

A full-page photograph of a man with dark skin and short hair, wearing a dark suit. He is holding a white, featureless mannequin torso. A red, textured flower is pinned to the mannequin's chest. The background is a bright, out-of-focus white. The text 'collection.' is overlaid in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font, and 'magazine' is in a smaller, blue sans-serif font to its right.

collection.

magazine

DANIEL CAESAR

INNATE GEAR

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LDN IS ABOUT TO EXPLODE
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AT DSK, WE DARE TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE AND DRIVE TOWARDS DIVERSITY. BORN IN LONDON BY NISH DHAKAL, 'DARE TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE' (DSK) IS A HIGH FASHION LIFESTYLE BRAND, WITH A PLATFORM REPRESENTING THE WORKING WORLD THAT CONSTITUTES THE SPACE AROUND US. AS A BRAND, DSK IS BUILT AND OPERATED BY ARTISTIC DESIGNERS

DARE TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE

WHILE CULTURE, UNIQUE CULTURE, UP AMONG A FAMILY

BRINGING US TO HOUSEHOLDS, ECONOMIC AREAS OF DIFFERENCES

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DARE TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE

AND CREATIVES FROM AROUND THE WORLD. DSK IS EMBEDDED WITH CULTURAL INFLUENCES, WITH THE DIRECTOR, NISH, BEING FROM NEPAL AND INDIA. WHILST GROWING UP, NISH WAS EXPOSED TO LONDON CULTURE, BROAD FASHION PERSPECTIVES, AND UNIQUE CULTURAL EXPERIENCES, SUCH AS GROWING UP AMONG A FAMILY OF PRIESTS. ADDITIONALLY, THE

DSK TEAM ORIGINATES FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF JAMAICA, BRITAIN, PAKISTAN, AND PUNJAB, BRINGING OUR CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, MIXING UNITED KINGDOM LONDON URBAN VIBES, OUR EXPOSURE TO LOW-INCOME HOUSING, STATE SCHOOLS, AND LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC AREAS OF LONDON, WITH OUR ARTISTIC DIFFERENCES





TRIBE OF GOD



TRIBE OF GOD



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FEATHER PENDANTS

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HOUSE OF MOTHER TONGUE



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Left: Emy Ozori for Starlit

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daniel caesar

freedom skatepark

ghana to the world

paradisus x warner camp

joani johnson

giggs

one.

THE ONE THAT CHANGES IT ALL

Featuring Daniel Caesar, Giggs, Wallis Day, Tion Wayne, Saint Jhn, Jaz Karis, Arz, DarrieWRLD, Joani Johnson, Earth Gang, Starlit, Marc Jacques Burton, Ravyn Lenae, Subwae Studios, MRTL, Soundskillz, Freedom Skate Park, Loud Parade, Mila's Textiles, Ajay Sengh, JoeyXL, KKeda, Enam, Dani Draco, Kofi Jamar, Offei, Marince Omario, \$pacely, Skillz 8Figurez, Blazer Boccle, MKay and more.

one.



EUROPE

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N. AMERICA

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AFRICA

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one

Welcome to the premiere of Collection, where style and sound collide to reflect and refract culture.

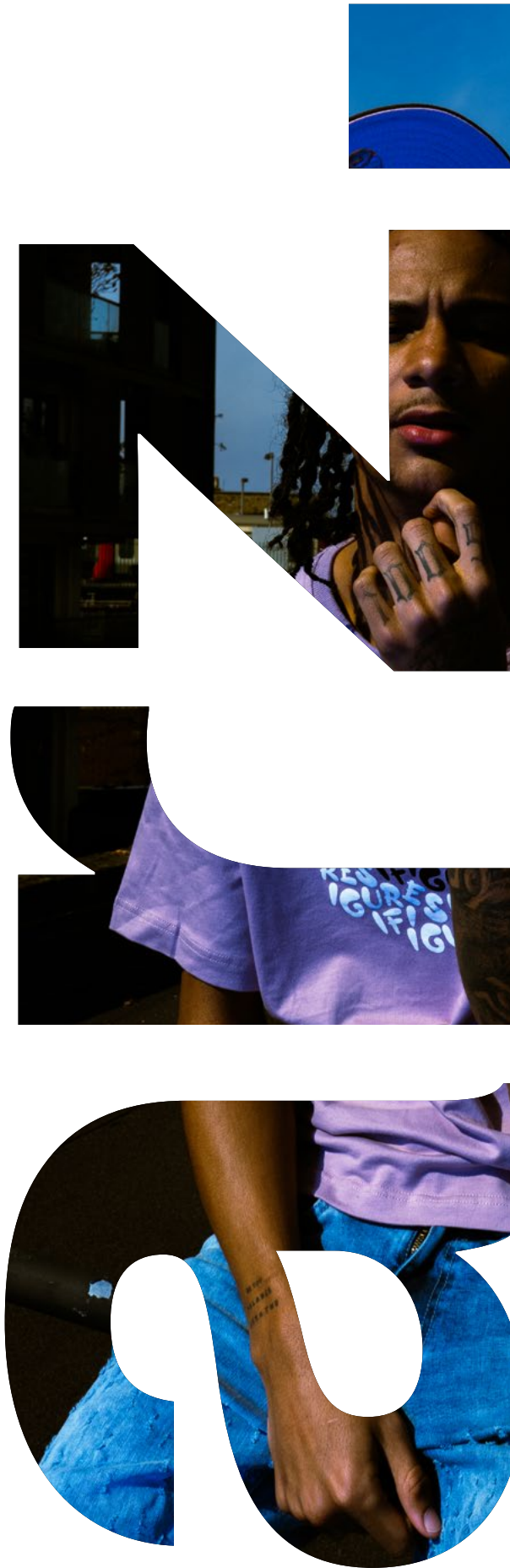
Fashion and music have always been inextricably intertwined, and Collection is here to celebrate that connection. We believe that the clothes we wear and the music we listen to both reflect our individuality and shape the cultural landscape around us.

No matter your race, religion or lifestyle Collection is here to celebrate diversity and inspire you to find your own unique style. Whether you're a trendsetter, a fan, or you're still just trying to find your place in this world, we've got something for everyone.

A.D & Ray Michael



one



Photos by Sedecel Afework









coffee, cocktails and cards.

starring

jaz faris

Photos by Sedecel Afework
Make Up by @beautybyami
Hair by @iamanaviana
Styling by @kaylaeviana

Top: Selina Knitts
Jewellery: Stooki x Miphologia



Top: Yef Studio
Jewellery: Stookie
Shades: Shakkar Shades





DANIEL CAESAR IS *NEVER ENOUGH*

a visual story by scott butler

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Macaroni pie, the Migos, and happiness...what does it all mean?

REDEMPTION, RESTLESSNESS & RESILIENCE

Soulful, experimental, and introspective - Canada-born singer-songwriter Daniel Caesar is someone who's familiar with shattering expectations and pushing the norm of what R&B is today.

At just 27 years old, Caesar has made a lasting impact on the music industry. Since the release of his debut studio album, *Freudian* (2017), he has continued to gain recognition for his musical prowess, philosophical and reflective writing style, and ability to get us in our feelings. From his critically acclaimed EPs *Praise Break* (2014) and *Pilgrim's Paradise* (2015), to *Case Study 01* (2019), Caesar has become notable for his ability to transcend genres, blending the stylistic elements of multiple genres together. Soul, reggae, gospel, electronics, R&B - if you can think of a genre, Caesar has (or is soon likely to!) combine and redefine it in his own way.

With his new project 'NEVER ENOUGH' dropping in just a few weeks, on April 7th, we sat down with Daniel Caesar to tap in and find out exactly what the people need to know before we listen! Of course, we couldn't ask the basics, so we crafted up some limited edition quickfire Collection Mag - FACES questions for him:



Is music a way for you to battle the chaos that you find in the world?

Daniel Caesar: Uh, yeah. To make sense of it...process it and then you create something out of it. I don't know how. Yeah. To make sense of the chaos.

What do you do for a living?

I sing songs.

Why do you sing songs?

Because I have to express myself.

Describe yourself in one word.

Thoughtful, pontificate.

If you could go back in time and give yourself one piece of advice, what would it be?

Um. Drink more water.

Uh, redemption is always within your grasp, and the job is never finished until you're dead.

You've talked in the past about how turning your art into commerce has often felt like something you've had to wrestle with. Have you made peace with the "work-ification" of your art?

No, don't plan to.

You're on death row. What would be your last meal?

Jerk chicken, macaroni pie, rice and peas. Red stripe.

Your long awaited project, 'Never Enough' drops, April 7th. What is the story you want to tell with this album?

Uh, redemption is always within your grasp, and the job is never finished until you're dead.

And who are you making music for today?

Myself.

'Freudian' gave the world a love story. 'Case study 01' built on that and explored philosophy in the self. What themes weave themselves into the story of 'Never Enough'?

Uh. Resilience. Resilience. Suicidal ideation. Um. Um. Stability. Mental stability. Perseverance.

You've talked about how you were continually running from responsibility. How is your relationship with responsibility today?

I think I actually embrace it with like...I embrace it. I complain a lot, though. I'm trying to complain about it less. I kind of whine a lot, but. Um, it's either I take it on or it takes me on. So I'd rather the former.

What does happiness in 2023 look like for Daniel Caesar?

What does it look like? It looks like fostering relationships with others. Um, it looks like a community, you know? Allowing myself to be a part of a community. Um, and to com-

mune with myself more and allow myself to hang out with myself, sober.

At 17, you left home to pursue music, what keeps you creative?

I have to. Restlessness, Restlessness. Sometimes I'm creating and God, blah, blah, blah. Blah, blah, blah, blah and then I burn out or have nothing to say. And so I sit around and do nothing. Sometimes I do other productive things, but other times I just do nothing. And then I burn up inside and I have to, like, I just have to. It's a cycle. I can't really...you can't run from it.

And most next for you after the album?

Another album? No, I got a tour. All the like, the usual stuff. But I have a lot of different types of music bubbling inside me. I'm hoping I think I'm going to have a period of like high output, like a lot of different things coming out like Migos in fucking 20--, whatever that time was. I don't know.

If Migos' track record is enough of an example, then it's clear that we haven't seen or heard the last of Daniel Caesar yet! The ongoing experimentation, growth, and reflection explored in his music leaves him on a path that will definitely create even stronger projects in the future. Despite the name of his upcoming album, NEVER ENOUGH is likely to be MORE THAN enough to prove his uniqueness as an artist.











It's 2022, and Blackface is alive and kicking alongside the rising experimentation of artificial intelligence in the music industry. Newly created artist, FN Meka, was allegedly designed using algorithms and coding, but the outcome of this 'artist' leads us to ask an important question: how much of artificial intelligence is intelligence, and how much is racism?

Black culture is so readily consumed by everyone, often without praise or props being paid to the communities that paved the way for others to join. For example, Rap and Hip-Hop – two historically Black music genres – have made room for non-Black rappers within the music community. Artists such as Eminem, and Jack Harlow have made their mark on the genre; even Ed Sheeran and Selena Gomez have tried their hand at collaborating with rappers and Afro-beats artists (we all heard Ed's verse on Peru by Fireboy DML...I have many thoughts on that song, but that's for another day).

When it comes to the subject of non-Black artists entering Hip-Hop and Rap, there has always been a fine line between appropriation, and appreciation; paying homage to a genre shaped around expression, Black voices, and poetry, versus building a falsified brand identity for the sake of appealing to the masses who seek out the 'coolness' of Blackness. The latest artist to cause a stir is FN Meka - but, he is unlike any Eminem, G-Eazy or Logic you've heard before. Why? Well, he doesn't actually exist, not in the physical world anyway. FN Meka is one of the recent attempts to combine artificial-intelligence (AI), music, gaming culture, and content creation. For some, the idea of intersecting three highly lucrative and profitable sectors of the media and tech industries sounds like a great idea. But is there space for AI rappers in a genre whose musical quality is becoming increasingly diluted and placated for the masses, rather than the communities who need it?

