

Mansur Brown is the definition of a prodigy: a classically trained guitarist, curator and multi-disciplinary artist whose music balances virtuoso precision with deft expressions of emotion. Mansur's distinctive compositional approach finds him blending his intricate, flamenco-influenced guitar with his own original production work, informed by the rhythmic snap of early '00s Timbaland, the swing of Afrobeats and the melancholic sound design of Burial. "Sometimes my music has a club feel, other times it's more introspective," he explains. "But running through all of it are feelings of happiness, of gratitude. I want it to feel rejuvenating."

Guitar remains at the centre of Mansur's music, but it's by no means the only component. Straddling the roles of songwriter, producer and multi-instrumentalist, records like 2021's *Heiwa* find him reaching for keyboards, flute and saxophone –even singing, pitch-shifting his voice in honour of his favourite R&B tracks. This spirit of self-sufficiency cuts through everything Mansur does.

It's why he decided to found his own label AMAI ('sweet' in Japanese), an entrepreneurial venture through which he plans to release music, film, artwork –even technology and code. "In the music industry, people really like genres –they like to define things, put things in boxes," he says. "Being able to start a label, in this climate where everything's in a box, it gives me the freedom to innovate and explore concepts. To do it my way."

A collection of club heaters that set Brown's melodic guitar to a set of rich, filled-out dancefloor productions, *NAQI Vol.1* finds Mansur exploring the influence of '00s hip-hop innovator Timbaland and Afrobeats artists like Burna Boy and Wizkid. "I like my music to have a club feel at its core, but to keep hold of that sense of musicality," he explains. "Having that sense of movement, but with guitar melodies, keyboards and strings over the top –that's always been a dream of mine".