

Six years later, Ono sheds the 90s alt-rock genre misstep of Rising for her first ‘art rock’ record; at least, they tried for art rock, it kinda just sounds the same as the last one. The milquetoast trip-hop is still there, as is the slack-jawed genre potpourri of Rising, though it's pushed much further through a much more inspired vocal performance from Yoko; more than One Hot Minute, we’re dealing with early PJ Harvey. The pop/new wave songs, like the “D'yer Mak'er” inspired “I’m Not Getting Enough”, sound pretty awful with modern production in contrast to her Double Fantasy era joints with similar aims, while her live multilingual extra noise-y, Sonic Youthian “Rising II” sequel rip with manifold intense energy; “Rising II” may be Ono’s best song and the perfect sonic context for her unrestrained vocals. There’s also “Mulberry”, a powerful Fluxus noise-rock hymn from the late 60s that she’s slapped on here with little regard for cohesion.

The late 90s (around when Cobain died) all the way to the late 00s is the worst era of popular recorded music; this was my childhood and teenage years and, perhaps because I reject nostalgia, the unkempt downtempo ennui'd rock of this era doesn't cut it for me. It's not until Animal Collective's Merriweather Post Pavillion hit number 13 on the Billboard charts, I argue, that popular rock music got exciting again.

There's an incredible live version of that track with Thurston Moore and Kim Gordon from 2009 on YouTube I'd recommend above the album version.

Between my Head and the Sky (w/Plastic Ono Band) (2009)

While writing notes on Between my Head and the Sky, all I could muster was "this is a rich text". Much of the experimental music I'm drawn to is simple, like fast food free improv. The following record with Moore and Gordon is a great example of fast food experimental: its sparse, loose, immediate, and scratches an itch in the lower back where poetry, prose, and harmony can't reach. Between my Head and the Sky is experimental, certainly, but it's not a provocation nor is a quick synaptic surge like YOKOKIMTHURSTON - it's seamlessly ambitious and composed with the discipline of an ascetic composer far more than her Fluxus work ever was.

Take me to the Land of Hell (w/Plastic Ono Band) (2013)

If we're gonna call Nick Cave a good singer, then Ono's good too. Sean Lennon and Yoko revive the Plastic Ono Band here, though seemingly only in name. Between my Head and the Sky is the strongest record across the board - its seamlessly eccentric blending Yoko's 70s pop writing with contemporary classical, and tongue-in-cheek jazz tinged with her signature scream that all brings to mind The Boatman's Call. Take me the Land of Hell is more dour than its predecessor, but also less experimental and more impressionistic. Its lyrics serve as a reminder that this is a funny, transgressive, intelligent person whose whole public life is reckoning with her late husband's legacy. To me, the duology of Between my Head and the Sky and Take me to the Land of Hell sounds like Yoko finally letting go.

Warzone (2018)

Warzone rings like a self-elegy - a collection of reimagined versions of songs from her oeuvre seemingly in combat with the rise of Trumpian politics (her first and only record .

Many of these new versions, most notably the title track, benefit from the tasteful melancholic production of Thomas Bartlett (the mastermind behind the tear-jerking "Visions of Gideon" by Sufjan Stevens).

However, the crisp production lets the antiquity of Yoko's pre-Head and the Sky protest lyricism fall flat. Her acid-enlightenment optimism has never felt older and out-of-step against this production, yet her unbridled earnestness and artful expressiveness shine through. This a sentimental record, and a fitting, generous conclusion to one of rock history's most undersung heroes.

It's hard not to be moved by Yoko closing out her discography by reclaiming "Imagine" as her own; a song in which we know was co-written by her. Its startlingly beautiful, and a much better version to meet the moment then Israeli actress Gal Gadot's cover.

GX Jupitter-Larsen has been operating at the edges of culture for decades. As the founder and sole constant member of The Haters, he helped define the language of noise before most people even had a word for it. His work moves through cassette culture, mail art, underground performance, zines, radio experiments, and film.

This conversation focuses on that last part. While GX is widely associated with noise and long-running conceptual projects, he has also been making films for years. We talk about how and why he works in cinema, what draws him to the medium, and how his approach to structure, repetition, and duration carries over onto the screen.

NW: I want to start off by asking where your love of film came from. Was there a moment, or a particular film, that really hit you and made you think differently about what film could be?

