



NEW ALBUM AFTER FIVE YEARS

Plaindrifter

„The whole album is itself a kind of Gestalt that each of us tinkers with.“
Stoner rock trio from Gelsenkirchen releases their second album „Gestalt“.

FIVE YEARS, ONE ALBUM

The stoner rock formation Plaindrifter from Gelsenkirchen released their second studio album „Gestalt“ on June 19, 2026. A few days before the release, Kirsten from the blog GelsenMyLove sat down with Uwe (drums & vocals), Nils (guitar) and André (bass) in their rehearsal space in Herne.*

**GelsenMyLove is covering news from the arts and culture scene in and around Gelsenkirchen, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany.*

HOW ARE YOU FEELING RIGHT NOW, JUST BEFORE THE RELEASE?

Nils: I'm relaxed and just taking it as it comes. I'm curious about the reviews, but not particularly nervous. I'm just happy it's finally out there in full.

Uwe: I'm really curious to see how it lands as a complete work. The two singles were already well received. As a whole, I think it'll hit even harder.

André: I'd agree with that. We've been living with this material for so long – it's simply time for it to come out. Finally!

YOU'VE BEEN WORKING WITH SOME OF THIS MATERIAL FOR A VERY LONG TIME – HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?

Nils: The interlude of "Debaser," for example, we were already playing live about three years ago, just to fill our sets with something new. Over time the songs matured, things were added, things were changed – the lyrics came last of all. You could basically say that one half of the album consists of two songs we'd been playing for a while that kept growing, and the other half is completely new material that we've now played live a few times but that nobody knows yet in its final form, the way it appears on the record.

WHY DID IT TAKE FIVE YEARS?

André: Life, plain and simple. During the time we were making it, my second child was born, and my focus was elsewhere for a while. We all have day jobs and usually manage one rehearsal a week – but to really dive deep into new songs, you need the right headspace, and that wasn't always there.

Nils: On top of that, I was out for months after wrist surgery. I usually bring the riffs and basic ideas, and we develop the rest together in the rehearsal room – but during that period I barely got to do anything.

André: After the first album, we were pretty burned out from the recording process and needed a short break – from the work, and from each other. We also wanted to incorporate new elements we didn't have much experience with yet, like the piano, played by a friend. That took time to organize.

Uwe: But better to take longer and do it right.

IS THERE A MEANING BEHIND THE TITLE „GESTALT“?

Uwe: We decided on the title together, but the suggestion came from a brainstorming list André had made.

Nils: We were sitting on Uwe's couch, Andi passed his list around, and I said: "Gestalt is pretty cool." Just using a German word as the title – everyone liked that.

Afterwards we looked into it, and everything made sense: "Gestalt" is also a term from psychology that's known in English, so it's internationally understood even though it's German.

Uwe: The title also connects the individual songs – with every one of them, you can imagine something under the concept of "Gestalt."

André: For me, the whole album itself is a kind of "Gestalt" that each of us tinkers with and contributes to, almost like a Golem. That fits, because we're all pretty big perfectionists and have put so much time and work into it.



PLAINDRIFTER - NILS, UWE AND ANDRÉ

As for the meaning: we deliberately put things out there and leave the interpretation to the listener. The lyrics are intentionally a bit cryptic – not too on the nose, not too obvious.

ANDRÉ, YOU ALSO DID THE ARTWORK – DID THE NAME COME FIRST, OR THE IMAGE?

André: The artwork actually came first, the name came a little later. In the studio there was already an early idea for it, and when we chose the title afterwards, the concept confirmed itself – that we could really "gestalten" (shape) it.

YOU HAD TO LEAVE THE STUDIO IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR RECORDING SESSION – WHAT HAPPENED?

Uwe: Honestly, that was incredibly annoying. Our producer Robin Stirnberg, who had already worked with us on the first album, had just recently moved into a studio with two other people. In the middle of our sessions, one of them suddenly wanted more rent from Robin – which would have made it financially unviable for him. Instead of being considerate about our remaining five days, we were simply told: you need to be out by Sunday.

