

# HARD HIT

## VOLUME 4

DECEMBER 2023



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# **COVER STORY**

## ***A year in retroperspective***

I remember when I last wrote an intro for this magazine, I felt pretty bad. But then this year turned around to the most positive end possible. Not only did I conduct five interviews, I also had the amazing opportunity to shoot pictures at Desertfest Antwerp, Ken Mode and Elder. Something that I didn't even dare to dream of. I was somehow convinced that this project done solely by me wasn't big enough to get any attention by festivals or bands. But sometimes you just need to try. I gave it a shoot and wrote to bands, they replied and I am super happy to meet with all these amazing artists. It is an interesting experience to meet the human beings behind the music. They aren't that different after all.

I am kinda afraid to admit it but during the interviews I often get this horrible: "You suck this sucks and nobody likes you feeling" but carried out and I am proud I overcame it. Now looking back I am not so focused on all these flaws that bothered me while recording. Now I see it as casual conversation between a fan and a musician. And the interviews are pretty interesting.

I definitely learned something about filming interviews: It takes far too long to edit and is very depending on your equipment. So in the future the video material of the interviews will be less polished and I will instead focus on presenting the Interviews in this magazine.

Taking pictures at shows was super exciting to me. Though I am not an expert in photography. I have a 10 year old Canon for starters.

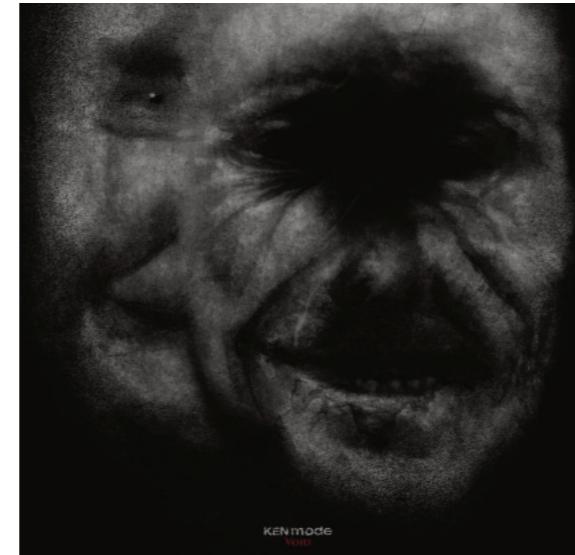
The best about taking photos is being close up to the bands, capturing the energy and soul of the band, the human emotions the artist goes through while performing. That's what I want to capture with these images.

The worst is that feeling that everyone is better at me. It always feels so competitive at shows. And afterwards I hope for likes on Instagram like a crack head. A like from the band on Instagram feels like a pet of the head though.

Taking concert photos is a great experience and I am happy with the results.

# MY FAVOURITE RECORDS OF 2023

Like last year here is a list of albums that I enjoyed the most in 2023. Of course this top ten isn't complete. There are always some bands I miss. Like Dir En Grey made a new record last year, wasn't featured in the 2022 top twenty, and I only found out last month. Here is playlist with songs from every record on this list and a few other favourites.



## VOID

**Ken Mode**

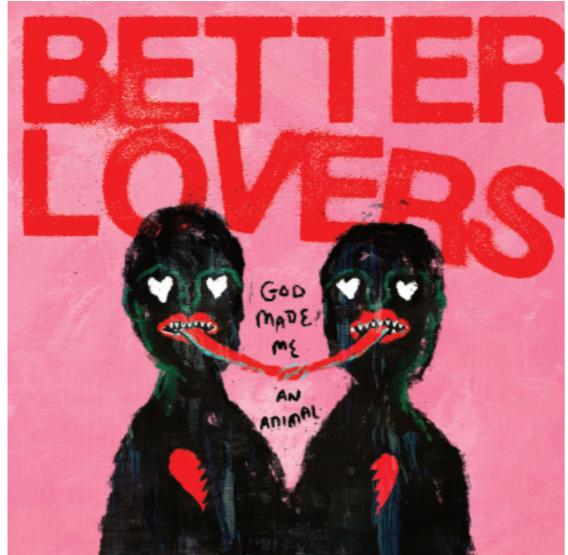
**Noise Rock**

Last year Ken Mode was number two. This year Ken Mode is number one. I guess you could say things are getting pretty serious. I love this band. The Void and Null are supposed to be one anyway. So it makes sense that I like the second half of this body of work just as much as the first. The first song sounds like a panic attack, and you get this

**"I am about to freak out" -feeling.**

My favourite song is the second one **Painless**. It starts like a hardcore song and then transforms into noise rock chaos. The middle part with the saxophone is perfect. This song is fun to mosh along live! The addition of saxophone and piano player Kathryn definitely adds to the sound. Her skills truly shine on **Not Today, Old Friend**. Plus adding strings on a song is always something I appreciate. The album has mostly slower songs like **These Wires** that give depth and meaning to the record. So much melancholy and longing. Yet there are these noise rock moments that really stick out. This mix of different musical moods is a continued tendency of the band. Don't forget to check out my interview with them!

**Favourite song: Painless**



## GOD MADE ME AN ANIMAL

### Better Lovers

**Mathcore/Chaotic Hardcore**

The only bad thing about this is, that it's only 15 minutes long. But rather short than prolonged with filler. I really hope they release a full length soon. This Band features Ex-Dillinger Escape Plan's Vocalist Greg Puciato, the three Ex-Everytime I Die members Jordan Buckley (guitarist), Stephen Micciche (bass) and Clayton Holyoak(drums); and Fit For An Autopsy guitarist Will Putney. A match made in heaven. It's so nice to hear Greg in his natural genre, after lots of his solo material. His vocals on opening Song **Sacrificial Participant** are so on point. There is so much energy and speed on this track. And this album has these almost pop moments that give contrast to the faster passages of the songs.

Better Lovers has a lot of melody and chaos at the same time. I like the high-pitched, energetic guitar tone that beautifully squeaks on **30 under 13**.

**Favourite song: God Made Me An Animal**



## ALFÖLD

### Thy Catafalque

**Progressive Metal**

Putting this into a genre is almost impossible. Because on this record you find all of them! There is Black, Death, Doom and Folk Metal. Every song is unique and in a different style. A metal journey and the fascinating thing is that composer Tamás Kátai really mastered all of these genres and each song is perfect. Nothing is impossible for this guy to write. The album starts slow, doomy and picks up on speed with **Testen túl**, that turns into a black Metal song at the second half of the song.

The third song **A földdel egyenlő** is progressive Death Metal song. **Alföld** is a doom folk metal song. **Folyondár** and **Csillagot görgető** are folk metal songs with synths. **A felkelő hold orzág** turns back into the Doom Death style from the beginning. Closing song **Néma vermek** is progressive space death metal. And still all these songs feel very cohesive and written by the same band. I recommend listening to it as a whole because it is a unique musical experience.

Sidenote: Hungarian is a fascinating language that leads to some misheard lyrics(Finnish onion? Not really).

**Favourite song: Néma vermek**



# THE ENDURING SPIRIT

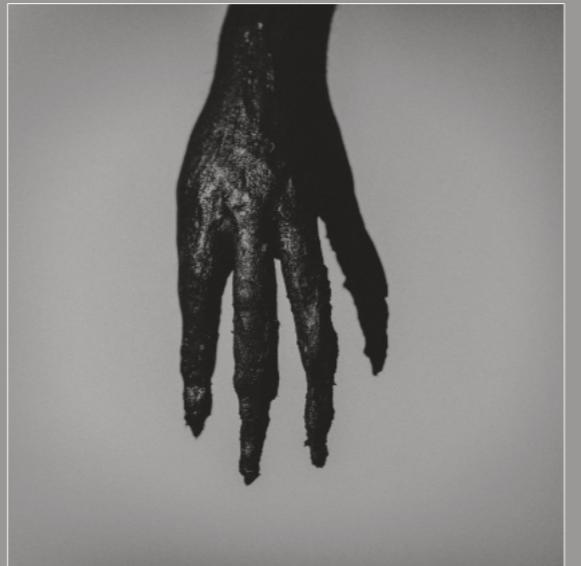
## Tomb Mold

**(Progressive) Death Metal**

Progressive **Death Metal** is one of my favorite genres and this record is a gem. It's fast and the bass does chubba-chubba. The guitar work sticks out because the rest is so low tuned. Drums are more in the background which sounded unusual at first. But therefore they sound very natural. The vocals are very guttural and deep. I love the old school deep sound that this album was recorded in! It reminds me of Cynic or Atheist. And it's a delight to listen to. All songs are well composed.

**Will of Whispers** starts with a beautiful spacey guitar intro, then mid-tempo death Metal with uneven drumming, the guitar returns for a melodic mid-break that ends in a slow outro. The composition of this song is beautiful. The most epic song with over eleven minutes of playtime is **The Enduring Of Calamity** though. If you like guitar solos, you're gonna love this record.

**Favourite song:** *Will Of Whispers*



# ||||

## Briqueville

**Post Metal**

When I saw a new Briqueville record was out, I instantly knew this would be an album of the year. This mysterious, experimental mix of post metal is like a **dark journey**. It has some weird spoken words and noise samples. Songs are long and slowly build up. The band creates such a **dense** atmosphere like nobody else can. It's a detailed soundscape. The instrumental is repeating passages over and over which creates this hypnotizing sounds. It makes the samples and synth the focus point of the music. **Akte XVII** for the first time ever features some singing. The riffs fit the song perfectly.

**Favourite song:** *Akte XVII*



# DISHARMONIUM: NAHAB

## Blut aus Nord

**Black Metal**

They enhance the mysterious factor of Briqueville and add some aggressive black metal to it. There is this certain level of spookiness to the songs. Unsettling, lurking **FEAR**. A song title like **Mental Paralysis** already gives you a very good idea of what to expect. It's these monstrous vocals, guitars with lots of hall and effects and a marching drum beat. **The Endless Multitude** reminds of pterodactyls flying over me screaming. Listening to this I always wonder how do they create this soundscape? It sounds so out of this world. The first four Songs are doom metal slow paced.

**The Crowning Horror** transfers the album into black metal territory. The **Black Vortex** is another highlight of the record. It features some distorted horns that add to this whirlwind of **darkness**. It reminds me a tiny bit of Imperial Triumphant.

**Favourite song:** *The Endless Multitude*



## DEFORMITY ADRIFT

### Nightmarer *Death Metal*

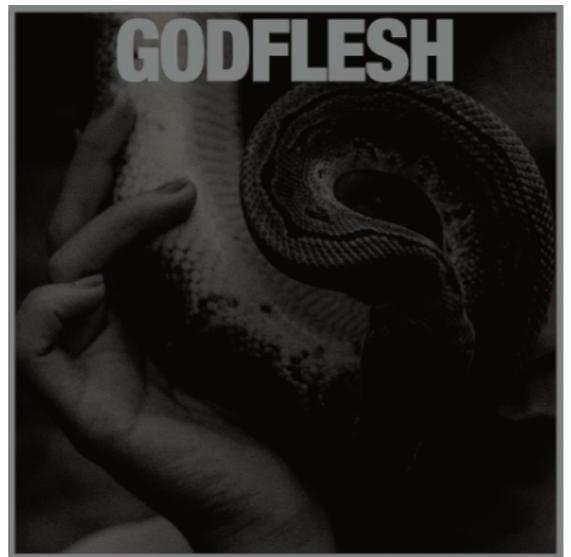
Yes this has to be biased choice because I interviewed Drummer Paul Seidel this year. But this record does rip ass. It's some dense death Metal that leans towards **Doom Death** at passages of the songs. The Song

#### **BRUTALIST IMPERATOR**

*is very good example of that. It starts with some fast blast beats and slows down in the*

*middle of the song.* Second song **Baptismal Tomb** on the other hand goes more into the tech death direction with some very heavy guitar riffs. There is a little Meshuggah influence audible, too. Some riffs do the typical Meshuggawushwushwush sound. What I enjoy is the mixing of the record. The drums sound very natural. I enjoy the song **Taufbefehl** the most. I think the German language has potential as metal singing language. It's add some weirdness and harshness to the songs.