GX : A Clockwork Orange, by Stanley Kubrick. During my teens, I would end up seeing this film about a hundred times at the cinema. Sometimes I'd stay and watch the movie two or three times in a single day. For a while, again during my teens, I could recite from memory the entire film word for word, scene for scene. But there were also the films of Luis Buñuel. His anti-conformist manifesto The Exterminating Angel; when I finally got to see it, few movies would ever have a bigger impact on me. Then; there was Steppenwolf directed by Fred Haines. The film suggested the audience had a 'stuffy' view of life. In complete agreement, this 15 year old was inspired.

NW: When did you start thinking about film as something you could actually make, rather than just watch?

GX: I don't think I ever had any doubt about being able to make films.

NW: Did you feel connected to experimental film scenes early on, or were you mostly operating outside of that?

GX: I discovered Dadaist films by the likes of Man Ray and Hans Richter when I was still in High School. It was around that time when I got to read Amos Vogel's book Film as a Subversive Art. I don't think I ever saw anything the same way after reading that book.

NW: A lot of people first encounter your film work through documentation of The Haters. At what point did filming those performances become important to you?

GX: So, that happened out of necessity. It was easier to show people what I did on stage than to try and explain it in words. At the time my performances were far more visual than sonic.

NW: Do you see a difference between documenting The Haters and making a film? Or does that line not really exist for you?

GX: No; there's a line there for sure. The performance documentation is just that. The narrative work tells a fictional story. Two different things even if I am incorporating similar themes.

NW: When you're editing film, what are you looking for? Is it rhythm, tension, something else?

GX: Connections. Visual and narrative connections.

NW: Do you ever think about audience differently when you're making a film versus when you're doing a performance?

GX: Not really.

NW: You've also made feature-length work, which feels like a different commitment of time and structure. What pushed you toward that scale?

GX: Just wanted to try something different. I'm always looking for a new door to open and walk through.

NW: When you made A Noisy Delivery and later Omniwave Refresher, what made you commit to that duration? Why an hour?

GX: They just felt complete at that point.

NW: Omniwave Refresher moves between documentary, puppet show, and reenactment. What drew you to layering formats like that?

GX: I was inspired by childhood memories of going to Saturday matinees. They always started with a newsreel, followed by an animated short, and then the live action feature which normally ran for about an hour or so.

NW: You divided your videography into conceptual, narrative, and documentation. Did those categories come naturally to you, or did they only make sense in retrospect?

GX: No, they came quite naturally.

NW: With something like Blank Banner, which is literally a blank tape submitted to festivals, were you thinking about institutions and exhibition spaces as part of the piece? Or was it more about testing the boundaries of what counts as a film?

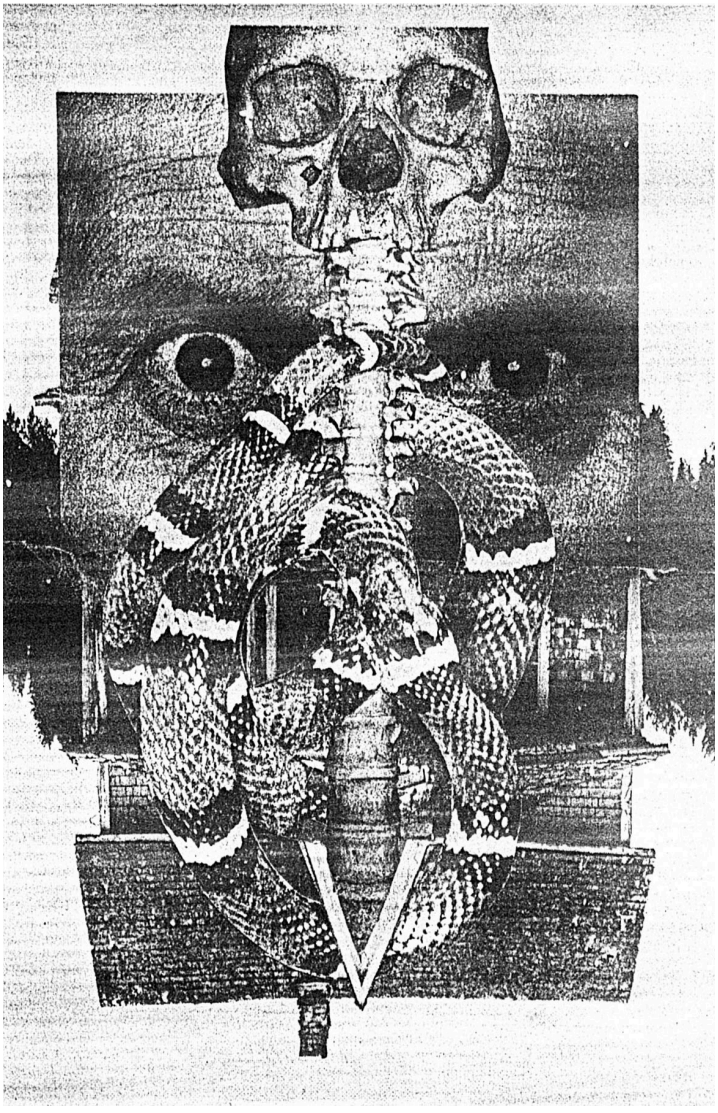
GX: Both actually. At the time much of my work dealt with the void or nothingness as a theme. Doing something by not doing it was part of that. It was around that time I decreed all vacant lots in every city as readymade public sculptures. I also did performances by not showing up for the said event. The flyers always clearly state that I wouldn't be showing up; but tons of people still attended. In 1982, The Philadelphia Film Co-op hosted a 'Jupitter-Larsen Film Festival' in which no films were screened, at all. The venue was open as normal and tickets were sold. People arrived, but the projector remained still and silent the whole evening.

