

Artifex Pereo's last record left us suspended among stars. Their new one brings us crashing back down to Earth.

The Kentucky rock band—comprised of members Lucas Worley, Eugene Barker, Cory Eaves, Jeremiah Brinkworth, Jamie Davis, and Jordan Haynes—released their critically acclaimed debut album, *Time In Place*, in 2014. The record's theme left us hovering over the planet, experiencing what astronauts refer to as "The Overview Effect." "The concept for the record was essentially about the cognitive shift that happens when you see the full view of Earth," explains Haynes. "We wrote from the perspective of someone removed from the world in order to objectively see it." Their newest project reflects on that perspective and returns—literally and figuratively—to the gravity of the situation.

In *Passengers*, out September 9th on Tooth & Nail Records, Artifex Pereo masterfully attends to the most mammoth and complex dysfunctions destroying society and the pale blue dot it lives on.

"We approached the new album with this epiphany in mind," says Davis, "as if someone was coming back to Earth with a new perspective to address the maddening things going on with the world." Each song confronts a different concern: war, close-mindedness, organized religion, the refugee crisis. Other tracks, like "Soft Weapons," deal with propaganda and social media influence, highlighting truth and how difficult it is to find. The lyrics "calculated narration falls from a tainted tongue" explicitly drives home themes of distorted storytelling and partiality. Another song, "Enterprise of Empire," with lyrics, "Danger is a country founded on a staircase of necks that provided its steps to the top / Looking down your nose you'll find that you created a monster that's growing the darkest of hearts" laments the instilled racism that continues within America. The song "Static Color" aims to expose organized for-profit religion. "The song deals with blind faith, where people believe in things because they have to, and because of that they're unwilling to compromise or look at any other viewpoint," explains Worley. "All it does is separate us all, and it's unfortunate how people profit over another's need to believe in something."

Although the record's societal topics *could* feel sporadic, they don't. Artifex Pereo cleverly welds things together; it's something they not only do well, but are used to doing. "We aren't trying to be unmarketable or chaotic, we just don't have a formula," explains Haynes. "We're a collective of six different guys with very individual lives, and we all wear who we are proudly. I think it explains the eclectic nature of our record." The band's writing technique is unique as well. They write lyrics first, building music around their words. The result is a sound equally as atmospheric as the album's concept; unburdened by the weight of classification, Artifex Pereo's music floats freely and unrestrained.

Best explained as experimental rock, *Passengers* epitomizes a record unconfined; its blues, jazz, and post-hardcore influences leave the listener with something skillfully indescribable. The themes, however, provoke conversation. "We don't have the answers to change, but we do have the tools to address the issues," explains Haynes, "and we want to point a finger at them. Instead of writing a song about girls or parties or whatever, we want to use this as a sociopolitical flashlight that exposes our wrong."

Like a ship rocketing towards reality, *Passengers* aims to not only illuminate the broken, but beg the broken to be illuminated.

