

LAYA's boundless creativity is born from a desire to push herself. The Staten Island-born artist has worked as a singer, songwriter, producer, creative director, and visual artist—constantly shifting forms and acquiring skills, because, for her, that's what growth looks like. Her vibrant yet vulnerable take on R&B and pop offers up a unique perspective on life and love, powered by a need for newness. The upcoming release of her EP, *Um Hello*, showcases her approach thus far, but her first single of 2022, "Brag," with Fivio Foreign, is a retrofuturist victory lap—her slinky '90s-indebted vocals echo gently as she flexes what she's accomplished so far. Which is a lot. Growing up around musical theater and visual art, LAYA's love of performance began in her childhood. But over time her musical energies focused and crystallized, leading her to the nostalgic, yet forward-looking sound resonating with fans today. Her 2020 breakout, "Sailor Moon," showcased that visionary approach and broadcast her auteur status. In addition to writing the song, LAYA also shot, directed, and edited the visuals, on top of doing her own hair, makeup, and wardrobe—all skill sets that remain core to her work today. The inclination to constantly create has given her a leg up, in terms of achieving her past, present, and future ambitions. "Everything that I've gotten to this point, I've worked for and made happen," LAYA says. "It didn't exist yesterday, but it exists today." And clearly, tomorrow.