

Press release

**Signal The Future**

Photographer Georg Gatsas' name has become synonymous with London's late noughties dubstep scene, and his *Signal The Future* unpacks many layers of an important musical era. Through portraits of its many protagonists, candid shots of the music in situ, and architectural investigations – especially subterranean and aerial – of the city that gave it birth, a story is subliminally revealed. After Gatsas' initial introduction to the music via Mary Anne Hobbs' Radio One show, early Tempa and Hyperdub releases, and a club performance by The Bug, the Swiss photographer quickly met some key figures: scene champion Hobbs, the crews around Rinse FM – the city's indispensable pirate radio station and purveyors of the Tempa label – and Kode9 and his Hyperdub family.

With a chronology dating from 2008 – shortly after the British club phenomenon of dubstep received wider international acclaim – we're introduced to a scene in the flush of fame. Ethnically diverse, largely working class, surprisingly close-knit, and a world apart from the country's acclaimed indie and guitar rock history, they're united by the city and their love of a music that is absolutely integral to their lives. We glimpse dancers – no less important than the artists – mid-stride, witness their steppers' communion, and get a sense of their afterhours lives on the empty streets of Brixton in the dead of night.

As time progresses, so does the music, becoming broader, less categorisable, encompassing more, and like the internet itself, no longer so localised. If dubstep is no longer such an obvious thread, FWD – dubstep and grime's flagship club night operated

by the Rinse crew – is, and represents new music accordingly. In a few short years, the tone of electronic music has changed and so have the images – becoming brighter, taking place more often outside of the club, and interspersed with the kind of soaring structures that are always the hallmark of modernism. The music expands to include more genres that come from more places, though London and the family tree of this scene are still integral to nurturing that growth: something known and felt worldwide in thriving music cultures everywhere and online, even as global celebrities such as Skrillex become more obvious indicators of dubstep's impact.

While the photos' narrative requires some advance knowledge on the part of the observer, the essays included in *Signal The Future* make everything explicit. Acclaimed writers on music and cultural theory, including the late Mark Fisher, probe deeply on so many of the strands that Gatsas visualises: urbanism, community, the 'underground', capitalism, networked futurism, gentrification, and more. Today, we see artists such as grime MCs JME and Stormzy as crucial political opinion leaders for the youth in Jeremy Corbyn's grassroots Momentum movement – the culmination of the movements hinted at here. Anyone not following underground music may be surprised to realise how much is contained within its scope. Gatsas helps bring those complexities alive.

*Lisa Blanning*

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Georg Gatsas is an artist, photographer and freelance journalist based in Zurich, Switzerland. Gatsas uses an interdisciplinary approach to focus on how sound, recollection, and public spaces interact. Gatsas' photographs are based on music and art including their historical and sociological affinities. A nomad in a globalized world, Gatsas travels between different urban landscapes and captures individuals in their surrounding worlds in his portraits. In recent years, Georg Gatsas' work has been presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Switzerland and abroad, including Kunstmuseum St.Gallen (2017), Oldenburger Kunstverein (2017), Le Confort Moderne Poitiers (2017), FRAC Nord-Pas de

Calais (2015), Museum Bärengasse Zurich (2013), Kunstraum Riehen (2013), Aargauer Kunsthau (2012), Kunsthau Zurich (2008, 2011), Helmhaus Zurich (2011), Coalmine Galerie Winterthur (2010), Contemporary Art Centre Vilnius (2009), Swiss Institute New York (2007), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen Rotterdam (2006) and Kunsthalle St.Gallen (2003).

His editorial work has featured in a variety of magazines such as Interview, i-D, Dazed, Beat, Zweikommasieben and Edge.