



# MARTIN CARR

## NEW SHAPES OF LIFE



CD // LP (+CD) // Digital  
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### Cover, photos etc.

[www.tapeterecords.com/artists](http://www.tapeterecords.com/artists)

TR389

CD 148652

EAN 4015698012736

LP 148651

EAN 4015698012750

### Tracklisting

1. New Shapes of Life
2. Damocles
3. The Main Man
4. Future Reflections
5. A Mess of Everything
6. Three Studies of the Male Back
7. The Van
8. The Last Song

NEW SHAPES OF LIFE is the third album I've made under my own name and my second for Tapete Records. My last LP, THE BREAKS, dealt with my feelings of separation from the world around me. The music was simple, guitars, organs, and drums, but somehow it left me feeling even more dissatisfied than when I started writing it. This time I wanted to swim deeper, catch the bigger fish that lurk in the depths, waiting to be found.

I had spent much of 2015 in my studio trying to write songs for pop stars, getting nowhere and feeling useless, when David Bowie died. I abandoned my writing and immersed myself in his records, films and biographies. I did nothing else for weeks. The records are great, of course, but what I took from Bowie was the responsibility of the Artist, how important it is to express oneself through a chosen medium. I was wasting my time scrabbling around in the dirt for pennies, making myself more and more miserable. I reflected on how many years I'd wasted chasing smoke and mirrors, living the life of an artist but neglecting the art.

I ditched everything else I was working on and decided to write a new album rather than waiting until I had a few songs. I started completely from scratch, writing and recording, often at the same time, in my home studio in Cardiff. I was looking for a sound and a voice to call my own. That was the starting point. The theme was to be myself, to attempt to discover what made me tick, to work out why I behaved the way I did. I wanted to go deeper and find more room in the depths.

Lyrics were written first, unusual for me, but because they were the driving force of the songs, they had to be right. I concentrated on what I wanted to say rather than trying find rhymes and scansion. Because these songs were written under a spell it has its own universe, its own language: phrases and symbols and images are repeated throughout, mirrors, reflections, The Van. "New Shapes of Life" was the first song I finished. The opening lines opened everything up for me:

*Of muted desire  
And no fit state  
I know my place  
Behind the glass*

Those lines say more than all the songs I've written. They are my truth, that's how I knew I was on to something. I was honest. Possibly for the first time. I stood naked in front of the mirror.

There was no sonic template in mind, though I was listening to a lot of soul music – Philly, Northern, Motown – along with the Bowie stuff. I wanted to change the way I sang, I didn't really want to play anything, Most of the music is stuff I sampled and fucked with and then played it back in on a keyboard. I don't think I picked up the guitar once.

I wrote until I was empty. I worked on ten songs but in the end, only finished eight before the spell was broken. I had been deconstructing the way I'd worked for the better part of two decades but found I'd somehow disassembled myself. I began finding it hard to put the pieces back together.

I had pushed and I pushed until my mental wellbeing had begun to suffer. I became paranoid and anxious. I was talking to myself and waving my arms around until I finally broke down and told my family and called the doctor. Something I should have done many years before.

I tried going back to it but I could never find the same space. I then spent six months looking for someone to mix it. In the winter of 2017 I recorded a new single, "Gold Lift," inspired by the photograph of Donald Trump and Nigel Farage taken the day after the U.S. presidential election. I asked Greg Haver, a Cardiff producer and friend now living in New Zealand, to help me with the mix for that. He tidied it up, replaced my electronic drums with his own playing, and then sent it back over for Clint Murphy – a New Zealander now living in the U.K. – to do a proper mix. This worked out so well that I decided to follow the same process for NEW SHAPES OF LIFE.

I'm on medication now; it feels like making this record was the end of that part of my life. Now I'm on the other side of the glass where everyone else is. I still don't fit but I'm fine with that. NEW SHAPES OF LIFE is the first album I've made where I can stand by every word I've written. It's the first one that sounds like me and it won't be the last.

*Martin Carr, Cardiff, July 2017*



### Back Catalogue

The Breaks

TR288

CD 990342

EAN 4047179903424

LP 990341

EAN 4047179903417