Under Capitol Records, FN Meka quickly gained a following, amassing over 10m followers and 135m likes on TikTok and thousands of Instagram followers. Despite such an impressive social media engagement, the rapper's rise to fame (regardless of how short-lived it was) does raise concern surrounding the public perception of the rapper. Within that 10m follower count, how many people overlooked the racialisation of this robot-



rapper? Why is it that FN Meka was only under scrutiny after saying the n-word, and featuring footage of the AI artist being beaten by police? The simple answer: because Blackness (the pain, the joy, the musicality, the culture) is marketable and profitable, even when copied and mimicked.

The internet, and the predominantly white media-giants that run it, continuously code Blackness into aspects of digital consumer culture. Though seen as a space where people can craft their identities freely, and be who they want to be, the internet helps to proliferate race and racial stereotypes through commodifying them. It's not difficult to see that FN Meka was constructed with existing mainstream rappers, and Black cultural aesthetics in mind. FN Meka is shown sporting gold chains, piercings, and dyed single-strand braids; multiple elements associated with Black Rap culture. In an attempt to create an artist that fits the expectation of rap culture, Capitol Records essentially pushed for the creation of a digitised Blackface mashup of what they believed 21st century rap artists look like.

With highly-successful Black artists like Snoop Dogg, Lil Baby and the up-and-coming TDE rap-genius DoeChii signed to their label, it's surprising that Capitol would make the risky move to co-sign an artist that undeniably emulates the Black cultural aesthetics that existing Black artists already have the right and agency to call upon. Regardless of this evidently unethical creation, the label, and FN Meka, were able to make it relatively far, with little return being paid to the communities that inspire the construction of this artist to begin with. Not only did they exploit the very characteristics and stylistic practices that many Black individuals find themselves scolded, discriminated against, and judged for, but Capitol also reportedly scammed and ghosted Kyle the Hooligan, the Black rapper that voiced FN Meka. We've seen many industries bear the brunt of automisation caused by the capitalist desire to earn money more efficiently; but, now, we face the risk of labels favouring AI rappers over real artists like Kyle the Hooligan, and other underground artists that could, if given the chance, make a large impact on the industry. That sample the socially-popular elements of Blackness, while simultaneously being made a mockery of the very communities they steal from.

FN Meka misses the mark of being an icon or impactful artist, because he simply isn't real. Artificially creating a Black-adjacent character for entertainment purposes strays dangerously close to the minstrel shows that riddled American society in the 19th century. These shows made use of white actors in Blackface, performing degrading caricatures of Black people as lazy, clumsy, uncouth, or the 'Happy Slave.' We're in the 21st century now, and Blackface has unfortunately been reinvented rather than eradicated. Revamped instead of removed from our consumption; what warrants the commercialisation of police brutality, and the harsh reality that millions of Black people face every day? There is something deeply unsettling about the way in which Blackness is loved and favoured by society one day, but criminalised and loathed the next. Encouraging the crafting of AI Black performers not only perpetuates the commodification and exploitation of Black culture, while reinforcing inaccurate, stereotypical images of Blackness.

If we can't place responsibility on the rapper, who is to be held accountable for this? Capitol Records dropped the artist in an attempt to express their "deepest apologies to the Black community" in an attempt to minimise the backlash and essentially save their company from being scrutinised any further. This move was made for the sake of maintaining business-as-usual, and portraying an image of caring for their Black listeners. But when the next opportunity to make an AI artist knocks, it's unlikely that Capitol will turn them away. After all, money talks louder than the conscience of capitalists.

Handos, squid games and Ghetto Gods

From their worst fits, to upcoming guaranteed hits, we uncovered what makes EARTHGANG one of the hottest rap duos!

Written by Krissah Rolle

Photos by Scott Butler

Experimental and funky - Atlanta rap duo EARTHGANG have continued to make their mark on the music industry. Johnny Venus and DocturDot's versatility, and experimental style has allowed them to push the boundaries of what it means to be artists, while still making music that always reflects their own definitions of creativity.





Being signed by Dreamville, under the legendary J. Cole, would be nerve-racking for any artist; however, EARTHGANG have consistently proven that they can not only hold their own, but leave people remembering their lyrics even after the song has ended. From their dynamic, idiosyncratic flows on their label debut, Mirrorland (2019), to their ability to seamlessly blend with other artists on the 2020 Dreamville production Spillignon, EARTHGANG seem like they are far from slowing down anytime soon.

In light of their highly anticipated 2022 release, GHETTO GODS, we were able to lock in with them and see what makes them one of the most unique groups to come out of Atlanta to date. Naturally, we had to ask the most important question first:

Out of the two of you who would survive the longest in Squid Games?

DOCTURDOT: Mm. I'm gonna fuck up on the cookie game. Ima kill that red light, green light. The little cookie game... I might laugh and f-*k up!

DOCTURDOT: Yeah. That's like the only game I probably would f*ck up. The little, the bridge game. You can't really control who you up on that one.
JOHNNY VENUS: Oh nah - I saw somebody with like, why don't they just walk on the rails?
They'd heat the rails. Don't forget. Cause they want you to die. So that's, that's a good question though. Squid Games is fun.

I think if I could think it is probably some from like back on the These Days tour... man the whole These Days Tour, every day we stepped out looking stupid...big clown vibes bro!

JOHNNY VENUS: I'd last I'd last - I'll be at the end. Yeah. Me and my mans trying to kill each other then!

Since you've been in London, cause obviously this is not your first time you've been in London. Have you had Nandos yet?

DOCTURDOT: It's cool. I get why y'all like it cuz y'all don't have nothing that taste like anything out here. So yeah, it's like I need anything to, to that's cool to appeal to my emotions as a human being. Yes haha.

JOHNNY VENUS: A lil PeriPeri, sauce and fries.

DocturDot: Nah I ain't gonna hold you - look, the super hot one. I buy for the crib in in America. The super hot sauce. Y'all got like a XX-hot that sh*t be popping!

Aside from giving Nando's the Atlantan stamp-of-approval, the duo were also very candid about their own growth as artists, and how they have changed since first gaining recognition years ago.

What's the worst outfit the other person has worn?

DOCTURDOT: What's his worst one? I think if I could think

it is probably some from like back on the These Days tour... man the whole These Days Tour, every day we stepped out looking stupid...big clown vibes bro! That was our first time getting like some “free drip”or whatever. Anything that people gave us we put it all together no matter what it was bro. Like I remember we was wearing like 10 Deep and back then we went through the 10 Deep warehouse...We was just putting that with you can find coats, kit, whatever. Cause that was our first time ever like being noticed period. Like quitting our jobs like you know what I'm saying? We didn't have no bread so we was just doing whatever bro. But like all them fits was, I can't think of one solid one cuz I, I'm probably imagining him in something and it was probably me if I go back and look at it was you haha.

JOHNNY VENUS: I hate seeing pictures from [back then]. Those like the only ones that people use. 2022 You know what I'm saying? Like for an appearance...and y'all gonna use this old ass picture like what's y'all doing?

DOCTURDOT: I love the period of how trash we look back then. This is pretty awesome... It's like “look at them guys. They just want to get on stage!”

“G'S move in silence, Rather make moves than announcements, See a opportunity and pounce it” – DocturDot, WATERBOYZ

Though EARTHGANG are powerful on their own, we noticed that they had some special lyricists and heavy hitters featuring on their upcoming project.

Who's your favourite feature on the album and why? Who should we be looking forward to this album?

EARTHGANG: Agility E. Agility E. Agility. E.

Interviewer: That's the London boy. (Special shout out for repping LDN)

DOCTURDOT: I'm gonna say my favourite is Ari. Ari? Yeah. Ari. I'm gonna say my favourite is Ari. Just because I just, I like how she sounds on that.

JOHNNY VENUS: Yeah. She killed beautiful, beautiful. Yeah, she was fire.

DOCTURDOT: Um, all of 'em. For real. For real. I like Smino's verse a lot.

JOHNNY VENUS: When we did CeeLo and Smino we shoulda had them on the same song.

EARTHGANG: Smi-Lo! Smi-Lo - them on the same record!

DOCTURDOT: Uh baby, Baby Tate did her thing too. Yeah. Yeah. Everybody walks. You know what all the fans love Baby Tate. Yeah. Some big features on top as well. Yeah. Yeah. It was all organic though. People come through, you know what I'm saying?

“I'm from the ghetto, baby, seen bodies in the street 'fore I could tweet” – Johnny Venus, GHETTO GODS

After just one afternoon with them, we were able to get a clear feel for the album's overall theme: raw, vulnerable yet celebratory.





girls^{of} grime

Written by Krissah Rolle
Photos by Sedaecel Afework

Music has always been a male-dominated industry, with women often finding it difficult to break through and make a name for themselves. But things are changing, thanks in part to the efforts of organisations like GIRLSofGRIME.

Founded in 2017, GIRLSofGRIME is an independent, female-led grassroots organisation that aims to reinforce gender balance within the music business and their strapline reads - 'It's Not Just Music, It's Our Culture'. Inspired by the foundation of the early Grime scene, company founder Shakira Walters, drew from the essence of community, the resourcefulness and the independence of the genre's founders to provide a platform for female artists, DJ's, producers and women in music business to showcase their talent and develop their careers.

Today, GIRLSofGRIME is helping to reshape the culture, by advocating for gender balance in the industry. Their latest project, the collaborative record 'Crop Tops and Hoodies', is a testament to their commitment to empowering women in music and providing them with career opportunities. An official record for International Women's Day 2023, whose theme this year is #EmbraceEquity, 'Crop Tops & Hoodies', aims to highlight the often-silenced female voices and to encourage the community and corporations to take action on their mission to advocate for better gender balance for the next generation. This track features Ariez Baby, Frizz Price, Cassie Rytz and the duo, AE and drops on IWD - March 8th.

At its core, GIRLSofGRIME is a community of women in music supporting women in music and could be described as the 'Big Sister of the Scene'. Producing national and international live showcases, panel/networking events and live streams such as GIRLSofGRIME RADIO with resident DJ Kaylee Kay, the multi-purposeful company, GIRLSofGRIME prides themselves on supporting their community and the development of creative talent. GIRLSofGRIME have also

curated various collaborative opportunities for female creatives including national radio show takeovers with Rinse FM, BBC 1xtra, and KISS FM, plus showcases with prestigious venues such as National Theatre & Somerset House, and for Wireless Festival, and Amazon Music.

GIRLSofGRIME is on a mission to level the playing field and bring more diversity to the industry. Therefore, alongside creating opportunities for live performance, GIRLSofGRIME also provides safe spaces for future females to be able to fulfill their maximum potential, by offering programmes to assist women in improving their skills and developing their careers. GIRLSofGRIME have curated workshops, and new release music programmes including their successful DJ sessions headed up by DJ Shaxx and discovering resident and now international DJ DEBS, created opportunity for artists to perform alongside a live band for the first time with the LOCKED+LIVE project and assisted with the release of music music and videos such as 'Press It' by Ariez Baby and 'Jim Carrey' by Lauren Marshall.

DJ DEBS - How she joined GoG

"I was part of a group chat for creatives and someone had sent in that GOG were doing DJ workshops. I had known about and been a follower for quite some time so I was like "Rah, the stars have aligned because I've been trying to learn"... I pulled up to Pirate Studios in South East London, and met Shakira and Shaxx, who straight away made me feel so welcomed. We were vibing the whole time and at the end, I made it clear that I wanted to be part of this amazing community and Shakira gave me the opportunity to work with her on our (GOG's) social media and other projects. Now it's just family."