NW: When did you start painting, and is there anyone in particular that influenced you then?

GX: Early teens. Edvard Munch.

NW: Thank you.

GX: No; thank YOU.



Paul van Trigt is an artist and experimental noise musician based in Victoria, BC. Working primarily in analog and mixed media collage, he uses photocopy manipulation and print processes to layer, distort, and reframe found imagery.

NW: Your visual work is deeply tied to underground music culture. How did art and noise culture first intersect for you?

PVT: I've been interested in underground music for most of my life. I've always been drawn to confrontational art forms, whether that's music, books, film, or visual art. The challenge that happens through confrontation. Noise is really about extremes and I think can be really challenging for a lot of reasons, from extreme volume, to themes explored, to the imagery that is often paired with noise.

My favourite type of noise is tape-based, highly degraded using old analog formats. The imperfections, the worn out warbling sound, the sound of something being broken, the hiss. This is audio collage with vintage materials. For me noise and art are an extension of each other. My own noise project, MOT, is tied to my visual artwork. I see them as parallel to each other, collaging in different mediums.

NW: You work heavily with analog collage, photocopy manipulation, and printmaking. What keeps you drawn to physical processes instead of digital tools?

PVT: I appreciate the hands-on experience of analog processes. Physically touching the materials and manipulating things manually and with limited technology like photocopying is just way more appealing to me process-wise than digital tools. I'm not really a computer-person. Art for me is a tangible thing. I like being covered in toner and glue. In this world where everything is so digital, it's been interesting trying to explain to folks, especially for commissions, that I can't just command-z out of the piece if they change their mind. It's permanent.

NW: Your work often uses imagery pulled from medical textbooks, military archives, nature books, and architectural sources. What draws you to those particular images?

PVT: I like pairing the medical with the natural images, it's very much the beauty of the grotesque and imperfections of people and nature and societal imperfections. I like to pair architecture and bodies, and nature and bodies, especially from medical texts to highlight these imperfections. Sometimes I do use more 'perfect' bodies from adult magazines to portray that vulnerability of nakedness with harsher images like buildings, ruins, military images - that tension or juxtaposition is something I like to play with a lot.

I'm drawn to imagery that reflects the relationship of people to their own mind and body and how
we interact with the world outside of that and all the expectations that are put on us. I find there
is something so beautiful about how people are posed with all their 'flaws' on display in the

medical texts. Especially pairing that with natural imagery, like plants and insects, and
architecture. Thinking about the complexity of all these things fighting to exist at the same time.

NW: When you are working with found imagery, how much of the final piece is planned and how much is discovered through experimentation?

PVT: Often, I start with ideas of themes and images I want to pair but so much of it also it is experimentation. I'm constantly pushing myself to consistently experiment with how I can manipulate the source images in an analog process. Whether that's through image transfers, photocopy degradation, or layering. I almost never have a final piece in mind when I start, it's built through process. Sometimes I just sit down and look through my books until some images spark an idea and then manipulate and build from there.

NW: Photocopy degradation plays a huge role in your aesthetic. What do you find compelling about distortion, loss of detail, and repetition through copying?

PVT: The idea of imperfections is something I work with a lot, and the process of photocopying, degrading an image over time continues to explore that theme. The more you degrade, the more you obscure the original image. It becomes something unrecognizable.

