

# Michael Lacey

August 9-12



Michael Lacey presents a new album of music recorded on guitar and analog synthesizer with an accompanying video projection. The as-yet-untitled album combines dense, intricate melodies with drifting waves of ambient sound. Lacey's diverse musical influences are unpacked on his radio show *Illegal Railway*, broadcast by IWFm and available online. Prior to this event, Lacey selected the 2006 Norwegian film 'The Bothersome Man' to screen here at OUTPUT.

## **Ways into thinking about the album playback:**

- 1. What affect does Lacey want his music to have upon listeners?**
- 2. What are the projections alongside the music, and where are they from?**
- 3. How does Lacey's work in music sit alongside his artistic practice?**
- 4. Why did the artist select to show 'The Bothersome Man' before this album playback?**

Michael Lacey is an artist and musician based in Liverpool. Born in the city in 1985, he studied at the Glasgow School of Art and has exhibited widely around the UK. His work across painting, collage and sculpture details a fictional netherworld shaped by his interests and experiences, typified by absurdity and unsettling humour. Notable projects include writing and illustrating the comic book *Innards* ('a really exciting talent' - Alan Moore), and co-running the online gallery Little Man. Lacey has recently been working with local independent press Dead Ink on a series of book covers. [michael-lacey.co.uk](http://michael-lacey.co.uk)

OUTPUT is a gallery working exclusively with creatives from or based in Merseyside. It is supported by The Kazimier.

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## **SOME ANSWERS FROM MICHAEL LACEY:**

1. What affect does Lacey want his music to have upon listeners?

I bought a synth last year to keep myself company in the house and found it had a potent soporific effect on my girlfriend, so I made some recordings for her to listen to at bedtime. I don't want to send everyone who hears this to sleep but that sense of relaxation seemed like an interesting place to start exploring, that if people are at ease they're perhaps more willing to come on a little journey with me. As the music has developed I think it's become more emotive, and a sort of warm space to examine aspects of my frame of mind that aren't necessarily positive or optimistic. It's interesting to try and convey emotion through structured things like melody and harmony rather than through language or visual metaphor.

2. What are the projections alongside the music, and where are they from?

The projections are a series of videos I filmed around Abersoch in North Wales last weekend. I go there every Summer with some friends to cook food, play on boats, climb hills, go to the beach, take long-exposure night time photographs and other wholesome activities. There's no internet or phone reception and it's exceptionally relaxing. I've started to value it as a punctuation point in the year, a chance to step back and take stock of my practice/life. Decisions I made on the trip last year are just coming to fruition now, because I work in quite a slow and deliberate way (except for producing this video).

3. How does Lacey's work in music sit alongside his artistic practice?

I don't know, really - it isn't something I've worried about very much. I don't think the music can be considered a soundtrack to the pictures I make, they're not explicitly connected or anything. I think as I get older I'm more concerned with enjoying the time that I spend working on things, and less with worrying about the shape of my career or presenting myself in a succinct, easily digestible way. Ragnar Kjartansson's show at the Barbican in 2016 helped me relax about this - it was a retrospective show whose main strength was the diversity of work presented.

4. Why did the artist select to show 'The Bothersome Man' before this album playback?

The Bothersome Man originated as a radio play before being adapted for film by its original writer, Per Schreiner. The sound design is really vivid throughout and there's some powerful uses of the music of Edvard Grieg. It uses an allegorical story to communicate a really common feeling, of being unable to enjoy the things that are expected of you, to the bafflement and eventual resentment of others. It's in a lineage with works by Flann O'Brien, Beckett, Kafka, David Lynch and others who have been influential figures for me.

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