

As an artist, I've always been chasing my shadow.

When I was a kid I used to chase my shadow without realizing it was my own. But I realized what I was really chasing weren't just shapes on the ground. They were pieces of myself, my passions, and my identity.

My shadow is my past and my future, and all this time I've been chasing it only to realize it's been with me all along. I was just a little over two years old when my dad took me to Shadow Cliffs park in Pleasanton. I didn't know where I was or what the park even was, but it didn't matter to me. The colors, the textures, the way the wind moved things, the way the bugs moved on the ground, all that. I didn't understand that feeling, but I knew I wanted to keep watching it. I was drawn to the quiet, invisible things that made the world feel alive. The kind of things artists notice, and I guess that's what I was, though I didn't know it yet.

I learned to be creative from my dad. He never sat me down and told me how to draw. Instead, he showed me what it looked like to love the process. That was the gift. As a toddler, I was scribbling with crayons, not caring about the result. I just loved the act of creating and appreciating what it was. By elementary school, I carried a sketchbook everywhere I went. Same brand, same size. When one filled up, I'd get another. Even now, I use the same kind. To me, drawing has never been about showing off, it's been a quiet place to explore the things that fascinate me.

Music bloomed in parallel, right alongside art. My dad played records on lazy Saturday mornings letting the sound fill the house like sunlight. That's when I fell in love with the warmth of vinyl. Not because it's trendy or nostalgic, but because it feels alive. I didn't grow up with lessons or theory. I couldn't read sheet music, and I still can't. But I'd always find myself hovering around the piano and instruments, playing by ear. Feeling my way through chords I couldn't name. And that's the thing – no one pushed me. I was simply drawn to it.

Fashion, to me, is very personal. I don't build my wardrobe off mood boards, I build it off connection. Every piece I wear has a memory, a story, a little shadow of where I've been. I dress with the same attention I draw or produce music with intention. Everything I do now is with that intention from my past. My style is the surface reflection of all my passions combined with who I am.

I'm still chasing my shadow. But I've learned that it's not a thing to catch, it's a thing to follow. It's made of the art I grew up with, the records that spun, the clothes that created my confidence before I even knew the word confidence. It is the evidence that my deepest interests are natural. I no longer feel the need to define myself. I simply need to trust the direction my shadow leads. As I step onto a college campus, I am not arriving as a blank canvas or a person in search of an identity. I am bringing the history of my passion with me. I used to think I had to find who I was. But I've always been right here walking, growing, changing, but always casting the same shadow.