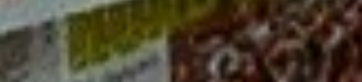




## Audrey Nuna

Miguel Costa · INTERVIEWS · October 1, 2020

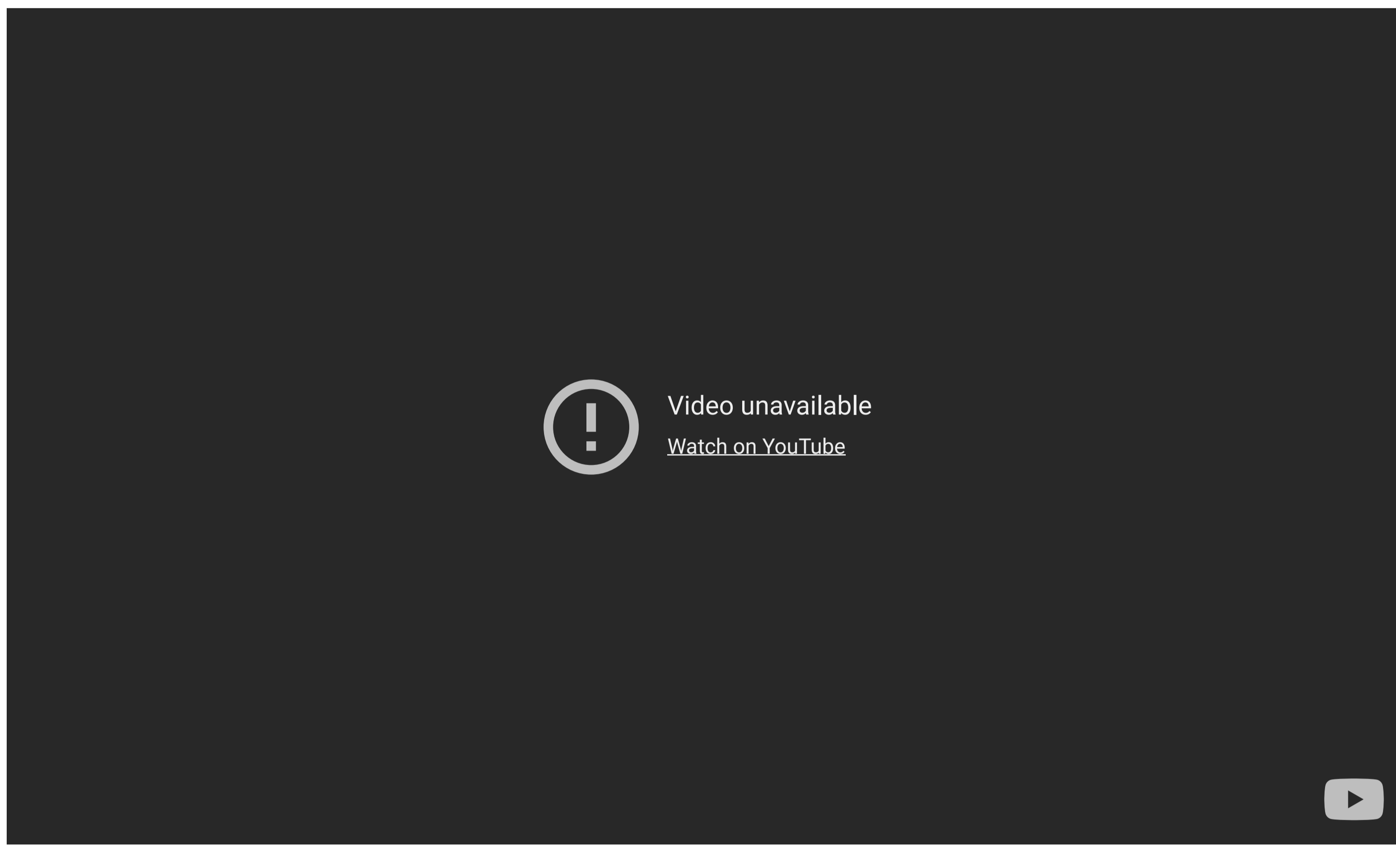


Audrey Nuna’s music videos are often decorated in surrealism. The picturesque concepts behind the visuals for “Paper” and “Time” showcase the depths of her musicality and the colorful imagination behind her songwriting.

