

BILLIARDS MUSIC

VOLUME V

APRIL | MAY

ALANA MERCEDDES

A STAR PLUCKED OUT OF SPACE

Community,
Creativity, &
The Club
She Built

FROM THE DISTRICT
TO THE TIDEWATER:
DAY TRIP
VIBES LINED
UP JUST FOR YOU

INTRODUCING
TEN & TWO:
**VANIA &
NAIRE**
CHALK UP THE
FIRST-EVER
BILLIARDS
PODCAST



BILLIARDS
VIRGINIA & THE DMV



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Alana Mercedes



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This month on Billiards Music, our host Naire sat down with a fresh and vibrant voice on the rise—Hot 91's own, Alana Mercedes. Known for her engaging presence behind the mic and her work building creative community through Club Creative, Alana is steadily carving out a name rooted in authenticity, passion, and purpose.

From growing up in a musically rich household to picking up the guitar and making space for artists to be fully themselves, Alana shared how her journey has shaped her artistry and deepened her commitment to the people around her. She reflects on the influence of her Virginia roots, the importance of storytelling, and what it means to serve community through creativity.

In this interview, she talks vision, vulnerability, and why she believes every artist deserves to be seen.

Swipe through to see how Alana Mercedes is putting on for the 757—proving that when creativity meets community, the culture gets louder.

