

Brainwashed - Carla dal Forno, "Look Up Sharp"

Written by Kallista

Friday, 02 August 2019 08:38 -



Carla dal Forno announces her second full-length album, *Look Up Sharp*, on her own Kallista Records.

The London-based artist enters a new era in her peerless output pushing her dub-damaged DIY dispatches to the limits of flawless dream-pop. In a transformative move towards crystal clear vocals and sharpened production, *Look Up Sharp* is an evolutionary leap from the thick fog and pastoral stillness of her *Blackest Ever Black* missives,

You Know What It's Like

(2016) and

The Garden

EP (2017).

Three years since her plain-speaking debut album, the Melbourne-via-Berlin artist finds herself absorbed in London's sprawling mess. The small-town dreams and inertia that preoccupied dal Forno's first album have dissolved into the chaotic city, its shifting identities, far-flung surroundings and blank faces. *Look Up Sharp* is the story of this life in flux, longing for intimacy, falling short and embracing the unfamiliar. Dal Forno connects with kindred spirits and finds refuge in darkened alleys, secret gardens and wherever else she dares to look.

In her own territory between plaintive pop, folk and post-punk, dal Forno conjures the ghosts of AC Marias, Virginia Astley and Broadcast through her brushwork of art-damaged fx and spectral atmospheres. The first half of the record is filled with dubbed-out humid bass lines, which tether stoned hazes of psychedelic synth work as on "Took A Long Time" and "No Trace." These are contrasted with songs like "I'm Conscious" and "So Much Better" that channel the lilting power of Young Marble Giants and are clear sequels-in-waiting to dead-eyed classics like "Fast Moving Cars."

The B-side begins with the feverish bass and meandering melody of "Don't Follow Me," which takes The Cure's "A Forest" as its conceptual springboard. It's the clearest lyrical example since "The Garden" of dal Forno's unmatched ability to unpick the masculine void of post-punk and new wave nostalgia to reflect contemporary nuance. *Look Up Sharp* reaches its satisfying conclusion with "Push On" - dal Forno's most explicit foray into an undiscovered trip hop universe between Massive Attack and Tracey Thorn. The album's last gasp finds personal validation in fragility: "I push on / I'm the Place I'm Going," a self discovery lifted by reverberant

Brainwashed - Carla dal Forno, "Look Up Sharp"

Written by Kallista

Friday, 02 August 2019 08:38 -

broken beats and glass-blown vocals.

Adding further depth to *Look Up Sharp* are the instrumentals, which flow seamlessly between the vocal-led pieces. "Hype Sleep" and "Heart of Hearts" drink from the same stream as The Flying Lizard's dubbed-out madness and the vivid purple sunsets of Eno's

Another Green World

. While "Creep Out of Bed" and "Leaving for Japan" funnel the fourth-world psychedelia of Cyclobe's industrial-folk into the vortex of Nico's

The Marble Index

Conceived as a whole, *Look Up Sharp* is a singular prism in which light, sound and concept bend at all angles. A deeply personal but infinitely relatable album its many surfaces are complex but authentic, enduring but imperfect, hard-edged but delicate. A diamond. Look up sharp or you'll miss it.

More information can be found [here](#) .