

vocals over a wide range of compositional narratives, concepts and timbres.

The tracks glide through various genres by way of electroacoustic and studio composition techniques. Opening track "Quatre Couches/Flare Stains" begins with a vocal tirade of numbers that quickly disintegrate into screams, chanting and melodies. Loops are sewn together then picked apart in "Timepiece

Triptych: Declaratives In The First Person" – intuitively structured, this work should be used as a demonstration in inventiveness for any singer-songwriter discovering looper pedals for the first time.

"Other Rooms" is a gorgeous sonic collage that simultaneously lives in the present, past and future, a layering of melody, vocal samples, speech and

instrumental phrases which slide between close miked recordings, large spaces and vocals with electronic reverb. Z's use of recitative dances between phasing, minimalism and operetta in "He Says Yes (From Echo)" through a fluid bending of tempo in pulsing vocals, distorted speech paired with close whispering texts and harsh accelerating engine sounds.

The quality and depth of Z's materials, coupled with the unpredictability of her compositional structures, inventive spatialisation and political narratives, bring concision and weight to this release. In *A Secret Code*, we hear something singular and compelling within the well-defined parameters of minimalism and electroacoustics.

Mariam Rezaei

Palace brother: Viktor Timofeev



### Viktor Timofeev

*Palace Of Peace And Reconciliation/Live At No Moon*

Lo Bit Landscapes DL/LP+CD

### Exocursion

Futura Resistenza DL/LP

There's an evocative appeal to imagining Viktor Timofeev's *Palace Of Peace And Reconciliation* as both intrinsically digital age and, conversely, an artefact uncovered from some mouldering ancient edifice. Granted, the impression of its artefactness makes some demands of the imagination. In development since 2012, its release has been significantly stalled by the summary closure in 2014 of the Brooklyn live/work space that housed label Lo Bit Landscapes.

The reality of being locked out of your loft with your stuff inside for over half a decade is probably a pedestrian and deeply unencharmed nightmare with precious little glow. *Palace* glows hard, though; hard enough to illuminate the bays, domes and towers of some barely glimpsed phantasmic sacred architecture. That required imaginative reach – the one that allows us to think of it as an eerily arrested, excised thing shunted off down a spatio-temporal slipstream – is generously supported by the album's rich atmospheric and psychic space.

Named after a multi-faith cultural centre in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan – an ersatz pyramid built in the mid-2000s – the album comprises five tracks, and, as a gatefold LP edition features a bonus CD (*Live At No Moon*) with six more. The main feature has

a big, vaulted, immersive sound lightly banded with a few idiomatic nods. There's a soft clanging in the opener "Tavek Fritolov" which had me puzzling for something I initially couldn't place, but turned out to be the Coil track "The Avatars", while the shimmering quasi dream pop guitar of "Memoratorium" made me think of early 2000s Fennesz reacquainting noise with its estranged descendent – the blissed-out, gauzy jangle. Elsewhere, the opening of "Pyramid Of Accord" fires a volley of frayed and fetid death metal bellows over some limpid flickering, suggesting Autopsy's Chris Reifert struggling to wake from a sun-kissed nightmare.

Signifiers aside, *Palace*, at its innermost, uppermost and utmost, feels like it should be experienced untethered on an updraft, with maps and notes falling uselessly away into darkness. It is nonetheless helpful to note Timofeev's practice as a contemporary visual artist, which can come across like a gamer's take on the loose post minimalist tendency known as Systems Art or Systems Aesthetics. Timofeev is something of a techno-demiurge type of artist, a worldbuilder for whom data both creates and constitutes the very brick and mortar of our environs, be they sacred, bureaucratic, hallowed or absurdly institutional.

It's tempting to say this animus comes to the fore in all his visual and musical output, but the bonus disc *Live At No Moon* deftly pulls the rug from under that pat analysis, which makes it a good companion piece. As a suite of frenetic, uncanny mantras leaning heavily on staccato rhythms and the repetition of

liturgical sounding phrases, the contrast with the largely beatless, breathless *Palace* could hardly be more pronounced. It is worth listening to the two back to back while noting that, in terms of discrete passages, the latter has some of the most memorable of the package, most notably the captivating five minute coda of "Nightfall, City35".

For further contrast, see *Exocursion*, released earlier this year by Belgian/Dutch label Futura Resistenza. It has markedly more cinematic, panoramic qualities than the architectonic *Palace*, even though explicit reference is made to the built environment. "When The Bridge Speaks" seems to be composed of field recordings from what could be one bridge, a composite polyphony of bridges or a range of proximities around one or more bridges. What seems most important is the conjecture that the bridge has a voice, hence a story, both of which are constructed and carried on whorls of passing traffic unspooling in concrete chambers.

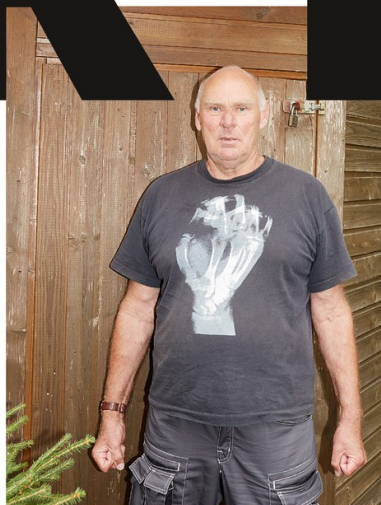
Coil comparisons come to mind again: *Exocursion*'s most melancholy moments brace for the keening of Stephen Thrower's lonesome clarinet, while others seem to expand on the kind of sketches found on *Worship The Glitch*. Collected sketches, plans or provisional storyboard studies may be an apt analogy, as implied by an accompanying series of illustrations, one per track – part speculative landscape design, part floodplain model for a deterritorialised net of liquefying grids. If they correspond to anything like a narrative, it's a fittingly hermetic one.

James Gormley

Viktor Timofeev

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