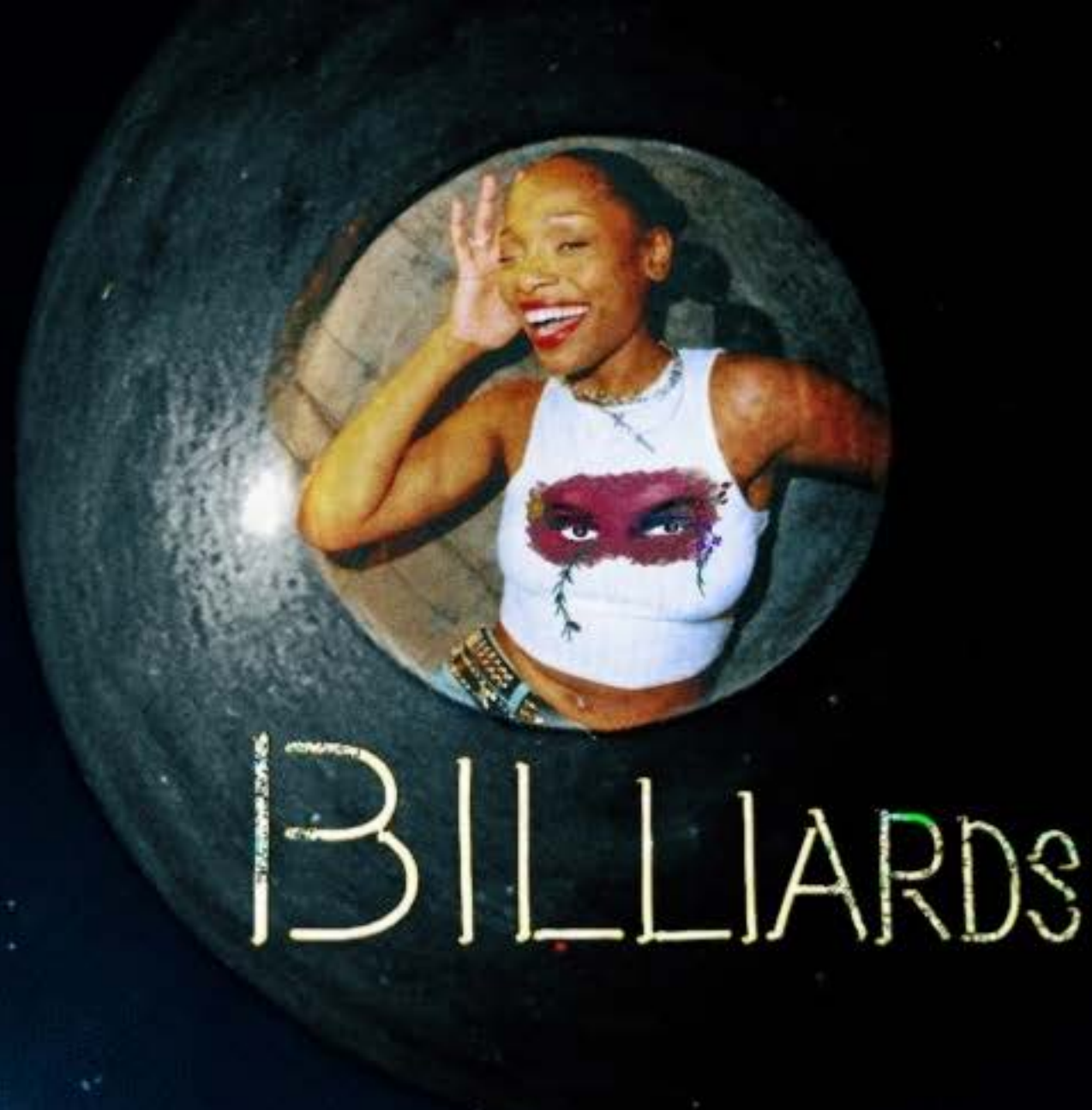


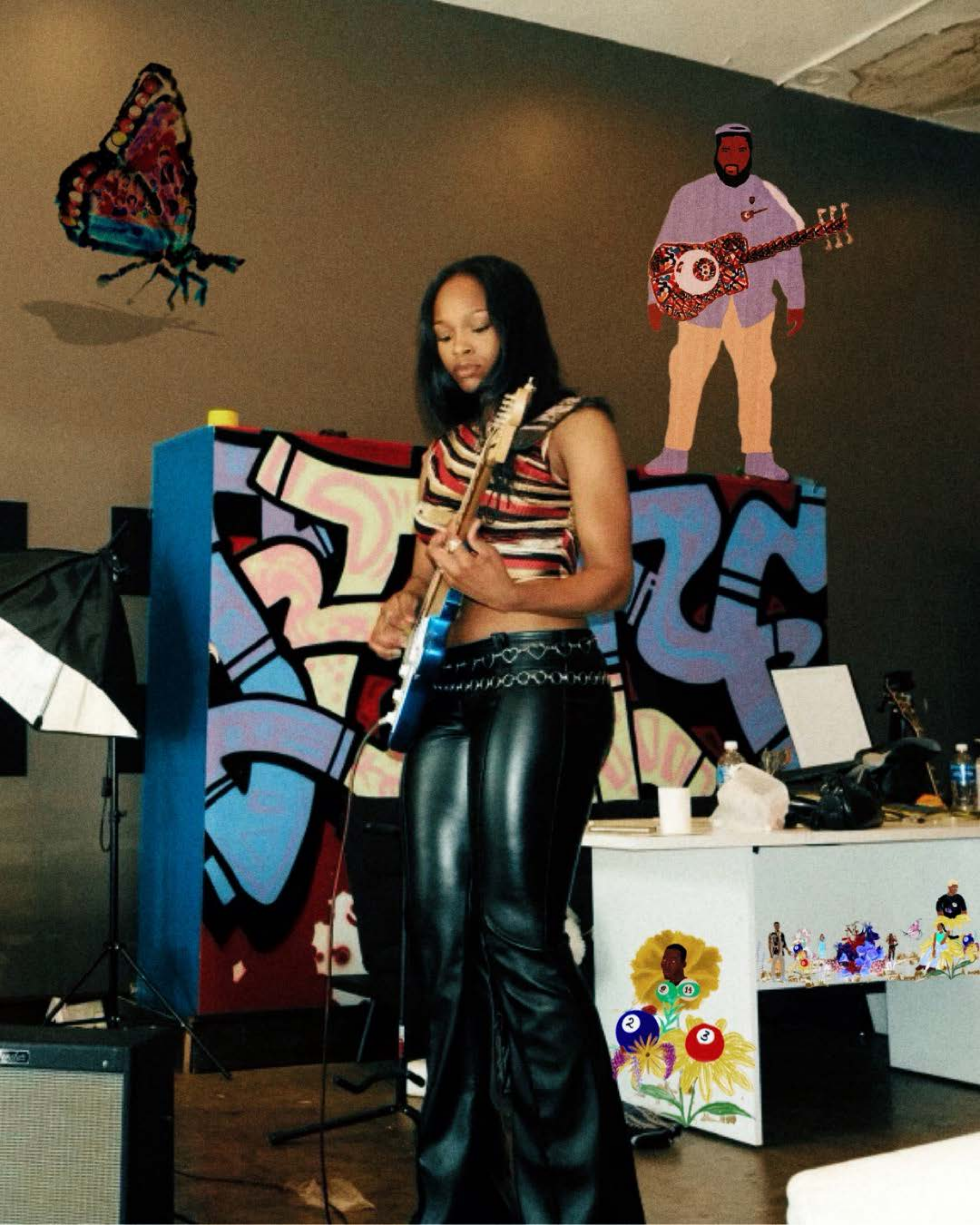
Naire: **Alana Mercedes**, thank you so much for being with us. First, tell us who you are and how growing up in Virginia helped shape the artist and radio host you've become today.