DJ KAYLEE KAY - What GoG Means to Her

"Being part of the GOG community is really important to me as I have been able to connect with other talented and like-minded females who also share a passion for Grime and UK music. GOG gave me a platform to demonstrate my passion for Grime music and DJing and I have been lucky enough to have gotten some dope opportunities in the process, like djing at certain events and meeting/working with people in the industry. GOG is a recognised platform that continues to showcase females doing big things in the scene. I like the sense of community and inclusion Shakira has created. I feel grateful as GOG has elevated my profile and Kaylee Kay is recognised as someone who reps the Grime scene."

DJ SHAXX - Craziest DJ experience

"I played an NYE set for 'Faded' in Dalston. It was so lit! Ppl where shaking the barriers everything! I was even scared to play certain songs because I knew it would get too crazy. Well. I played 'big drip', that was it, the tables they had pushed together for the decks split in half! The mixer fell through but I managed to catch it in time. But yh I had to tell everyone to calm down while I put it all together."



the skater state of mind

How Virgil Abloh's legacy lives on through the youth thriving in Accra's new skate park.

What does the word skateboarding mean to you?

Skateboarding might make you think of legends like Tony Hawk; for others, skate culture may simply remind you of rebellious teens, making too much noise during the summertime. However, to the people in West African countries like Ghana, skating has become an expression of freedom, empowerment, and a symbol of support.

In a world where the experiences of young people are often overlooked and underfunded, the presence of the Freedom Skate park has never been more important. For Sandy Alibo, the founder of Surf Ghana skating has come to be the definition of community and accessibility.

When asked what skateboards mean to the youth in Accra, Ghana, Sandy explained that Freedom Skate Park is "a recreational centre and a safe space that we created for the youth in Ghana. At the moment, there is no [other] place to chill, to love, to connect, and I'm really happy to have launched this project like one month ago, because the idea was really to connect to skate, but also to meet other creatives in general in Ghana."



The presence of Freedom Park has helped to redefine the idea of sport, accessibility, and unity. Like Sandy expressed, it's become a hub for members of the community, to gather and convene safely, while sharing knowledge of their culture and the growing skateboarding scene. Surf Ghana is just one of many skateparks that Sandy wants to develop, as she believes these places are central to the personal fulfilment of people in the community. People from all walks of life find solace in the park: from young kids learning how to balance on a skateboard, to teens spending time independently with friends, and adults perfecting their skills, everyone is welcome and seems to be enjoying the space.

In fact, the park is thriving more than people anticipated. As she reflected on the growth of skateboarding culture



in Ghana, Sandy laughed and told us one of the many “crazy things” that have happened since opening the park. On one occasion, the group posted a flyer for an event just one day before it was scheduled to happen. Sandy, with a smile on her face, told us that “almost 700 people came that day and it was just crazy because we had just one security guard and everybody was coming, etc.” Though the unexpectedly large turnout did leave Sandy stressed in the moment, she was amazed at the number of people that arrived at the park. “It was crazy to see that in Ghana” she chuckled.

Moments like that, as well as the day-to-day running of the park undeniably make it worth the efforts of those who supported the park in its earliest stages. Sandy mentioned the importance of collective community contributions in making this vision come to life. “We’ve been able to connect with so many other talents and many ambassadors all around the world. And at the moment we have that skatepark sense to them, you know, and what is important is like they also believe in modernity, you know, for the skate park, they don’t really only believe in skateboarding. They believe also that this skate park is also a place to build up. You know, every skateboarder, every creative in Ghana.”





Okay, Sandy, what does it mean to you?

Okay. So asobejana means working together, means Collective, means Community. It means. Fashion means creativity. It also means Black representation. African representation above all. And I'm happy to have the chance to work with amazing talent in Ghana for the past five years.

What do skateparks mean to the community?

So Freedom's Gate Park is, above all a recreational center and a safe space that we created for the youth in Ghana. At the moment there is no place to chill, to love, to connect, and I'm really happy to have launched this project like one month ago, because the idea was really to connect to skate, but also to meet other creatives in general in Ghana.

Thank you. Do you want to do it again?

No, no, no.

It's all right. I hear you.

Yeah. It was a huge task on my head because I think you might go out of focus, but we're halfway through the whole time. Six, six. Sunday.

Yeah. What gets you up in the morning?

What excites me the most at the moment is also to find a way to work for the communities everywhere. Every day I wake up and I'm happy to say, okay, I'm contributing. You know, I give back to the community. I also work with amazing talent that nobody know about it, and I'm happy to highlight them and make sure that we are building the future of Africa here.

Thank you. If you could build a skatepark in another part of the world next, where would it be?

If I can build another skate park, I would love to build a skate park in, oh, there's so many countries. That's not easy, because actually you are connected with so many countries in West Africa and all of them are really into skateboarding actually. So I would love to build maybe a skate park in Ivory Coast, but why not in Lumi? And maybe, I don't know, other country around. So I feel like now skateboarding is also a movement. So it's not even only one country. It's like all the countries in Africa are really, really interested to develop their community, etc. So yeah, I

would love to do another skate park in West Africa, actually.

Thank you. What's the funniest thing that has happened here so far?

There's so many crazy things. Funny things. I don't know if it's funny or it's like, crazy, but yeah, funny, funny, funny, funny, funny, funny. Yeah. So let's say that I'm not going to say funny. I'm going to say that a crazy thing

If I can build another skate park, I would love to build a skate park in, oh, there's so many countries. That's not easy, because actual-ity you are connected with so many countries in West Africa and all of them are really into skateboarding actually.

happened to us last week. We post a flier of a party the day before the day of the party, you know, And what happened is like almost 700 people came that day and it was just crazy because we had just one security guard and everybody were coming, etc.. So me, I was like sweating. I was stressing because I was like, wow, it's like party X again, you know, like just in Ghana. And yeah I was really happy to to OST amazing DJ, etc. But we are not ready to host that amount of people. But it was crazy to see that in Ghana.

And who are some of the people that supported this park?

So let's say that we are really also happy to involve brands like Off-white Daily Paper, Vans, because they're really contribute to the skatepark in a way that our ambassador first. The design fashion collection just for us. And we've been able to connect with so many other talents and many ambassadors all around the world. And at the moment we have that skatepark sense to them, you know, and what is important is like they also believe in in modernity, you know, for the skate park, they don't really only believe in skateboarding. They believe also that this skate park is also a place to build up. You know, every skateboarders, every creative in Ghana.

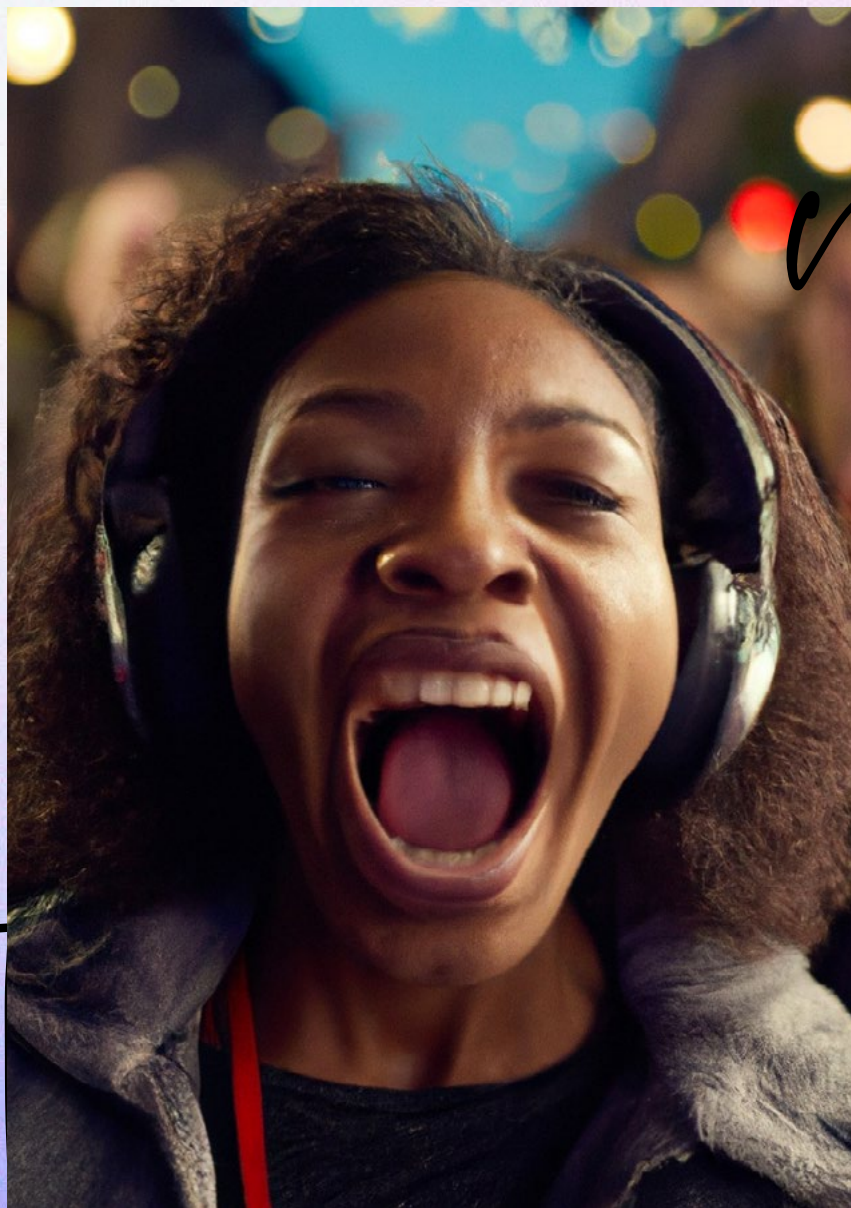
And what's next for Sandy?

The next project for us is to build a SketchUp and a wi-fi cafe. That's really important also to create an ecosystem, a virtual ecosystem for the skateboarders, and make sure that they have access to job opportunities. We can develop the skate industry. It's not only about practicing. Skateboarding is how how we grow together, how we can sell skate equipment, how we can invite chefs who are also skateboarders here and cook for everybody. I don't know. I feel like this this skateboarding thing is more than just a sport, is an art, it's a lifestyle. It's a movement in Ghana, and I'm happy to have so many people coming on board just, you know, to support, to give love. And again, I'm really happy about it. So stay tuned.

Thanks a lot.

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Ads

There's no denying the impact Tik Tok has had on the music industry. The resurgence of Old School classics, to the popularisation of remixing and sampling, and the way we even discover and pay attention to music, are a few examples of how Tik Tok has transformed the music industry. Recently, we've even seen Bytedance, the parent company of Tik Tok collaborate with Samsung to produce a new Stemdrop tool: a tool designed to attract young producers to start remixing Old School classics. Again, this is but one of an array of music discovery tools and formats that has allowed old school catalogue hits make a comeback for new generations and emerging artists.

By Kirissa Rolle



one

This method has helped artists gain unprecedented traction and be signed to major labels in record timing – something would have been unimaginable even 5 years ago. PinkPantheress, Doja Cat, and Central Cee are a few favourites that definitely represent the impact of Tik Tok in marketing and creating hype around an artist and their music. Tik Tok has evolved the sound of what this generation would call a ‘radio hit’ and even how they Gen Z consumers discover and interact with music

Despite these technological advancements, one company keeping the human touch to music discovery is Loud Parade, a Gen Z owned and focused music marketing agency which works with brands to create ‘Tik Tok-friendly’ music for their advertising campaigns and largely working with emerging artists and producers in their network to create these custom tracks for brands.

The young company was founded by two school friends, Rahmon Agbaje and Maatin Adewunmi; though they’re friends, the pair make a powerful duo, helping Loud Parade to make a lot of noise in the world of music and advertising. Agbaje and Adewunmi have seen their platform hit major milestones, including working with some culturally iconic brands like JD and Nike. The agency also gained over 8 billion views on their custom tracks – one called The Vapormax shuffle – a dance track they created from scratch, enlisting Sony Rapper Morrison to celebrate the release of the highly anticipated Nike Vapormax 21s. Last but not least, they’re fresh off of winning a business award from prominent Financial services company KPMG. These accolades alone showcase the unique nature of their business model, and approach to curating music.