NW: A lot of your work questions ideas of perfection and imperfection. Do you see degradation as destruction, transformation, or something else?

PVT: It really depends on the piece, different pieces would touch on each of these. Sometimes the destruction, obscuring, or loss of the image is important to the process, other times it's about transforming it through degradation, building something instead of losing something. Sometimes it's about the beauty that happens when something is imperfect. I like things to be unsettling but that doesn't always mean scary, sometimes that just means not perfect.

NW: You have created artwork for over 100 album covers across noise, industrial, metal, and punk scenes. How did you first start working with musicians?

PVT: After a long hiatus of not making my own music or art, I started back into both around 2013. I started by making covers for my own noise projects, using cut-and-paste collage and then I started sharing some of my visual work online. I hadn't really thought of doing art for other noise artists, but one of my first pieces I posted, a label contacted me and asked if they could use the image for americanoise legends, Macronympha, release. After that I started to think that maybe this was something I could actually do more of. I reached out to some different labels, and just started asking and offering work for trades. Just to get the art out there. This DIY-trade approach was really important to me for many years. I just wanted to share art, trade art for art. I still work with some of the first labels I started with, like Phage Tapes, I regularly work with Sam on different releases.

NW: When creating album artwork, do you approach it as a response to the music or as an independent visual interpretation?

PVT: Sometimes if the artist is able to give me music, I will listen to it and create art as a response to the music. But often, when starting to work with somebody, I ask for the general feeling or cues that the artist wants to portray for the album and ask what kind of images they are hoping for. They can tell me a feeling or idea that they want to get across and I interpret from there. Artists might give me starting points like: loss, political, bleak, death, erotic.

NW: Underground music often has a strong visual identity tied to physical media. How important do you think album artwork still is in an era of streaming?

PVT: I think it is essential. I feel like any serious listeners are paying attention to the whole package. Especially for folks that are committed collectors of physical media, album art is so key to the whole experience. In underground music, physical media is still so important. Supporting artists you like by buying their releases is such a huge part of experimental, noise, and underground music culture. The images on the releases are the first thing someone interacts with when picking up a tape or vinyl, it's the first thing you see.

NW: You just had a show in a Vancouver gallery. Did that change how you picked your images, or do you just let the work do its thing no matter the space?

PVT: The most recent show was at Vancouver Noise fest in December 2025, so I picked all work that had been on noise or industrial releases. I picked some of my favourites and some that even involved some folks performing at the fest, like Teflon Spine, and releases on Absurd Exposition. The fest was in a massive performance studio space with many hallways and concrete corridors. I worked with the organizer to pick the best space once I was there, so figuring out how to install in the moment, all the way being truly deafened by the noise artists soundchecking. A true DIY experience.

NW: How do you know when a piece is finished, especially when working with layered and iterative processes?

PVT: I'm pretty obsessive once I start working on something. For me, a piece needs to be finished once it's started in one day. I can't sit on things. I just have to keep going back to it. Sometimes even interrupting my evening to do it. I obsess about it until I feel like I can let it go. Which is when it's done or finished.

NW: Are there visual artists, designers, or collage traditions that have influenced your work?

PVT: I'd say my biggest influences are the culture and style of underground cassette culture in the 80s and 90s. That xerox work, very DIY, experimental approaches to playing around with tape and album art creation. I also draw a lot of inspiration from the high contrast artwork of d-beat and power violence bands, particularly the political punk collage of the late 70s, 80s. Lately, I've been drawing a lot of inspiration from metal illustrative work. The composition, abstract and otherworldlyness of metal illustrations are something I'm working with a lot lately. I'm very interested in film, from arthouse to exploitation which I think influences my outlook with my work.

NW: Has your visual style changed over time, or do you see it as a continuous evolution of the same themes?

PVT: The themes have been continuous for me, but the approach has changed. I started with more traditional cut-and-paste and moved into photo copy manipulation. It's gotten more and more degraded over time.

