

A close-up portrait of Andre 3000. He is wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat, a yellow and blue plaid shirt, and a blue bow tie with white and yellow polka dots. He has a goatee and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

ART FORMS

Andre 3000

INDIVIDUALITY

When considering Andre Benjamin's contribution to Hip-Hop, many will rank him the most creative, forward-thinking and eclectic rapper ever to enter the cosmos. But upon Dre's first appearance on the scene along side his comrade and fellow Atlanta native Big Boi, as two parts Outkast, Dre seemed a straight-laced, master spitter, whose lyrics ran vivid only in the ears of the beholder. As time would have it, Andre 3000 has since revealed himself to be a mesmerizing storyteller with a penchant for pushing the envelope, when it comes to his style of dress and his commanding sound. To Dre, he considers himself nothing more than an idealist.

"I don't want to say [that I'm an] artist [because] I think people use artist sometimes as an excuse to do whatever the f* they want to do. At the end of the day, it's just the ideas that I'm trying to get off. I would say [that] I'm an idealist and a dreamer," he said.

Between breaking boundaries and side-stepping supposed ways of being, Andre 3000 is always up ahead, leading and looking at what's next. He waits for no one, follows no trends and demands nothing in exchange for his sometimes, otherworldly antics. He is just Dre.

"My P.O.V., I think that's what it's about. It's about expression, because you and I can look at the same scene and paint it, I'm going to see it differently. So I may be talking bout that same thing as a rapper in Atlanta is talking about, but this is my point of view. ... As a fan, as a person out here doing it, I think that's what the fans want. They want to hear what you think. That's what they buy into: what you think. Not what you think they think, or trying to imitate what the guy that's on right now thinks, they want to know what you think."

words by **Almstar**

photographed by **Lee**