

OBJECT OF UNKNOWN FUNCTION

This recording is the culmination of ideas that have primarily existed in my live solo shows for the past ten years. The goal was to capture, organize, adapt, and transpose the energy and sensory experience of those live shows into an album format. To that end, I experimented with recording techniques that would pull the listener into the raw intimacy of each composition, creating the illusion that they are sitting in front of me as I sway, sweat, and gasp my way through my solo set.

Additionally, I set out to document my evolution as a composer over the last decade. I wanted to honor my roots as an improviser prone to extreme physicality, humor, and an almost antagonistic dedication to challenging my audience through unsettling jump cuts and left turns. But I equally wanted to lean into the newfound vulnerability that has allowed me to explore a more lyrical style of storytelling based on softer, slower melodies and transitions. Stepping in and out of my comfort zone allowed me to gain a better understanding of how I can use these modes of expression in service of finding a greater sonic truth.

When it came time to record, we used contact mics on my legs, throat, and chest, and we made sure to give my instruments the same treatment. Each labored breath, each thumping heartbeat, each grazing of flesh against wood enhances the listener's suspension of disbelief that they are not, in fact, in my immediate presence. Though subtle in the mix, this sound design makes its way to the surface the more you tune in, eventually blurring the line between my human body and the wooden bodies that allow me to express myself.

Two new instruments, from opposite ends of the twentieth century, played an important role in shaping the sound world of this record: an early 1900's six-string banjo and a late 1990's 12-string electric guitar. Sometimes I struggled to coax the exact sound that I wanted from them, while at other times they guided me, like erstwhile mentors, into new dimensions. Part of the exercise of writing this album was to forge a deep relationship with my instruments and then find ways to highlight that

symbiosis through the recordings. My hope was to convey a feeling that these instruments are an extension of my own anatomy. Alone, we are perhaps objects of unknown function, but together and in each other, we find purpose through our collective sound.

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