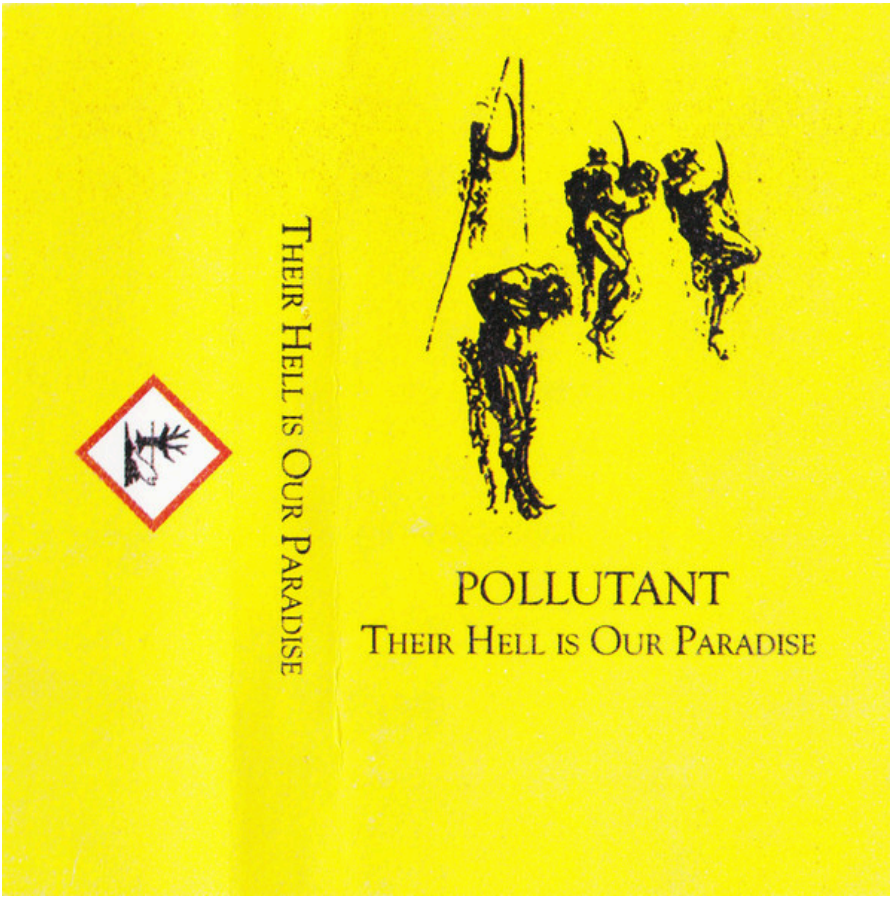
NW: What are you currently exploring that feels new or challenging in your practice?

PVT:I'm always trying to manipulate the source imagery more, expanding my techniques to find new and more degraded ways to manipulate the starting images. I'm constantly evolving how to take an image and make it my own.

I'm also working more with my own sourced images, through my own photography. This is a new step that I'm working on more.

NW: If someone encounters your work for the first time through an album cover, what do you hope they feel before they even hear the music?

PVT: I want the albums to stand out and not be like everything else out there. I definitely hope that when someone encounters the work that it makes them wonder what the album will sound like, maybe feel curiosity and be drawn into listening to something new that defies their expectations. I do try to style the work for the genre of the album, but I also hope that it stands out as maybe something a little different. I want the work to unsettle the viewer.



A review of Pollutant - "Their Hell Is Our Paradise" by Zack Davies

Sweden is a beautiful place. I've never been before but this is what I gather as I work through my recently purchased Ingmar Bergman film boxset. More than anything Sweden would appear to hold an incredibly bleak and chilling atmosphere placed over the backdrop of bewitching, picturesque northern landscapes. Neither of these things would seem relevant to this release by Pollutant as it deals a slurring nightmare of plight and anxiety. Kicking in your door, spitting in your face and pissing on the floor.

Released on C30 Cassette in 2020 by Fusty Cunt. Their Hell Is Our Paradise is approximately the 10th release by Norrköping, Sweden based power electronics project Pollutant.

bright yellow background and spine is a seldom sight in this genre and the grizzly image accurately implies the violent nature of what you're about to listen to. It's printed on a thick glossy card stock, suggesting a sort of sterile legitimacy. Almost as if it was a label you'd stick on some sort home brewed lethal toxin. Just a whiff of this stuff and you'll begin a long agonizing death.

This is a downright ugly piece of audio. Filthy, dark. evil and pissed. The first track "Open Season" grinds itself awake, like an engine struggling to ignite after a long winter. Its slow, yet chopping and angry as it works to gain and lose momentum.

Distorted vocals come in like brick through the window. You're already in agony but now shard of glass litter the floor. Pulsing and twisting, this track pulls you down, slicing and gouging you before you're tossed aside to the dumpster after it's had it's way. A master class example of how a minimal pallet; when used correctly, can express an enormous effect and emotion.