Ever since the 21-year old R&B singer signed a record deal with Arista Records, back in 2019, she has quickly become a buzzworthy beacon throughout the blogosphere. Not only is she an Asian American soul singer, but she’s also a rapper on a shortlist of emcees who have successfully forgone their college education to pick up a mic instead (à la Kanye West & J. Cole). The success of “Comic Sans” (a single featuring Jack Harlow) has validated her risky collegiate move for now, but there is still some uncertainty in the young career of the New York City native.

Only time will tell if Audrey Nuna’s voyage into the unpredictable landscape of music fandom will result in her becoming a household name in mainstream America or if she will drift into a niche of the underground music scene with a substantial cult following instead. Questions like that can only be answered with the release of a debut album. A project that she says will come soon.

For now, Audrey is just happy to be Audrey. A budding artist with a trademark sound of vibey R&B music. As she continues to racket up the curiosity of music lovers and journalists worldwide, she took us behind the scenes. She gave us an in-depth look into her creative process and the things that inspire her to think outside of the box when making a music video.



**You’re 21 years old now, and you would probably be in your 2nd or 3rd year of college at New York University if you hadn’t chosen to stay there rather than pursuing a career in music instead. Who would Audrey Nuna have become if it wasn’t for R&B and hip-hop music?**  
Honestly, I would have studied something boring like world history or art history. I also love language, so maybe I would have done an Italian minor. I still would probably be learning for the sake of learning...I love that.

**How did your family members react when they found out that you wanted to make hip-hop and R&B music for a living? Did you have to make any promises to them in terms of what you would and wouldn’t do as a female recording artist?**  
I promised my Dad I would get a degree (laughs). I don’t know if I’m going to be able to fulfill that promise, to be honest...The only thing my Mom made me promise not to be nude, that’s it. She was like: “Just none of that bullshit!” And I was like, “Okay, I wasn’t planning on it.”

**That’s interesting because you seem to have found a way to captivate your supporters with artistic music videos and outlandish attire that happens to be very conservative. Why has it been so important for you not to rely heavily on sex appeal?**  
I think it’s fire when female rappers are empowering their own sexuality. I think that’s sick! I know that everything I make reflects who I am, and I’m not just naturally like that. So if that’s you, do you. That’s sick, and that’s fire. But that’s not who I happen to be.

**So does that mean that you’ll never make a music video like “WAP” by Cardi B?**  
(laughs) Yo, I actually haven’t seen that video yet. Everyone keeps talking to me about that video. But no, I have zero urge to do anything like that.

**Growing up as a fan of music, before you became a performer, was there a live concert experience that completely changed your life and perspective?**  
I went to this concert in college, freshman year. It was Durant Jones & The Indications. It was by far the best live show that I have ever been to. I remember just standing there and felling a high, and I wasn’t even on anything! Maybe I had like a beer or something...but I just felt so incredibly high after that performance. For me, that was inspiring because there’s so much about music, and this was kind of just a reminder to myself like: “This shit is really just about music.” It always has been with me, and I always want it to be. Music first. And everything else will fall into place after that.

**You released the music video for “Damn Right” – The music carries a nostalgia that’s remindful of 80’s hip-hop in New York. While stylistically, the cinematography is kind of similar to the early work of Missy Elliot. Who or what influenced those elements for this music video the most?**  
That’s a huge compliment; I love Missy Elliot’s videos. All the shit she’s done with Hype Williams has definitely inspired me. I wanted the song to be just as ridiculous, almost like a satire on people talking shit. The first idea that my friend (a music director named Loris Russier) sent me was my face in a bath (full of Barbie dolls), so we kind of thought that every shot should match that energy.

