

## Destruction / Reconstruction album info \_ FAQ



## **FACT SHEET**

### **KEY INFORMATION**

**Album title:** Destruction / Reconstruction  
**Band name:** Mexican Radio  
**Release date:** 20 September, 2019  
**Singles:** Kirchner in the Mountains (9 August, 2019)  
Night of the Nihilist (23 August, 2019)  
Yukio Mishima Suicide (6 September, 2019)  
Pretty Out There (20 September, 2019)  
**Band:** Nathaniel Fregoso (vocals, keys, effects)  
Dyan Valdés (vocals, keys)  
Hannes Neupert (vocals, drums)  
**Production:** [Mischkah Wilke](#) (production, engineering and mixing)  
[Arne Ziemann](#) (mastering)  
**Artwork:** [Timm Hartmann](#) (artwork and layout)  
[Petra Valdimarsdóttir](#) (photography)  
**Studios:** [Studio B](#), Kaulsdorf (recording)  
[Kozmic Sound](#), Weißensee (mixing)  
[Oakfield Mastering](#), Regensburg (mastering)  
**Label:** R.I.P. Ben Lee Records

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

*answered by Dyan*

***How is Destruction / Reconstruction different from your first album, Mexican Radio (2018)?***

With the first album, we were still figuring out what the band was all about. We had written a batch of songs that we loved, and we wanted to get into the studio right away.

Those seven songs contained the basic DNA of the band, but it wasn't until we had that record under our belts that we clearly saw what the whole project was about.

The second batch of songs seemed to take on a life of their own. Nathaniel trained his lyrical eye on works of literature and art that had really spoken to him, and through writing about them he found a new way to engage with those works and connect them to our lives. The songs were much darker than those on the first album. Each song had a distinct voice and the characters were all artists and writers at odds with the world around them, trying to turn the shattered pieces of their lives into art.

Musically, we kept the same essential blueprint: synths, drums, vocals and effects, all recorded live to analogue tape with no overdubs. However, this time there is a lot more variation in the types of sounds, tempos and styles. In contrast with the first record, the music is heavier, darker, and more repetitive - which ties in more intimately with Nathaniel's lyrical ideas.

We consider the first album to be our "white" album - the cover is white, the uniforms are white - because everything was new and open. The second album has a red cover and we now wear red uniforms - the "red" album is about fire, intensity and bloodshed.

### ***Where does the title Destruction / Reconstruction come from?***

At the end of the song "Up the Bunker," Nathaniel and I sing the words "destruction" and "reconstruction" as a call and response, intensifying to a fever pitch at the climax. We decided that the juxtaposition of these words would make the perfect album title. Even though all of the songs are about wildly different subjects, they could somehow all be woven together by these threads of "destruction" and "reconstruction" to be part of the same story.

"Night of the Nihilist" was inspired by Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* and the Russian nihilist movement, specifically referencing the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881. "2666" references the wave of unsolved brutal murders of women in Ciudad Juárez since the early 1990s that Roberto Bolaño wrote about in his epic novel *2666*. "Yukio Mishima Suicide" tells the story of the Japanese author's failed coup attempt in 1970 that resulted in his ritualistic suicide, after his *Tatenokai* society tried to restore imperial rule. "Kirchner in the Mountains" is about German *Brücke* artist Ernst Kirchner trying to use his own art to recover from the brutal trauma of World War I. And so on...

Many people in the songs are trying to do what they think is right for themselves, to build a better world or a better life, but their choices lead them to disastrous results.

Most of us can't relate to throwing a bomb at an emperor's carriage, but I think we can all understand that feeling of desperation when you're backed into a corner and the only way out of a situation is to destroy everything around you. That's where "destruction" comes from.