Second track is "Untitled", A searing drone screeches like a runaway train, distortion throbs back and forth while a wicked voice whales and wallows with pain. You're stuck and there is no way out. The track burns away as the light at the end of your tunnel fades. You find yourself empty and cold.

Track three; "Being". This is a world on fire now, feedback screeches over looping chaos. Indiscernible words and lyrics clatter underneath the sea of pain until it is stripped away, leaving only the voice of unreason and hatred. Eventually dying and eroding away into a bleak emptiness. This is the end of the first side of the cassette.

Side two opens with "Indifference Is An Act Of Betrayal". An imposing loops hurls away. It feels threatening. Feedback builds as twisted vocals begin to pierce through like bullets. You sit with anxiety and fear as this track intensely grips you, creating a claustrophobic atmosphere. Vocals fade and leave you alone with the ugly underbelly. Like being locked in a room with a dead body.

You've been beaten to a pulp, sick and cold. Disgraced and forgotten. "Paradise City" is a final fatal blow to take you out of your misery. Scorching hot and unrelenting sum this closer up. Pollutant is and the end of the rope and as pissed as ever. Distortion and feedback fill like an inferno. Vocals are punishing and angry. We ride the red line all the way out until we spit out our final breath, succumbing to a brutal and agonizing death.

Pollutant is not for the faint of heart. "Their Hell Is Our Paradise" poses an aggressive conflict that leaves no chance of victory. An impressive display of the power and abuse that is capable with very little. A vicious beast that will slaughter and dismember you without a shred of remorse. Fantastic.

Teflon Spine is a Vancouver DIY showcase series focused on presenting local and visiting noise and outsider artists. It grew out of a gap in the city's experimental scene, creating more consistent opportunities for emerging, touring, and harder-to-place performers to take the stage.

More than just a show series, Teflon Spine has become a community hub for curious listeners and artists who want space to experiment.

NW:For folks who might not know, what is Teflon Spine and how did it first come together in Vancouver?

TS: Most importantly, Teflon Spine is a method for local and visiting outsider artists to be presented in Vancouver. The fun part of that is there are more noise and other outsider events to attend, and artists can look forward to a receptive and diverse audience of nerds and other curious people.

While Vancouver boasts a history of providing a stage for noise, incidentally where I'm a stakeholder in all this, access to neophyte, visiting, weird, and "new" artists had largely evaporated over time. Enduring and long-standing street-level cultural hubs like 8East and Red Gate are godsend institutions, but Vancouver changes a lot and relies on very few people taking positions of enduring responsibility for presenting and promoting active culture that doesn't necessarily have a punchline or a beat. So I try to be part of the solution rather than the problem at the DIY level.
The second thing is that TS is a community of people who love that kind of stuff. I get a lot of help and support, so it feels much more like a "we" than a "me."

NW: Noise scenes often exist outside traditional music ecosystems. What gap were you trying to fill when you started putting these showcases together?

TS: Artists often realistically have the time and resources to put together one or two shows a year by themselves. These shows are usually the best and feature other relevant artists.

"Scenes" sprout and provide meaningful opportunities, but they often lack the resources or longevity to catch the attention of people who may not yet know that noise and experimental sound art appeal to them.

Established organizations that have access to funding to please "high arts" spaces without taking significant personal financial risk do things their own way. Sometimes they present non-academic conceptual performance art, and noise loves to feature there. Their shows are usually amazing and feature superior acoustics and sound equipment, meaning very high-quality sound systems capable of mind-splitting volume, lighting, space for physical performance, and the equipment and resources to realize a dream. They sometimes present artists from outside their localized communities as well.

Vancouver Noise Fest is fantastic and always well anticipated, but it only presents about two or three shows a year, so more people want to be presented there than reasonably can be.
In few of these cases can an enthusiastic person with something amazing to share get stage time unless they're fairly extroverted.

Somewhere in there, that's the gap I'm trying to fill.

NW: Noise and experimental music can mean wildly different things depending on who you ask. How do you personally define noise, if you even think it needs a definition?

TS: It avoids definition, lol. It's a bit of a catch-all, like "alternative" is for non-standard pop music.

Noise tends to involve invented or collected instruments presented at high volume. It's usually not exclusively musical, maybe. It trends toward deep listening, like a foregrounded atmosphere, and uses the sound system to pulse that atmosphere through your body. But "healthy" volume noise is still noise. I'm thinking particularly of artists like DJ Molly Pocket and haley bird.

