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# Poppy and uncensored

With a third upcoming release, electronic artist Lillian Frances gets closer to her honest essence

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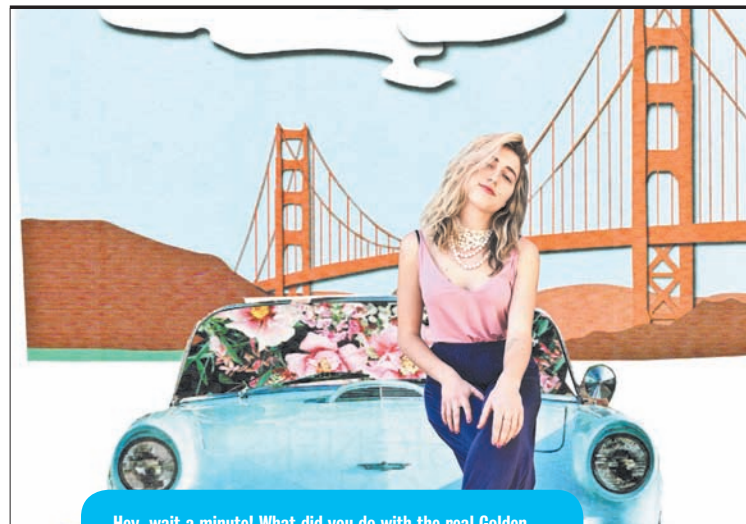


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Hey, wait a minute! What did you do with the real Golden Gate Bridge, Lillian Frances?

By this point, Frances was thinking more seriously about music. A 2012 vacation to visit her sister in Madrid unleashed a new wave of creativity, inspiring her to write her first song.

There were other creative pushes, too. Initially, Frances majored in urban environmental policy with a double minor in Spanish and economics. That Sylvan Esso festival experience left an indelible mark, however, and Frances eventually dropped the econ minor and signed up for recording classes at Occidental.

She quickly became disillusioned with its staunch boys club vibe. "I wasn't allowed to be in the studio by myself—which is bullshit on so many levels," she says. "Why do I have someone else pressing the buttons for me when I know what I want and I want to be by myself?"

She later enrolled at L.A.'s Beat Lab Academy, where she learned about engineering and music production. This, coupled with a few more expeditions to Spain, and Frances emerged with a sense of musical confidence.

The journey is evident between her first EP, *Gravestone Feel*, in 2017 and her second, *Timeism*, in 2018. The former is sparse and laid back. *Timeism*, which at six tracks is double the length of its predecessor, is notably more complex. Songs such as "Netflix and Chill" and "For a Good Time Call" are bright, layered with beats and dance-worthy melodies.

"I'm getting so much closer with every song to finding my honest self with music," says Frances, who is now writing songs for a new album. "[But] as much as I like *Timeism*, there's still a barrier between my honest self-essence and the music being created."

It comes down to tools and skills, she says, and a willingness to experiment.

"Everything I make that sounds good is an accident," she says. "That is my only job: not to censor myself in the studio." Sometimes, Frances says, she has to remind herself of that.

"I'll say, 'Don't think, Lillian, whatever you do, don't think ...'" she says. "All you have to do is experiment and mess stuff up ... There's so much beauty in mistakes."

## "It's never too late to disappoint your grandma."

So says Lillian Frances, the Davis singer-songwriter with an ear for electronica and an affinity for saucy language.

Frances, who performs Saturday January 25 at Beatnik Studios, is considering what her grandmother might think of her mew single "Super Bowl Party," which boasts lyrics such as "fuck the patriarchy" and "I'm really horny."

"My grandmother had an issue when I released [the song] 'Bitch, I'm Aphrodite,'—she called me, really sad about my use of expletives," Frances remembers. "I said, 'I can't censor myself for you. I can't censor myself for anyone.'"

While Frances says that her grandmother ultimately understood and supports her music, it should be no surprise she's protective of her art. She's spent years finding her musical voice.

As a child, Frances, 27, played guitar and piano, dabbling in folk with a love for the Avett Brothers and Sufjan Stevens. Her tastes expanded to encompass electronica. One experience at a festival left a particular impression.

It was the summer before her senior year at Occidental College when a friend convinced her to attend a festival in Pasadena. It's there Frances first heard Sylvan Esso, an electronica duo known for its sultry beats.

"I've never had music vibrate so deeply inside of me," she says. "I was high for days off music."

It wasn't just the music, though. It was the idea of being a musician. It seemed amazing up there, up on that stage.

"It was in that audience, looking up at them that I was like, 'That looks like the most fun someone can have, that's what I want to do,'" she says.

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