**Favourite song:** *Taufbefehl*



## PURGE

### Godflesh

#### *Industrial*

The duo returns in peak shape. Purge is a solid Industrial record. Like on their older record "Us and them" they added drum and bass elements. The guitar is never ending riffing. The bass is wumming. The drum machine offers beats from groovy to industrial. Lyrics are very minimal. Pay

attention to all the details, electronic layers and samples.

**Nero** is a perfect song to kick off the album. I enjoy the synth part in **Landlord**. It switches with this amazing main riff. **Army Of Non** gets close to being a nu Metal song with a rap sample and the underlying hip hop beat. My favourite song is **Lazarus Leper**. I adore the guitar sound. And the bass sounds super crunchy and deep.

**Permission** has this hypnotizing endless drive vibe. Justin's voice echoes through the song. **The Father** is a very apocalyptic song that reminds me of their earlier material. Closing song **You Are The Judge The Jury And The Executioner** is epic and experimental. It's one of the slowest songs of the record. It has this melancholic Jesu vibe to it. Perfect to close the album.

**Favourite song:** *Lazarus Leper*



## STONE

### Baroness

#### *Stoner Rock*

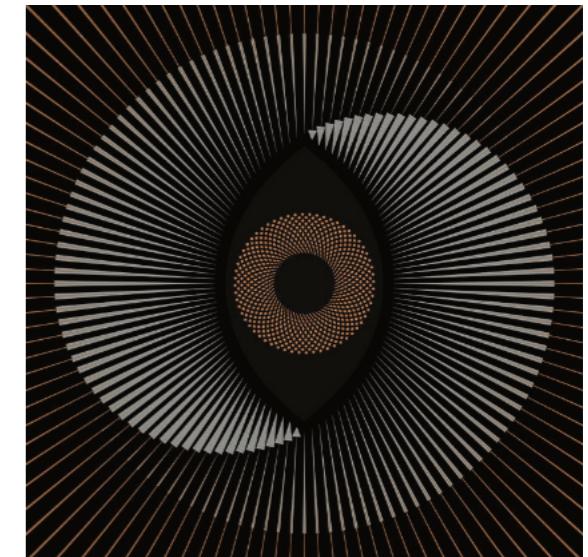
Fast and fun. Terrific guitar work. Overdrive in action. Opening track

**Last Word** is so much fun to listen to. I like the proggly seamless transition from **Beneath the Rose** to **Choir** — a song in the style of Pink Floyd. There are songs like **Anodyne** that Definitely sound a bit like Mastodon.

There are some experimental parts between songs. All of these elements are well fitting and go into one another seamlessly. Slow Paced and thoughtful.

**Magnolia** is another great song. It starts slow and then becomes a fast stoner rock song. The guitar is so catchy. **Under the wheel** is a slower epic stoner song that slowly turns into post rock. Vocalist John delivers a top performance. His singing is very different and perfectly fits the melody. Second guitarist Gina added some background vocals. Their vocal talent is best shown in the song **Bloom**. I hope for a song in the future that she is the main vocalist. Baroness found their perfect middle ground between Stoner and Progressive Rock. Previous record Gold & Grey had its length. But this release is on point.

**Favourite song:** *Beneath the Rose*



## HOLOCENE

### The Ocean

#### *Progressive Rock*

Did I mention that I interviewed the Drummer Paul? Anyway this record is great. It's far more electronic than the band's previous material. I love how they incorporate two very different music elements, synth and Metal, into cohesive songs. The first half of the song **Subboreal** centers around an earworm

causing synth beat. The song shows what the Germans are best at. Start songs slow and turn them into a furios metal final.

This is the bands most mellow record. **Sea of Reeds** for instance is a slow paced, dreamy Prog Rock song. The horns and Loïc's voice are supreme. Holocene has its heavier moments though. Like the song **Unconformities** with guest vocalist Karin Park. Definitely a highlight of the record. **Parabiosis** has a refrain that gets stuck in my head every time I listen to it. Subatlantic closes the record. It starts minimalistic and slowly unfolds with strong vocals and heavy riffs.

**Favourite song:** *Subboreal*



## Honorable mentions:

**Incantation - Unholy Deification**

Rezn - Solace

Ohhms - Rot

**Rotten Sound - Apocalypse**

Sulphur Aeon - Seven Crowns And Seven Seals

**Dying Fetus - Make Them Beg for Death**

Khan - Creatures

**Cryptopsy - As Gomorrah Burns**

Kanga - Under Glass

**DESIGNED FOR METAL  
COOLEST ALBUM COVER:**

# TERRASITE

**BY WES BENSCOTER  
FOR CATTLE DECAPITATION**

When I saw this cover for the first time, I was instantly in love. Just look at the face of this gorgeous creature. The idea of a grasshopper with human skin is unique and gross. It's weird that it's disgusting and cute at the same time. I have endless sympathy for this creature. This thing looks so alive and in misery. It mixes with my childhood memories of the grasshopper in a bug's life on such a grotesque level.

Metal artist veteran Wes Benscoter outdid himself. The composition is great. I like the rim light and silhouette of the creature. It has these nasty details, like the spiky hair, its feelers in the face, the gross slime dripping from its leg, and the human cocoon it hatched from.

The look on its face is priceless and very memorable. As in deep disbelief about its

own resurrection: "Shit, I have to go on like THIS?" The eyes and teeth are weirdly misplaced. But you instantly recognize the eyes as the only real human organ left.

In contrast to most of his work, that is done in a traditional acrylic-painting style, this artwork has a more realistic style. This choice adds to the uncomfortable feeling of the piece. Its skin looks so human. Benscoter nailed the tone of the skin. I can almost feel it. It is weird to think of a humanoid insect as a real being.

The background has this apocalyptic, lifeless and dark mountainscape. I love the deep blue-yellow gradient. Besides being a fitting color choice, the sunrise supports the album idea of humanity re-birthing as insects after dying out. A new beginning in disgust.





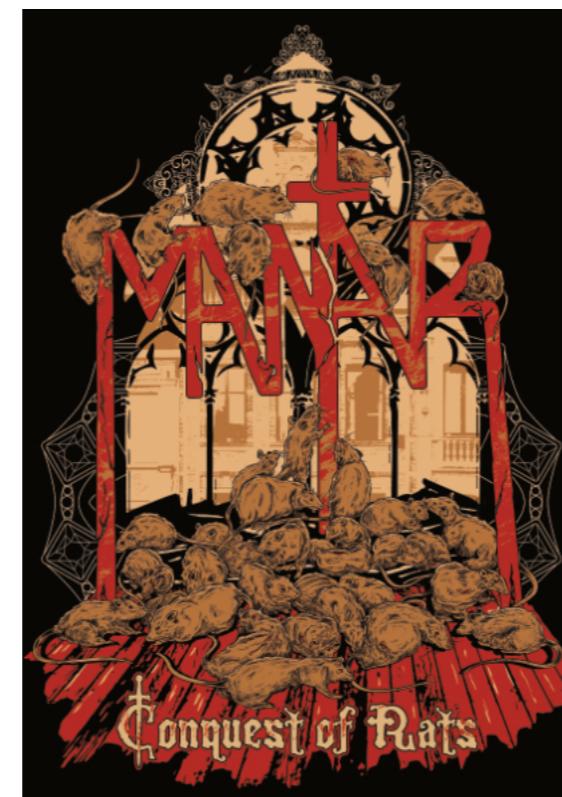
# **DESIGNED FOR METAL INTERVIEW: HEADBANG DESIGN**

*Antoine Defarges aka Headbang Design is a french graphic artist. He is specialized since 2014 in music artwork. he creates gig posters, limited & hand-made screen-prints, t-shirt designs, album covers and band logos. He worked for almost a hundred clients over the*

*last 4 years including: Warner Music Group, Napalm Death, Suicidal Tendencies, Truck Fighters, The Obsessed, Freak Valley Festival & Desert Fest Berlin, and many, many more. I meet with him at Desertfest Antwerp and later conducted this interview online.*



Napalm Death shirt design



Design for Manatar



Posca Drawing



Posca Drawing

**Tell us about your background.  
Did you study art or design?**

I did learn a bit about painting between age 10 and 13 in a local course for kids. Then I studied graphic design and the making of comics in a private school with no real degree or anything but experience, at the end of the 3 years. I quickly started to work as a freelancer and I kept learning on the fly. So I'm mostly self-taught.

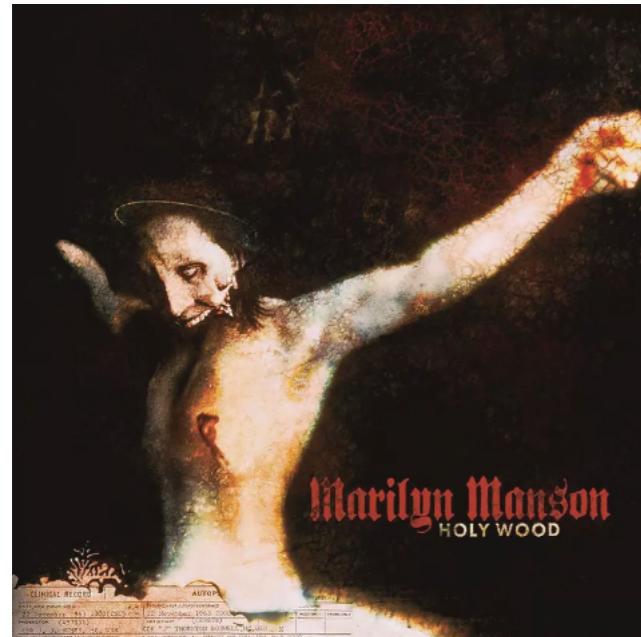
***"I'm always trying to improve and be satisfied."***

**Are you one of the people that has been drawing since their childhood or did you develop this interest later?**

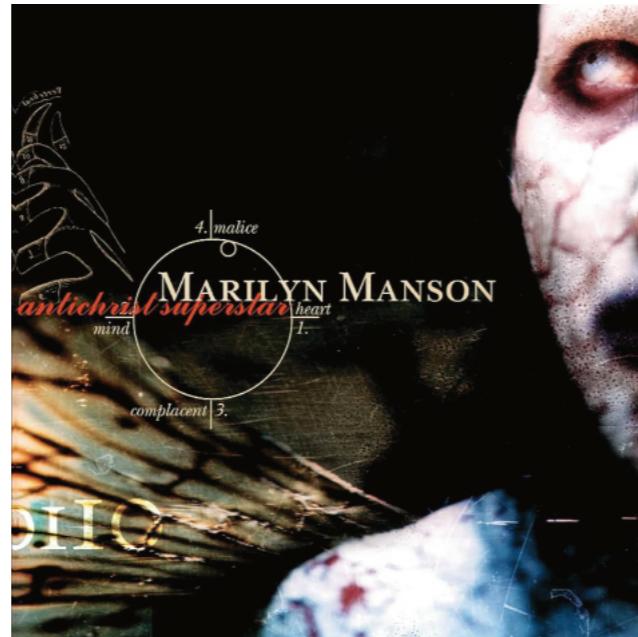
I still have my kindergarten drawings, the little guys [stickmen] are already nicely shaped. Then I started illustrating short stories when I was 9. I never stopped drawing.