Loud Parade works to combine culture and technology through a strategic business model which curates custom tracks which incorporate the brand product into the lyrics of these super viral catchy tracks which work on the platform and feel like/ ‘make TikToks not ads.’

Music licensing can be complicated. In a world of instant access where the internet grants so much freedom to fans, piracy online has been an ongoing bat-

tle for the creative industry, so Loud Parade’s work has been crucial in minimising harm, while maximising creative freedom.

The key reason why music is so important in ads it’s that it creates an emotional connection with a brand

Whilst it’s commonly known that brands must obtain and pay for a licence to use music on TV ads, on social media, many Household brands found themselves infringing on music copyright laws – especially on Tik Tok. 2021 brought about the recent landmark case, where social and fitness powerhouse brand Gymshark were sued over \$44m by Sony Music for using music from major label artists such as ASAP Rocky, Travis Scott and Beyonce in their Instagram reels and Tik Tok content. Whilst the case was settled outside of court by both parties earlier this year, and sparked more lawsuits in the industry, Loud Parade saw this as an opportunity to solve a major problem and be the go-to creator of bespoke music for these brands who knew just how important the power of music is on social media.

The timing of the company’s success coincides nicely with the rise of Tik Tok as a platform and brands valuing the cultural relevance of music and influencers in their campaigns. In 2021, Tik Tok had over 3 billion downloads making it the World’s most downloaded app and also managed to surpass Google as the number one search engine for Gen Z audiences. Additionally, the audio advertising industry itself has experienced a boom following the pandemic and the rise in popularity of podcasts.

The founders ambitions for the company are high, rooted in strategy and creativi-

ty: ‘We want to make art not adverts and we want to give opportunities for artists in our community to get paid for their talents.’ Loud Parade pride themselves on their subtlety, using the universal appeal of music to market in a way that feels friendly, fun and creative. They prioritise aligning themselves with Gen Z behavioural patterns that value brands that are community-driven, socially conscious, creative and most importantly authentic.

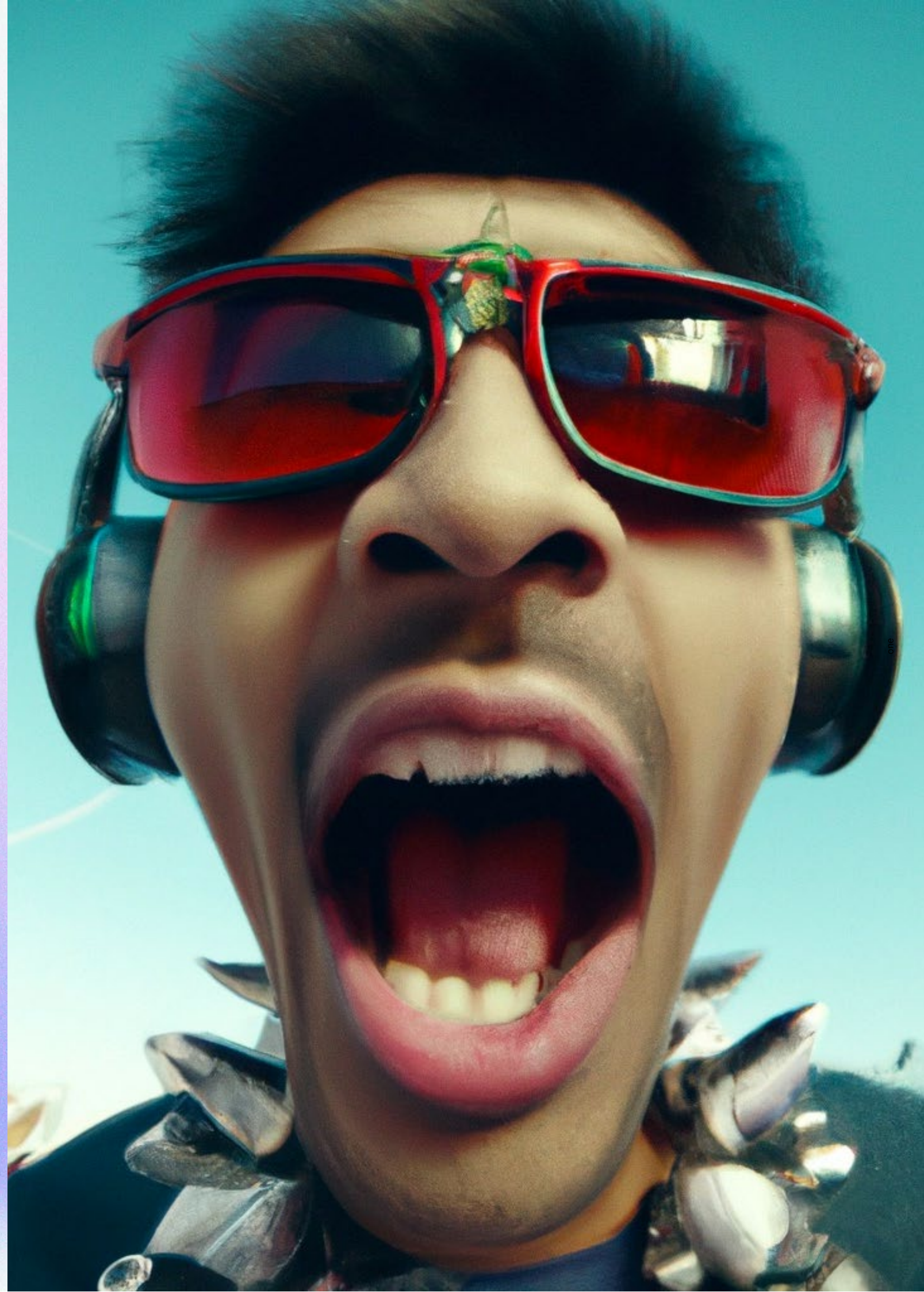
‘Without music Tik Tok simply does not have the same appeal,’ Rahmon affirms. With 88% of Tik Tok users expressing that sound is integral to their experience of the platform, it seems that investing in tailor made tracks is the best move for brands. Ads with a brand-specific, tailor made sound achieve 7% more likeability vs recognisable songs.

‘The key reason why music is so important in ads it’s that it creates an emotional connection with a brand unlike any other force.’ Since the days of the iconic Justin Timberlake ‘I’m Lovin It’ TV jingle, or the annoyingly catchy Snoop Dogg and Katy Perry Just Eat melodies, music and advertising have always intertwined with powerful results.

What’s Next for Loud Parade?

Loud Parade are showing no signs of slowing down! They have the expectation to continuing bridging the gap, creating hits for brands on social media with their wide network of music artists, giving them a new route for income. Having learnt from the sync world where big brands would acquire the rights for tracks to play in films and TV ads, their new business model is more bespoke but a lot more fast paced as it mainly music for social campaigns. The team at Loud Parade are dreaming big and want to make bespoke music for all mediums whether that’s social media, films, TV adverts or even video games.

The music industry is constantly evolving, opening up doors and opportunities for artists to monetise their talents and also gain new ways for exposure and marketing. It’s an exciting time for artists to get involved and cut through the noise.





who the f*ck
is mrtl?

Whereabouts in London are you from?

Okay, so I was born in East London, but like the whole of my life I've lived in, north London. Like, not born, but bred there. And yeah, I've lived in North for, like, a long while. Only recently I moved in with, like, my girl. So, now we live in South, but, like, I'm a north London Londoner at heart, so.

How do you think those different areas kind of influence your music style?

From a personal perspective. I don't know. North London just brings a whole grittiness to it. Like you'll be around me, like in Tottenham, like OGs, like Skepta, and that from Tottenham, North London. And I don't know. I think when you come to the south, it can be a lot of like, I don't know, I don't know. South is...south is different, I don't think. I think whenever I make music, I always relate to the lifestyle of North London, if that makes sense. Like my nights out in north, how I grew up – I've not yet found a way to, I don't

I'll never forget there was, like, some boy, he must have took my poetry book. And he started, like, reading it out to the class. And I was just like, What the fuck are you doing?

know, relate to South London too much yet. I've not been here too long.

So what pushed you to start releasing music?

I think it kind of came naturally. It's like when I started making music. It's like you have no choice but to release it. Like, it's like, okay, so when's it dropping? Like, do you know what I mean? But. Yeah, it just if you make it like you kind of want to then share it with the world,

You know what I mean? Yeah, that's what it is. It's just the drive to just show what you're kind of creating.

And do you think you have a musical background? Like, did you grow up playing instruments or did it kind of come later on?

I've always been in love with, like, writing music, so to speak. And yeah, I used to write a lot of poetry as a child. And I had like, a little poetry book. I'd write all my poems. And then there was a moment, like, in secondary school, I'll never forget there was, like, some boy, he must have took my poetry book. And he started, like, reading it out to the class. And I was just like, What the fuck are you doing? Like, type shit? I was like, No, don't do this, then do this. They didn't start reading it all. And I was just like, Oh, you know, I can't even deal because it was personal to me. And then I just thought, okay, what's the way that I can, like, keep my poems and not, like, have it written in physical forms and no one can just play with my shit like that. And then so yeah, I started recording it until, like, this old like, you know, you had what they call cassettes. Like I had to take thing I could record music onto. And so, yeah, I used to record onto those, and then I started to record my poetry to like instrumentals. Then it just turned into music and then I started making music. So it's from a pretty young age. I went to a lot of musical schools and yeah, I used to try to play piano. I had a few lessons and I've just always been around music. I grew up listening to it. My mum has a mad vinyl collection and shit. Yeah, I've always been like, It's crazy.

Same -- Dad has the vinyls in our family. My whole living room just packed out.

Packed, boxes on boxes, bro. And then that shit be from like my nan and shit. You know what I mean? Like, it's just. Yeah, the music.

Generational.

Yeah. 100%.

Can you explain the phrase "we don't age" because it seems like it's a slogan for you?

So very much so. We don't age. So basically what it means in a whole is just being like a kid again. Like, I don't know, like when you're a kid, you feel like, okay, I want to be a footballer. I don't want to be like this. I don't want to be that. I don't want to be like, you want to be everything at once. And it's just basically not limiting yourself and just feeding that kid, doing like, okay, today I want to do this, all right, and go do it type thing. It's like people think, okay, with age, you have to kind of get older, have this career, go down this

line. You need to go to school, do this, like age. We don't age, man. It's just like, be that kid. You know what I mean? And it's funny because the phrase came from Kanye – he said it in a song and he was just like he said. Well, how do you remember the bar? I think you said something like "rich n*gga shit, we don't age." And I was like, rah, we don't age? Yeah, I like that a lot. This year on a train on the way to the studio, and I heard, like, we don't age. I kept saying it. And then I said it to my boy, Nick. I was like, Whoa, what do you think about that? He's like, Bro, that's cold, man. So then I start to build a little collective. So it's me, Nicholas, and a producer called Analog, and we're just all under the umbrella. Or was she separate or is it just makes sense to be a team and buddy up on it and yeah,

that's our little thing, our little home office codes.

So it's like being limitless. Not being bound by age. I like that...So what're three words to describe yourself?

It's hard because the way I describe myself, it changes all the time...You evolve. So at the moment, I would say. I'm still very much an introvert, I'd say, which is funny because I'm an artist and people expect us to be outlandish and shit, but I'm very introverted. It's another word to describe myself. I prefer when people put tags on me rather than me, but I find it so difficult. I don't know. I'm very chill person. Uh. At times I can be. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. It's hard. It's hard. It's hard. I don't know. That one caught me a bit. I think I have to think about that one.

Cool, and three words to describe your fashion sense?