So: Friday we set up the studio and dialed in the sound, Saturday we recorded drums for 13 straight hours (after six weeks of tendinitis), Sunday was moving day – we had to decompress that evening with a beer. In hindsight it makes for a funny story to tell, and it didn't seem to affect the result, but it was still incredibly frustrating.

Nils: The main thing was that the drums were recorded in one place so the sound would stay consistent – that's why Robin pushed through everything in that one day. We recorded the rest here in the rehearsal room. The only downside was missing out on the experience of talking through the material together in the evenings – we'll make up for that on the third album.

THE FIRST SINGLE "MOTH MURMURATION" TAKES A WHILE TO BUILD – WAS THERE A SPECIFIC REASON FOR CHOOSING IT AS THE FIRST RELEASE?

Nils: We actually wanted to start with "In Anima," the track that became the second single – it has a proper noise opener, perfect for a comeback. But we shot an elaborate music video for it, with Ryan Garney from High Desert Queen as a guest vocalist, and we wanted to take our time with that. So "In Anima" became the second single, released first with a lyric video and no production pressure – the exact opposite of how we'd originally planned, but I don't mind at all.

„Eight, nine minutes – when am I supposed to listen to this?“ is basically our entry fee.

André: You have to take your time and let yourself get into it. We need room to unfold. It's a different listening experience than a lot of people are used to: "Eight, nine minutes – when am I supposed to listen to this?" is basically our entry fee.

YOU MADE THE SECOND SINGLE WITH THE VOCALIST FROM HIGH DESERT QUEEN – HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING WITH THEM?

Uwe: We met because we released our first albums in the same month and caught each other's attention through the Doom Charts. Ryan then wrote to us saying High Desert Queen were coming to Europe and asked if we wanted to play together – back then they were much smaller, with no gear of their own, and we were supposed to provide the backline.

André: Crazy really: we'd just put out our first album, nobody knew who we were – and then a band from America writes to us. The first meeting was in Asendorf, out in the middle of nowhere between Osnabrück and Bremen – until the last minute we thought maybe we were being scammed and no real Americans would actually show up.

Uwe: But then suddenly these incredibly warm, kind, open-minded people were sitting in front of us, and we clicked instantly. The next day we all drove to Munich together, spent a few great days there – and we've been friends ever since.

Ryan has helped us a lot along the way, including with finding a label, and now he also handles some of our booking. Asking him for a feature was never really in question – it was also a way of saying thank you. We were of course thrilled that he didn't hesitate for a second.

Nils: Without him we probably never would have ended up at Ripple Music – one of the biggest and most respected indie stoner labels out there. Having someone open that door for you is invaluable.

LENA SCHNEIDER IS ALSO HEARD ON THE ALBUM?

Nils: That's right – Lena is my girlfriend and she sings on it. On the first album we barely had any vocal passages, this time we deliberately added more.

In some places something was just missing – also because we only have one guitar live and can't replicate certain parts the way they sound on the record. It's not proper vocal lines with lyrics, more like atmospheric vocals layered over certain passages.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE THOSE PARTS LIVE?

Uwe: I try to replicate Lena's vocals as best I can live – some of it is even two-part harmonies, and it actually worked surprisingly well in the rehearsal room.

André: For some album elements, like certain keyboard parts, we haven't found a live solution yet – we always ask ourselves: how essential is this to the song, and how much effort would it take to

recreate? What matters to us is being able to reproduce the bulk of a song ourselves, live.

Uwe: Live, our sound is different anyway, and that's fine. I enjoy playing things spontaneously and deviating from the album. When you work yourself up into a part, it naturally gets faster and more intense – that's just the joy of playing.

HOW DID THE KEYBOARD COME INTO IT – WAS IT A RISKY DECISION, OR DID IT FEEL RIGHT EARLY ON?