The only other thing I'd add is that noise leaves its reception extremely open to interpretation. It's radically inclusive, purposefully immersive, and often seeks to overwhelm.

So yeah, it actively tries to slip out of definition. "Experimental music" is what you say when you're not supposed to say "noise." Similarly, "sound art" is a heightening of "noise" that basically means the same thing.

NW: What draws you to noise as a form of expression versus more conventional musical structures?

TS: Music serves a different purpose from noise for me. Music uses a lot of convenient coding to capture and hold things in ways that stick in our memory. Noise holds more information than music can, and it gives much more power to the audience's reception of the work and how they meet it personally as witnesses.

In these ways, music works better for promotion, whereas noise is largely about the experience of the art itself.

That's completely subjective, of course. I also much prefer the experience of seeing noise, performance art, and electronica to most music. It's a pacing thing, maybe.

NW: When you curate a Teflon Spine lineup, what are you listening for? Is it about sonic diversity, intensity, conceptual approach, community, or something else?

TS: I usually run numbered TS shows, like TSXIX on March 28 at KW Studios, when people are touring through Vancouver or coming to visit. I generally keep a list of artists who have ideas they want to present in the back of my mind, and I maintain a spreadsheet of other local artists who are looking for shows. All this to say, the key factor is availability, lol.

When I have the freedom of choice, I try to provide a few different types of instruments that aren't jarringly out of balance in terms of intensity but still provide meaningful travel for the senses. Marginalized artists get first consideration, and second priority goes to debut performances.

During soundcheck, the layout of the evening reveals itself, and it's always a rolling swath of rich experience. Folks have told me they appreciate how I arrange an evening of performances, and that's very motivating for me, but the real ammunition comes from the power and innovation of the art emerging from our communities.

NW: How would you describe the current state of the Vancouver noise and experimental scene? Does it feel like it is shifting or evolving in any particular direction?

TS: Other people are starting to run noise-inclusive mixed bills, and I'm excited by that. To be honest, inspiring more people to include noise in their shows has been part of our goal since the beginning.

Vancouver trends eclectic and cinematic in its noise. We have very little Wall. Even artists like Temple of the Moth, a very HNW-leaning project, operate well outside the static, unchanging stereotype of traditional HNW.

I see some new computer noise coming in, and I look forward to new vocal noise projects, particularly as Sainerine and thrtdsply are moving to their respective not-Vancouvers this year. There are a lot of new projects set to debut this year, most of them harsh and some creative ambient noise. I have a feeling we'll see more no-input and pedals on tables, and more power electronics, as the year progresses.

Performance art is also returning to the stage, which I heartily encourage. hollowskull's presentations are becoming increasingly wild. We presented Zell this year and look forward to Jayne Imagination joining us later in the year.

I'm ready to be surprised. I'm excited to experience the new, and I'm down to support.

I'd like to see more non-bar spaces open to noise, and I'll try to do my part as I'm able. When people need support, there are a few of us available to provide it, and those of us closer to the DIY level are approachable and easy to find. There's room for growth, but things are growing, and our people are extremely good.

NW: DIY spaces and alternative venues tend to be crucial for underground music. How important have those spaces been for Teflon Spine, and what challenges have you run into trying to keep events happening?

TS: The first shows I ran this way in Vancouver were enabled by radical acceptance and trust based on experience. Anyone prioritizing profits came much later, if at all. DIY has been crucial to our existence.

When your booker is a real person who talks with you and understands your position, it's a tremendous blessing. Some cities only have one place like that, and some don't have any. DIY and DIY-accessible venues in Vancouver are essential to the persistence of contemporary culture and history in a city that is perpetually seeking to erase it.

Most importantly, a successful DIY venue relies on an active audience and a healthy diversity of cultural events, and Vancouver has that in spades.

This is a good era for Vancouver in terms of underground music, but it comes after a gigantic drought of shows in the face of a massive surplus of creativity. Catching Vancouver on a "good year" can feel hard to plan, but there are good people dedicated to supporting and building back from slumps like that.

NW: Noise has a long global lineage. Are there particular artists, scenes, or movements that influenced the creation of Teflon Spine?

TS: Without Fake Jazz, there would not have been as much precedent for Teflon Spine. Although Fake Jazz wasn't necessarily as majority-noise as Teflon Spine is, everyone involved lent me their ear, gave advice, or supported my events.