I'd say I dress like, comfortably, like I'll never punish it just to like, obviously I put it on and look cool and shit, but I have to make sure I'm comfortable in it as well. It's not even like a grungy look, but I do like high platforms. Rock a lot of Doc Martens with mad soles – It's like a grungy comfortable. Also fun word for fashion sense. I like dark. I like dark clothing, too. Like oversized shit as well. I like to pull things from high fashion and streetwear. So like, you can kind of say like eclectic type, like outdoor shit, like I'll see something and I'll draw from different types of fashion senses as well.

So what's your like, creative process for making music?

I think for me, a lot of it will come from the producer that I'm working with. So, like, he'll send me a beat and then it will be like, Okay, cool. I'll sit there and I'll listen to it. I'll kind of. I'll sit there and listen to the track and it will

always start with a flow. Like I'll mumble words and try to find the flow of the song that is really catchy, like how I can draw a catchy hook. Like a hook will start my song more time. Nine times out of ten. And then I feel like once I've found the flow, the words write themselves, it's bare weird. But that's kind of how it happens for me. Like it's like the flow tells you what to say it's bare weird.

That makes sense.

What's the longest amount of time you spent working on a song?

The longest. I can get on my Mac now. It's so mad. I, like, complete a song like, start to finish within, like. Like I can bang out like everything at the end of tonight if I really wanted to, I can make two/three tracks start to finish like, yeah, done. But then, like, I always go back and add pieces. I'll lay down the main vocals and then like, I'll come back to it and be like, "Okay, this will sound good on there and I'll just add to it." So I try to get it to a complete stage. That can take like a week. Say, that's me going away, listening to it, adding to it and coming back. But if I really wanted to get a track done in a couple hours, I can do that. I've done it and can do it!

So, it's just like it comes to you. And how strong is your freestyle game?

But you know what? Back in the day, I was pretty good at it. I felt like because I used to write a lot of raps like before. Before I've done, like, more melodic songs. I used to rap, so I used to write a lot of raps. So they would just be embedded in my head, like, I'll be able to freestyle like nothing. And I used to go to a lot of radio interviews where I'd be put on the spot to freestyle. So I used to have to know how to freestyle. But like, now that I make slower songs, I'm like, I don't write like bars and shit as much as I used to. So like, I think now if I got put on the spot I might struggle only because I've not written like, like bar-for-bar like that for a long time. But if I was to start getting into it, I think I'll be fine.

Okay. I like that. If you could have one artist in the studio with you, who would it be?

That's a sick question. There's so many sick artists...it depends on the vibe, but that's such a hard question. I'll have to say two...no, I'll say three. They have to be someone like Frank Ocean on a slow-ish day. Then to make it a banger, I'll get someone like Pharrell...Uh, Don Toliver - he's a melodic king. I can't. And Kaytranada as well! He's a crazy guy. I'd love to see what happens if we go into the studio. Even though that's not one artist... I couldn't pick one. There's too many sick guys, but I



think they would be in the top four. Sorry, I had to name four!

And they're all good people. I listen to all of them, so I vouch for it! I support that. So how would you describe your music?

I'll never forget there was, like, some boy, he must have took my poetry book. And he started, like, reading it out to the class. And I was just like, What the fuck are you doing?

Very 'at the moment' with the stuff that I'm making, I feel like what I make changes and it depends on the mood that producers are in at the time as well and how we mesh. But at the moment it's very energetic, trippy, like it's a lot of nightlife type stuff going on at the moment. I don't know, maybe it's just the place in my head, but I'm making a lot of. But if I was to make, like some, trap, I'm not talking trap stuff. It's like more love, trippy, like love, sex, drugs type mode that I'm in at the moment.

And then do you have any advice for people trying to enter the music field?

Um, yeah. If someone's going to enter, I'll just say, do what feels natural to you. Even when I started transitioning from, like, writing raps and rapping to, like, melodic shit, obviously you're not going to be as sick as you are a year or two down the line, but it was like everyone's would tell me "No, man, fuck that shit. Go back to rapping." I was like, no, I really want to explore this. I've not done it before. I want to be able to sing my own hooks and write my own verses. I want to try it. And the point I'm at now, like, the shit I'm making is crazy. So it's just like, do what you feel and what feels good to you. Like, I mean, for pasta, I will see what sticks and go with it. It's

just literally that. And yeah, for me, that's the vibe. Just doing what you feel is good in that moment and just keep it like stay consistent with it and you'll end up making some sick shit. I bet.

So you just mentioned pasta, so I have a big question. You dropped a video about Vapianos on your Instagram, right? What's going on with Vaps? Why doesn't it hit for you anymore.

No, listen! I used to love my Vapianos. And then I had one bad experience. I don't know anymore. It's not my thing anymore. But, yeah, like, I walked into Vapianos man. And fucking..it was like COVID times, So, like, you had to do this QR code shit. Like no one was kind of like, you go walk into a restaurant, you expect service. No one trying to come to you and say, Hey, here's your table – it was just, the vibe was off. The food didn't bang that day. It was like, Oh, this is bad, man, and I love good pasta. But they ruined it for me, man. Honestly, I can't lie. No one was trying to come to the table and I wanted all the drinks, so, like, No, it doesn't work like this no more. No, this is no good, man.

So what's your new favorite place to eat in London?

You know, I'm going to tell you a gem in South Brixton. Sushi Revolution! That spot is mad for the sushi. They have. They put, like, fried chicken in the sushi roll. It's crazy like they got it going on. I can't even lie. That is a gem I don't normally tell people, but that is the spot. I'm like, I be gatekeepers for fucking my spots apart. Like, I don't be sharing. I don't. Well, that is a spoiler.

Thank you for putting me on. I appreciate it. What's one thing you can't live without?

One thing I can't live without. You know, it's funny, I was kind of having this conversation with myself, but a couple I was thinking about, like, I don't know, like, worldly shit. And I was just like, I need to stop being so attached to worldly stuff because I don't want to come back here. Like, I was thinking, like, afterlife shit. I don't know. Sometimes I just think of so much and I was just like, Fuck, I need to swoop me in, attach to the world, be shit. So one thing I can't live without, I don't know. I'm trying to detach from certain shit for probably music. All the same music. Yeah, 100% sound. I can't live without that.

Okay, so speaking of music, here's the scenario: All of the music in the world is

going to disappear in 24 hours. But you have the chance to save two albums. What are the ones you're going to save.

The Weeknd: Trilogy, and. Um, Channel Orange, Should I say that one..is that the album I wanna say?

Ooh but is it Channel Orange or Blonde?

Yeah, that's what I wanted to know. I think I'm going to say Channel Orange just because of like, the time I like the memories tied to it. Like that was like at the end of, like, secondary school. It's going to have to be Channel Orange for me, the nostalgia.

Yeah, I like those two selections. Those are good.

Very good man. Old school. Old school Weeknd as well? Untouchable, man, that is. I still try to make music like that today, and it's just no way. It's no way. I can't ever.

That's definitely the, like, night time vibe that you were talking about before. Like, they love sex drugs, Like, that's it.

That's it. Those two albums.

Last question. What is the inspiration behind your tattoos? Do they all mean something or are they just kind of like I felt like this today.

Bit of both. So I have tattoos that are like that, like, mean a lot to me. And then some of them, like. Like, I'll go in for something and I'll be like, okay, I want this done today. And then I'll just be chilling like a lot of, not a lot of but some of the artists that I get to do my tats, I'm actually friends with as well so like, I'll be like, I'll go and get say, I want to get this done, and then I'll be like, Hey, like, put a line on my. I want to see how it feels. And like, they'll just tap me and I'll be like, Okay, that ain't for you. Like, I'll just do sometimes just to feel how it feels and then sometimes at random.

milas' textiles.

Written by Krissah Rolle
Photography by Sedacael Afework





Whereabouts in the UK are you from?

I grew up in Northolt, West London and have lived in London since the age of 9.

Do you think your area/neighbourhood influenced your fashion style in any way?

Living in London, you're surrounded by all sorts of fashion aesthetics. I have definitely gone through phases where I chose to wear outfits influenced by the trends at the time, what my friends wore and what I saw people wearing in and around London. I now think I have come to a point where I can wear items that I genuinely like and make me feel good. They're inspired by my own sense of individuality and I guess this translates into my work, where I don't like to follow micro trends but instead make artworks which give me a sense of comfort and make me feel safe.

What pushed you to start your own business?

I always knew I wanted to eventually start my own brand. Around 2017, I created the Mila Textiles instagram page and documented my work on there. At that time, I was just starting my Embroidery course at University so I used the page as a portfolio and a timeline of my progress. When I graduated University, I didn't feel ready to start my own business and also I didn't have the money to do so. I transitioned my work life into retail and fashion, gaining experience in the industry as well as saving enough money to start up my own brand. At the same time, I was making artworks in any free time that I got, experimenting with new designs and building an audience on social media. Starting my own business was always at the back of my mind, that was always my main goal. With the support of my boyfriend, and a growing Instagram following, I eventually took the risk and quit my job to officially launch Mila Textiles in 2022 and work on it full time.

Do you have advice for any young people trying to enter the fashion field?

I would say don't compare your work or your progress to other creators. Don't doubt yourself because everyone is on their own journey and you never know what's going on behind the scenes. Go for it, focus on your progress, work hard and it will pay off.

Also be nice and make yourself available.

3 words to describe yourself?

open-minded, dedicated, aspirational

I would say don't compare your work or your progress

What's your creative process for creating your products?

I first and foremost take inspiration from my environment, finding the beauty and colour from the natural world. Living in London makes this easy as there is constantly something going on. While my patterns can resemble an ethereal world above the surface, my pieces also show elements of sea creatures, highlighting their amazing colours and patterns. I feel my imagination also points to my love for cartoons - I try to include illustrations of creatures in my designs as taking inspiration from my own representation of animation brings comfort to me, almost as cartoons would. In the same way, I want my work to make my audience feel happy and forget about the stress every day life can bring.

What is the longest amount of time you've spent on an embroidery piece/what's the most complex thing you've made so far?

Each of the balaclava prototypes I made at first took me over a month. It was very difficult to find a way where the embroidery placement didn't alter the shape of the balaclava once it was being worn.

You mentioned that your artwork has some surrealist aspects to it – do you have a method for making it surrealist, or is it something you just feel while designing the product?

Although my work is inspired by the natural world, I sometimes like to use colours which aren't a realistic representation of what I am illustrating. This ensures my final artwork has intriguing details that people can delve into whilst perceiving the piece differently from one another.

What do you think sets Mila Textiles aside from other brands?

My art pieces are all 'one of one' handcrafted designs meaning that no item is ever the same. It allows me to provide my customer with unique and special accessories made for them, which they hopefully will cherish for years.

3 words to describe your brand?

Fun, invigorating, ethereal

If you could have one celeb wearing your products, who would it be?

This is a question I have asked myself many times and it always results in a list more than an answer. If I had to choose however it would be Travis Scott. From his otherworldly songs and art to the eclectic and absorbing extent of his set design, he proves that invigorating art can span across art disciplines, this is something that inspires me when creating any piece.

If you had unlimited resources, what would you create next?

Head to toe Mila Textiles collection. Hats, shirts, jumpers, trousers, socks you name it. I'd want a collection of main pieces and accessories!

My art pieces are all 'one of one' handcrafted designs meaning that no item is ever the same.

How do you envision Mila Textiles growing and developing in the future?

