

"THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF US PRACTICING WAS PLAYING FOR THIRTY MINUTES, ME MOANING INTO A MIC."

# GEN F

## BUMMER

**CRYSTAL STILTS WEAR BLACK TO THE BEACH**

**J**B Townsend and Brad Hargett of the band *Crystal Stilts* grew up in the same South Florida town. Together they listened to The Velvet Underground and planned their escape. According to Townsend, who answers every question like what he's saying should be obvious and pulls his hair over his eyes as he speaks, "Every kid from that scene has either moved to New York or talks about moving to New York." In 2004, a year after the two made their own inevitable relocation to Brooklyn, they started to make music, but say they had no intention of actually starting a band. "The first three months of us practicing was playing for thirty minutes, me moaning into a mic," Hargett says. "It was no songs, just like thirty minute freak outs." He also describes these early rehearsals as being "way more Brooklyn" than the band's current sound, which veers towards surf rock played in an echo chamber.

Hargett says that people in Brooklyn criticize his style—he only owns two T-shirts, both black, and wears them against the summer sun without breaking a sweat—but doesn't seem to really care. His quietly sullen attitude is shared by his bandmates: guitarist Townsend, bassist Andy Adler and drummer Frankie Rose, who recently defected from fellow Brooklyn upstarts Vivian Girls. Sitting in silence over beers in a Williamsburg bar on a Thursday afternoon, they seem completely uninterested in self-promotion or,

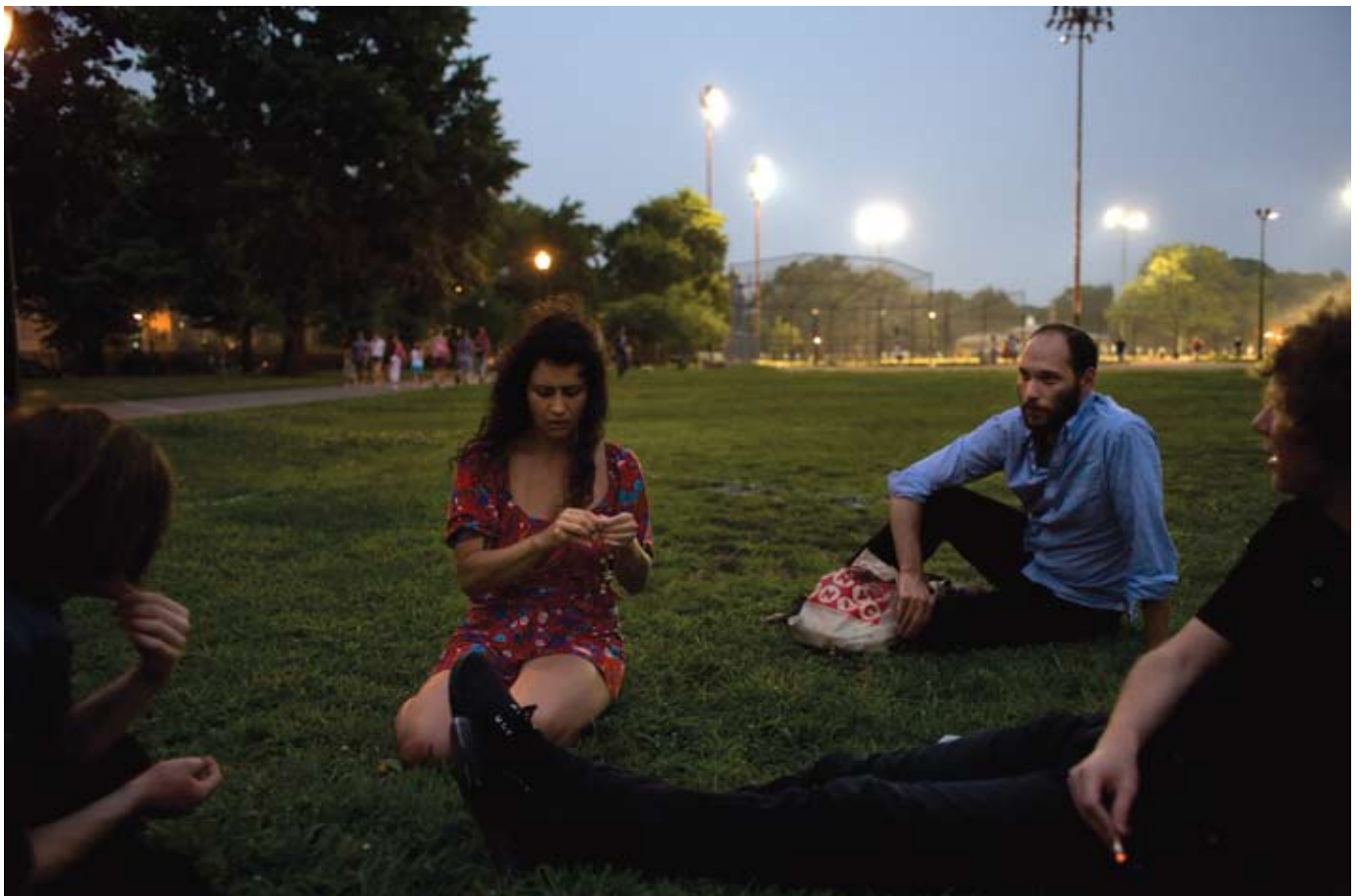
actually, any conversation whatsoever. It's as if they live in their own universe and no, they aren't going to tell you about it.

The songs on *Crystal Stilts'* debut album *Alight of Night* are an incongruous hybrid of dreamy drum rolls, Beach Boys riffs, basement filling distortion and nearly unintelligible vocals with the levels pushed way down. It initially comes off discomfoting, but then it creeps into your body, warm and tingling, reminding you why slasher films are the best movies for holding hands. And although this is music to listen to with your head down, eyes towards the floor, you may also notice a little sway in your hips. It's a sound that is the clear result of time spent listening to records at the beach when you wish you were in the city. But in the city it's the sound of riding the train to Coney Island, where the man with the python around his neck comes a little too close, but you can still dip your toes in the water just to remember just how big the ocean is.

MAUD DEITCH

[myspace.com/crystalstilts](http://myspace.com/crystalstilts)

**Crystal Stilts in  
McCarren Park in  
Brooklyn, NY.**



PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN FRANCIS PETERS