**What is your favourite artwork of your own?**

My general feeling about my work is that I'm not satisfied with it. I only see the flaws and what I can't do quite right. I'm always trying to improve and be satisfied, or be satisfying to my clients. But I like the Posca drawings I'm doing for fun with no pressure.



Marilyn Manson - Holy Wood



Marilyn Manson - Antichrist Superstar



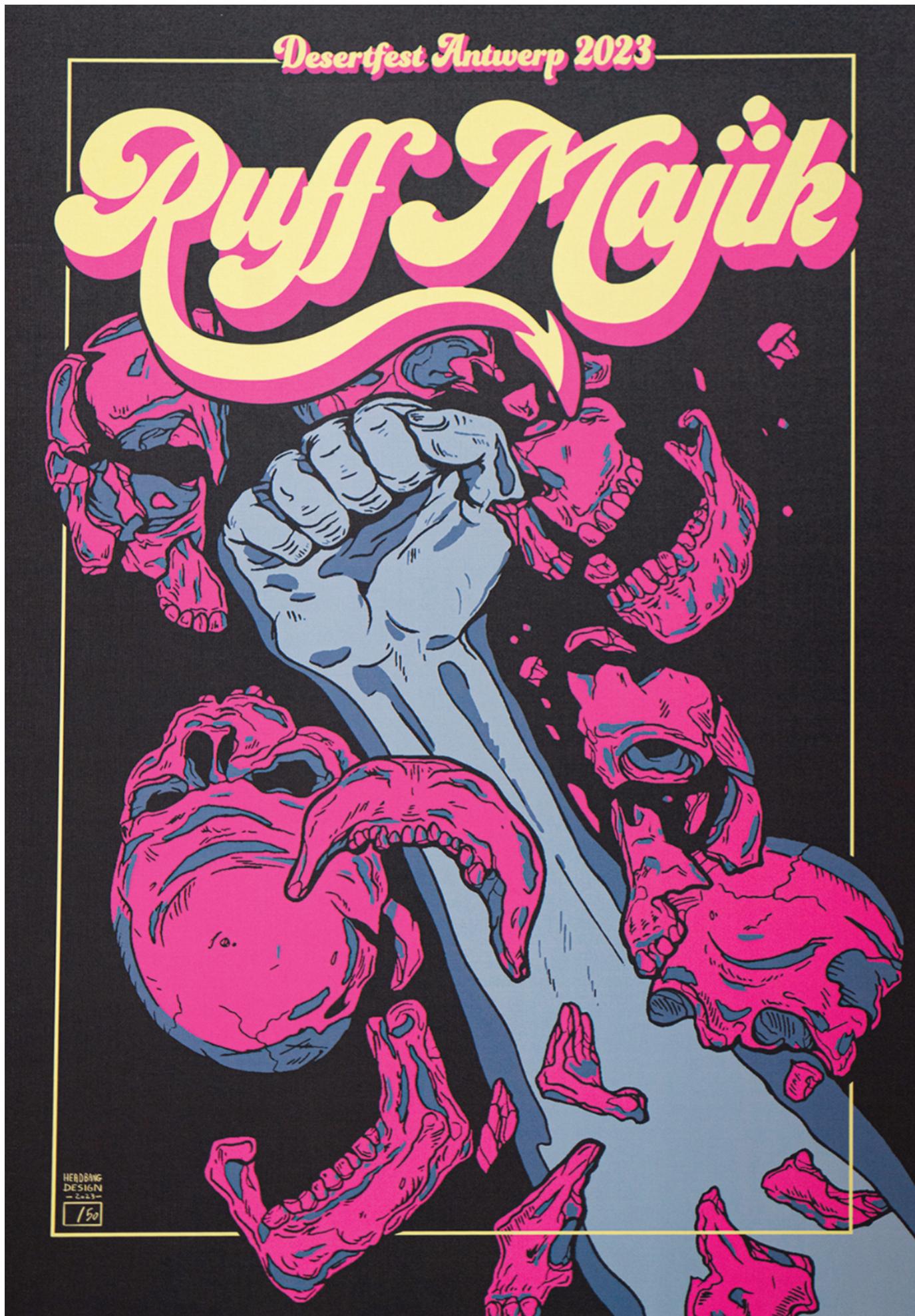
The Offspring - Americana: Front and back of the Album - artwork that tells a story

### What is your favourite album cover?

I don't like mine. As for other artists' work, I love a lot of stuff, it's hard to pick one. I always loved The Offspring's *Americana* cover for its simplicity and boldness. When I was 12 I had copied all illustrations from the booklet of this album on oversized sheets of paper to cover all my bedroom walls with it. I've also always been impressed by early Marilyn Manson covers (*Antichrist Superstar* and *Holy Wood*). These are my childhood stuff.



The Offspring - Americana: booklet



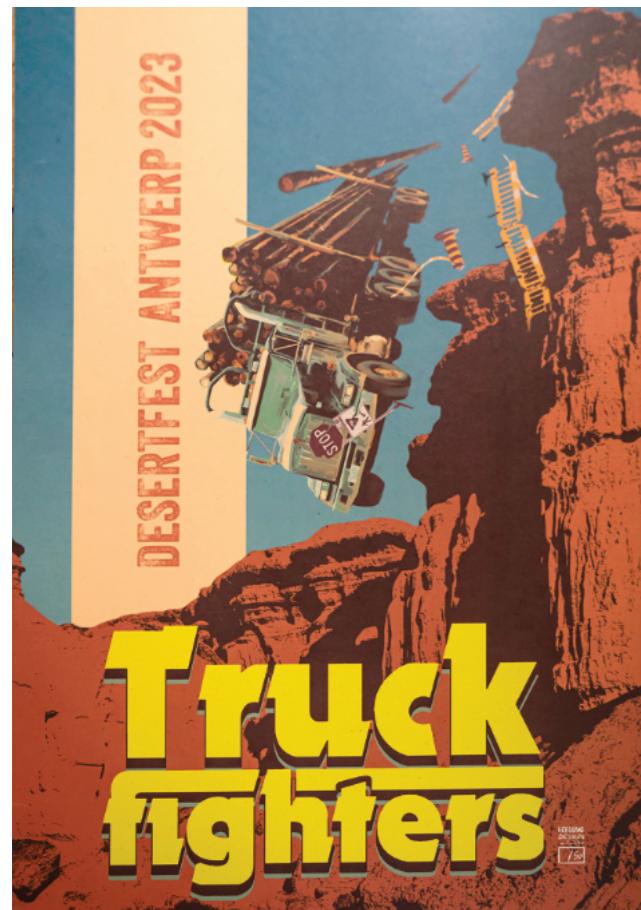
Posterdesign for Desertfest Antwerp

**Some of your artwork has a silk print aesthetic to it. What is your method to get this look?**

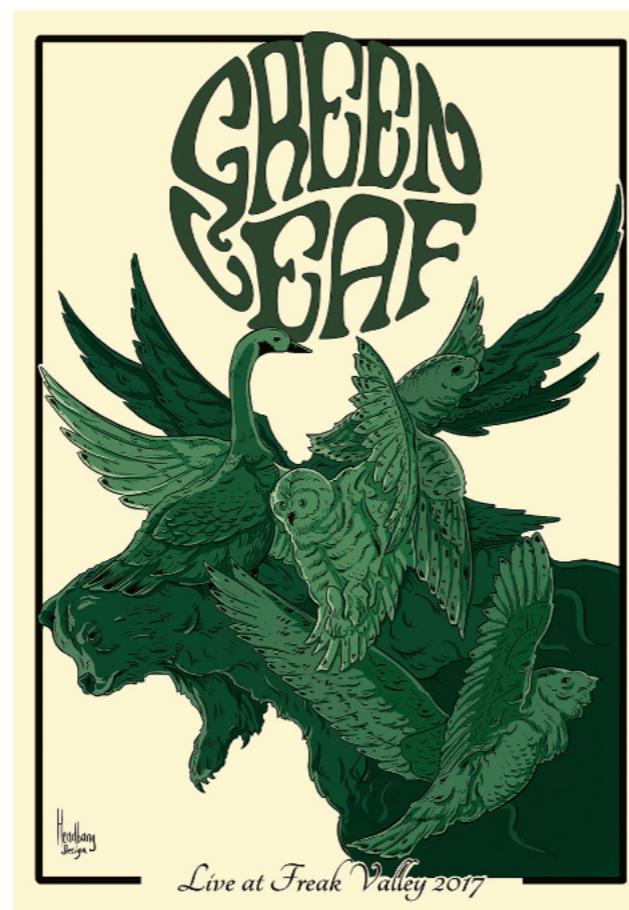
Well actually I'm also producing actual screen-prints (printed by hand on manual press with hand-mixed inks). That's only a really restrictive way to print things. You basically have to isolate each color on its own layer, create a physical "stencil" for each color, then print one color, let it dry or not, change the stencil, align the best you can, print the next color, etc. So that takes a lot of time, and it restrains you a lot in terms of color choice and physical "doability". So yeah what I'm doing more and more is saying "fuck it" to the whole screen-printing process and use good old digital machinery. I try to stick more and more on limited color palettes, to keep with a certain impact, and I try to find high-quality papers to print on (recycled, textured, etc.). I think that's why you and other people can think some of my digital prints are kind of hand-made: limited color palette, no fancy effects, and great choice of paper.

**Do you prefer to work analog or digital?**

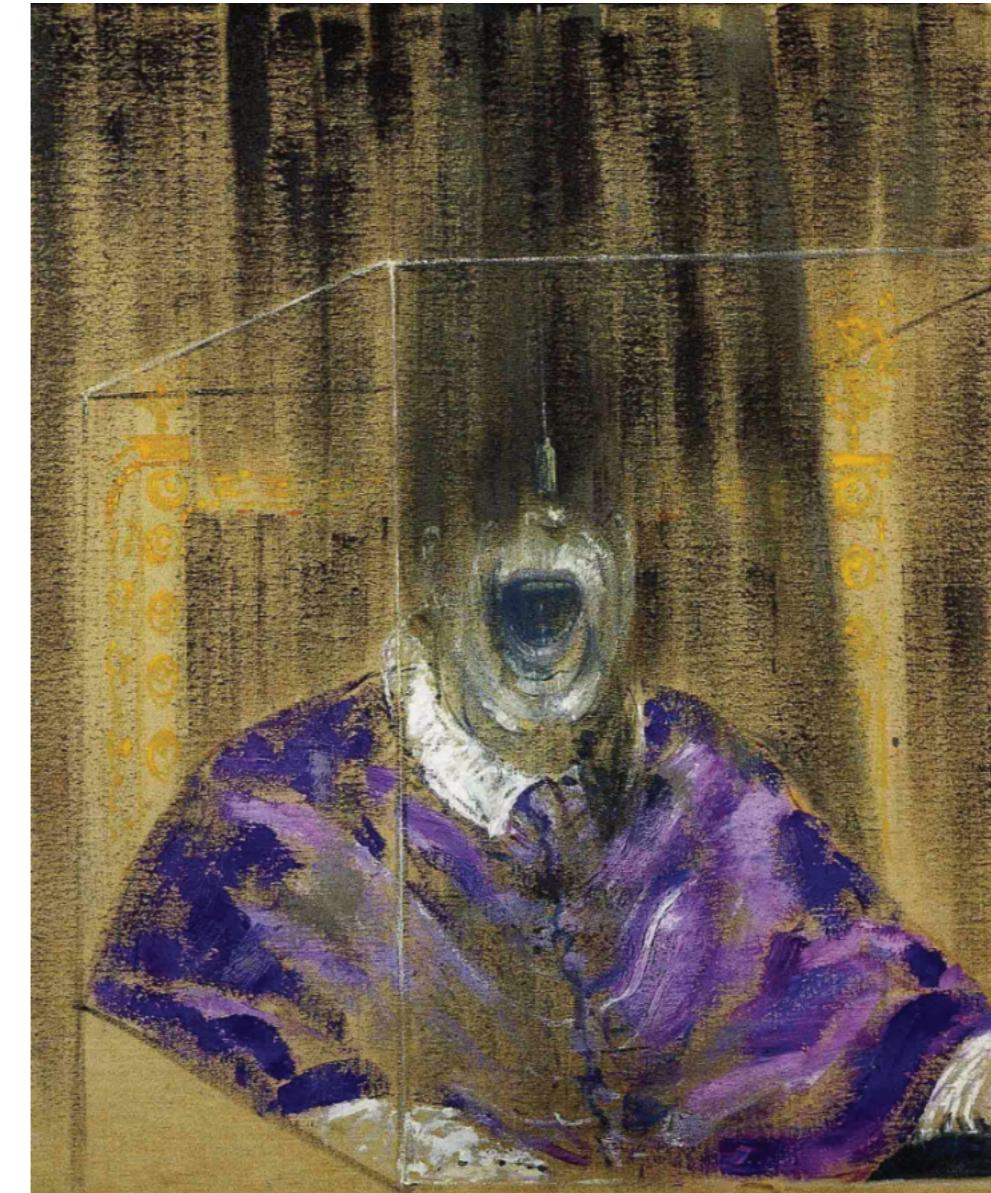
When you're a professional, digital is always involved at some level, at least for final production. I love drawing on paper when the project allows it, but it really depends on time, budget, style and technicalities. I create all my rough within Photoshop as it's easier for me to iterate things, compare, align and experiment with composition - even when the final drawing is going to be done by hand on paper. I love to paint too, but I'm not good at it.