**When I watch a music video by Audrey Nuna, I feel like I’m watching an art film. “Party” is such a visual video. Have you ever watched a music video by another artist and thought to yourself: “Damn, I wish I came up with that idea for myself?”**

Yeah definitely. One of my favorite videos is the Childish Gambino “Sober” video. As well as the video for “3005” where it’s just a one take on a ferris wheel. I love his videos. I’m really inspired by him and Hiro Murai, who does allot of his (music videos). That feeling is the feeling that I aim to give other people.

**You chose Jack Harlow for a feature on your biggest hit to date, “Comic Sans.” He dropped a dope verse. Your fans got to hear you rap for the first time. The song got over 1 million views on YouTube... and a few months later? He blew up! How do you feel about the chart-topping success he’s had this year with “What’s Poppin?” Has his rise in popularity been encouraging for you?**

Yeah, I’m honestly just really stoked for him. Just coming from a fan’s perspective, I’ve loved him since 2018...I love when people who I believe in get the recognition they deserve. So yeah, I’m really happy for him.

See also

**Speaking of awesome features. Your debut EP is scheduled to drop later this year. Who’s going to be on this album?**  
I actually don’t know. Honestly, I don’t even know if the album is going to come out this year. It’s ready. I’m just rolling with the punches. If I’m meant to put an album out this year, then I’m going to put it out. I just want to put it out when it makes sense to drop it.

**So there’s an album that’s already done?**  
For sure, yeah. I have so many songs that are already done.

**A lot of social issues have been simmering in this country this year. It’s as if society has reached a breaking point. This year also happens to be a time that you have been working on new music. As a woman and an Asian-American, have you ever felt pressure from anyone to speak on any of the issues that concern your gender or your community? And if so, will any of these topics be addressed in your upcoming music releases or product launches in the future?**

I have never necessarily felt obligated to act a certain way or represent a particular archetype or anything like that. For me, the biggest responsibility I have to that is just to be fully myself and to be true to the art that I want to make because those parts of my identity are so real they’ll just leak into the work. Right now, I just want to do my best work and do it at a level of excellence...Doing that is one of the best ways to level the playing field.

**Speaking of leveling the playing field, 88Rising has been very influential in showcasing the very best Asian and Asian American recording artists in urban music—how did your collaboration with them come about?**

They just hit me up! They DM’d me a while back, and we connected. They’ve been very supportive. I adore what they’re doing as well, and it’s just been a really healthy collaborative relationship. I actually signed with them for publishing. It’s been so fire working with them. They’re like a machine. They’re so good at getting stuff done.

**Two years ago, Joji became the first Asian American recording artist ever to have an album debut at number 1 on Billboard’s Top R&B/Hip-hop charts. When it comes to celebrating Asian American recording artists, why do you think mainstream America was so late to the party?**

I honestly think that the internet has changed everything. The whole barrier with Asian-Americans breaking out into the (music) industry has been an inner industry barrier where these executives sometimes don’t know what to do with someone who looks like this. But I also just think that times are changing in all scopes (with the help of mainstream productions like Crazy Rich Asians). Overall, I think the world is becoming a more open place. I feel blessed that I was born in this era.

**If you could create your own line of clothing with a streetwear brand, what would be your dream collaboration?**  
Streetwear for sure, but I also really love techwear, weird harnesses, and accessories. I think I would definitely go into that space. I definitely want to do clothes. I really want to collaborate with people. I really like this brand called Basketcase; they’re fire. And Helmut Lang. I really like Helmut Lang.

**Given everything that you now know about the music industry, if you could go back in time and tell the 15-year old version of yourself one thing about the future, what would you tell her?**  
I would say: You’re always going to want more, so it’s very important to enjoy what you’re doing today.

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