

NG: That's interesting. I think people on the outside of an artist's creative process will always be curious as to what's driving it - you refer to decisions - what decisions did you make?

The funny thing is I wasn't looking to make another record. The previous EP wasn't all that long ago and anyone who knows me will be aware I have a busy family life. Then I happened to take a picture of a panda balloon we bought for my son when he was ill. Using some random filter, it looked really goofy and psychedelic. And to me it just looked like an album cover you know? And then I just started having weird thoughts about if this was the cover to an album then what would the music sound like? That's when the decisions started. The last EP I went for a one guitar, keys, bass, and drums dynamic so this time I thought let's change it up a bit and go for two guitars instead of one. And let's try make things more trippy!

NG: That's nuts - I don't think I've heard of someone making an entire album just because they happened to look at a picture!

That picture kind of sums up where I'm at with China presently. The panda's obviously a national symbol so I like that it has such a crazy appearance, because China frankly IS crazy! But it also, like the "Tish" cover, documents a literal everyday truth - my relationship with my child. I haven't heard of someone making an album inspired by a photo either but I wouldn't be surprised if this type of thing happens a lot. What begins the creative process could be any number of things. Take the band Beach House, they're really into movies apparently, and I think you hear that in their sound. It's almost like they're trying to make you feel like you're in a David Lynch film or something. Perhaps when they write it's cinematic imagery that's inspiring them. Not completely unrelated, I visited the Ai Weiwei/Andy Warhol exhibition in Melbourne recently. It really hit home how

well Warhol's art still reflects the current age and how influential he still remains. Just the support he gave to The Velvet Underground is important because they inspired many bands, but also, we still consume music as this neatly packaged mass produced shiny little product or format, even if it's a zip file in the digital era. To go back to Bowie, I bet artists like him or David Byrne of Talking Heads have been or were often inspired by different works of art, though whether they were inspired by a crappy photo of a balloon they took themselves is perhaps more open to speculation (laughs). I'm happy to be regarded as at the forefront of balloon-inspired music though, you can quote me on that (laughs again).

NG: We're perhaps repeating ourselves here at the Guide, given we asked this question about your previous EP "Tish" but where the heck did the title "Flounce" come from?

I feel like this album is Tish's baby. A child that grew up to be even wackier than its parent. I wanted to continue the trend of having just one simple word for the title and this word somehow seemed to fit with the cover. You can't see it in the photo but the balloon is near our door. I like to imagine someone's stormed out leaving the balloon there. There's something ridiculous about that proposition juxtaposed with the panda's goofy expression. It just came to me out of the blue anyway and I liked it. Like the preceding EP, this album does have a childlike quality to it in the way it's presented. I've been known to flounce around a bit - it's the artistic temperament don't you know (laughs). And as for my little boy? Let's just say he's a chip off the old block.

NG: When you say a childlike quality can you be more specific - how so?

Well the opening track encapsulates this. It hinges around simple notes and sound effects played on my son's toy keyboard. You

can play individual notes on it but it's also got a preprogrammed song and these sheep head buttons that make strange sounds. I think maybe it's a famous cartoon in China. Anyway, I couldn't resist picking it up and messing around. The best results came using the preprogrammed song setting and instead of letting the song run I just went to a different note. Then I'd occasionally throw in a sheep head to break it up a bit. As you do (laughs). In terms of its sound, as an opening track, it's a little bit of a false flag given how the rest of the album progresses. That's deliberate. I enjoyed the idea of throwing the listener a curveball. Anyway, that particular song is called "Child's Play" so there you go. Regarding the rest of the material the childlike qualities can be found perhaps in the general playfulness or imagery of the lyrics, the instrumentation, or just the fact I'm at pains to try and keep things simple, almost like a child would do, particularly the beats. And one song, "Suck It In Spit It Out" I guess is almost like a child throwing a big tantrum in the middle of the album.

NG: A toy keyboard? Crazy! I'm guessing most would assume it's a midi synthesizer or samples. What other insights can you give our readers into the recording process?

I love what you can do with midi these days and the resources freely available on the Internet. But you can make an album more distinctive if you throw a few random sounds in there that are home recorded. It can take some doing. A long time I was in that cupboard playing that child's keyboard trying to get the right take (laughs). Hmmm other insights? Well going back to the decisions thing, I find it helps envisaging the final sound. Whilst for Tish I started with the basic drum patterns and bass because I'd never done it that way before, from the ground up, this time the guitars were the initial jumping off point. I wanted a different guitar sound coming through either side of the stereo image and that