Posterdesign for Truckfighters for their performance at Desertfest Antwerp



Posterdesign for Green Leaf for their performance at Freak Valley Festival



Head VI - Painting by British artist Francis Bacon (1909 - 1992)

### **What is your favorite art tool to work with?**

For digital, my long-time partners are Photoshop and a massive Wacom Cintiq screen-tablet. For traditional, I'm using Posca markers since a couple of years and these are really badass: perfect covering, perfect colors, nice colours (I have 200 markers of various sizes with 65 colors).

### **What is a band you would love to work for?**

There are many bands I'd love to work with. Basically everything I'm listening to. My favs are not what you would expect. Meshuggah, Clutch, Deftones, The Offspring and Kendrick Lamar !!

### **Who is your favourite artist?**

Francis Bacon because he was relentless. He always chose the best colors. The compositions are great, and his subjects are disturbing.

**Thank you Antoine!**

# INTERVIEW KEN MODE



I had the pleasure to meet the entire band before their gig on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October in Dresden. The band consist of newest member Kathryn Kerr for Saxophone and Synth, Bass player Scott Hamilton, Singer and guitarist Jesse Matthewson, the sibling of drummer Shane Matthewson. The brothers shared a clown for breakfast and the whole band was in a friendly and witty mood. We talked about the newest record, album covers, Mathcore and much more.

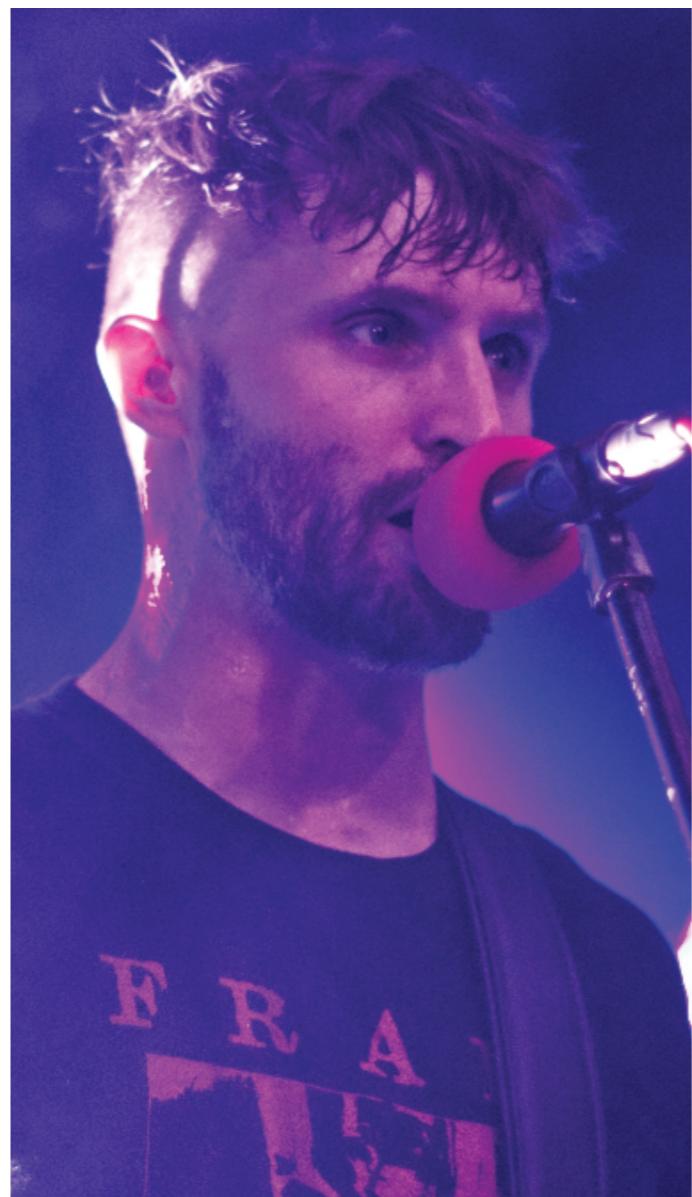
You can watch the video of this interview on my YouTube channel. On YouTube you will also find the live recordings of Blessed and A Love Letter.



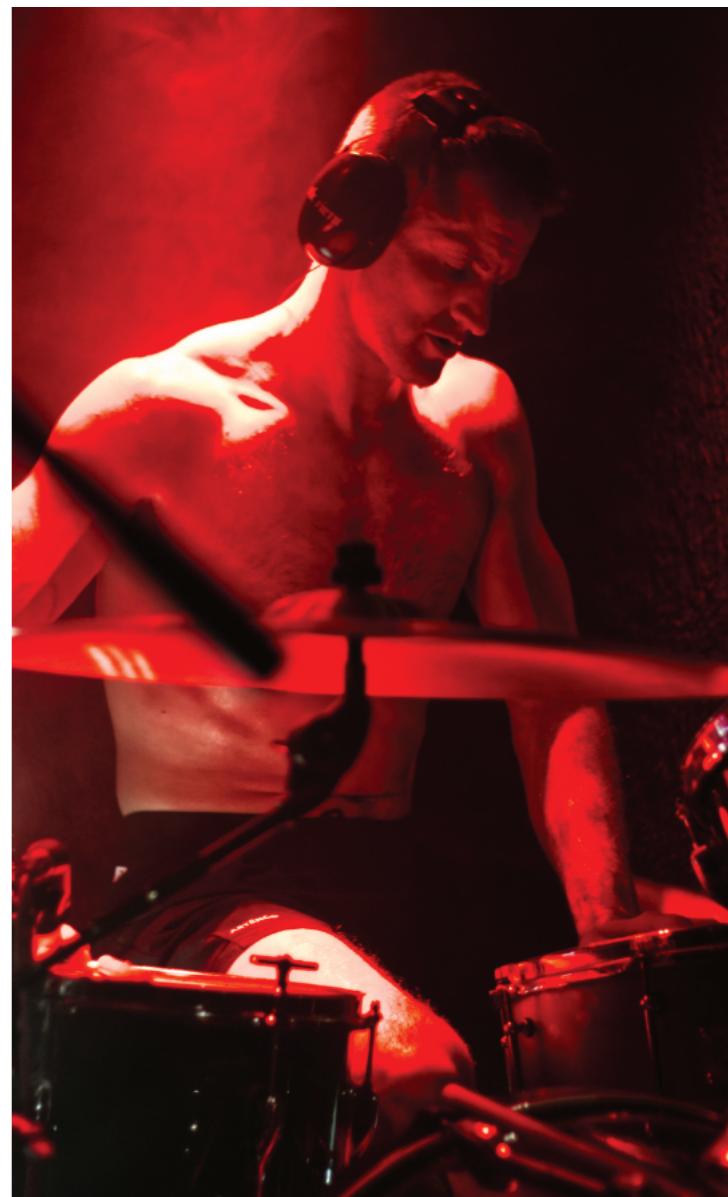
Kathryn (Saxophone, Synth, Piano)



Scott (Bass)



Jesse (Guitar, Vocals)



Shane (Drums)

**Hi, thanks again for having me.  
How's the tour been so far for  
you guys?**

**Jesse:** It's been good. But yesterday I think I was food poisoned.

It feels better today. But my voice has been feeling pretty wrecked the last couple of days. Which is fine as long as I can do vocals. My speaking voice will just progressively get lower as the tour goes. So at one point I'll be talking like this [imitates Darth Vader] just to get words out. But for now we'll just deal with it this way.

**So what I was always wondering  
about you Jesse. You're an  
accountant and you're a musician.  
How do you manage that?**

**Jesse:** Poorly.

I'm actually kind of a low level accountant. [points at Shane] He's the high level accountant. So he's most impressive with the designation. I think it's a chartered accountant over here right.

**Shane:** I don't know.

**Jesse:** I know it was in Britain?

**Shane:** It is in Britain. Anyway yeah professional account. That's why I'm the only one with no tattoos. Because tattoos are for degenerates. [band laughs :D]

**Kathryn:** That was part of the requirements to become an accountant.

**Shane:** Lots of accountants have tattoos, but they all have very pedestrian tattoos.

**Jesse:** Shane and I run a company that does business management for other Bands. We don't do this full time anymore — unfortunately. So that's how we have the time. But there's not really that much money in what this is. So we need to make enough money to eat somehow.

**Shane:** Hhhhuuuhh?





**Kathryn, You're the newest member of the band. How did you join the Band?**

**Kathryn:** I knew of their business management company. And I knew of Ken mode because I'm from the same city. And so I actually reached out to Jesse like eight or nine years ago, and I emailed him, asking if they would ever like to take on an intern at their business. Because I was like: I want a day job in music, doing something that I think I'd be interested in, that could support me being a musician at the same time. And so that's how we got in touch. I didn't end up working with them at the time.

But then when Ken Mode was looking for a saxophone player I was like: "hey remember me? I talked to you like. ... "

**Jesse:** ...We just meet!

**Kathryn:** ... I just meet you.

And that's how I got to know them, and then I played on Loved. But didn't tour that one, Because I was only on three tracks on that album.

So then when Jesse started writing new stuff, I was very excited that he was like: "Do you want to play keys? Do you want to play synth or do you want to do other stuff?" and I was super down to do it.

**So these two albums was the first time that you were involved in the songwriting?**

**Kathryn:** I guess a little bit more. [For] Loved I was kind of just coming into the studio. You guys usually have a lot of the base down, and then I come in for sax parts. And Jesse wrote a lot of the synth parts and made a lot of the patches that I play also. But that was during the pandemic. So maybe now that it's not lockdown I'll be involved a little bit more.

**Jesse:** The next phase will be attempting to actually write as a four piece as opposed to me and Scott writing all the additional parts.

**So you and Scott are the two main writers?**

**Jesse:** For the actual writing riffs generally speaking.

**And do you practice at the same place or do you live in different areas?**

**Jesse:** Scott lives in a completely different city.

**Scott:** Yeah, I'm about a 9-hour drive away. We don't have weekly practices. I come in, and we work together for concentrated periods of time. Start early in the morning and go until we pass out basically every night.

