

Brainwashed - Karate, Guns & Tanning, "Concrete Beach"

Written by Eve McGivern

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Best friends Valerie Green and Paige Shedletsky have collaborated across the heartland of the United States in various projects since 2009, the latest as Karate, Guns & Tanning. With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the duo took the time to complete their debut album *Concrete Beach*

. The band name, taken from a strip mall sign, serves as a hint of the variety of musical content within, ranging from teenage garage-tinged pop to fuzz-driven rock with '90s sensibilities. Green and Shedletsky, as musicians with self-professed eclectic musical tastes, make waves large and small for nearly any kind of sound surfer.

[self-released](#)

I'm a sucker for categorization, and this one took me a couple of listens through before I realized that *Concrete Beach* refuses this. Karate, Guns & Tanning consists of Shedletsky (keyboards) and Green (bass and lead vocals), with mean guitar work from Joy Caroline Mills and tight drumming from Daniel Guajardo. The musicians explore a wide gamut of music styles, so it's easy to move on from one song when the mood doesn't suit. My first exposure to the album was through the video for "Artifacts," filled with wailing guitars and haunting keyboards as fuzzed-out vocals exclaim, "*We're gonna fly high / we're gonna get out, get out of here.*"

" Karate, Guns & Tanning have indicated that much of the album was an expression of frustration in lockdown, and like other albums from 2020, I expected the rest of the album might follow suit. Yet "Clockwork" oozes exuberance, sprinkled with disco and topped off with twee, making this song an undeniably catchy earworm suitable for the dance floor. I found further comfort in the ethereal, heart-rendering "Zenith," full of angelic vocals, guitar jangle, and plenty of dreamy fuzz. The album is wonderfully balanced, riding out on an apocalyptic SciFi vision of robots overtaking humanity with "Hot Bots," a punk girl garage slab of fuzz that tickled my old Riot Grrl sensibilities. "

Fight kick bite scream, heart beats living machine, tell them we're losing steam.

" Hell yes! It took a few tries to catch a wave, but the variety of surf allowed me to get into the line-up and crest.

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Sound samples can be found [here](#) .

The video for "Artifacts" can be found [here](#) .

The video for "Hot Bots" can be found [here](#) .

The video for "Clockwork" can be found [here](#) .