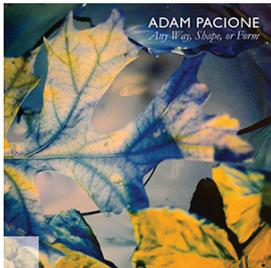


Brainwashed - Adam Pacione, "Any Way, Shape, or Form"

Written by Creag Dunton

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Austin based composer and photographer Adam Pacione's recorded work has been largely digital over the past 10 years or so, which makes this lavish four disc collection all the more significant. *Any Way, Shape, or Form* compiles 2009's *Still Life* series of subscription only 3" CDRs alongside some other unreleased and rare material from the same era, based around material recorded between 1999 and 2009. In some ways the box is a massive undertaking, though split into comfortably bite sized pieces that perfectly capture Pacione's brand of unique ambient work, it is enjoyable in any listening arrangement.

[Elevator Bath](#)

Across these 16 compositions, Pacione works largely with gentle tones that he layers and expands, with a notable amount of consistency from piece to piece. This makes sense given that 14 of them formed a formal series, with two unreleased works from the same era included. Generally speaking the pieces on the first disc have an expansive, gentle drift to them. "A Still Life" and "Dyestuffs" both lead from soft tones, the former transitioning more towards explicit melody in its later segments, the latter from the onset. There are some bleaker, grimmer moments towards the end of "They Live By Night" but overall the pieces here are made up of shimmering, beautiful, yet varied tones.

By contrast, more than a couple works on the second disc feature Pacione emphasizing rhythmic qualities, like the looped structure of "Split at the Core," complete with some dramatic, cinematic sweeps of sound. "Evening Colors" follows with an almost oceanic buoyancy, taking on some slightly fuzzy, dissonant moods later on. "Thinning Silver" is largely layered tones and melodies, but some very synth-like pulsations bring a sense of rhythm and variation. Disc three is where Pacione leans a bit into lower frequencies, with similarly ambient themes as earlier, but heavier on the low end. "Ferro Organ" sounds like either the titular instrument or a harmonium, slowly enveloping the mix with the right amount of bassy rumble. On "Nodal Point" Pacione toys with the volume dynamics and some filters, resulting in another standout work.

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The final disc also has some unique moments, such as the darkness and distortion of "A Delicate Giant," which may be structurally similar to other pieces, but the final product is something distinctly different. "Lumen Organ" is at first a sparse, open work of droning tones, but what sounds like cassette tape manipulation and mangling gives it a unique, and somewhat unsettling quality. All of the material on *Any Way, Shape, or Form* was obviously created with the 3" CD format in mind, with most pieces sitting between 15 and 19 minutes in length. For this type of music it makes perfect sense. These are mostly light, slightly melodic ambient works, and it is just the right duration to establish a mood, with enough room for change to keep things interesting but never linger too long. Either taken individually, on a disc by disc basis, or all four plus hours in one sitting, Pacione's work captivates, carefully balancing thematic unity and consistency, while still giving each separate piece its own feel, reflecting his artistry and understated touch beautifully.

Samples can be found [here](#) .