**You previously did double albums like Venerable / Entrench and Success / Nerve. What do you like about doing that?**

**Jesse:** I know Entrench was on two LPs which I don't think it should have been. It should have been one record. We try to make our records somewhere between 30 and 45 minutes. A long one would be 45 minutes. Because I feel like that's a long time for what we do.

With this new batch of material it just so happens that we wrote 75 minutes worth of material because of the pandemic. And originally we were attempting to record in July of 2021, but we couldn't get our producer Andrew Schneider into Canada. Because Canada hadn't lifted its COVID-19 restrictions yet. So we had to push the session. We ended up pushing it like three or four months. But we had to make the call around May of 2021 like when we're going to do it. So we allotted like an extra 6 months. So we just kept writing. So at the end we had two albums worth of material, so we had to decide how to separate all that out.



## What was the idea or the theme when you wrote Null and Void?

**Jesse:** Just dealing with depression.

The way everyone was treating each other throughout the pandemic. I know from our art standpoint and even the visual artist Randy Ortiz, who did both albums. I know a lot of what he was facing was his relationship with the world itself and people, where a lot of the time he felt like he was wearing a mask when he was speaking to others. So I know he kind of conveyed a lot of those sentiments in the artwork itself.

Yeah, for us, it was a lot of the emotional fallout of the pandemic and trying to cope with your own mental illness and just generally absorbing the world around you and how awful everyone was being to each other.

## So what you just said, that he felt like wearing a mask, was this the idea for the artwork?

**Jesse:** I think that's kind of one of the approaches he was taking. I know he was struggling. Because we pitched him doing the artwork for whatever was next for us before the pandemic even happen.

But we've worked with Randy a bunch. Like he did our artwork for Success he did the seven inches for Mennonite. He did the Loved artwork. So he's worked with us for a long time. But I know he was having a lot of trouble over the pandemic and that ended up being where he kind of landed thematically, what actually inspired him. He had a lot of trouble through the pandemic just with inspiration I think.

## He had full freedom in designing the artwork?

**Jesse:** We generally give him [full freedom]. Like we'll have discussions about what kind of themes we're all feeling. It's a conversation that we literally have as a group, and then they'll go back to the workshop and [he]

start[s] tooling around with stuff and then pitch some of the ideas at us, and then we'll probably hang out again and talk about stuff.

**Scott:** It's not particularly organized a lot of the time we just meet him at his place, and we talk about how we're all doing. And the answer is always bad.

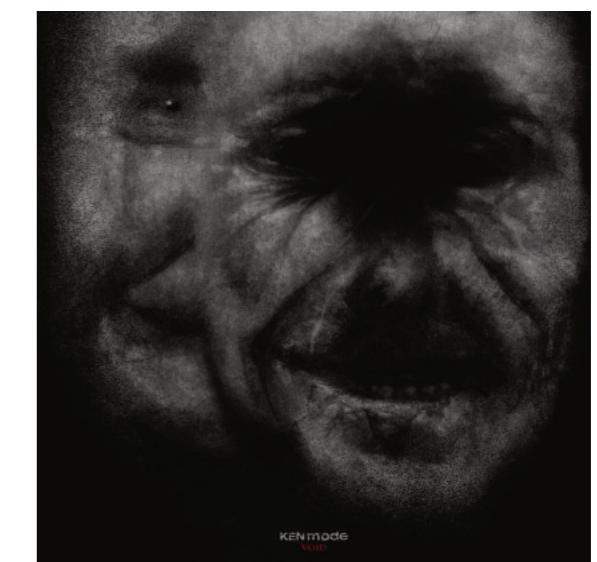
And then we figure out where the shared threads are and that usually gives him something to marinade on for a little bit. It is funny because it just sounds like a disastrous and probably reverse therapy session when we all get together and everyone just leaves feeling worse.



Randy Ortiz meow



Albumcover Null



Albumcover Void



Albumcover Mennonite



Albumcover Success

## Do you give him demos that he can listen to when he's working on the artwork?

**Jesse:** I send him some sometimes. I don't think he necessarily even listens to them. But yeah I do do it.

But for the most part we generally trust him completely. Or if he doesn't like something, I don't think he's going to suggest it.



**What's your own favorite album cover of your own discography?**

**Jesse:** It's hard to escape the Loved cover.

**Kathryn:** Loved!

**Yeah, Loved looks cool. It looks creepy and a bit retarded.**

[all laugh]

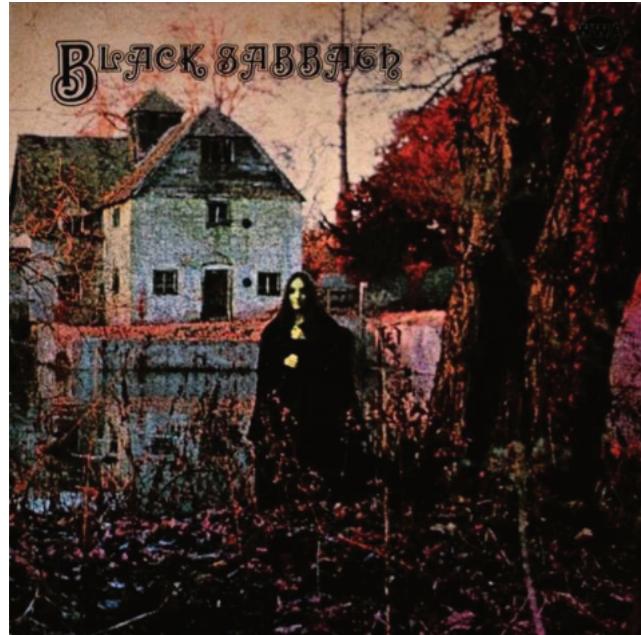
**Kathryn:** It does.

**Scott:** See that one's funny though. Because Randy had made that piece before we finished making Loved, or before we even wrote a note of it. And his artwork was an inspiration to us while we were working on Loved.

**Jesse:** He made stickers of it, that were about that big [measures about 20 cm with his hands] and I had it sitting on my nightstand for the full two years that we were working on the Album, I looked into its creepy eyes. So we had a saying that with every piece of music we wrote we were just trying to please his smile.

**Kathryn:** Yeah, smiling man has to be a favorite.

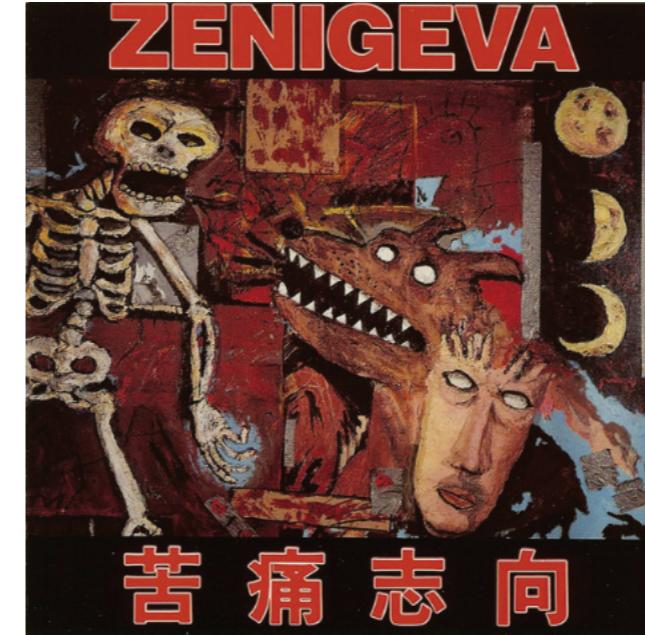
***"With every  
piece of music  
we wrote we  
were just trying  
to please his  
smile."***



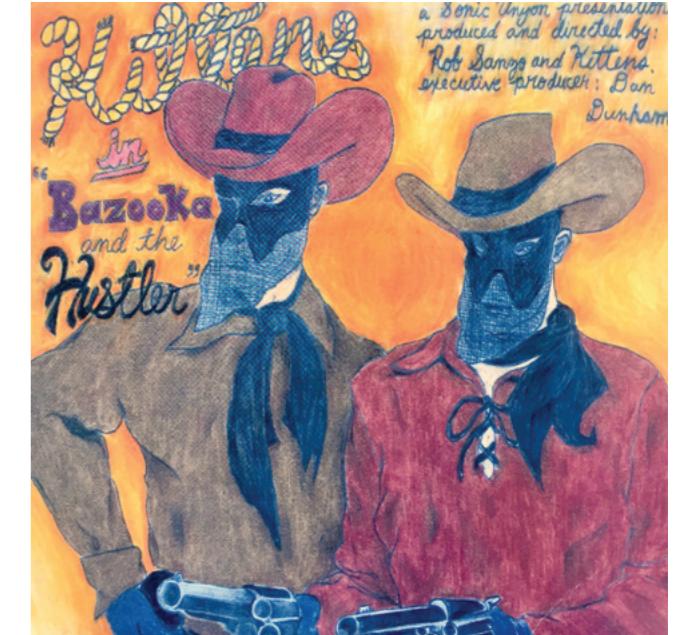
Black Sabbath - Black Sabbath



Hide - Interior Terror



Zenigeva - Desire For Agony



Bazooka and the Hustler - Kittens

### What's your overall favorite album cover?

**Scott:** I have an easy answer to that. I already know my favorite album cover is the first Black Sabbath album cover. Everything about it is perfect. I wouldn't touch an inch of it. I think it's very evocative.

**Kathryn:** I remember actually I liked the Hide album cover. Because you guys showed me that band, and it's just a person covered in oil. And I was like: "what is this going to be?" that one you know?

**Scott:** I think that one is Hell is Here. [it isn't it's Interior Terror ^^]

**Kathryn:** Yeah, that's a great cover.

**Jesse:** I've always liked Zenigeva - Desire For Agony

**Shane:** I keep going back to ones I don't like

**Kathryn:** Which one do you hate?

**Shane:** Well not hate it. But I keep thinking of Bazooka and the Hustler. It just got a very childish [style]. It's a crayon drawing. Let me go with that one: Bazooka and the Hustler - kittens. It's an amazing album. But the artwork is a little... It's not terrible, it's a crayon pencil drawing that the singer did of two Cowboys.

**Jesse:** But the Cowboys are them!

**Shane:** Yeah, but the album's amazing. It's one of my favorites. Excellent noise Rock record from Canada.



## Would you consider yourself a Mathcore band?

**Shane:** Yeah, not really. We have some songs that aren't in like  $\frac{4}{4}$ . But for the most part [our music] doesn't do lots of changes. We'll have like a riff in  $\frac{5}{4}$  or something, and then it'll go on to something else.

The mathy bands, their structures are intentionally complicated. And ours, we may have stuff that's like a less typical time signature. But there's not a lot of changes.

**Jesse:** There used to be a lot more in old albums though

**Scott:** I was going to say. As somebody who's had to play music from other [time periods] of the band, that I had nothing to do with, looking at them objectively from the outside, having had artistically nothing to do with them, that there's a notable shift from Reprisal to Mennonite.

And I think that those first two records are much closer to being in that realm. And then you guys moved away from that.

**Jesse:** I think a lot of that has to do with the time that it was written into. Because I think in the early 2000s everything was very much painted with that Dillinger Escape Plan brush. Where it was just cool to write songs with like 52 Parts.

**Scott:** For the band's anniversary we learned some of the older songs. I love listening to those songs. I hate playing them. They're not fun to play. There's too many parts.