I would love to host a number of Mila Textiles pop ups around the world to showcase my work. As well as collaborating on new collections with some artists. I'm planning on expanding the type of items that I create too. I feel my target for the brand is to allow people from every walk of life to feel a connection to my work, I always want it to be inclusive and thought provoking.





overwatch 2 *meets* mjb

Words by Krissah Rolle

Photos by Scott Butler

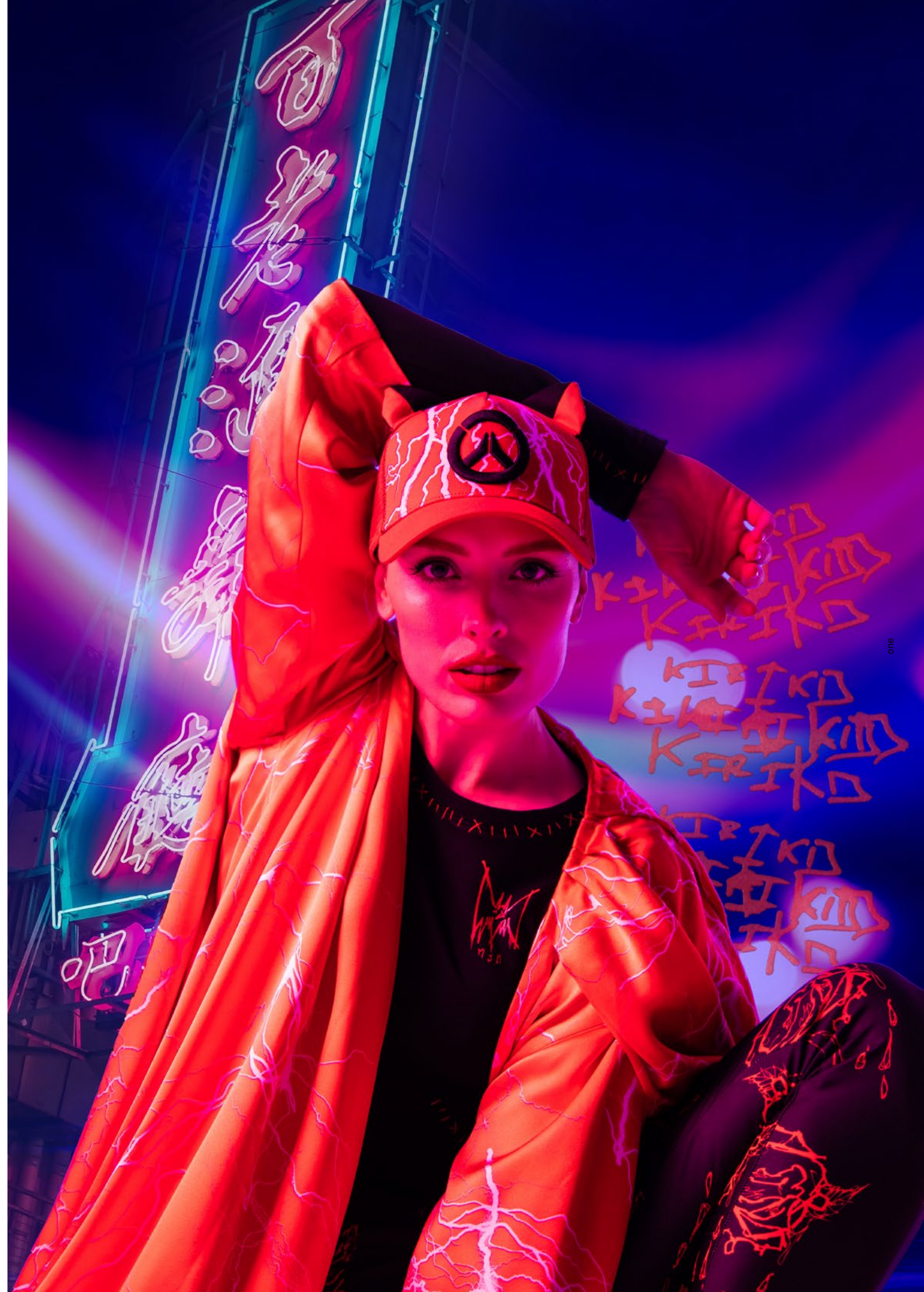
MJB styling British MVP with their new Overwatch 2 collection

In light of the recent release of Overwatch 2, MJB developed a limited-edition collaboration, combining fashion with and gaming like never before. Marc Jacques Burton, the Creative Director of MJB gave us more insight into the connection between gamer culture, fashion, and music. He expressed that these facets are "incredibly interrelated now...I wanted to combine these elements when launching the MJB X Overwatch 2 collection."

The MJB X Overwatch collection has range of pieces, which aimed to meet the mission of Overwtach 2. Burton continued, "The core message from Overwatch is that 'heroes aren't born but made.'"

Have you ever seen a character and thought "damn, I like their shirt" or "I wish their outfit was real."? Well, MJB is the fashion powerhouse turning that into a reality.

Though the range was impressive, the most exciting aspect was how the clothes transformed British MVPs like Giggs, Wallis Day, Hope Ikpoku Jnr and Darkoo into Overwatch heroes. These artists are also real-life examples of our very own London heroes, who – as Burton mentioned – "The performers tonight Giggs, Suki, Hope and Darkoo have all shown what can be achieved through hard work and self-belief. They have been able to live their dreams and become heroes to many of us. I really appreciate everyone who has supported the launch of this collaboration here tonight at The Cinema in Selfridges."





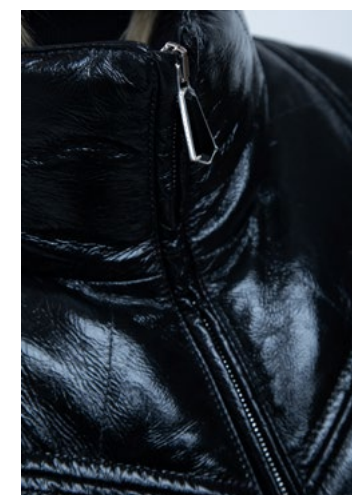
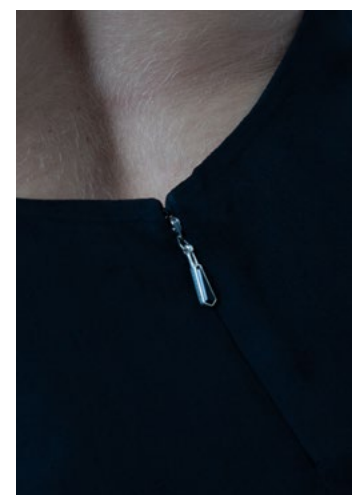
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Creative Directed by Ajay Singh,
Jahanavi Sharma
Modelled by Dinesh Gillela, Zeinab Budi
Makeup by Chiharu
Photography by Scott Butler

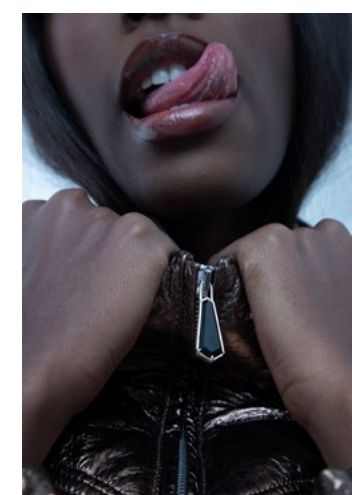
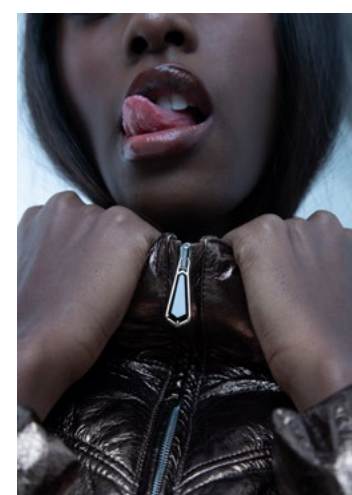
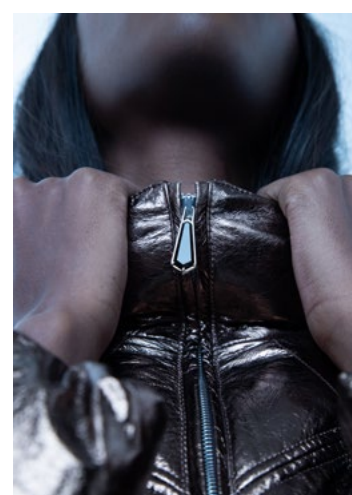








STARLITLA







Soundskillz

Most valuable player:
An associate forward, originally used by team sports to recognize excellence and also used outside of sports to recognize excellence in the contribution of an individual to group efforts.

Words by Saskia Loja
Photos by João Pico

With Lisbon as his backdrop (or, LX, as Lisboners affectionately call the city) Soundskillz has continued to make an impact on the music industry.

For half a decade, Soundskillz has been the go-to producer for artists looking to find their unique sound and embolden their desires of a global vision. His range is unmatched, and his versatility comes through in his work as a producer, engineer and artist.

After a series of wins including Eurovision stints, and working with Portuguese legend David Fonseca, Soundskillz has been forging his own path in music, focusing his expertise and skill set on helping some of the country's exciting new talent; he's even branched out to work with up and coming UK artist Siah.

The Collection team sat down with the Portuguese-born music aficionado to discuss the importance of musical identity, the weight of the city in his creation, musical innovation and quality in this age of fast music consumption.

First off, you seem to heavily rep for Lisbon, both personally and professionally. Why make it from here though? What's different about this city?

Soundkillz: Well, now the answer has become more obvious, as the city has grown to be this big cultural centerpoint in Europe, but for a long while, no one was really paying attention to this place, nor to the music and art that was being made here. I used to hype up my music and some of the artists that I thought had real quality, but most, if not all, thought that breaking borders was impossible. I can't claim to be the first one who was pushing for the idea of a global sound while based in the country, as acts like Buraka Som Sistema and even David Fonseca had international success, but I definitely got weird looks and laughs when I started speaking on building an international career while still living here. Now that the country is seeing a real up-stream of attention, everyone is starting to understand how genuine, welcoming and untouched this city still feels compared to most other European capitals - It's an inspiring city, and I'm very connected to it.

So now you feel that things are different? Did the city change, or did the perception of the city and the people in it change?

Both. It's like the city was moved closer to the other European capitals. As for me and how my vision is perceived here, as I got involved with the Czech Eurovision and had artists from different countries come to me, people started to respect my vision, but at first, even getting people to actually take me to sessions was hard, as most artists would just ask you to send beats over. I never wanted to do that. I'm a real producer, I want to be involved. That's one of the reasons that led me to build the studio. It serves as the headquarters for my vision for music.

And vision is?

Trying to make music that's undeniably good by fusing niche, experimental ideas with mainstream appeal. All while showing that it's possible to do it from here.

And you've broken artists into high positions in big international playlists like EQUAL.

I've been blessed. That's something outside my control, so obviously I don't take it for granted. It's wonderful that people, both audiences and tastemakers, find what I do captivating enough.

What's curious to me is that, from what I've heard, your music sounds very different from most Portuguese music, and more heavily influenced by UK and US sounds.

Yes, I grew up on it. I used to go to this little video rental store as a kid and ask my mom if she could buy me UK's 'Now That's What I Call Music' double cassettes. I was about 7, so as you can imagine, I felt like the coolest kid in the world when I knew about all this music while

the other kids in my school were listening to some kids' music. But I've written R & B or Rap songs that had a certain 'Fado' feeling to them, so I guess you can't really escape your genes completely! (laughs)

Do you feel like that led you to wanting to connect with UK artists?

I think so. I have a deep appreciation for UK music. 'Missing' from Everything But The Girl is still one of my favorite records ever. The Prodigy has such a heavy influence on my taste, it's insane. But, obviously, at the end of the day, I'm all about individual quality. Guys like Siah make me excited about making music. Some UK artists, people like Bree Runway, Slowthai or Bellah represent the pinnacle of artistry to me.

Let's talk about Siah. How did you meet? What are you guys working on?