Alana: Thank you so much for having me! I'm Alana Mercedes, a radio personality for Hot 91. I grew up in a super musical and creative household. My mom supported everything I wanted to do—from violin and guitar to ukulele, acting, and theater. I've dabbled in a lot of things, and she always had my back. Honestly, I'd have to credit most of my creativity to her.

Growing up in Virginia, there's just something in the air here. So much talent. It's not just about the big names like Missy, Pharrell, and Timbaland—it's the people around you, the everyday creativity. I didn't always recognize it, but once I decided to really see it, I realized how special this place is.

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Naire: Let's talk about music. You mentioned you're a **self-taught guitarist**. What's your journey with music been like, and how does it inform your creative voice?

A: Music has always been part of my life. I played violin from fifth grade through college and was classically trained. In high school, I joined a club where people played random instruments—accordion, banjo—you name it. It opened me up to all kinds of sounds.

In 2023, I told my family I wanted a guitar, and that Christmas my dad gifted me one. I've been teaching myself ever since. Sometimes a song hits me so deeply, I feel like I have to learn how to play it. Music is my constant. It touches something in me that nothing else does.

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Naire: What would you say makes your presence in a collaborative space unique?

A: I've always been able to talk to people—genuinely talk. I'm a social person, but beyond that, I love passionate people. Folks have told me they feel comfortable around me, like they can show up as their most authentic selves. That means a lot to me.

I've struggled with authenticity myself, so being able to bring that out in others feels like a gift. I want to hold space for people to feel seen, whether it's in conversation or through music.

Naire: If you could collaborate with any Virginia-based artist—past or present—who would it be?

Alana: There's a band called Nothing Nowhere Now Here that I love. Funny enough, the drummer from my old band is now their drummer. Their music is real—it's rooted in life experience. I'd collaborate with them in a heartbeat, even if I'm just shaking a tambourine in the back.

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Naire: What are you working on now that's lighting you up?

A: I've got some exciting guests lined up for Club Creative this summer. I don't like to announce them ahead of time—I want people to be surprised. But it's been amazing discovering local voices I hadn't heard before. I want others to hear their stories too.

Also, I'm working on being more consistent with social media and showing people what I'm doing in real time. This summer's about staying booked and busy and trusting that God has more coming for me.