**Shane:** You guys, that's why we started writing simpler songs. We want to have fun playing them!

**Jesse:** And we still don't have fun playing them.

**Shane:** We have more fun!

**Jesse:** We have less less fun?!

**Kathryn & Scott:** Less less fun?!

**Jesse:** Less less fun!

**Kathryn:** Okay sure.

**Shane:** Enough. Not Mathcore!

[band laughs]

**But do you like Mathcore? Do you like listening to it?**

**Shane:** Not anymore.

**You've grown out of it ?**

**Shane:** I like bands who can pull off weird time signatures and have you not notice it. Like a Soundgarden riff. Where you're just like: "what is this in?" you'll hear it, and you'll be into it, and you go like: "oh this isn't in 4/4. what the f\_\_ is it even in?"

Propagandhi is really good at that too. Where they'll do complicated structures that they weave the vocals into, so it just feels normal. So anything that feels very jarring and mathy, I don't like that much anymore.

**Jesse:** I actually created a Twitter argument thread uh mildly talking s\_\_ on a lot of the bands from like the early early 2000s.

I mostly just said that all the bands that play that style that weren't Converge, Botch or Dillinger haven't aged very well and kind of suck. I was mostly making the statement because I thought it was funny.

**Kathryn:** I love it.

**Jesse:** But like a lot of those bands just really haven't aged very well for me. Even bands that I really like, like Coalescence. I just don't really care anymore.

**Shane:** I don't like our first album.

[band laughs]

**Kathryn:** You don't like the first Ken Mode Record?

**Shane:** The parts that are mathy are just [written] in a very clunky way. As soon as we start talking about this I was thinking of this riff [imitates the beginning riff of Bite the Wax Tadpole.] I was like: "who the f\_\_ wrote this?" children.

**Kathryn:** You guys were very young when you started.

**Shane:** Yeah, that's.

**You were like 19 or 20, right?**

**Shane:** I was 15 when the band started. But then when we recorded the first one ...

**Jesse:** ... you were 17.

**Shane:** 17, yeah and you can tell!

**Jesse:** But boy could you shred, man!

**Shane:** Oh boy!

**Thank you KEN Mode for this interesting Interview!**







# **INTERVIEW PAUL SEIDEL**

*I meet with Paul Seidel before he played with his band The Ocean at Desertfest Antwerp. Paul is one of the friendliest and calmest person I have ever meet. He asked me about this magazine and seemed genuinely interested in it. In this Interview we talk about his drumming, influences and the future of The Ocean. This interview was done in German. You find the German original in the next section.*



War from a Harlots Mouth  
Transmetropolitan (2007)



War from a Harlots Mouth  
In Shoals (2009)



War from a Harlots Mouth  
MMXX (2010)



War from a Harlots Mouth  
Voyeur (2010)



Nightmarer  
Cacophony of Terror (2018)



The Ocean  
Phanerozoic I Palaeozoic (2018)



The Ocean  
Phanerozoic II Palaeozoic (2020)

**Hi Paul! You started playing in War From A Harlots Mouth, and then you started playing in The Ocean and your current project is the Death Metal band Nightmarer. That's quite a few styles of music. Does this affect your drumming in any way?**

So it's more like the bands help shape my drumming. And what I then do in the process as the bands or artists that I get to know again through other bands. That also influences my playing. So it's a big mix of everything I listen to myself and the bands I play in.

**Why did you want to play metal as a drummer?**

I think I've grown into it. I just started with Grunge and a bit of Punk in my school band. And then it became more and more intense and extreme. Then I meet Simon from War From A Harlots Mouth while playing local concerts and then everything just intensified. So I grew into Metal.

**How long have you been playing drums?**

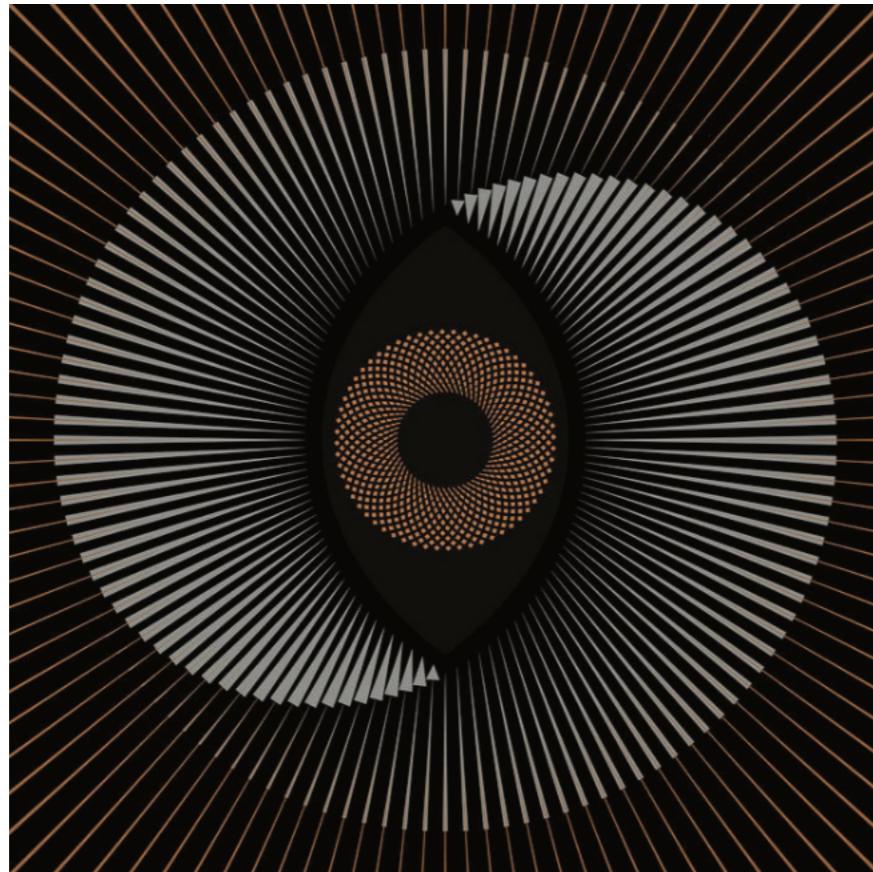
Since I was 15.

**Would you say that one style of music or band is easier to play than another?**

Definitely. So the level of difficulty doesn't necessarily differ by the amount of hits you make, but rather by the complexity of the rhythms you play. For example, a band like Meshuggah is extremely complex and involves a lot of intellectual work. Whereas death metal or something like that, when you play blast beats for 4 minutes, it's more physically demanding than intellectually. Whether I play jazz or pop or rock, the peculiarities of drumming make it complicated.



Nightmarer - Deformity Adrift (2023)



The Ocean - Holocene (2023)



Tomas Haake

### **Who's your favourite drummer?**

From a playing perspective, I've always been very influenced by Tomas Haake from Meshuggah and the Nothing album in particular inspired me a lot and changed my playing a lot.

### **What are your favourite albums that you played drums on?**

The last two albums I released are my favorites: The Ocean and Nightmarer. You grow with your tasks.

### **Was it difficult for you to play drums in Nightmarer?**

It's exhausting, so now I'm mainly on tour with The Ocean and my muscles have changed accordingly. With The Ocean there is a lot more dynamic at play and accordingly the muscles are more finely aligned.

And in Nightmarer there is a lot of fast drumming, and at the same level of volume, and it always takes a while for the body to get used to it and for the muscles to rebuild accordingly.

***"I've always been very influenced by Tomas Haake"***



Meshuggah - Nothing (2002)

### **So does it make a physical difference to you which band you're currently playing in?**

Yes definitely, yes. So if I were to go on tour with Nightmarer, for example, I would first have to lock myself in a rehearsal room for two weeks and really practice blast beats so that my muscles get used to it.

### **Do you actually use triggers when playing drums?**

No, not with The Ocean.

I used it towards the end of War From A Harlots Mouth. Because we often played in clubs where the sound wasn't that good and I had to somehow make sure that the bass drum was clearly audible.

The trigger is actually quite good for something like that. Generally for really fast things where it is difficult to hear the pedal hits correctly in the PA.

But not with The Ocean, no. I would possibly use it for electronic sounds on top. I was already thinking about whether I should try it. But there is currently no need for that.

**But you also like listening to lo-fi pop, and you have an electronic project Fern. This electronic stuff, do you bring that to The Ocean too?**

Yes. So for the first time with the Phanerozoic 1 and 2 records. We - Peter and I - did a lot of work on the synths together.

**You're also directly involved in the songwriting?**

Exactly. Yes, Robin [guitar] and Peter [synth] wrote the last Holocene record together. I was more involved in the arrangement with Peter afterwards, i.e. when it came to piano parts and additional synth sounds. [There] I had a little influence on the record. But I think it's more of a tendency for us as a band to drift away into this synth areas. Let's see what the next record looks like.

**Do you rehearse together then?**

It's very in the box. So a lot of stuff happens about sending the songs back and forth and basically checking how they work and whether they work. Robin usually writes the majority of the songs. And then we sit down together in

the rehearsal room with David, Robin [guitarists] and to change details in the structures. Then usually comes the studio part. Where we all go to the studio, one by one. So we always record separately, and then the vocals come on at the end. So when the whole construct is almost finished.

**Do you all live in Berlin too?**

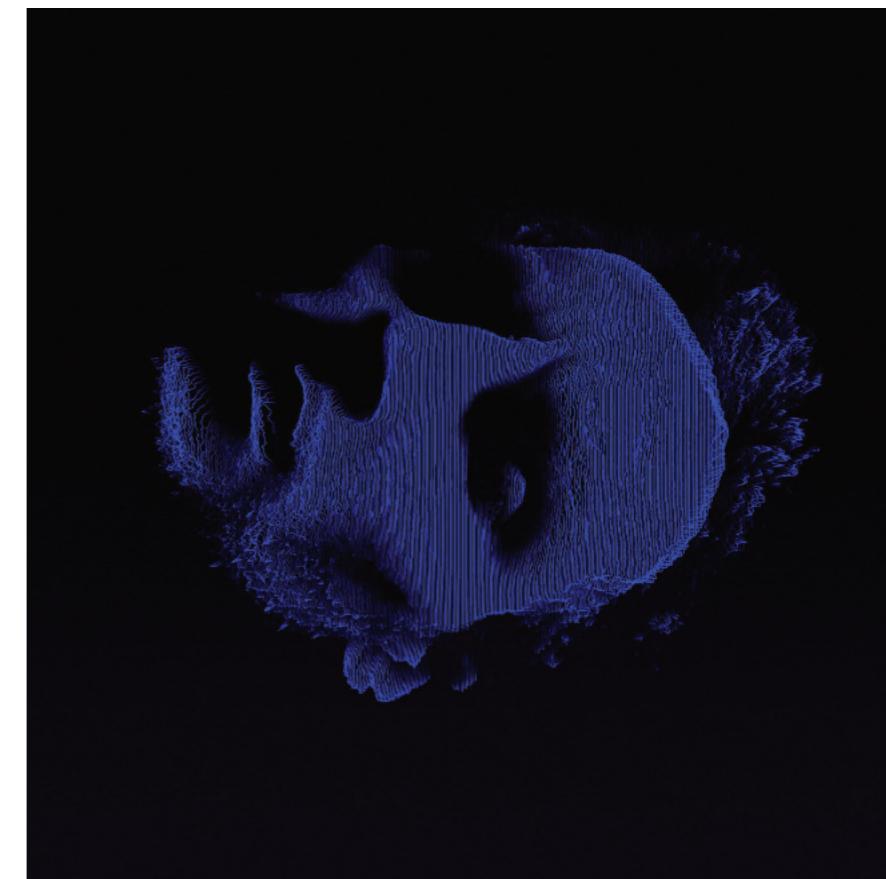
Almost all of them, yes exactly. Except for Matthias. Matthias lives in Stockholm and Peter lives near Bremen.

