



**IRASCIBLE  
MUSIC**



BRNS (BE)

Album: Celluloid Swamp

Label: Yotanka

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EPK: [irascible.ch/releases/BRNS/celluloid-swamp](http://irascible.ch/releases/BRNS/celluloid-swamp)

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BRNS' fourth album, Celluloid Swamp, is a mutant chamber pop album with a smorgasbord of references spliced into sound only just recognisable as a guitar band. The four-piece sound like a band that is more overtly settled as outsiders in a mainstream space. BRNS is more boldly aligned to the neo-dadaist manifesto laid out as the parameters for the band when it started in 2010: music free of inhibition; a space where anything goes. Whether it be in production: blending parts from what were supposed to be different songs into the same song. Or in genre: embracing R&B into their indie-rock DNA. A lot of adventurous ideas made it in the new LP.

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The R&B-tinge of drummer/singer Timothée Philippe's vocals is one of the most radical aspects of the record since it's something that most overtly breaks the indie rock/pop mould they are most associated with. The Frank Ocean-esque track 'Suffer', which is seethingly vengeful in its lyrical content, is one of the tracks most evocative of this new trend.

But what's clear is where one element in the band evokes mainstream timbres, it's never far from subversion. Keyboardist/bassist Antoine Meersseman, in particular, is crafty at this. His taste for vintage outboard gear means the poppiest moments - like 'Money' - become underpinned by beautiful, cosmic outpourings of emotion that are ruggedly analog and atypical in pop.

BRNS Guitarist Diego Leyder, meanwhile, recorded with a cockpit of effect pedals and makes it sound like anything but a guitar at times. With it not being always easy to decipher where the guitar ends and the synth starts, it means normative timbre expectations are pleasingly left at the door. That said, Leyder's most distorted riffs - such as opener 'Get Something' and 'Lighthouses' - prove his dexterity with a more familiar sound. The latter cut is one of a number of tracks to feature enig-

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matic BRNS newcomer Nele De Gussem on vocals. She has tapped into the chemistry of the band instantaneously. De Gussem's vocals hit in a way on 'Lighthouses' that's not unlike Régine Alexandra Chassagne of Arcade Fire.

The record was done in New York. Brooklyn's Studio G and a residential recording studio in the Catskills which has a Neve desk called Outlier Inn. And they were in good hands with Grammy Award-winning engineer Alexis Berthelot, who had produced Frank Ocean and Moses Sumney, at the controls. His gift to this record says Diego Layer is the acoustic instruments retain prominence as a maelstrom of electronic sound might have otherwise sunk them had Berthelot not guided it. This is particularly true of the drums, which are underproduced in a way that means the sound of the room makes it onto the record. It also revives the feeling of seeing this extraordinary band, who have released what is undoubtedly their most artful statement to date, live. And since BRNS have expanded their setlist with some of the best band material ever, that remains an exciting prospect in the weeks and months to come.

Moreover, BRNS made a career-great move with the artwork: the cover for Celloid Swamp - which has an 8-bit Donkey Kong-esque vibe and a trippy overload of colour - serves to further submerge in the entertaining world of BRNS, which is somewhere you might just not mind getting stuck in.

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