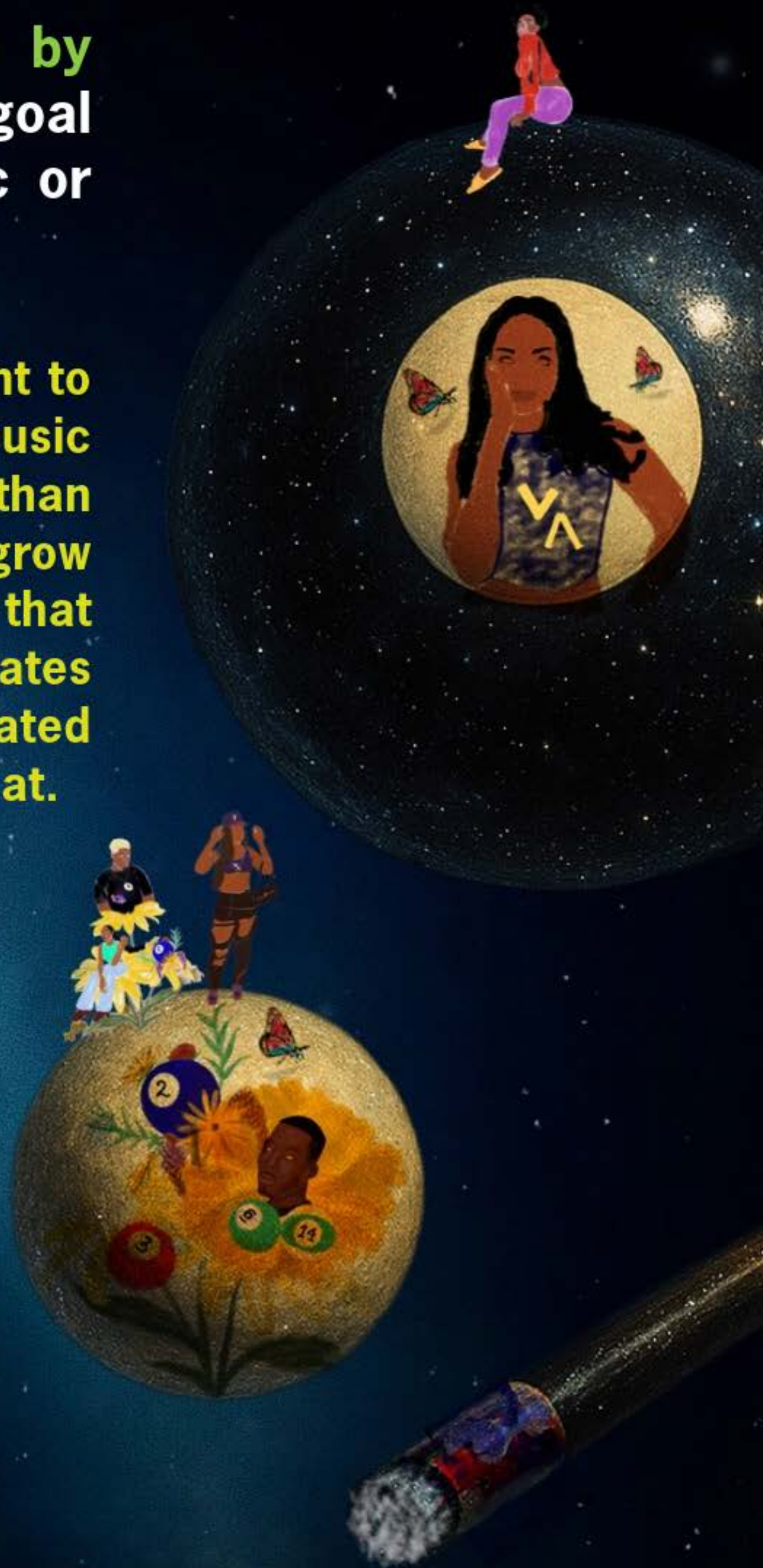


Naire: You're clearly driven by purpose. What's a dream goal you're holding close in music or media?

A: There are so many things I want to do, but a big dream is to merge music and media into something bigger than myself. I want Club Creative to grow into its own platform—something that goes beyond Virginia and celebrates creatives everywhere. I've hesitated out of fear, but I'm pushing past that.

"As for music, I loved being in a band—it gave me that collective energy I crave.

Creating something together with people who share that fire? Nothing compares. I'd love to keep making music in community and see where it takes me."



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Naire: You've created something beautiful with **Club Creative**. Can you share what inspired it and what the platform means to you?

A: Club Creative started as a personal passion project when I was going through a time of rediscovering myself. I read Rick Rubin's *The Creative Act*—and it helped me realize that creatives often have the deepest understanding of their identities. We pour ourselves into mediums that other people can feel and understand. That's powerful.

"I wanted to create a space where people could talk not just about their craft, but about why they do what they do—how they discovered their voice and what fuels their expression. I paired that desire with my job, my love for people, and my love for community. It all aligned."

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Naire: When it comes to **legacy**, what do you want to leave behind in Virginia's music and media space?

A: Initially I would've said I want Club Creative to be a lasting platform—and I still do. But this conversation helped me realize I want to be known as a community servant. The bible says the greatest among you must be a servant, right?

I want to be that connecting piece that helps lift others to the next level. I love this state and I love how I've learned to love it. I just want to use my voice to amplify others here. We're not meant to do this alone.

Naire: That's a powerful mission. Before we wrap, what's one piece of advice you'd give to up-and-coming creatives?

A: Show up. Go to events. Talk to people. Share your work—even if it's not "perfect." We're all just people. Nobody's going to bite you (hopefully!)

And most importantly, show up as you. Don't try to morph into what you think people want. Your authentic self will always attract the right circle. That's not just for Virginia—that's everywhere.

Naire: And that's the truth. Alana, thank you so much for sharing your story, your light, and your vision. We're honored to have you in the Billiards family.