**Do you have any other projects that you make music with?**

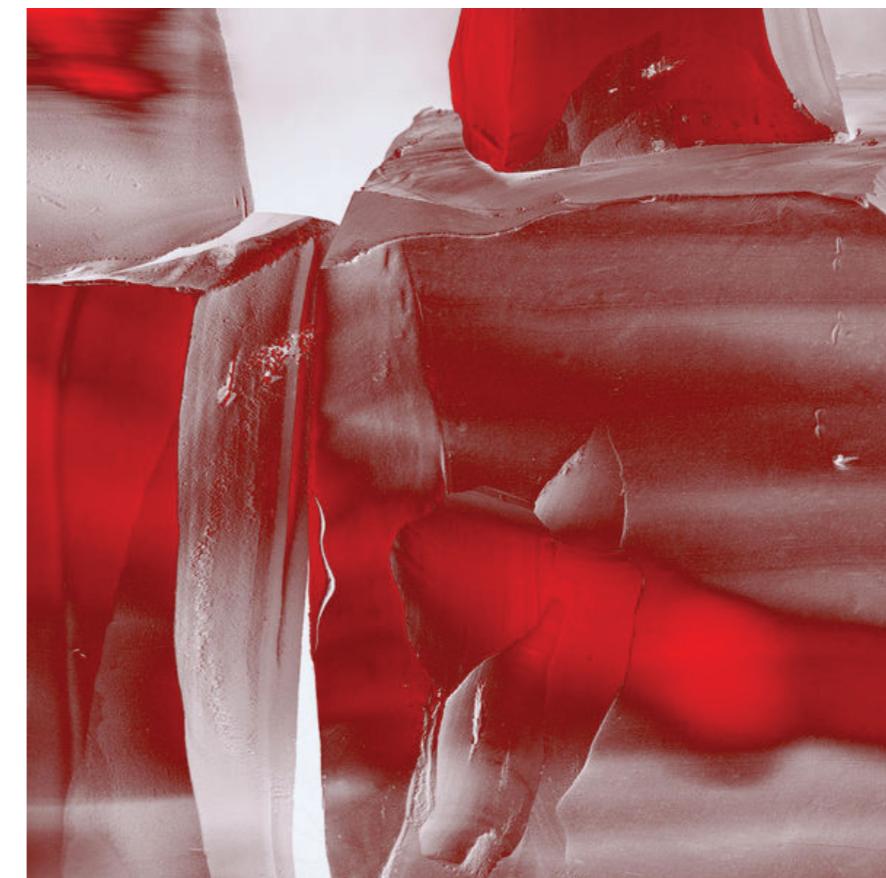
Not as an active member. But, for example, I worked a bit on production for an artist from Berlin. The project is called Kollmorgen. It's a bit Portishead meets Moderat. So it's pretty electronic too. I was involved a lot in songwriting and arranging and so on. I tend to have my hands here and there.

**So you were the producer?**

Yes, exactly. But I don't really want to take on any more projects right now.



Fern - Fern (2017)



Fern - Intersubjective (2022)



**Which album cover do you think is the most beautiful by Ocean?**

The Holocene cover, the newest one with the rays and the orange circles. I generally like artwork that doesn't directly reveal what it's supposed to mean. So more abstract planes, art, geometric structures.

**Will there be more music by or with you soon?**

I actually don't think so, no. Now I want to get creative again and write songs. Probably next year.

**Do you already have new material for The Ocean?**

Yes yes, so something is definitely finished in terms of songwriting. It will definitely take some time before the whole thing is recorded and published. I would say a year or two. I would actually like to write new Fern-material again. But for that I need time and peace.

**Is this also completely your own project?**

Yes, exactly. I like to lock myself in and take my time.

**The Ocean, you are playing in Colombia for the first time soon [November 2023]?**

Correct. We were invited to play at the festival. It's a free for all and between 70 and 80,000 people are always expected. So if there are really so many people in front of the stage, then I will be very nervous.

**Do you sometimes get nervous before performances?**

Every now and then, yes. So especially in Berlin. So home game, because then I know the family is there, all friends are there. And that's always a new level. But generally when we haven't played for a long time, for example the first two shows. I'm always pretty excited about that. We often play over 100 shows a year. It's more like that, it's not nervousness, it's more like a positive excitement that you feel like playing — finally. Because the days are always relatively long. You also just sit around. And then you finally want to get started.

**Thanks for your time Paul!**

**THE OCEAN**

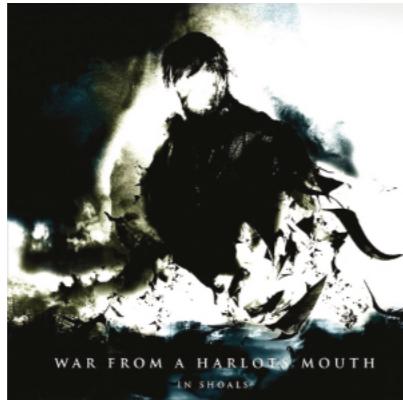


# **INTERVIEW PAUL SEIDEL**

*Ich habe mich mit Paul Seidel vor dem Auftritt seiner Band The Ocean auf dem Desertfest Antwerpen getroffen. Paul ist einer der freundlichsten und entspanntesten Menschen die ich bisher getroffen habe. Er hat mich nach diesem Magazin gefragt und schien wirklich daran interessiert zu sein. Wir haben über sein Schlagzeugspiel, Inspirationen und die Zukunft von The Ocean geredet.*



War from a Harlots Mouth  
Transmetropolitan (2007)



War from a Harlots Mouth  
In Shoals (2009)



War from a Harlots Mouth  
MMXX (2010)



War from a Harlots Mouth  
Voyeur (2010)



Nightmarer  
Cacophony of Terror (2018)



The Ocean  
Phanerozoic I Palaeozoic (2018)



The Ocean  
Phanerozoic II Palaeozoic (2020)

**Hi Paul! Du hast angefangen bei War From A Harlots Mouth zu spielen und dann hast du bei The Ocean angefangen und dein aktuelles Projekt ist die Death Metal Band Nightmarer - das sind ziemlich viele Musikstile. Beeinflusst das irgendwie dein Schlagzeugspiel?**

Also es ist eher so dass, die Bands mein Schlagzeugspiel mit formen. Und das ich dann im gleichen Atemzug mit den Bands oder Künstlern, die ich durch andere Bands kennenerne, beeinflusst werde. Also es ist ein großer Mix aus allem, was ich selber höre und die Bands in denen ich spiele.

**Warum wolltest du unbedingt Metal spielen als Schlagzeuger?**

Ich bin da so reingewachsen glaube ich. Ich habe erst angefangen mit Grunge und so ein bisschen Punk in meiner Schülerband. Und das wurde dann immer intensiver und extremer. Dann habe ich übers lokale Konzerte spielen Simon, von War From A Harlots Mouth, kennengelernt und dann hat sich das alles immer weiter intensiviert. So bin ich dann in den Metal hineingewachsen.

**Seit wann spielst du Schlagzeug?**

Seit ich 15 bin.

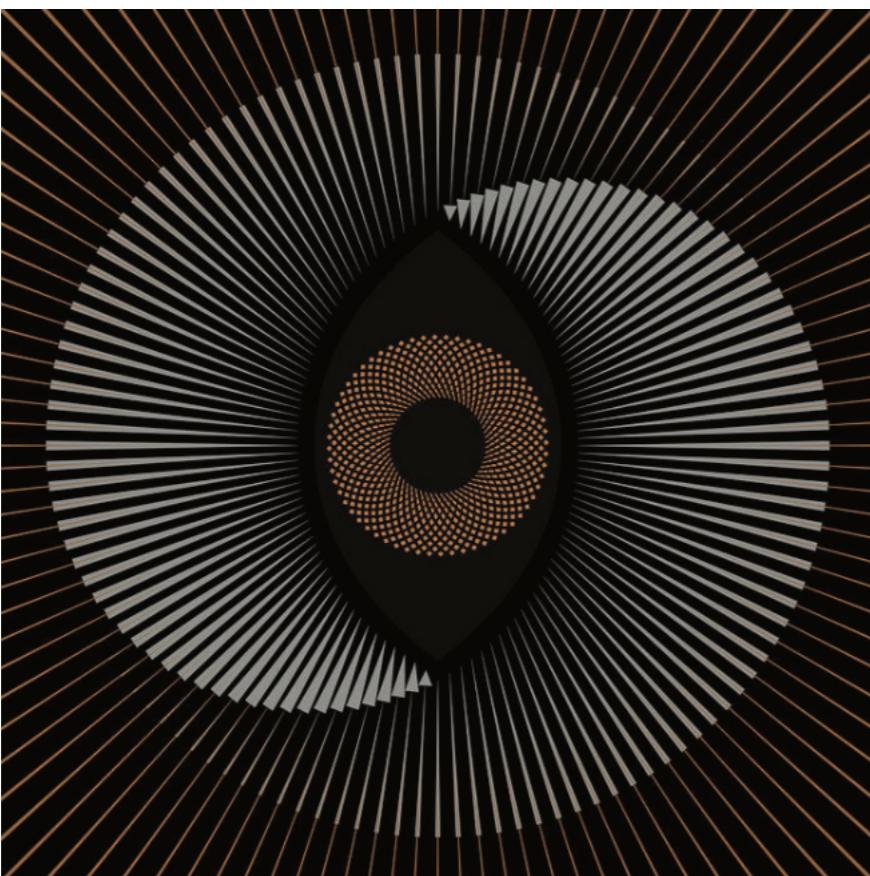
**Würdest du sagen, dass ein Musikstil oder eine Band einfacher zu spielen ist als eine andere?**

Auf jeden Fall. Also der Schwierigkeitsgrad unterscheidet sich nicht zwangsläufig durch die Menge an Schlägen, die man macht, sondern die Komplexität der Rhythmen die man spielt. Also z. B. eine Band wie Meshuggah ist extrem komplex, ist also sehr viel intellektuelle Arbeit. Wohingegen Death Metal, wenn man 4 Minuten lang Blastbeats spielt, eher körperlich, physisch anstrengend ist als intellektuell.

Ob ich jetzt Jazz Spiele oder Pop oder Rock. Es sind so die Eigenheiten des Schlagzeugspiels die es dann kompliziert machen.



Nightmarer - Deformity Adrift (2023)



The Ocean - Holocene (2023)



Tomas Haake

### **Was sind deine größten Inspirationen?**

Spielerisch gesehen hat mich schon immer Tomas Haake von Meshuggah sehr beeinflusst und insbesondere das Nothing Album hat mich sehr sehr inspiriert, mein Spiel sehr verändert.

### **Was ist dein Lieblingsalbum, auf dem du Schlagzeug spielst?**

Die letzten beiden Alben die ich rausgebracht habe, sind meine liebsten: The Ocean und Nightmarer. Man wächst ja mit seinen Aufgaben.

### **War es für dich schwierig bei Nightmarer Schlagzeug zu spielen?**

Es ist schon anstrengend, also ich bin ja jetzt hauptsächlich mit The Ocean auf Tour und meine Muskeln haben sich dahingehend auch verändert. Bei The Ocean ist sehr viel mehr Dynamik im Spiel und dementsprechend sind die Muskeln auch feiner ausgerichtet. Und bei Nightmarer ist ja sehr viel schnelles Schlagzeugspiel, auf dem gleichen Level der Lautstärke und es dauert immer ein Weilchen bis der Körper sich dann daran gewöhnt und die Muskeln entsprechend auch umbaut.

