



After starting his music career in 2012, Jaden Smith released his debut album, *Syre*, in 2017. His hit single "Icon" shouts out his *Highsnobiety* magazine cover story with the lyric "Highsnob cover five minutes."

Born in 1998 to certified superstars Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith, Jaden Smith is fast cementing a legacy beyond the outsize shadow of his parents. With nearly 20 million followers on Instagram, he certainly has an active digital audience. But Smith wants much more than follows and likes. He wants to inspire his fans to create unabashedly, and on their own terms. To him, the internet is a conduit to fulfill that duty.

"I hope to see more people start to love themselves and release music and products in general," he says in his 2017 *Highsnobiety* magazine cover story. "I hope to see people start to trust their vision more and to go full speed towards what they want in their life, and to really go and grasp what they want instead of just sitting back."

There are plenty of self-assured street style stars who readily push the boundaries of clothing as self-expression, but when Jaden Smith does it, it packs a certain gravitas.

Smith's acting career began in 2002 with a small cameo in Will Smith's alien-fighting comedy film *Men in Black II*. In 2006, he took on a larger role as Will Smith's on-screen son in the film *The Pursuit of Happyness*, before breaking out with a leading role in the 2010 remake of *The Karate Kid*, starring opposite Jackie Chan. In 2013, he once again portrayed his father's film progeny in the sci-fi epic *After Earth*. Around the same time, he began his music career, appearing on songs like "Never Say Never" and "Thinkin Bout You" with Justin Bieber, and releasing his first mixtape, *The Cool Cafe: Cool Tape Vol. 1* in 2012.

In 2017, Jaden Smith released his debut album, *Syre*, taken from his full name—Jaden Christopher Syre Smith. But it can also be interpreted as a nod to his status as a heir apparent. If his father Will was "The Fresh Prince," then the younger Smith feels ready to bear the full weight of the crown. The album was received favorably, but wasn't without its critics. Take, for example, Kevin Lozano of Pitchfork, who wrote in his review: "Full of chaotic beats and cringe-worthy lyrics, the debut studio album from Jaden Smith is a sophisticated, paranoid fantasy that mixes new-age thinking with apocalyptic rhetoric."

It may be easier to simply say that harsh criticism doesn't faze him, but Smith is quite forthcoming with the backlash that comes with creative risk. Aside from his music, there was the flack he got when he appeared in a skirt in Louis Vuitton's Spring/Summer 2016 campaign alongside models Sarah Brannon, Jean Campbell, and Rianne Van Rompaey.

"I hope that people can see me and say, 'Oh, so he's under a bunch of fire for wearing a skirt or saying something that was really wild. Now that everybody's talking about him, I can be behind the scenes and do what I need to do,'" he says. "Jaden's taking the fire. So I can stand behind him and not be burned by the fire of the world."

Other entertainers might use their platform to provide aspirational examples of

what being passionate and driven affords you in life. But Smith has a different outlook on social media. He sees himself as somewhat of a martyr, where he is willing to assume the burdens, hate, and vitriol associated with being different.

His endeavors extend beyond the realms of music and fashion, and touch entrepreneurship and environmentalism. He has his own clothing line, MSFTSrep, which "aims to educate and inspire individuals, encouraging them to think differently about the world." And, in 2015, Smith co-founded JUST Water, a company that prides itself in being the first U.S.-sourced spring water packaged in a recyclable paper-based carton with a plant-based plastic cap made from Brazilian sugarcane. Each carton utilizes approximately 88% renewable materials. After learning about the pollution problem in the Pacific Ocean, where a gyre known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch consists mostly of plastic debris, he was driven to try to make a difference. Smith's multi-faceted nature and layered interests perfectly complement what he wants to achieve in the fashion industry.

"Even with fashion, no one wants to look the same. You want to have a different range, a different spectrum from other people," he says. "So I feel like in the future, people are going to have to do the same thing that we're doing with plastic, with clothes, with fashion. So this is just the start."

Smith has a reputation as a red carpet provocateur, like when he brought his dreadlocks as an accessory to the 2017 Met Gala. The year after, he followed it up by bringing the gold record certifying the hit single status of his song "Icon." Of course, in the latter instance, he was wearing a coat from Louis Vuitton's Fall/Winter 2018 womenswear collection. Smith doesn't mean to troll, however, and sees these opportunities as a way to speak to his large audience and encourage them to be bold and confident in their individuality.

"I mean, Balenciaga just did the first men's and women's fashion show together, right?"

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They had a whole family walking down the runway. I feel like they got to it. I feel like people are starting to realize what's happening. Everybody knows what's coming and where it's going," he adds. "I'm excited for it and I was so excited to see Balenciaga doing that because, with MSFTS, that was my thing, always. We just make clothes in general and whoever wears them, wears them. That's where I really think it's going."

There are plenty of self-assured street style stars and fashion acolytes who readily push the boundaries of clothing as self-expression, but when Smith does it, it packs a certain gravitas. In questioning heteronormativity in fashion, Smith represents a new kind of young fashion consumer. He once posted an Instagram