Follow Alana Mercedes:
@itsalanamercedes and
www.billiardsvmsoa.com



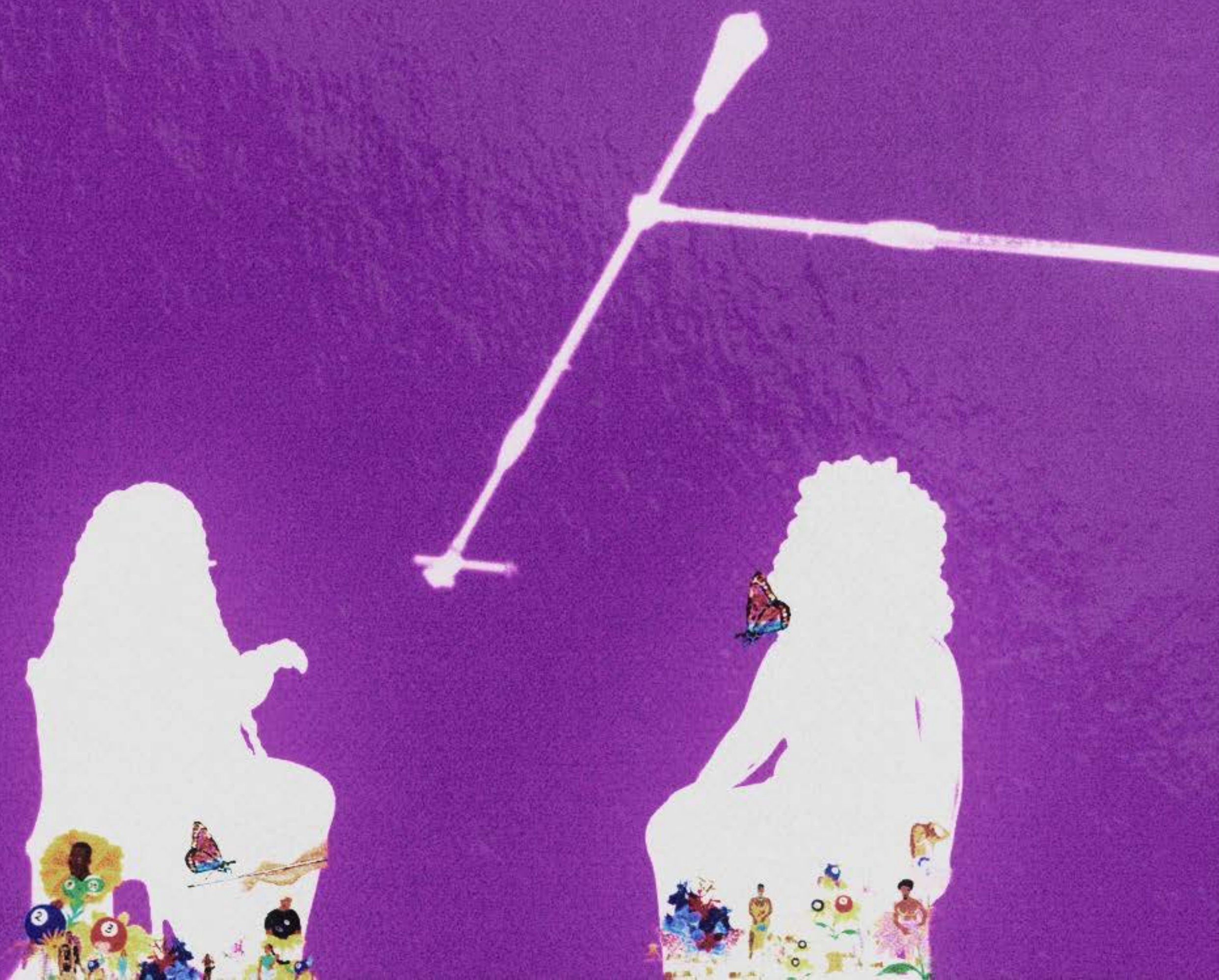
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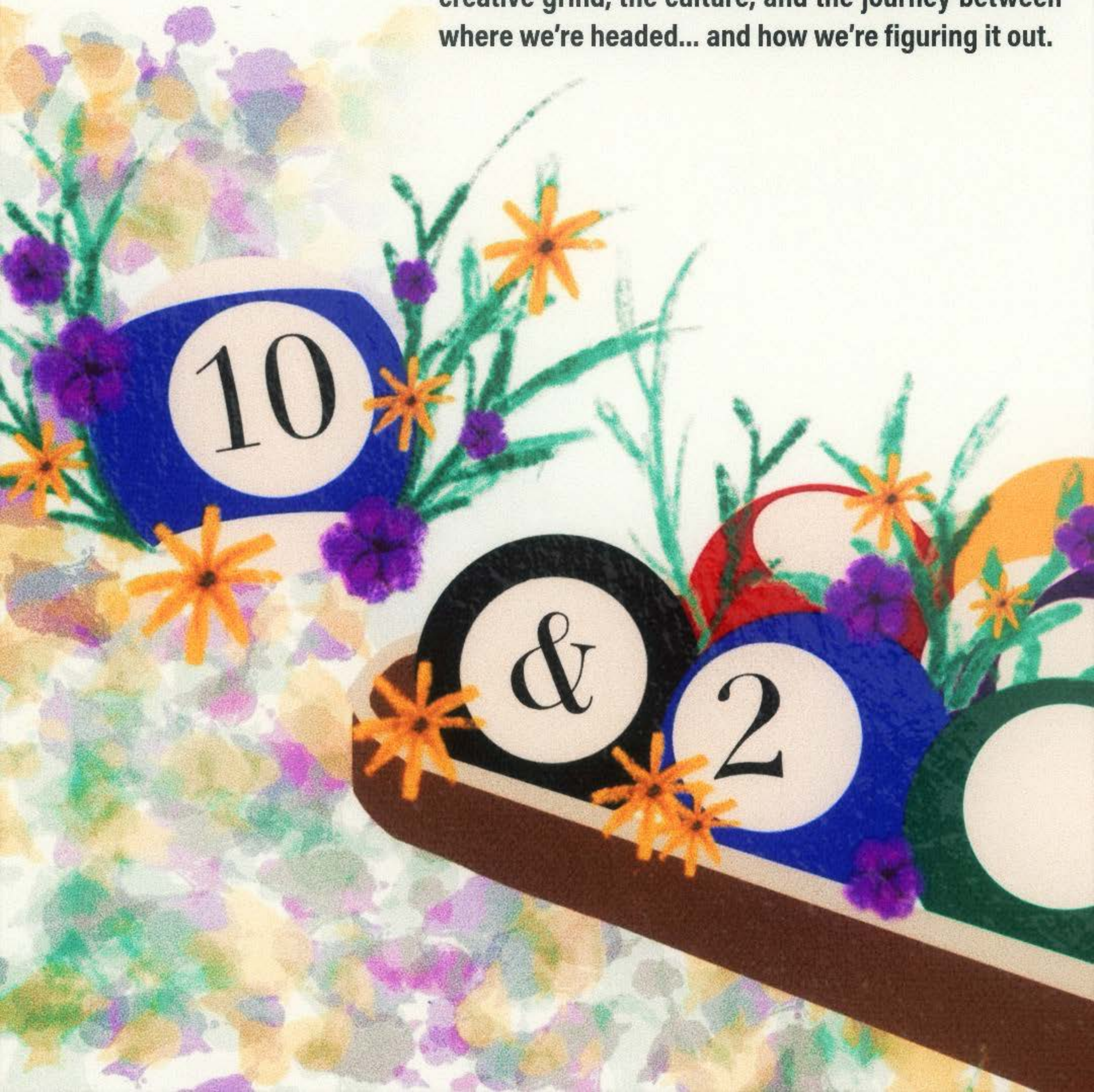
BILLIARDS VAMSOA

