

GROOMS EXIT INDEX

ABOUT THIS RECORD

Grooms' Exit Index combines the abandon of pop with the unease of American life in 2017, cloaking its hooks in a clamor of samples and distortion, its agitation expressed in its dream-poetry lyrics. The album as a whole is a study in contrasts—light meeting dark, amplifier fuzz surrounding big melodies, sampled friction squaring off with fluidly played basslines. Album opener "The Directory" shrouds itself in synth-dappled mist until Johnson, backed by ghostly harmonies, asks with increasing intensity, "Where are my millions, my millions, my millions?" "Dietrich," meanwhile, pins itself on a steady bassline, its guitars whirling into a maelstrom as Johnson sings promises of fealty to a far-away target

Grooms laid down the skeleton tracks for Exit Index, the Brooklyn band's first album since 2015's Comb the Feelings Through Your Hair, at the storied New York recording studio The Magic Shop—the last band to record there before its closure in March 2016. "It was the end," recalls Johnson. "We ended up bashing out 13 or 14 songs—of which we kept 10—in about six hours, because it was the last day. The engineer was like, 'I can't believe it. This is like working on a record in the '60s, where the band comes in and they know everything super well, because they have to.'" Johnson, drummer Steve Levine, and bassist Jay Heisemann had battened down in a Brooklyn recording studio for a month to write Exit Index, figuring out the bones of tracks like the pummeling "Magistrate Seeks Romance" and the tensely amorphous "Turn Your Body."

The lyrics on Exit Index combine honest expressions of anxiety with heady imagery that elicits icy, barren landscapes and dead-end streets. ("There's so few things we can talk about/Our endless words, overheard/We're not dead, we're being straightened out/We're semi-tough, it's not enough," he sings on the swirling "Softer Now.") "It's a heavier record than I've ever written lyrics for," says Johnson. "I was writing it while I watched every single debate last year—I don't know why I did that to myself—and after my wife would go to sleep, I would stay up with headphones on, recording and making samples—synths and quiet guitar, stuff like that. While I was doing that, I would also be zoning in and out of YouTube, and I was just so freaked out by how the debates were absurd, terrifying things to watch."

The heavy distortion on the group's guitars helps add to the gloom as well; Johnson, who has co-owned the Brooklyn pedal company Death By Audio Effects since 2008, made a limited-edition distortion pedal to celebrate the album's release. "There's a lot of tremolo on Exit Index," he says, "so I made a fucked-up-sounding trem." Collin Dupuis (Angel Olsen, Lana Del Rey) mixed the album, adding a few finishing touches to intros and song structures

Exit Index is a portrait of unease, its abstracted poetry and sonic murk giving rise to a catchy, dense disquiet. "In a way, I feel like it's a really appropriate record for this time," says Johnson. "It feels unintentional, though—I wasn't thinking, 'I want to soundtrack 2017,' or anything like that. It's hard for me to listen to it now, because I'll listen to it and I'll be like, 'God, I wish that this were a fever dream, but it's not.' But that lines up with what's going on in the world, too."



TRACK LIST

01 The Directory	5:04
02 Horoscopes	4:07
03 Turn Your Body	3:47
04 Magistrate Seeks Romance	3:55
05 End	4:29
06 Dietrich	4:06
07 Softer Now	3:35
08 Some Fantasy	3:54
09 They Can Tell	3:15
10 Thimble	5:53

PRESS

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- **PITCHFORK**

"...bands like Grooms convince me that no amount of gentrification will halt the creative energy of New York."
- **STEREOGUM**

"...reminiscent of Broadcast's spooky psychedelia."
- **UNCUT**

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