

PSYCHIC BLOOM

A snapshot of pre-revolution Iran reveals a patina of a middle-eastern Laurel Canyon; a velvet painting of a bohemian paradise of reality beyond our western expectations, informed by the mysticism of Rumi and opium-smoking mystics, drinking from the waters of a California beach that never existed and found only in magazine cutouts and American cinema.

Iran's psychedelic-era is now gone, hidden in roach-infested basements, under the veil of an artistically forbidden society. In a post-revolution haze, Aref Ahmadi, 28, found a dusty '69 Jaguar electric guitar, a pre-revolution relic locked away because of its rebellious DNA, and began strumming through Metallica licks, channeling the depressive burden of being silenced by Iran's overbearing school system, where he was ridiculed for his long hair, half-shaggy, half-annihilated aesthetic.

Following in the footsteps of musicians the Islamic Republic erased from history, Aref reemerged from his bedroom as "Hashill Ah," a gold-dipped psychedelic sun child who had discovered some arcane truth in records by 13th Floor Elevators, Zappa, Captain Beefheart, and Bo Diddley (all *banned* in the Islamic Republic). With a few trusted amigos, he began writing a quasi-Persian western that imagines Hashill riding the desert sands as a drifter with a six-shooter as his side on a caravan he calls **Psychic Bloom**—a floral rebellion he's planted in the belly of his hometown, Tehran, the capital of Iran, where he's a kind of indigenous refugee, for now, because of Trump's "travel ban."

In a psychic prison (where the Islamic Ministry of Culture will not allow him to release music or play it live) Hashill discovered Weiner Records in 2017, a subsidiary of Burger Records, and published music he wrote using *entirely* vintage pre-revolution instruments—the only tools at his disposal. Within days, he had 'Psychic Bloom,' a self-titled 12-track LP of lithium haze blending California surf-rock and UFO punk—a talisman he describes on "Sacred Sun" as a "flaming star." It's a familiar but mutated sound that's found its way from the west all the way to Tehran, in the bedroom of a self-made cowboy who writes about having a "pistol by my side" on "Dead Valley Star," a bluesy western-punk epic, or paints an image of a forbidden trail on tracks like "Lucky Day" and "Drifter," metaphors of his dream to hitch a ride on a stagecoach from Tehran to Texas.

Psychic Bloom is based in Tehran, Iran, where the "light is buried by dirty sands," in a cosmopolitan fortress of pollution, anxiety, and soul-searchers, where Hashill is using his surf guitar to find ride a visa and break through the walls between east and west. Rock and roll is his jet plane; battering-ram; caravan and currency to freedom as the first Burger Records signing from the Islamic Republic of Iran.