presents



TEN & TWO

Welcome to 10 & 2 — the official podcast powered by Billiards VMSOA. Hosted by Naire and Vania , this fresh and fearless new series gets candid about the creative grind, the culture, and the journey between where we're headed... and how we're figuring it out.



EPISODE 1: "NICE TO MEET YOU"

PREMIERING

4/23 ON APPLE & SPOTIFY

In this debut episode, "Nice To Meet You," Naire and Vania chop it up about:

- Who they are and how they came to Billiards
- Why artists-turned-educators deserve more credit
- What's in store for the podcast season ahead

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It's honest, lighthearted, and soaked in that Billiards spirit — part journal, part jam session, all real.

Tap In:

- Spotify: Billiards Podcasts 
- Apple Podcasts: The Billiards Podcasts 
- YouTube: @billiardsvmsoa 



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DAY TRIPPIN'

*Billiards-approved day trips
connecting Virginia's coast with
the culture of the capital.*

DMV TO THE TIDEWATER

Oceanfront Reset

*Start with a sunrise stretch at
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Grab smoothies from Fruitive
and soak in that saltwater
therapy.*

Norfolk Art Loop

*Check out the Chrysler
Museum, then head to NEON
District for murals, indie
galleries, and a drop-in at
Zeke's Beans & Bowls.*

757 Soundwaves

*End the night with live music at
37th & Zen or Culture Lounge.
You might catch a rising star or
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