Nils: The idea came from listening to a lot of Elder, one of our absolute favourite bands, who we're often compared to in terms of songwriting anyway. They layer organ chords underneath certain parts before the main riff, and I thought that could work for us too.

We've had a mutual friend since fifth grade – Phil – who has played organ since childhood, including church organ. We asked him, he was up for it, and together we figured out the chords and tried a few variations. That's how the organ parts came together in certain spots, just to lift the energy a bit – along with piano arpeggios and synth chords in quieter sections. No wild solos, everything just serves to underline the mood.

DID THE RESULT SURPRISE YOU?

Uwe: Especially in "In Anima," the track we worked on the longest, the organ in one particular passage genuinely surprised us – it gave that section so much more depth. I was skeptical at first, but I'm very happy with it now.

André: In the end we gave those elements more space than planned, simply because it worked so well – it improved every part we used it in.

HOW WAS THE FEEDBACK ON YOUR LIVE SHOWS WITH THE SINGLES?

Uwe: Overall I'm very happy with the response. Among people close to us it's gone down well so far, and at Wohnzimmer GE, our last gig before the release, people were already asking when they could buy the album.

André: We're our own harshest critics, but we can stand behind what we've made with confidence.

Nils: We're fortunate to be embedded in a very connected, honest stoner scene here in NRW – Tobi, my bandmate from Schubmodul, for example, gives us constant feedback, has already listened to the whole album and tells us which song he's not quite clicking with yet. Ultimately music taste is personal, but in terms of quality I'd say: right now in NRW everything is at a really high level – and the release will show whether the numbers back that up.

WITH THE SECOND ALBUM, DID YOU CONSCIOUSLY WANT TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY, OR SIMPLY CONTINUE WHAT DEFINES YOU?

Uwe: I wouldn't say completely different – more building on what made us who we are on the first album. Nils has a really strong sense of melody, we've often heard "that sounds like you" – we tried to refine that further and bring in some more progressive elements. We deliberately pushed the vocals more to the forefront, because they've improved over the years. It's a constant evolution.

Nils: At the beginning Uwe had only just really started getting into singing. Now we just trust ourselves more with it. When I'm writing I take inspiration from whatever I'm listening to at the time – this album has a bit more post-rock influence because I was listening to a lot of Fjört, and of course Elder is in my top bands every single year. I bring the riffs, and once drums and bass come in, the whole feel shifts. Some riffs that I find boring at home become something completely different in the full band context. Right after finishing an album I always think I've got nothing left, but then you go to a festival like Freak Valley and suddenly you have ten new ideas in your head.

We are our own harshest critics, but we can stand behind the result with confidence.

DO YOU HAVE FIXED ROLES IN THE BAND?

Uwe: In principle anyone can do anything – even with lyrics, ideas come from everyone.

Nils: Andi often lays the groundwork for a text, and then I do my "ultra-critical slide tackle" – checking whether something sounds too cheesy.

NILS, YOU ALSO PLAY IN SCHUBMODUL – HOW DO YOU MANAGE THAT?

Nils: With Schubmodul we have a fixed rehearsal day; here it's more flexible – Tuesdays usually don't work for me because of shift work, otherwise it varies depending on everyone's schedule. For gigs there have been two scheduling conflicts so far – in those cases, whoever I committed to first takes priority, and I have to let the other band down.

UWE, DRUMS AND VOCALS – HOW DEMANDING IS THAT LIVE?

Uwe: In "Eternal Season" there's a passage that transitions into a very rhythmic part – live I'm genuinely on the verge of collapsing at that point. I've pushed myself quite a lot over the last few years, but I can feel myself reaching my limits – coordination, stamina, vocally. Maybe there's still more in there though. So far I've always pulled through.

WAS THERE EVER ANY CONSIDERATION OF SEPARATING VOCALS AND DRUMS?