**„Tomas Haake hat mich schon immer sehr beeinflusst“**



Meshuggah - Nothing (2002)

### **Also es macht für dich auch körperlich einen Unterschied in welcher Band du gerade spiels?**

Ja auf jeden Fall, ja. Also, wenn ich jetzt mit Nightmarer auf Tour gehen würde z.B. müsste ich mich erstmal zwei Wochen einschließen in Proberaum und wirklich Blastbeats üben damit meine Muskeln sich daran gewöhnen.

### **Benutzt du eigentlich Trigger beim Schlagzeug spielen?**

Nee, nicht bei The Ocean. Ich habe es damals bei War From A Harlots Mouth zum Ende hin benutzt. Weil wir oft in Clubs gespielt haben, wo der Sound nicht so gut war und ich dann irgendwie sicherstellen musste, dass die Bassdrum gut hörbar ist. Für soweas ist der Trigger eigentlich ganz gut. Generell für richtig schnelle Sachen wo es schwierig ist die Anschläge von den Pedalen richtig wahrzunehmen in der PA.

Aber bei The Ocean nicht, ne. Ich würde es eventuell benutzen für so elektronische Sounds, die oben drüber liegen. Das hatte ich jetzt schon überlegt, ob ich das mal probiere. Aber aktuell besteht da keine Notwendigkeit.

**Du hörst aber auch gerne Lo-Fi Pop und du hast ein Elektroprojekt Fern. Diese elektronischen Sachen, bringst du das auch bei The Ocean ein?**

Ja. Also erstmals bei der Phanerozoic I & II . Da haben wir - Peter [Synth] und ich - zusammen ziemlich viel an den Synthies gebastelt.

**Also du bist auch direkt beim Songwriting beteiligt?**

Genau. Ja, die letzte Platte die Holocene haben Robin [Gitarre] und Peter zusammen geschrieben. Da war ich dann eher im Arrangement tätig, mit Peter im Nachhinein, also was so Piano Parts und zusätzliche Synthie Sounds anbelangt. [Da] Habe ich einen kleinen Einfluss gehabt auf der Platte. Aber es ist glaube ich eher eine Tendenz von uns, als Band mehr so in diese Synthie geladenen Bereiche abzudriften. Mal schauen wie die nächste Platte aussieht.

**Probst ihr dann zusammen?**

Es ist sehr in the box. Also passiert sehr viel über hin und her schicken und erstmal die Songs quasi checken, wie die funktionieren, ob sie funktionieren. Im Normalfall schreibt Robin den Großteil der Songs. Und wir setzen uns dann zusammen im Proberaum. David, Robin [Gitarre] und ich um in den Strukturen noch Details zu verändern. Dann kommt

normalerweise der Studiopart. Wo wir alle ins Studio gehen, einer nach dem anderen. Also wir nehmen immer separat auf und am Ende kommt dann der Gesang drauf. Also, wenn das ganze Konstrukt schon fast fertig ist.

**Ihr wohnt auch alle in Berlin?**

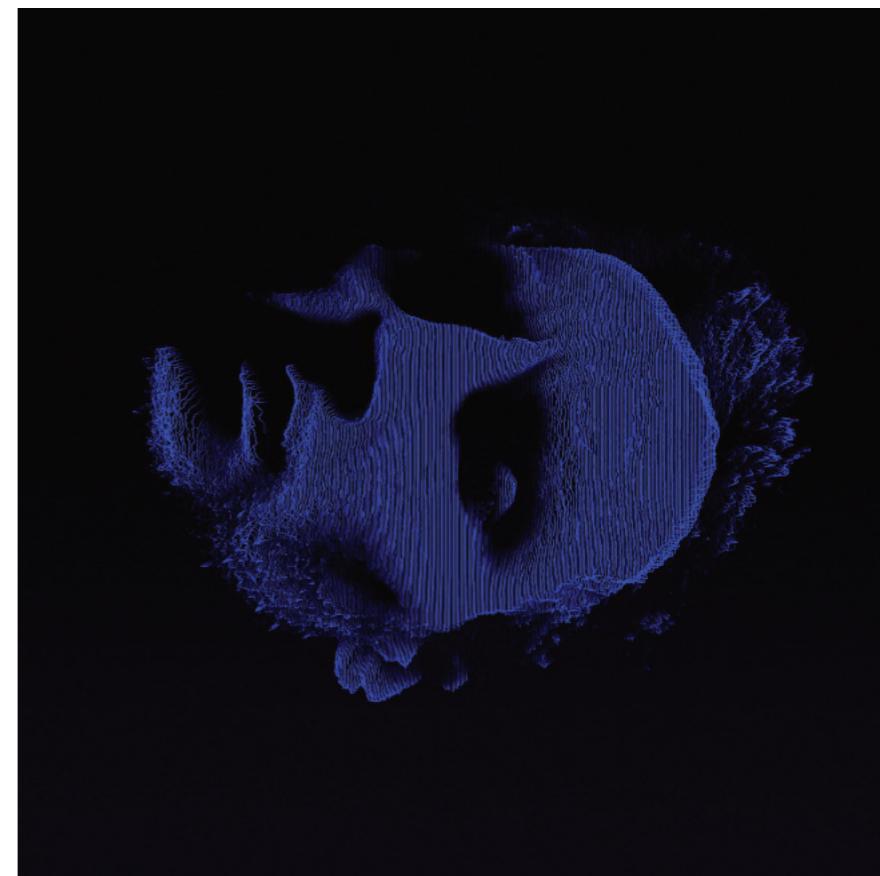
Fast alle, ja genau. Bis auf Matthias. Matthias wohnt in Stockholm und Peter wohnt in der Nähe von Bremen.

**Hast du noch andere Projekte mit denen du Musik machst?**

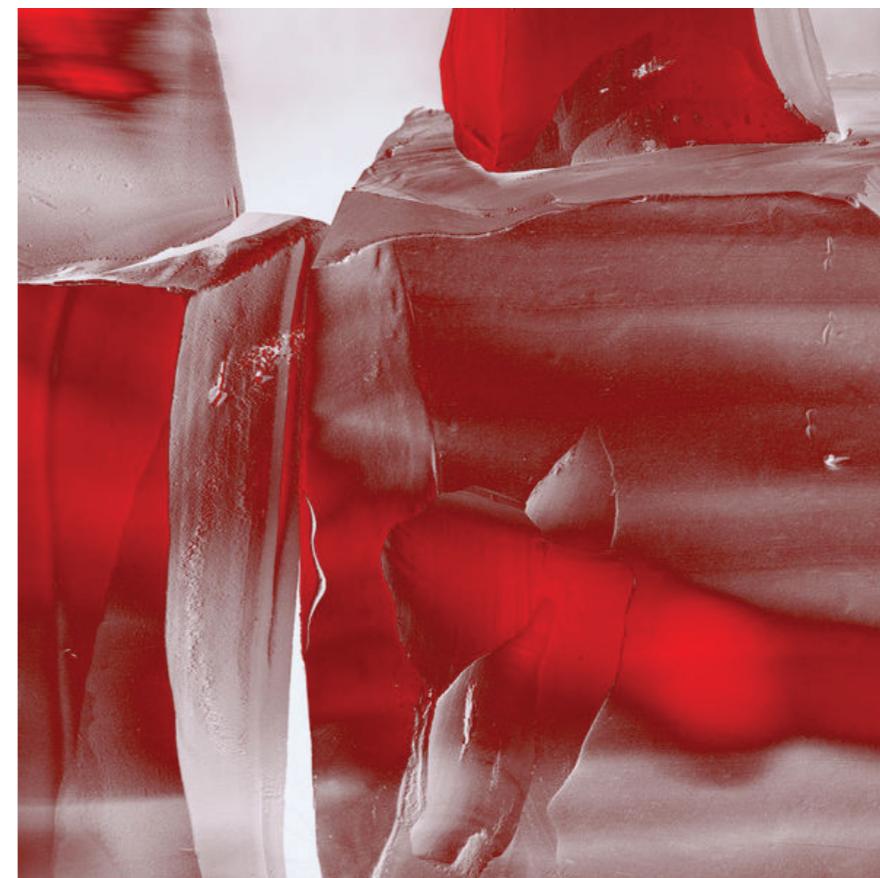
Nicht als aktives Mitglied. Aber ich habe z. B bei einer Künstlerin aus Berlin in der Produktion ein bisschen mitgearbeitet. Das Projekt heißt Kollmorgen. Das ist so ein bisschen Portishead meets Moderat. Also auch ziemlich elektronisch. Da habe ich viel im Songwriting mitgewirkt und im Arrangement und so weiter. Ich habe eher so hier und da meine Hände mit Spiel.

**Also du warst der Produzent?**

Ja genau. Aber noch mehr Projekte möchte ich mir gerade eigentlich auch nicht zutrauen.



Fern - Fern (2017)



Fern - Intersubjective (2022)



**Welches Album Cover findest du von The Ocean am schönsten?**

Das Holocene Cover, das neueste mit den Strahlen und den orangenen Kreisen. Ich mag generell gerne Artworks die nicht so direkt offenbaren, was es bedeuten soll. Also eher abstrakte Flächen, Kunst, geometrische Strukturen.

**Wird es naher Zukunft noch mehr Musik von oder mit dir geben?**

Ich glaube tatsächlich erstmal nicht, nein. Ich will jetzt erstmal wieder kreativ werden und Songs schreiben. Wahrscheinlich nächstes Jahr.

**Habt ihr den schon neues Material für The Ocean?**

Ja, ja, also es ist auf jeden Fall schon was fertig Songwriting-technisch. Bis das ganze dann aufgenommen und veröffentlichtbar ist, das dauert auf jeden Fall noch. Ich würde mal sagen ein, zwei Jahre. Ich würde gerne wieder neues Fern-Material schreiben eigentlich. Aber dafür brauche ich Zeit und Ruhe.

**Das ist auch komplett dein eigenes Projekt?**

Genau, ja. Da schließe ich mich gerne ein und lass mir Zeit.

**The Ocean, ihr spielt demnächst zum ersten Mal [November 2023] in Kolumbien?**

Richtig. Wir wurden da eingeladen auf dem Festival zu spielen. Das ist so ein free for all und da werden immer so zwischen 70 bis 80000 Leute erwartet. Also wenn da wirklich so viele Leute vor der Bühne stehen, dann werde ich sehr nervös sein.

**Bist du manchmal nervös vor Auftritten?**

Ab und an ja. Also vor allem in Berlin. So Heimspiel, weil dann weiß ich da ist die Familie da und alle Freunde. Das ist immer so eine neue Ebene. Aber generell, wenn wir lange nicht gespielt haben z.B. die ersten beiden Shows. Da bin ich dann immer schon ziemlich aufgeregt.

Wir spielen ja oft über 100 Shows im Jahr. Das ist eher so eine, es ist keine Nervosität mehr, eher so eine positive Aufregung, das man Lust hat zu spielen - endlich. Weil die Tage sind auch immer relativ lang. Man sitzt auch einfach nur rum. Und dann willst du endlich loslegen.

**Danke für deine Zeit Paul!**





**PHOTO GALLERY**  
**THE OCEAN AT**  
**DESERTFEST**  
**ANTWERP**



If you'd like to see more concert pictures  
follow the magazine on [Instagram](#).

# **THANKS FOR READING!**

This is the biggest issue of my magazine so far. It took forever to finish. But I am super hyped about the result. My goal to interview bands and write about it, is accomplished. I hope you enjoyed it. The year is over, but Hard Hit will continue. Be excited about the next issue with more interviews and Metal!

I am already editing two interviews with **Johannes Persson (Cult of Luna)** and **Nick DiSalvio (Elder)**. I plan to meet more interesting musicians in 2024. And there will be definitely some more design-content.  
Until then

**STAY BRUTOOL!**



Animals got replaced by Selfies with bands

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