

Forest Claudette makes music that moves toward peace. The 23-year-old powers through life's growing pains with diaristic songwriting, using their thoughtful take on alternative R&B and pop to find oases in a troubling world. "It just makes me feel better, even if it's not for anyone else," Claudette says. "It's great to journal and talk to people, but making music makes the most sense to my brain. Sometimes I can't write out what I'm thinking, but I can write lyrics."

Their Warner Records single, "Mess Around" (made with genre-blurring rap duo EARTHGANG), encapsulates their beautiful but blunt honesty. "*If I could mess around and see you I would, but the exit's on the way in, and the writing's on the wall,*" they croon over pensive drums and serene synths. They wrote the song—which they call an "ethical fuckboy's anthem"—as they waded into casual dating and learned how to communicate clearly so everyone was on the same page. "This song is an ode to that sense of freedom, of feeling like I can talk about what I want and need, and feel comfortable knowing that I've done everything I can."

Personal growth is at the core of Claudette's upcoming EP, *Everything Was Green*. Since the release of their 2022 debut EP, *The Year of February*, the singer-songwriter has begun to fully embrace their identity, including their Blackness and queerness, while reflecting on their relationships. *Everything Was Green* is the start of this inward journey as Claudette painstakingly taps into a world of heartbreak, chaos, clarity, and a need for connection via richly textural soundscapes, soul-stirring vocals, and thoughtfully placed Auto-Tune. "I feel like the places that I'm coming from when I'm writing have evolved quite a lot," they say.

For Claudette, music has long been a tool for self-discovery. Born to classically trained musician parents, they grew up in a small town in the Dandenong Ranges in Victoria, Australia, where they spent years trying to perfect their craft at an alternative-learning-focused high school. Claudette took piano, guitar, and vocal lessons, but realized that nobody could teach them how to write songs that told their unique story—so they began to work hard on their own. When triple j held an annual music contest for high school students, they submitted a song, which earned them an impromptu interview and a spin on the radio station.

Soon after, Claudette started joining songwriting sessions and landed a record deal during a trip to Los Angeles. Despite the achievement, they battled with imposter syndrome and questioned whether their success was truly earned. Their debut single "Creaming Soda"

addresses those insecurities, pairing a woozy blend of bleary soul, glowing pop, and bruising rap sounds with intimate yet charming musings: *“I was trying to be serious, sell like I’m on TV—but fuck it, I’m nineteen.”* Later songs “Gone Without a Trace” and “Hologram” furthered the introspective themes of loss and self-doubt. “It really came from that place of being like, ‘I don’t know if this will connect with anyone,’” they say. “But it totally did.”

As Claudette continues to settle into who they are, they’re thinking about who else might draw comfort from their songs. “My goal is to keep learning about myself and sharing that with people, and hope that it connects with people and makes them feel a certain way,” they say, “Whether they’re commiserating, or celebrating, or learning things about themselves. I just want to provide that space, be that voice, and make a difference.”