

PRESS RELEASE

IMPEKA



Album title: The Usurp Tapes, Vol. I: Species of Spaces

Artists: Conspirators of Pleasure

Release date: 1st September 2017

Format: Cassette [C60] + digital download | edition of 50 hand numbered copies with individual polaroid photographs

Label: IMPEKA | !CS003

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IMPEKA proudly present the first official **Conspirators of Pleasure** release, “**The Usurp Tapes, Vol. I: Species of Spaces**”, an hour-long sonic journey into and around the **Usurp Art Gallery** in Harrow.

A radical departure from their eclectic live performances, these recordings are the result of a one-day micro-residency at **Usurp Art Gallery**, for which founders **Poulomi Desai** and **Simon Underwood** invited long-time collaborator **Jonas Gustafsson** to sonically explore, investigate and interact with the physical space and its immediate surroundings. Through interaction and reactions - listening in the space, gestures, speech, field-recordings and found sounds - they created a soundscape based on the hidden, forgotten, disregarded spaces and places that breathe life into the peripheries of London. This aural dialogue culminated in a live performance based on chance, action and collaboration in a public space, where the trio brought in instrumentation such as sitar, bass and percussion to interpret and translate their findings.

This release is divided into two parts where the first, “Spaces”, is an exploration of our everyday surroundings, mundane activities and forgotten objects. The sounds convey a systematic inventory of the production of everyday life and an investigation into the infra-ordinary, documenting aspects of day to day life in the gallery through experiments in sound. “Species”, the second part, is an improvised live performance between the three artists performed at the **Usurp Art Gallery**, which concludes the inquiry into the art space as a site for public engagement and community creativity.

Conspirators of Pleasure are an improvising duo that seek to bend all the rules, question the sacred, create extraordinary soundscape performances and self-regulating sonic systems, using modified and prepared instruments. Part of their unusual musical armoury includes a prepared sitar, sonically twisted toys, prepared bass, resurrected radios and visually scarred slide projections. Their compositions explore experimental terrains, twisting technology to transform organic sounds into eerie calls that flow from intense waves of abrasive, noisy, chaos invoking industrial nostalgia, to structured pulsating rhythms, to melancholic, microtonal drones. The core duo of **Poulomi Desai** and **Simon Underwood** frequently invite a rotating cast of like-minded musicians and artists to collaborate on live performances and site-specific installations / events.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Poulomi Desai is a Leverhulme Research Fellow at **Heritage Quay Archives** and runs the **Usurp Art space** in Harrow, London. She is self-taught and has been involved in performance, curatorial projects, live art, sound and photography installations interrogating the politics of identity, listening and perception inspired by her activist background and DIY post-punk for over 30 years. She creates performances / compositions with modified sitars, electronics and VLF radio solo as well as in duos and ensembles. Exhibitions / projections include **The Queens Museum, The Serpentine Gallery, Photographers Gallery, The Science Museum, The Oxford Gallery India, Futuresonic** and **Souzouzukan 9001 Japan**. Commissions and performances include **Sonic Acts, LCMF, Fort Process, Clandestino** and **Colour Out of Space**. Her work has been published in six books and she co-founded the youngest Black / Asian performance company in the UK - **HAC** - in 1981; the first South Asian LGBTTT campaigning club - **Shakti** - in 1988; and the first HIV/AIDS charity in India - **NAZ/NFI** - in 1991.

Having co-founded the post-punk outfit **The Pop Group**, **Simon Underwood** has been active in experimental music and filmmaking since the early 80's. His current practice is focused on DIY electronics (circuit bending, hardware hacking and instrument building), free-improv performances and exploring new forms of compositional processes. In 2012 he formed the experimental noise duo **Conspirators of Pleasure** with **Poulomi Desai**, discharging their chaotic and extraordinary soundscape performances throughout the UK, Europe and India. In 2015/17 **Conspirators of Pleasure** contributed two compositions to the experimental **Waywords & Meansigns** project setting **James Joyce's** bizarre novel, "**Finnegans Wake**" to music. Simon is also the co-founder of the **Usurp Art Space** in London.

www.conspire.org.uk

www.usurp.org.uk

www.waywordsandmeansigns.com/artists/the-conspirators-of-pleasure/

Jonas Gustafsson is an artist whose main interest lies in the field of phonography, and how the listening experience can alter our sense and perception of place and environment. He is also continuously exploring and performing improvised music using percussion, guitar, electronics and found objects. Installations, residencies and performances have taken place at **SoundFjord, Café OTO** and **Barbican**, London, UK, as well as **HUT**, Vienna, AT; work has also been presented on **BBC Radio 3: Late Junction, Resonance FM** and **Framework Radio**. Jonas is an associate artist of **Usurp Art Space** and runs the **IMPEKA** imprint.

IMPEKA began operating in early 2017 and, from its Southeast London base, is dedicated to promoting and presenting experimental music and art through musical releases, performances, film and printed matter.

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