

GQ February Issue 2025 – ROSÉ

- How did you spend the end of the year?

(laughs) A very lazy end of the year. To be honest, I was going around saying, "Once I'm done with everything, I'll go on a trip! I'll do this and that!" But nope, none of that happened.

- Doing absolutely nothing, but wanting to do nothing even more intensely.

Exactly. (laughs) Over the past few months, I was spending a week in a different place all the time—one week in Europe, another in the U.S., then Japan, and Korea... By the time the end of the year rolled around, I just felt like staying home. So I thought, "Alright, let's treat this like I'm on a trip," and didn't make too many plans or commitments. I think I spent it slowly, meeting friends and family. Oh, and my mom set up a Christmas tree at home, so I didn't even want to go out because I wanted to enjoy it as much as possible.

- Spending it with loved ones—sounds like a perfect end to the year.

I liked it. It wasn't particularly exciting, but it was a long-overdue, stable, and comfortable time.

- It's been two years since we last met with *GQ*. Back then, you were about to take the Coachella headliner stage.

That's right. I remember.

- When we asked how you felt about performing as a Coachella headliner, you said, "Something unimaginable has happened. Something I didn't even dare to dream of!"

Honestly, the Coachella stage still feels unreal. It was such a dreamlike opportunity. Even now, when people bring up Coachella, I'm like, "Oh right, we were headliners, weren't we?" It still feels unbelievable.

- If we were to ask you about the reactions to 'APT.' now, I feel like your answer would be similar. What do you think?

Exactly. Not just the reactions after the release, but the entire production process felt like riding a rollercoaster. There were so many incredible experiences along the way that even now, when I think about it, it's hard to believe.

- So if I ask about the current reactions to 'APT.' you might give a similar answer, right?

Yes, Exactly. Not just the reactions after the song's release, but the entire production process felt like riding a rollercoaster. There were so many incredible experiences in between that even now, , when I look back, it still feels unreal.

- Seeing the wave-like reactions to 'APT.' reminded me of something you said in that interview: "Whenever I trusted myself, the outcome was always good." Sending the sample of 'APT.' to Bruno was based on your instinct and your decision, wasn't it?

When I took to heart the moments and things that genuinely brought me joy, I came to realize that there are those who, without judgment, embrace and share in my choices, even if not everyone does. And this has been something I've believed for a long time: listening closely to what brings me joy, observing, and recognizing it is an incredibly valuable attitude for someone who makes music. Being able to look at the sound of my heart, as if reading a diary, is something truly important.

- So your music is born from those honest emotions.

It's a bit embarrassing, but I think so. The same goes for how I thought of Bruno. I clearly remember how much I was enjoying his performance about a year ago. I remember thinking, "Wow, an artist can deliver such an incredible live performance while running around like that?" It was both shocking and deeply inspiring. It was a huge shock and an emotional experience. The impact was so great that I even felt proud, as a fellow human. When I sent the song "APT." to Bruno, I thought, "I wish we could collaborate, that would be the only wish I'd ever need." That feeling came from remembering the sheer joy I felt watching his performance, and I think it made me long for and want to work with him even more.

- You were involved in every part of the production process for <ROSIE>, right?

That's right. To be honest, up until now, I've always been supported as a member of a group. Albums require countless decisions, and as a solo artist, I found myself facing those decisions alone. At some point, I realized that no one else would make the important decisions for me. After that, I decided to take

them on myself. To complete this project well, the only way was to go out there, learn, study, and face the challenges myself. Once I realized that, it became clear that it was what I had to do.

- With the mindset of starting from scratch.

Yes. To create the world I wanted, I had to build it step by step, completely on my own. And that journey started in the studio. To be honest, I was really scared when I first entered the studio. Because if I felt like "I can't do this on my own," I would have to find another way. But luckily, during the first session, I got this tiny feeling, like, "Maybe I can do this..." Of course, there's still so much I need to improve on and learn, but at that moment, I think I saw a bit of potential. Then, not long after, I came back to Korea and, a little shyly (laughs), shared the results with my family and friends.

- Drumroll... what was their reaction?

Thankfully, they were all incredibly supportive. They kept encouraging me to keep working hard. Before showing it to them, I was honestly nervous and scared, but their enthusiastic encouragement to get back to work gave me so much confidence.

- How long do you think it took from your first studio session to the album's release?

It was about a full year. I spent a whole year just working on it.

- That must have been an intense time.

When finishing the album, it was really hectic. But looking back on the production process now... it was a different kind of busy. Even though it was chaotic, it was enjoyable. I literally did nothing but go back and forth between the studio. Oh, and the hotpot restaurant! (laughs) My routine was pretty set: hotel, studio, hotpot. Hotel, studio, hotpot—for an entire year. It was fun.

- The phrase "busy but enjoyed it" really comes through clearly. It feels like you've neatly defined that year in two ways.

When I think back, that year was a time when I got to do everything I wanted to try. But when I say it like that, it might sound like I did a lot, but honestly, I only focused on music. So, it was a time when I got to explore everything I wanted within music. When I'm doing something other than music, I just don't feel happy. Eventually, it became like a hobby to me.

- It must be impossible for *ROSIE* to be anything but special.

I've mentioned this before, but this album really feels like a time capsule to me. It holds many of the emotions I felt at the time, emotions that I didn't even fully understand when I was in my early 20s. It also carries the complex journey of the year I spent making these songs based on those experiences. So, <ROSIE> is definitely a time capsule for me. In 5 or 10 years, I think it will feel like an old diary.

- What changes did you experience after completing the album?

It feels like I went through some hard training. So if I were to say what changed, I feel like I've become much stronger. Thanks to that, I now feel that no matter what challenges come my way, I can overcome them and handle them well. But these changes wouldn't have happened without the support of my family and friends. Wait a second, I feel like I'm about to cry... sorry. (A few moments later) I have friends who dropped everything and came to the U.S. so I could focus solely on making music. My friends, who stayed by my side until the end and always supported me emotionally so I wouldn't burn out, and my family. I feel like they took care of me and helped me grow over the past year. Thanks to them, I realized how precious it is to be supported by others. Wait a second, why am I tearing up... I'm really sorry.

- No, thank you for sharing honestly.

(A moment later) I'm okay now. Sorry.

- What did you wish for in the new year?

Until recently, I had a sort of "new year's fear." There was a time when I was very sick and went through a tough winter, and ever since, I've felt this pressure that the new year has to be filled with happiness. "You can't be sick, you have to be happy"—that pressure made it hard for me, and it turned into this kind of fear. But, ah, since I know my fans will read this interview, there's something I really want to share.

- You left a message for the fans in the last interview too.

Yes, because I'm sure they'll read it. I want to say something carefully: if any of the fans are going through a tough winter and not feeling happy, I want them to know that you don't *have* to be happy. Just

because it's Christmas or New Year's doesn't mean everyone is happy. If you look closely, these days are really no different from any other day—maybe just a bit more sparkling on the streets? I hope no one feels like they're the only one not happy. Happiness isn't something extraordinary. It can be found in the tiniest little things. GQ