# Joy Crookes reveals how racism and self-doubt shape her music and identity



In a candid conversation with Glamour UK, Joy Crookes, the rising British singer-songwriter, opened up about her ongoing struggles with self-doubt and her harrowing experiences with racism throughout her career. Despite her success—boasting 2.5 million monthly Spotify listeners and the acclaim that followed her debut album, *Skin*—Crookes revealed that insecurities persist. “I sometimes worry I’m not interesting enough for this industry,” she shared. The 26-year-old reflected on the challenges faced by women in music, particularly noting how male counterparts often receive accolades without needing the same depth of charisma. This perception was amplified by her admiration for legendary figures like Lauryn Hill, whose experiences in the industry have left a significant mark on Crookes’s outlook.

Crookes’s sentiment resonates deeply within the modern musical landscape, often influenced by the cultural and racial dynamics that shape the industry. Her early experiences in hospitality paint a troubling picture of the racism she encountered. Working in a Polish restaurant, she recalled incidents where racist customers would visibly reject her service, an experience she described as one of the most disturbing of her life. Yet rather than allowing these experiences to deter her, Crookes channeled her frustrations and identity into her music, which explores the nuances of her Bangladeshi-Irish heritage and the vibrant local culture of south London.

As she prepares to release her much-anticipated second album, *Juniper*, on September 26, 2025, Joy Crookes aims to build upon the themes introduced in *Skin*. This new project promises a collection of 12 tracks, including fan-favourites like “Pass The Salt” featuring Vince Staples. The release is not merely a follow-up; it signifies Crookes's growing commitment to addressing issues that resonate both personally and politically. In her previous work, themes surrounding racial justice and personal empowerment were paramount, as highlighted in tracks like “Feet Don’t Fail Me Now,” which critiques societal complacency.

Crookes's rise has occurred within a broader context of increasing representation for minority artists in music. As she highlighted in discussions surrounding her work, the struggle for visibility is a collective one, particularly as an artist of South Asian descent. “Growing up, the closest person I saw on TV who resembled me was Pocahontas,” she remarked, underlining the unique challenges faced by artists aiming to articulate their identities in an industry often fixated on singular narratives.

The forthcoming *Sound of the Summer* issue of Glamour UK will feature Crookes alongside fellow artists Darkoo and CMAT, spotlighting their diverse talents. This thematic focus aligns with the publication's new editorial direction under Kemi Alemoru, who emphasises the importance of reflecting multifaceted women's experiences in media. Alemoru’s vision, which prioritises inclusivity and authenticity, complements Crookes's own ethos—both advocate for the need to amplify underrepresented voices and celebrate female artistry.

In her new chapter, Joy Crookes stands poised not only to entertain but also to challenge perceptions within the music industry. As she embarks on a UK and European tour in support of *Juniper*, her journey resonates with those facing similar struggles, encapsulating the transformative power of music as a vehicle for both personal expression and social commentary.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14742917/Joy-Crookes-doubt-racism-Glamour-UK.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/joy-crookes-interview-2022)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14742917/Joy-Crookes-doubt-racism-Glamour-UK.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/culture/article/joy-crookes-interview-2021), [[4]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/music/artists/diaries-boring-joy-crookes-making-pop-sex-london-buses-love/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.npr.org/2021/10/17/1046850276/joy-crookes-first-album-embraces-power-heartbreak-and-racial-justice), [[6]](https://www.huckmag.com/article/joy-crookes-is-challenging-perceptions-of-identity)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/culture/article/joy-crookes-interview-2021), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-61634346)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14742917/Joy-Crookes-doubt-racism-Glamour-UK.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/joy-crookes-interview-2022)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14742917/Joy-Crookes-doubt-racism-Glamour-UK.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/joy-crookes-interview-2022> - In this interview with Glamour UK, Joy Crookes discusses her music, community, and authenticity. She emphasizes the importance of integrity in her work and life, highlighting the unapologetic nature of the women in her family. Crookes also reflects on her deep connection to music, describing it as a universal language that transcends borders. She shares personal anecdotes, including her teenage years in Elephant and Castle, and discusses her approach to songwriting as a form of emotional expression.
3. <https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/culture/article/joy-crookes-interview-2021> - In this British GQ interview, Joy Crookes reflects on her upbringing and the lack of representation she saw in the music industry. She shares that growing up, the closest person she saw on TV who resembled her was Pocahontas, and mentions MIA as another figure she could relate to. Crookes discusses the challenges of being a South Asian woman in the music industry and the importance of representation for minority groups.
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/music/artists/diaries-boring-joy-crookes-making-pop-sex-london-buses-love/> - In this interview with The Telegraph, Joy Crookes discusses her music and the influences that shape her work. She talks about her Bangladeshi-Irish heritage and how it informs her music, mentioning that both cultures are artistic and have experienced discrimination in Britain. Crookes also addresses the issue of racism and how it has made her a passionate person, emphasizing the importance of empathy in her work.
5. <https://www.npr.org/2021/10/17/1046850276/joy-crookes-first-album-embraces-power-heartbreak-and-racial-justice> - In this NPR interview, Joy Crookes discusses her debut album 'Skin' and the themes it explores, including power, heartbreak, and racial justice. She talks about the inspiration behind the song 'Feet Don't Fail Me Now,' which addresses political turmoil and the ease of being complicit. Crookes emphasizes the importance of facing oneself before addressing others in the pursuit of progression, especially concerning racism and injustice.
6. <https://www.huckmag.com/article/joy-crookes-is-challenging-perceptions-of-identity> - In this Huck Magazine article, Joy Crookes discusses the importance of identity and how it makes her feel comfortable in her own skin. She talks about the title of her album 'Skin' and its significance, noting that skin is both a biological organ and a social construct that can be used against people. Crookes also addresses the pressure to represent minority groups and the urgency to be heard, given the historical erasure of Black and brown women's voices.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-61634346> - In this BBC News article, Joy Crookes emphasizes the importance of providing platforms for artists from minority groups. She discusses the challenges of entering the music industry without existing connections and the significance of accessibility for individuals from diverse backgrounds. Crookes highlights the role of independent artists and labels in offering opportunities for minority communities to showcase their work.