He followed me and everyone on my team on IG after I released a single for Libra that I produced and shot a video for, 'Black Triangle'. Actually my business partner had mentioned him more than once, and I went to check out one of his singles and was blown away. We kinda went back and forth over music, and when I produced 'Saldo', I asked his camp for a feature. They flew in for the video, and we just connected. After some months, he just calls me out of the blue and asks if he can record with me in my studio (laughs). Like, of course! This guy is just special. He flew in again and we basically didn't leave my studio for a week and knocked out some 10 records, including 2 made from scratch. Recording was insane. This guy jumps in the booth, does a one take for a full song and it's a wrap.

Do you think real artistry has taken a backseat in the current age of music?

No. Real artistry is still being heavily celebrated everywhere. Plus, even the definition of real artistry is debatable - autotune won't make someone a 'fake' artist in my book. Now, originality is definitely not as prevalent as it should be, but I don't know if it's just a product of this era. If we look back to the 80's, there was a lot of cookie cutter music as well. It's just that the ones that survived the test of time really are incredible records. I think the biggest issue we have right now in music is the lack of proper artist development. Which leads to the same records being made over and over again. We need to study the past in order to build upon what was left to us.

So what can we expect from you next?

What's not under wraps... I guess I can talk about the joint project with Kilate, who's IMO the dopest Portuguese rapper by a mile. We might have a date or have it out by the time this is published. Lots of songs with Siah, for sure. We're re-recording a second verse for 'You Let Me Know' next month (March) and getting it finished. Plus, a solo EP dropping before summer. I'm mixing that currently. Definitely, a lot of music for the year.



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Joey XL.

Written by Ehsan Saeed
Photography by Scott Butler
Assisted by Fadwa Ammari
Styled by James Loach and Quin Nicki
Hair by Matilda Akinlabi

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East London native and up-and-coming artist JoeyXL, with hits like “Friday Night” and his most recent EP “XL’S ROOM”; has been making waves in music through his entrancing instrumentals and hard-hitting lyrics.

We sat down with JoeyXL and talked about his future plans, the trials and tribulations of his first EP, relationships and how he views his artistry.

As we head into March, let’s start this interview with how 2023’s been treating you.

Well... I always take the new year as a time to self-reflect and re-align myself; gratitude, a lot of gratitude. So far the year is serving me well like, I'm just stripping everything naked again and just re-figuring what my

Yeah, I feel like I'm always trying to say something. I’m not just putting melodies in a track and hoping for the best. There’s always a purpose behind my music...

purpose is and trying to actually say what my message is to the world or for this project or at this moment in time. So yeah, this year has been treating me well; I'm mentally good, I'm in the gym; I'm tryna re-discover myself as an artist songwriting-wise. But yeah, so far so good.

You mention ideas of realignment and self-discovery; what do you mean by that?

There's this saying to destroy and rebuild. I wouldn't say that I like to recreate myself; but I like to realign with myself, I like to rediscover myself. It's so easy to get lost in trying to understand who you are; sometimes you need to just take a step back and give time to yourself in order to understand your vision.

Would you say that re-invention is important to music? Especially your music?

Yeah, I feel like I'm always trying to say something.

I'm not just putting melodies in a track and hoping for the best. There's always a purpose behind my music, there's always something I'm trying to say; maybe there was something I was trying to say but I didn't articulate myself in the best way and sometimes I feel like I need to go back and rethink about what I'm trying to say. Even if I've already said it years ago, I may have changed my mind and my message would change with it

From East London to a now growing international audience, how would you say your upbringing motivated you?

Music was definitely something I had to work on, but it was second nature for me; I grew up around music. I played drums at a young age, like, I grew up in church, there was a lot of music, my parents were in the choir so I was always at choir practice, listening. When I was younger I was only allowed to listen to Gospel music and, if you know gospel, you know there are a lot of intricate melodies and harmonies and in my music, that influence still shows. But it doesn't feel like I have to try to get there, I was already musically inclined. The hardest thing for me was transitioning from a songwriter to an artist.

Oh? So you would see yourself as a songwriter first? When you were first starting out I mean.

Yeah, I was a songwriter first. At that point it was easy to just stay behind the scenes, to just write good songs. The songwriting part is what I like, I take so much time writing because that's what was the most important to me in the beginning. But now obviously, as an artist, there are so many other things you need to take into consideration.

We touched on your transitioning from a songwriter to an artist; how would you describe yourself as an artist today?

I like to describe myself as... Firstly, I don't like to put myself in a box, I'm an artist and that evokes a lot of feeling and emotion and I don't try to hide away from being vulnerable, I tell you how I'm actually feeling. In relationships, that's something I struggle with, but on a record, that's not something I've struggled with. Maybe that's because in life I'm not really a vulnerable person, even when it comes to peers or sometimes family; So



sometimes when it comes to making a record, a song, I use that lack of vulnerability in life and put it into my music, I don't mind. Music is like my vice in a sense; I know people struggle to be vulnerable on songs, but the best songs are the ones where you can actually feel what they're saying.

The essential question for any artist is, who or what are your inspirations? Inside or outside the music industry.

I would say one of my biggest inspirations is Nipsey Hussle. When I was working an accounting job, I just used to always listen to Nipsey Hussle, he was so motivating to me. My fears of quitting my career and starting a new one weren't so scary anymore. I don't know, it was so soothing, he implemented an "I can" mentality, or like, "I don't give a f**k", I can do me regardless, everything will work out, even if doesn't work out right now. Music wise I would say Lauryn Hill, Kanye West, Frank ocean for sure. I have to say drake as well, you kinda have to; if you grew up on drake he will have influenced you musically in some way.

You've said in prior interviews that one of your main goals for your music is to inspire; do you think you've been succeeding in that aspect?

Yeah. For me, if a person connects to a song and it changes or inspires a person in some way I would consider it a success like I've received that feedback. I make music with the intention of making people feel something; success for me would mean my songs helping someone get through a tough time. I had a song called "Focus", which I made quite a while ago; and there was this one woman who, unfortunately, had terminal cancer. She reached out and made a Twitter page about how "Focus" was helping her get through the day, we spoke for a while before she decided to delete the account. That felt like what success should be, actually impacting people.

XL'S ROOM is the first EP you've released; what were some of the trials and tribulations you faced while making it? Or was it all smooth sailing?

There was pressure. In my life, I've made over 10 EPs but due to rejection I've never released any, and with this one, I just needed to put one together that introduces me as an artist but also makes sense to where I am right now in my life. So there was a lot of pressure since it is my first EP there's pressure for me to say something profound. I have so much to say but I have to find the right way to do it. It was a tedious task, but it was good, it was exciting; it felt like the start of something, and it was exciting to work with other artists and breathe life into an idea I've had for a long time.

Who's on your current Spotify rotation?

Let me look... actually, no that's easy. There's a guy called Isaia Huron; I don't know much about him but he has this tape called Libbie 02. That's basically all I'm listening to right now.

There's still a lot of 2023 left to go, what are your plans for this year?

New music, working on new music which will be out in a few months, a couple of exciting things dropping soon. I plan on exploring the live circuit; I got into it more last year but, I'm trying to be live more often so I can touch base with people who support my music way more, and people who enjoy good music in general; as well as another project in the future

With those other EP's you mentioned that didn't make the cut; any chance those are gonna see the light of day (laughing)

Nah the past is the past (laughing). Maybe a song or two from something I've worked on before but I'm really just trying to look forward.

With inspiring music, a humble background and an exciting future; He seems motivated and willing to further expand his artistry and will undoubtedly continue to produce banger after banger. Collection Magazine is looking forward to seeing what the future has in store for JoeyXL.





this is what it sounds like.

Some of the emerging names producing sounds
of tomorrow from Ghana.

darrie world.

*it's darrie's world and
we're just living in it*

Written by Krissah Rolle
Photography by Scott Butler



What's the inspo behind your name?

The inspiration behind my stage name (darrieWRLD) stems from 2 major things. Darrie is basically short for Darius, which is my government name, and WRLD means worldwide. I see myself as a global artist.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in a lot of places in Ghana because we moved around a lot. First in Dansoman (shoutout to DC), then stayed in Takoradi for a bit then back to DC then to Kasoa for a bit then Tema, where the family is now. So yes, basically everywhere!

Do you think your area influenced your music style in any way?

Initially, the area inspired my sound a bit but I was also exposed to music from the west because my parents travelled often and used to bring CD's and gadgets that gave my and my siblings the opportunity to experience music from beyond these borders. With time I discovered more and more music from others parts of the world as well and that eventually defined me as an artist and what I want to sound like. I remember first discovering rap music with 2pacs greatest hits compilation that my mum brought on her way back from the states. I was so young and barely understood anything he was saying but I loved it so much I always played it on the speaker at home. RIP Tupac! Oh and also, YE's graduation album!

When did you realise you wanted to take music seriously?

I first realised I wanted to make music at an early age. I was about 10. Fresh off this talent show in Ghana where I learnt so much about stage craft and recording in the studio and I just loved every bit of the craft so much that I didn't want to do anything else aside from music. So yeah I'd say around that age.

Can you explain the meaning/inspo behind 'Damo Shi'?

Damo Shi is my newest and debut single under Paradisus. The words Damo Shi mean "STAND". The words in the song "DAMO SHI MA SH3 BO" mean "stand or hollup let me holla at you..." And it speaks about a girl I'm trying to holla at. I got inspiration from an old Ghanaian folklore speaking about my tribe who are the GA people. We're from the south, the coast, the seaside!!

Describe your musical style in one sentence?

My music style is one sentence? "WORLDWIDE TING"

What's your creative process for creating your music?

My creative process requires a stress free environment where it's me, God and my thoughts. I believe music is very spiritual and it has a source, God. He speaks,

I Speak. He places the melodies and words in my head and I just sing. Nothing more, nothing less.

How does it feel entering the field at a time where Afrobeats are becoming increasingly popular?

It feels amazing to be in the here and now of African music. It definitely has been a long time coming and I'm glad we are here to witness how it all unfolds and evolves into a global phenomenon. There's nothing greater than African Music. Afrobeats, Highlife, Amapiano, Palm wine music, etc... everything! I can't wait for the world to experience the diversity in African music and entertainment.

Does it increase the pressure, or make you feel more confident in your releases?

This might sound weird but Afrobeats and Irish music. I wonder what that would sound like. Time to hit the studio

I don't exactly feel pressured. I feel inspired. It only means one thing, there's a lot of work to do to also be a great. Its all about legacy for me. The world must sing!

If you could combine two genres of music, what would you like to experiment with?

This might sound weird but Afrobeats and Irish music. I wonder what that would sound like. Time to hit the studio !

What's next for DarrieWRLD?

More music, visuals, content from darrieWRLD. Soon, soon.

If you could sit down and talk music with one other artist, who would it be and why?

Michael Jackson! The Goat. I just want to know how his mind worked. How he processed music and sound in general. People don't realise how much of a genius he was. Yes! MJ. If only... But since that's impossible, my next option is Quincy Jones. Need I say more? He produced both the Highest selling album and highest selling single of all time! That's more than enough reason.

Scenario: you're making an album, what are the top artists you'd collaborate with?

Wow! There are a lot of artists I have in mind but let me name a few Koffee, Chronixx, Tems, Ayra Starr, Rema, Kendrick Lamar, YE, Stromae, Haile from WSTRN, Projexx, Chris Brown, Jon Bellion, Wizkid, Drake, Yebba, Jorja Smith, Ami Faku, Kabza De Small... The list could go on.

Do you have advice for any young people trying to enter the music field?

To enter the music field, you need to have heart and perseverance. Thats all I gotta say. ITS ALOT! So prepare, never get caught slipping. And above all, make amazing music. Experiment and create around your experiences.

All the music in the world is gonna disappear in 24 hours – what are 2 albums you save?

Damn! Tough one...Thriller, and based on recent events, Made In Lagos.