The rest of the songs are about rebuilding after destruction in some way. "Up the Bunker" very literally tells the story of the rubble women rebuilding Berlin after the Second World War. "Wohnstadt" is about a widower living in one of the large semi-utopian living communities that sprang up around Germany after the war, urban settlements meant to provide for all of their inhabitants' needs. "Kirchner in the Mountains" is about the artist attempting to recover after the horrors he experienced during the First World War - trying to "paint this depression out of me" - using art as a lifeline in a time of personal and societal crisis. This is where "reconstruction" comes from: emerging from the ashes, and trying to create something new even when everything seems completely hopeless. Again, the specifics of these stories are unique, but the survival instinct and human need for hope behind them is something that we can all understand.

### ***What is the significance of the red coveralls as a band uniform for this album?***

On the first album, we wore white t-shirts with red lightning bolts spray painted across them and black jeans. In retrospect, something a punky teenager would wear. With this new album, we are going to work.

When we chose the title *Destruction / Reconstruction*, a sort of industrial imagery immediately came to mind. We knew this would be our "red" album, so Nathaniel suggested that we wear the type of work coveralls that construction workers wear, but in bright red with our logo, the lightning bolt, sewn onto them.

We went to an *Arbeitskleidung* (workwear) supplier in Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin, and tried on several coverall suits until settling on the right one. The coveralls were then modified by Hannes' multitalented mother Christiane - she sewed white lightning bolts on the fronts and backs of the suits, and added several small embroidered details that only we can see.

I feel incredibly powerful when I put the uniform on. We immediately look and feel like members of a gang, and more importantly, we know it's time to work.

### ***What is the story behind the photos for the album?***

The album cover and press photos were shot by Petra Valdimarsdóttir. In keeping with our synth punk philosophy, they were shot on analogue film. We chose a few locations around East Berlin that had an industrial feel - the park around the Velodrom in Prenzlauer Berg and a couple of run-down but interesting-looking S-bahn stations. The day of the shoot, the weather was completely on our side: stormy, gloomy and overcast. Thanks to the eerie sky and gritty surroundings, Petra was able to capture images that fit to the music and themes of the record perfectly.

### ***How were the songs written?***

We are fortunate enough to be able to write and rehearse at Hannes' parents lovely home in Heinersdorf, a borough on the edge of East Berlin. Our rehearsal space is his old childhood bedroom, which Hannes' father has remodeled to feature a stage, spotlights and a sound system. They are very patient and don't seem to mind the loud noise, and when we take breaks we sit with them in the garden and listen to records, drink beers, eat delicious food, and laugh a lot. It is a very warm and idyllic setting - a bit odd, I suppose, that we wrote such a dark record there!

Most of the songs were written very quickly. The three of us work very fast, and are committed to a simple and repetitive musical style, so we stop ourselves from writing too much before anything gets overworked.

### ***What was the recording process like?***

We had an excellent experience recording the first album - we found a great analogue studio in the Kaulsdorf neighborhood of Berlin where we recorded with producer Mischkah Wilke, who we have known for years and who Hannes had previously worked with. Mischkah understood our concept immediately, and was just as committed to getting the live, raw "synth punk" sound that we wanted.

For *Destruction / Reconstruction*, we used the same recording setup and team. We went into the studio with Mischkah and recorded for three days - all in the same live room, playing the songs over and over until we got a take we were all happy with. I was impressed that Nathaniel's voice held up - he was singing full throttle on every take, for hours every day! During our breaks we went to the only restaurant around for miles - a pretty dismal but friendly all-you-can-eat Chinese buffet - and watched World Cup games.

When we mixed, we relocated to Mischkah's basement studio in Weißensee. Nathaniel's wife was about to have a baby, so it fell on Hannes and I to finish the record. It was extremely hot that summer, almost unbearable for us to be in the same tiny room with all of that vintage analogue equipment. Luckily there is a lovely garden upstairs from the studio with picnic tables, a pond, chickens, goats and even a peacock. We would sit up there playing Trivial Pursuit trying to avoid the swarms of mosquitoes for hours on end until Mischkah had a new mix for us to hear, then we would give notes and leave again to wait for the next version. It was very idyllic. After a few intense mixing sessions, we had a record (and Nathaniel had a son).