Vancouver Noise Fest and the curation work of Anju Singh have also undeniably set a precedent for much of what I do.

Noise and extreme metal events I've attended in Japan influence where I like the volume of a show to sit, and the in-fighting and glorification of noise artists and communities online gave me a good model of what not to encourage at our events and in our online presence.

NW: What keeps you motivated to continue organizing showcases, especially given how much unpaid labour usually goes into DIY music events?

TS: Apart from being able to see all the shows I wish someone else would run, watching artists' work develop over time as they pursue deeper expressions of their passions is a huge motivator. People like Casey Adams, V.Vecker, The Rita, Sh!tomato, and others whom we present multiple times as they come through town make it feel awesome and make for great shows. I also selfishly love playing with big PAs, though admittedly I spend less time performing through them than I might like.

Audience members remembering our events and talking about them, noisefolk from other cities reaching out so we can help each other, and online contacts becoming real-life acquaintances and friends are very personally motivating as well.

NW: What artists or projects in the scene right now are exciting you that people should be paying attention to?

Slingjaw, Met Glas, DJ Molly Pocket, Fide, Quiet I, and Encroaching are all doing strong work. Sainerine is moving to Montreal, and thrtdsply is moving to Moncton. I think Mandelbrat might be releasing new material, and Morrigan is performing new work. We're working on bringing Morrigan here in early spring.

I also hope people check out our Thursday shows at Red Gate, where we'll be presenting a number of debut performances this year.

NW: What is next for Teflon Spine? Any new directions, formats, or collaborations you are interested in exploring?

TS: We're monthly this year, so there will always be something on the horizon, either at Red Gate or elsewhere in town. In particular, March 19, April 16, May 7, and June 4 are set for our Weekday Sound Arts series, and we'll have a harsh-forward event at What Lab on April 11.

NW: If someone has never experienced a noise show before and is curious but intimidated, what would you say to them?

TS: Our audience is trans, enby, and cis; BIPOC and majority-presenting; crusty, goth, glam, casual; neurodiverse and differently abled. People stand, sit, lie on the floor, dance, get faded, or stay sober. There is always a place to be if you feel overwhelmed, and responsible people are easy to identify if you need help. You're welcome to come make friends, stand alone, stay the whole time, or arrive and leave when you need to. Teflon Spine is a great organization to perform with and to bear witness to, no matter who you are or how you show up.

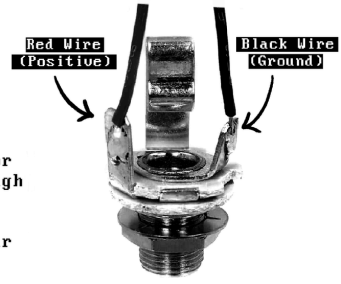
How To Amplify Every Day Objects: A DIY Contact Mic Tutorial

By Void Puppet

A contact Mic (also known as a piezo) is a microphone that senses physical vibrations of an object. They are most often used to amplify acoustic instruments. In the context of noise they work best when attached to metal objects (a tin box, bowl, kitchen utensils, flour sifter, meat grinder, sheet of metal, you name it) and they work even better when paired with a distortion guitar pedal if you want that classic noisy crunch.

Ingredients:

-1/4 Inch Output Jack (mono)
-Pre Wired Piezo Disc
-Soldering Iron
-Solder
-Electric Drill & Drill Bits
-Duct Tape
-Desired Object to be Amplifed



1.Solder the red (positive) wire attached to the piezo disc to the outer prong of the output jack.

2.Solder the black (ground) wire attached to the piezo disc to the inner prong of the output jack.

3.Take your desired object and find a spot with enough room for your output jack. Make sure the spot you choose will have enough depth for a cable to be plugged into it.

4.Starting with your smallest drill bit, drill a hole into your desired spot of your desired object.

5.Slowly move up in size and drill a hole large enough to snugly fit the threaded point of the output jack.

6.Remove the nut and washer from the threading and insert the jack from the inside out of your object into the drilled hole.

7.First place the washer and then the nut around threading on the outside of the object and screw in completely until tight.

8.Take a piece of duct tape and place it over the piezo disc (smooth metal side facing down) and stick it to the inside wall of desired object to secure it into place.

And there you have it! Your very own amplified object! Test it out with a power cable and amp. Build 10 more amplified objects, start a noise project, create an orchestra of amplified objects, annoy and concern your neighbours, get a noise complaint, take it as a compliment.