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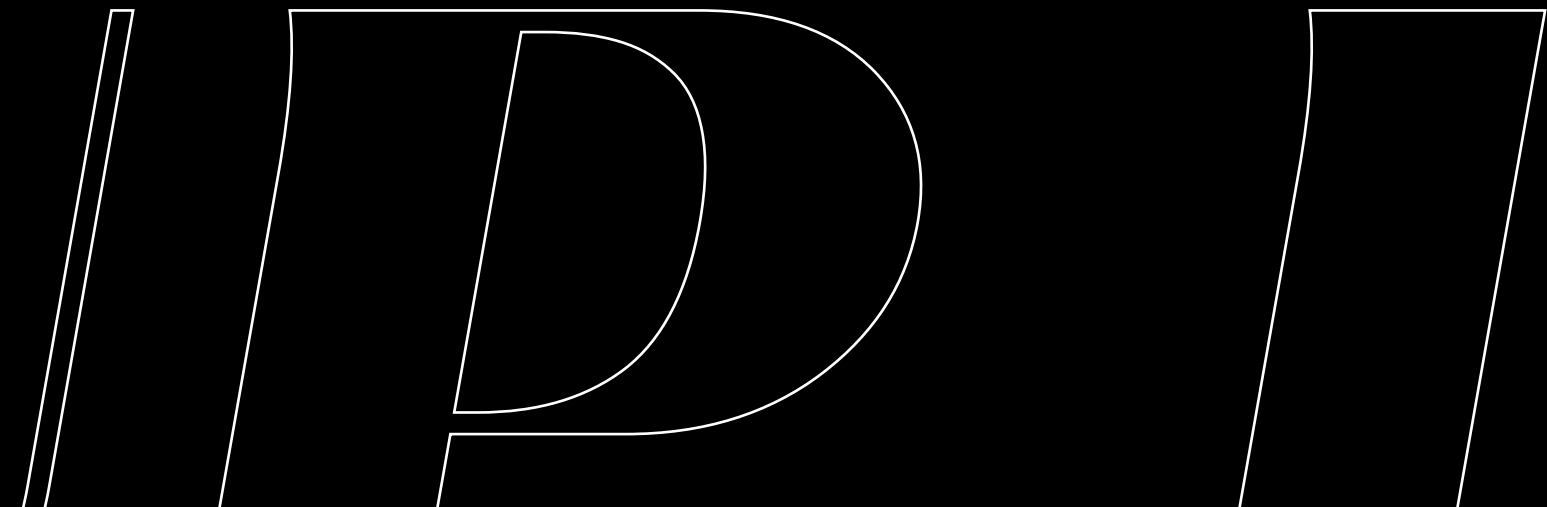
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Photography by Scott Butler
Shot at Paradisus, Ghana



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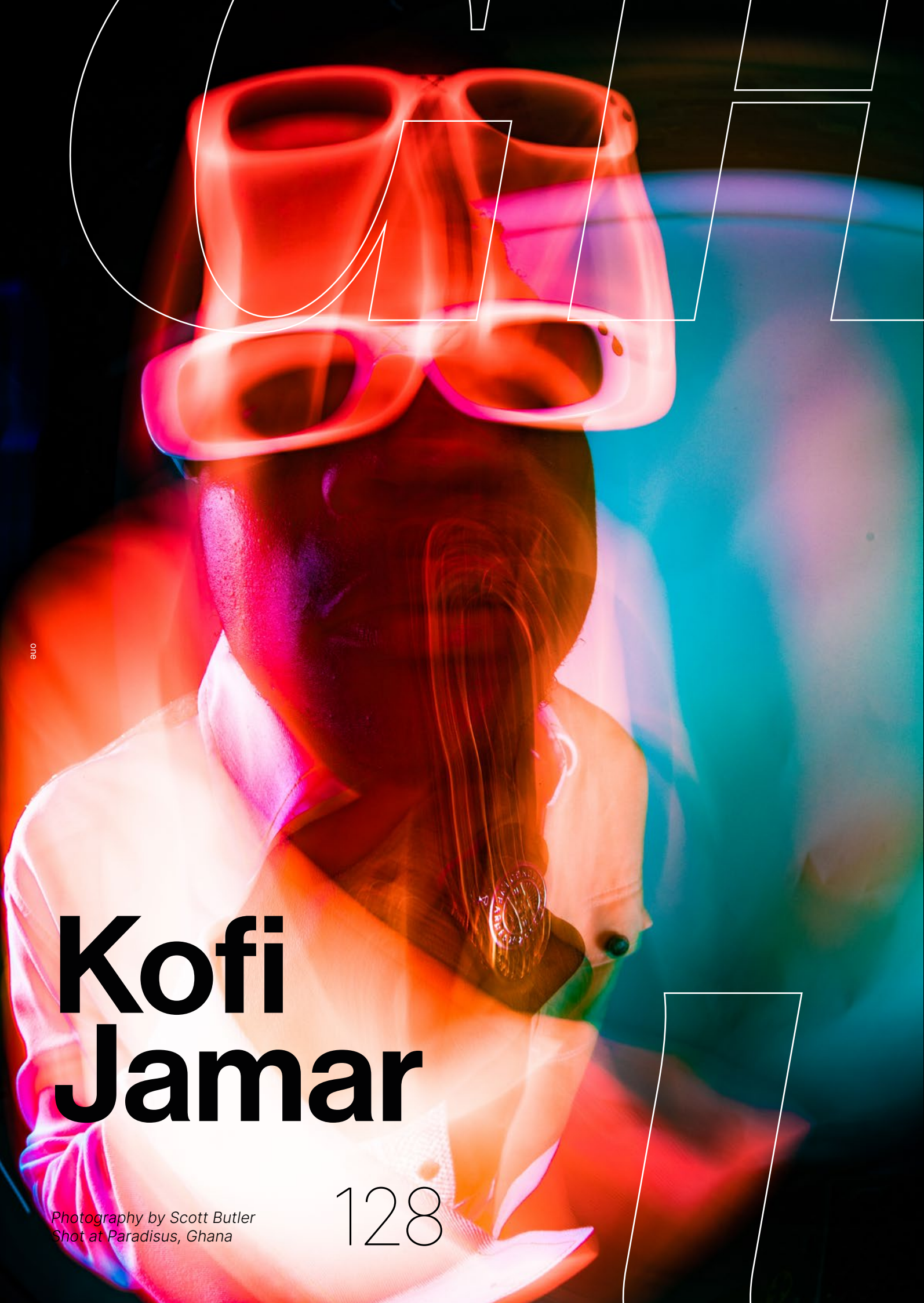
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Photography by Scott Butler
Shot at Paradisus, Ghana

Skillz 8Figure.





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Kofi Jamar

Photography by Scott Butler
Shot at Paradisus, Ghana

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Offei

Photography by Scott Butler
Shot at Paradisus, Ghana

132



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UP

Dani Draco

Photography by Scott Butler
Shot at Paradisus, Ghana

134



UP



Blazer Boccle



Photography by Scott Butler and Ola Busari
Assisted by Fadwa Ammari
Styling by Cal Mac
Facepaint by Alexandria Robert and Jesslyn Robert





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press pho- tos that aren't boring

featuring Saint Jhn

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DSK

Photography by Scott Butler
Assisted by Fadwa Ammari
Hair by Matilda Akinlabi
Featuring Benedictah Amoah and Joshua Boulton



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MARK





subwae studios





shot in Brooklyn,
New York,
February 2023

Creative Directed by Scott Butler
Assisted by Jade Wyzanski
Modelled by Edlyn Emelia and

stories.



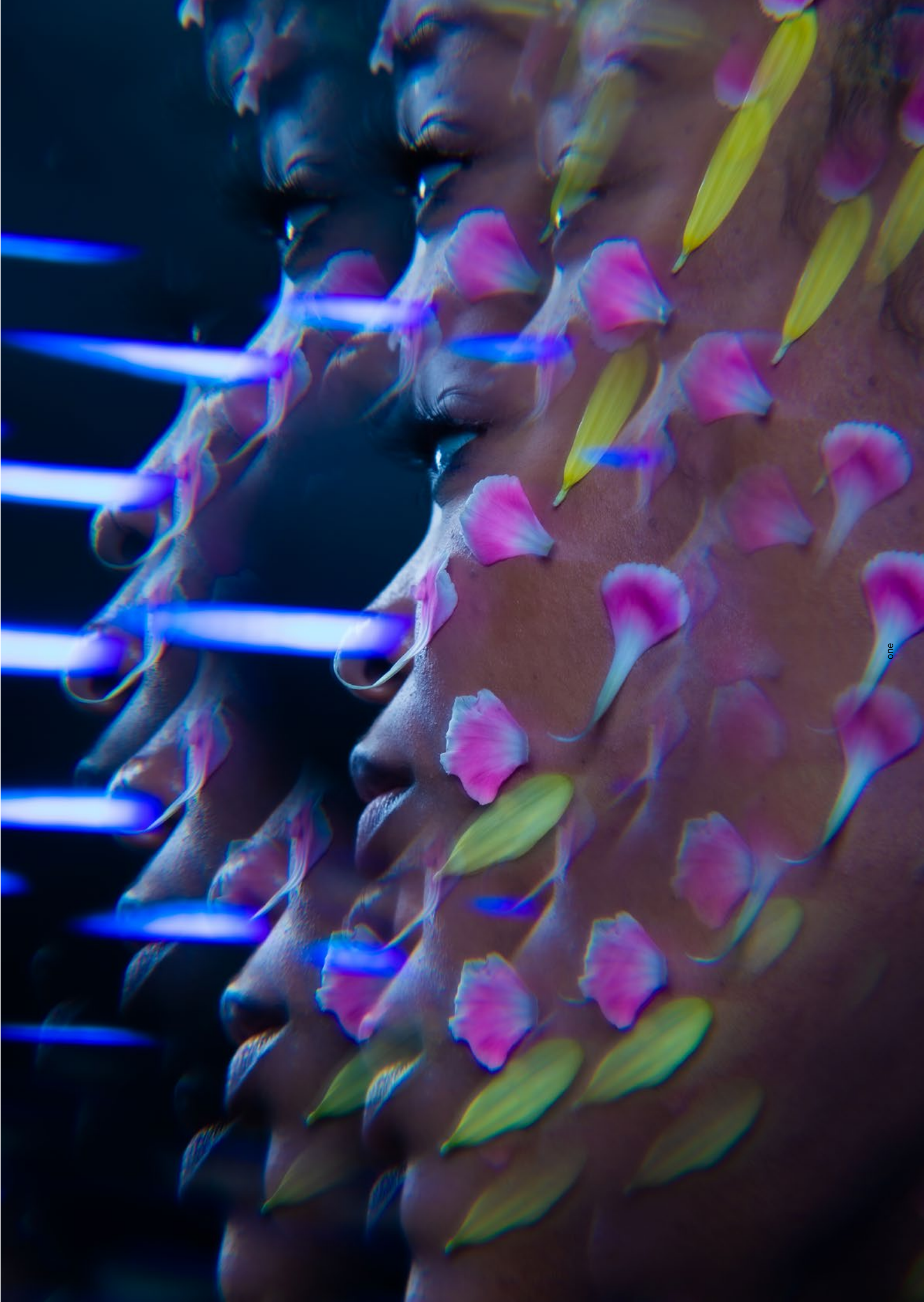
Jacket Kiko Kostadinov
Top Models Own



Shirt and Trousers by Wales Bonner
Jewelry by Avantara









John's
or
you









AIMS.







Warner Writing Camp x Paradisus

Collection Magazine dived into the action at the illustrious studio complex, Paradisus to cover the writing camp this April.

Ghana saw the likes of Tion Wayne, Kojey Radical, Ravyn Lenae, S1mba, Kawali connect with London, Magicsticks, Small God, Blaqbonez, Wes7ar and more.

LOCATION: PARADISUS, ABURI

DATES: 22 - 27 APRIL 2023





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if you have
a CV we
don't want
to work with
you

We don't believe in traditions. We're constantly rewriting the rules and we value people for what their able to create, not who they've worked for and where they've worked.

We do not care how many followers you have.

