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The Future Lives Here Gabi Dao

Same Same

'A Fantasy in Surrey'

[https://soundcloud.com/same-same-4/
a-fantasy-in-surrey-1](https://soundcloud.com/same-same-4/a-fantasy-in-surrey-1)

En route to the Surrey Public Library, the Skytrain's balanced robotic voice announces, "Your next station is Surrey City Central." An adjacent billboard gleams, "The Future Lives Here." *A Fantasy in Surrey* is an aggregate of abstract electronic verses organized in six sections.

Against the backdrop of architecture appropriating Frank Gehry's Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, an MPC 1000 is positioned for a photo-op. Brought to the Surrey Public Library for the sake of a photo shoot, it composes the foreground of *Fantasy's* album cover. Same Same's SoundCloud features accompanying text that points to the optimism of the modernist architecture. He admits, "For a moment while in the Surrey Public Library I wasn't afraid to make music." The sampler is like a euphemism for a human being, a funny cyborg reposed and illuminated on the curve of the frigid utopia where Same Same might have escaped from the hubbub of the city in order to focus on his work.

Each moment within “Sections 1-6” is a distinct progression without a chorus and resists conforming to the structures of a danceable beat. It’s meant to be listened to attentively—academic ambient—more like the geeky cousin of the beat driven tracks that one could shimmy to at a handful of coy spots in town. Indulgent in deep metronomic sequences, its pops and clicks skim over abrupt textures that hinge onto intermittent droid like vocals that nod to the social etiquette of the library. The tableau of a library patron clicking on a laptop in a shiny public library-cum-recording studio is a picture of post-studio practice. Work is no longer necessarily relegated to the traditional space of a studio; in this case it can be made anywhere with a Wi-Fi connection, a laptop, editing software and some headphones.

The city of Surrey champions the alleviation of business centres, the dispersal of civic resources and hype. The 77,000 square foot library is designed as an extension of the home—to exist, as architect Bing Thom states, as “a community room”. Without a studio at the time, Same Same felt comfortable enough to compose *Fantasy* quietly on headphones in a library that he heard looked like the Guggenheim.

As an independently released EP circulated on free online audio distribution platform Soundcloud, it participates in the virtual real estates that make it possible to host the boom of electronic music demand, production and reception. Like these distribution platforms, con-

dos and civic community centres model a uniform experience of space. The sonic pleasure of *Fantasy*, like much of the electronic music in town, requires idiosyncratic spaces that don’t fit into the agenda of city planning. These idiosyncratic spaces allow a kind of participation free from regulations that define specific types of public venues such as bars clubs. Arguably, they can establish a kind of programming that isn’t completely ruled by an equation for maximum revenue. The energy of immediacy, unhindered by regulation, elicits a freer itinerary in providing visibility for local talent within a particular aesthetic of electronic music.

These covert venues become intoxicating, but consecutive late-night jives are accompanied by the fact of city by-laws and politics that give next weekend’s plans a precarious status. A public and private binary becomes exaggerated by the need to remain covert, setting a model for when and where these cultural activities can occur. Under these parameters, a tense standard is formed. What makes *Fantasy* so singular is that this EP/artwork circumvents and cryptically subverts the standardized spaces of cultural production and reception, both in visual art and electronic music, on the Internet and within civic reality. It offers a poetic critique of metropolitan ambition while maintaining the sincerity of its medium that quietly speaks to a modest 41 virtual followers.

Gabi Dao