

LEIKELI47

Even if you've followed the meteoric rise of musician and producer Leikeli47 thus far, you're not prepared for where she's going to take you next. Her second album *Acrylic* is brash, bold, and as gleefully tough as the material the album takes its name from. "We have this saying that when you smell acrylic, you know just where you are," she explains while discussing what the album title means to her. "Acrylic is a hard substance and I feel this is one of my harder records to date. It speaks to how hard times don't break you, they make you."

The road to *Acrylic* has been eventful for Leikeli47, who's only seen her profile further elevate over the past year. She's notched several appearances on the soundtrack for HBO's *Insecure*, most recently with *Acrylic*'s snappy, infectious single "Girl Blunt"; the release of her debut album, last year's *Wash & Set*, spread the word about her considerable talents and led to the type of opportunities—performing for Natalie Portman, appearing with Lion Babe at Coachella, and having her inaugural ArfroPunk performance—that up-and-coming artists only dream of. There's been so many new opportunities," she reminisces. "It's been a really cool time, and I'm still taking it in. I've been in the studio discovering new sounds. Creatively, it's been a fun ride."

The second album in a planned trilogy kicked off by *Wash & Set*, *Acrylic* was recorded over the last year in Los Angeles — a casual creative process meant to let ideas flourish naturally. "As an artist, you want to go in and add new conversations and ideas," Leikeli47 explains. "Most of these ideas started in my apartment, or just from walking down the street. Great things happen when you live in the moment."

Indeed, *Acrylic* is brimming with a variety of melodic moods, from the brittle bounce of the title track to the brassy swing of "Hoyt and Schermerhorn." The vibe is *big* in every sense, a deliberate choice to expand Leikeli47's world of sound and showcase her true ambition. "I remember starting off as a producer, really jumping in and taking a chance with my sound—it was minimal, but it still had the boom to it," she states while discussing the progression that *Acrylic* represents. "There's been so much growth, sonically and lyrically, since. The sounds are bigger, the lyrics are more brash. It's been a really ill creative learning process."

Co-producers ranging from Clyde & Harry (Ludacris, Ghostface Killah) to Dave Hamelin (The Belle Game, Sam Roberts Band) pitched in during the creative process, as well as Michael Barney (One of Leikeli's right hands and production partner) and Hardcover CEO and frequent collaborator Harold Lilly (Alicia Keys, Beyoncé, Zayn Malik), who also happens to be Leikeli47's cousin. "He's one of the main people I look to when it comes to being an artist," she gushes. "He's a true drill sergeant, but I'm used to it. He requires nothing less than great and above. His motto is "Chop wood, carry water," like the Joshua Medcalf book. The people around you

should want the best for you and he definitely does. He and Michael made sure I stayed on point during the recording process. "

There's nothing but laser-guided focus on *Acrylic*, a true representation of the breadth of Leikeli47's talent. "Full Set (A New Style)" pulses with flashy ballroom samples and Leikeli47's up-front cadence, while "Roll Call" is a boisterous and flat-out fun tribute to HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). "It highlights the black college experience," she explains. " One love to all of the higher learning institutions but there's just a special line of love I have for my Historically Black Institutions. Getting your education is bomb no matter where you decide to go but it was very fun to get in and create art around a culture that's not often celebrated. I get to show people how we get down and that's a beautiful thing."

And that's the overriding message behind *Acrylic*: come together and have some fun, regardless of who you are. I'm all about letting people in — I love putting my message in music," Leikeli47 explains when talking about her artistic mission statement. "It's a great way to engage people and get them talking to each other. A lot of the time we don't know how our worlds relate because we barely talk to each other. We take stuff too seriously—it's time to have fun and be part of a melting pot of individuals." Leikeli47 wants to bring the world together as one, and through *Acrylic*, her message as infectious as ever.

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