Uwe: This band essentially grew out of a friendship. We did think at some point about bringing someone in just to sing – but in the beginning the question was more: who's most likely to be "not bad" at singing? It landed on me without us really giving it much thought.

A few years ago I might have said having a dedicated vocalist would be fine – but these days I actually kind of like the way it is. Sure, other bands have standalone singers, but for us this works – and as a three-piece it's simpler than four.

ANDRÉ, HOW DO YOU BALANCE BAND AND FAMILY?

André: It's often difficult – during the album recordings my daughter was still very young. Young children and a band at the same time is an enormous balancing act. My wife is incredibly supportive and shows a lot of understanding, especially during recording periods – I really appreciate that.

YOU'RE OFTEN COMPARED TO ELDER OR HOWLING GIANT – DO YOU FIND THAT LIMITING OR FLATTERING?

Nils: I find it genuinely great – an acknowledgment that what we're going for seems to be working, without being a copy. Skill-

wise we're miles behind bands like that, but we're just developing at our own pace, as hobbyist musicians, because we love it.

The best moment was when we played support for "Weite" with members of Elder – Nick DiSalvo said afterwards that we had a great sound. That was all I needed to hear. A real stamp of approval.

YOU'RE PLAYING RIPPLE FEST IN TEXAS – WHAT ARE YOU EXPECTING?

Uwe: It's a four-day festival across two venues, indoors and outdoors – we play on two days, Thursday and Saturday, once inside and once outside at each.

We got in through Ryan again, who has a strong connection to our label head. Ryan has organized Ripple Fest in Austin for the fourth time now and asked us last year. We didn't need to think about it for long – André just had to sort out the logistics at home.

It's kind of surreal: we're flying to the US with minimal luggage to perform as a band from Gelsenkirchen.

André: At the same time, it feels a bit like an initiation into the "Ripple family" – we'll meet a lot of people in person that we've only been in contact with by email for years, and that will definitely help with networking too.





NEW ALBUM

Gestalt

Label: Ripple Music

Release: 19.06.2026

Format: LP / CD / Digital

Second studio album

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM AN AMERICAN AUDIENCE?

Uwe: Honestly I haven't done much research yet, but it'll certainly be different from here. Austin is apparently, despite being in Texas, a very liberal city with a big cultural scene – unofficially even the music capital of the US – so I'm expecting an open, welcoming crowd.

André: Comparing ourselves to High Desert Queen, they do a lot of crowd work and stage presence stuff, we really don't – we want to win people over through the music itself.

Uwe: Maybe it'll even work the other way around: German fans love Ryan's stage banter and presence because they're not used to it from European bands – in the US, maybe the fact that we have little of that entertainment element is actually what stands out. But that's all speculation.

Nils: For us this will also feel like a bit of a holiday – we're borrowing instruments from friends over there. I'm looking forward to meeting people who've been following us on Facebook for years and are now planning multi-hour flights just to be there.

WHICH TRACK FROM "GESTALT" WOULD YOU RECOMMEND TO SOMEONE WHO'S NEVER HEARD YOU BEFORE?

Uwe: "Eternal Season" – my personal favourite track, which for me contains everything that defines us as a band. For someone who doesn't know us, it's well compressed, and you'll know pretty quickly whether this is for you.

André: "Debaser" – there are one or two elements in there that you don't hear from many other bands, real ear-catchers. Despite the length, it keeps you hooked throughout. Incidentally, "Debaser" is the only song title that doesn't directly connect to "Gestalt" in terms of content – but you can draw a line there too if you try.

Nils: "In Anima" – maybe the most playful track, but it has all the elements we've always had. It's the song that comes closest to my original vision, and even though we've been playing it for so long, we still don't tire of it.

+++Listen in? You can find both singles on YouTube here:



„Gestalt“ has been available everywhere since June 19, 2026.

Anyone who takes the time to sit with the album will understand why the three of them worked on it for so long. Give it a chance!