

Round & Round

Carina Round is laughing – something she does a lot, incidentally – because I have just rather fatuously likened the work involved in breathing life into a new magazine to giving birth. To her credit she simply points out that it's probably the closest I will ever get to childbirth rather than reminding me that hours of painful labour are not even remotely like typing.

If you are new to the name, your best point of reference is probably PJ Harvey or the less whimsical efforts from Kristin Hersh, but as always with exciting undiscovered artists, this is not meant to be anything more than a kicking off point – Carina is nothing if not her own woman. Ask about her influences and she will willingly own up to Charles Bukowski, Dorothy Parker, Tom Waits and Bjork (and anyone that puts Tom Waits and Bjork in the same sentence is OK in our book), but what she does is uniquely her own.

She is also alarmingly frank lyrically, something several people found a little hard to take on her first album, the excellent *First Blood Mystery*, so is there, I wonder, anything for the more squeamish amongst us to fear this time around?

“If you don't want to hear about periods, don't worry, you can still buy this album,” she chuckles. “The first album was the result of twenty years of bottling things up and was a kind of exorcism, an opening of the vaults if you like. When I look back now, I feel I tried to cram too much into too little space, it's 45 minutes long and it's fucking hardcore – the lyrics never stop coming – but this time around I've realised it's possible to say a lot more with far fewer words. I've tried to be far more concise this time [and] I think I've matured a lot musically.”

So do you now feel dissatisfied with *First Blood Mystery*?

“It feels a bit like I did about myself five years ago where I'll look back and think 'what was I wearing!' I'm really glad that I did it,

but I was just finding my feet.” Don't imagine, however, that just because periods are off the agenda this time around there aren't still plenty of uncomfortable moments to be found on her new, even more impressive follow-up album, *The Disconnection* (even the front cover is a startling and unsettling image)

“For me, this album is about taking experiences like hate, pain, anguish, disgust, embarrassment – as well as the joy and happiness – and deriving something good from it, even the really bad stuff.” She laughs. “It's really hard to say stuff like this without sounding like a whiney little girl, but I think if I ever became completely settled I would stop making music”

All of which may sound like so much 'suffering artist' claptrap if you didn't pick up the genuine intensity in her voice. I ask if she honestly thinks she couldn't be creative if she was content, and she pauses only momentarily before laughingly responding: “I honestly think anyone that says they're content is either a Buddhist or a liar. I think that nervous energy you get from being unsure about things is what helps you get up and go headfirst into the day. You never know what's going to happen, and that unknowing is a part of what drives you – that's what's exciting. Having said that, I also have to admit I am very scared about the future, but if it does all fail at least I gave it a shot.”

Due to sign a six album deal in the US several days after our conversation – via a convoluted deal with liquidated label Artists Direct, who took her self-financed second album to Interscope label boss Jimmy Iovine, who promptly fell in love with it and offered Carina a deal without even meeting her – we'd like to pretend that we're sticking our necks out when we say that by this time next year we're convinced Carina Round will be a household name. In truth, however, it's not really a matter of if, it's simply a matter of when.

The Disconnection is out now on Dehiscence (more details available at www.carinaround.com) and Carina is on tour in the UK throughout January – see details on the Listings Pages.