

the different sides of DAVE EAST

ANI HOVHANNISYAN
seen & styled
shot at The Urban Jungle Studio, LA



034 035

Dave wears
BASKETCASE X DICKIES jacket
STUSSY shorts

There’s Dave East: The New Yorker, born in Harlem but feels just as at home in Queens, where his family ties are equally strong.

There’s Dave East: The Basketball Player, that took part in Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) tournaments and attended the University of Richmond on a Division 1 scholarship.
There’s Dave East: The Muslim, who since converting to Islam while in jail, has remained committed to the peace and discipline that it brings him.
There’s Dave East: The Rapper, with a knack for storytelling that is co-signed by Nas and has produced an impressive catalog of music over his decade-long career.
There’s Dave East: The Father, blessed with two beautiful daughters, Kairi and Kobi.
There’s Dave East: The Actor, who got his breakthrough role playing Method Man in the series *Wu-Tang: An American Saga* (2019) — You can also catch him in the basketball film *Boogie*, set to release this year.

hannah rose prendergast

speaks with

dave east

How do you feel that you’ve grown as a creative during the pandemic?

I feel like I grew more. I had a lot more time to get back to my craft like the way it started. I wasn’t running around going to clubs, all that was shut down. I was really able to get back to the basics, get back to the studio a lot more, and just think more. When you’re less busy, your mind just flows a little bit better, as far as whatever you’re trying to express. That’s how I would say I got more creative — there wasn’t too much going on. All year I was just focused on my craft.

still around. I feel like it’ll take a while before we can visually see a change from Biden.

Congratulations on the birth of your second daughter, Kobi. How has Kairi helped you to be a good father?

Thank you, first of all. Helped me to be a good father? Just her, her vibe, her smile, her energy, her excitement to see me. All of that, and watching her grow — now we’re having full conversations. I feel like I was just holding her like a little baby. [It’s helped] seeing how she is with her little sister, being very protective. I think that’s what makes me a good father, just her being who she is and knowing the love we have for each other. I know that’s little me. That’s my little twin.

What did you set out to accomplish with *Karma 3*?

I wanted to talk to the streets. I was trying to give my core fanbase and my day one people that have been supporting me the shit that they love me for, the shit that got their attention from the jump. In 2019, I only put out one project, *Survival*, but I was doing the WuTang series too, so that kinda took me away from it for a bit. But [last] year, I was able to lock in, and I think *Karma 3* was the first of me getting back in my groove. I wasn’t really trying to accomplish nothing. I was trying to let n****s know I still do what I do, still talk shit. And I was able to work with newer artists that I hadn’t worked with before.

What do you think is the biggest misconception about being part of a gang?

That that’s all you are. So since I’m Muslim, I can’t be crip, like I can’t be both, or I can’t be a dad. If you’re in a gang, that’s all you can be; you can’t be nothing else. That’s the misconception. I feel like, with that shit, it evolves like everything else in life. You grow from banging and looking for people and beefing; you grow from that to doing different shit in your life if you choose to. For me, it’s more of a family thing I’m tied to forever, but I do so many other things that add a lot more value to society that aren’t spoken about, but that will always get attention. They’ll always ask me that as much as I try to do other shit and promote other shit. I think that’s the biggest



KEEZ jacket

As a *New Yorker*, would you say that things have changed for you since the election?

Since the election, there ain’t really been no change, nothing drastic that I’ve seen so far. I feel like it’ll take a little more time, probably by next summer, we’ll be able to see the effect of the new President. I feel like we’re still going through all of the bullshit from Trump. The Trump residue is



misconception is that that’s all you can be, or you have to be a violent, vile criminal forever. I don’t believe that.

Do you still practice Islam? How have you reconciled its teachings with your lifestyle?

I haven’t been to *Jumu’ah* [Friday prayer] in a while, but I still pray. Put it to my lifestyle, the teachings of the Quran keep me conscious of if I’m doing good or bad. Religion for me now is like my parent. When I was younger, when I’d be doing bad, I’d have my mom or dad at the back of my mind like, “*Damn, if I get caught doing this shit, it’s over.*” Now it’s like Allah sees this shit I’m doing, you know what I mean? I believe in Karma and all that. It ain’t gotta be a parent on my back no more; I’m a grown man. Those eyes I used to be scared of with my parents and shit, it’s Allah. It just keeps me conscious, on the right path as much as possible. We’re all human, and we’re all gonna make mistakes. That’s what my religion does for me; it keeps me conscious of what I’m doing.

You’ve said before that the biggest disease is being lit. How do you plan on staying timeless?

Just sticking to what I know, sticking to what I do best, becoming an expert at that, mastering my craft, not trying to jump into anybody else’s lane. For me, it’s not about being lit; it’s about how long you’re gonna last. You could be lit for a summer, and then nobody hears about you no more. You could be lit for a year or two, and then nobody talks about you no more. As long as I’m being talked about in a good way or a bad way, they’re still talking. With me, it’s more about making the best shit I can make, and in the process of that, I’ll create some timeless shit. I go back and listen to some of my old projects now, and they still sound good, so I think it just comes with growth as an artist. I still work like I’m in the projects like I’m trying to get there.

STUSSY top & pants

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BASKETCASE X DICKIES jacket
PHLEMUNS pants

There are many different sides of Dave East. There's Dave East: The New Yorker; The Basketball Player; The Muslim; The Rapper; The Father; The Actor, and the list goes on.

At just 32 years old, he seems to have done it all but make no mistake; he'll never stop building on where he comes from.

hannah rose prendergast speaks with dave east