

Fear of Men

2016 sees the return of Fear of Men with *Fall Forever*, an album that builds on the melodicism of their acclaimed debut album *Loom* and takes it in a bold and modern direction, pushing the limits of their instruments to take on new and alien forms.

After extensively touring in support of their acclaimed debut album, Fear of Men decamped in the early months of 2015 to an outbuilding of a disused abattoir in rural Kent, England, to begin work on new material. A two hour bus ride from their native Brighton and a blackhole for cell signal, such an environment was fitting for a band determined to strip their sound back to the bone and build it up to make an album that would, on their live return, "make the stage shake".

On *Fall Forever* Fear of Men twisted together sounds and influences from a variety of genres to create their own vision of a dark and modern pop record. Working with producer Tom Morris to gain clarity and presence, they focused on core sounds instead of layers, while still incorporating textures and details that can be discovered upon repeat listens.

Extending upon the themes of *Loom*, Jessica Weiss puts forth her own voice, rather than hiding behind metaphor or references. The result, she says, is a "very personal and genuine record exploring where my life is at the moment. It feels a lot more exposing than *Loom*, and it's been a way for me to process my life." A vocalist who has proved herself adept at conveying a kaleidoscope of emotions in just a few lines, Weiss juxtaposes the resultant feelings of independence and self-determination with ruminations on reliance and intimacy. Indeed, she calls *Fall Forever* a love album, but one with themes of strength and independence and one that explores emotional extremes of closeness and distance, love and violence.

Fear of Men reflects such contrasts in the sonic palette of the album; cold electronics meet lush, breathing textures and frenetic post-punk drums shudder against undulating guitars that recall the fluidity of shoegaze while stripping it of that genre's crutch of thick reverb to create a more forceful and contemporary sound. Intent on looking forward, the band utilized modern effects pedals and technology to manipulate their traditional band instruments into new and alien forms. Such an approach can be heard on 'Until You', where frozen guitar chords warp and twist to introduce the song before erupting into a distorted wall of sound for a chorus that hits with the punch of synthesizers but bristles with a human rawness that only guitars can bring.

Fear of Men have pushed themselves to explore new sonic possibilities with their old instruments while pulling back the veils that have previously obscured them and in the process created an album that

could only be theirs. *Fall Forever*, co-produced by Tom Morris and Daniel Falvey, is out June 3, 2016 on Kanine Records.