

sneakers unboxed:  
studio to street

Tour Proposal





## The Design Museum Touring Programme

The programme was set up in 2002 with the aim of bringing design exhibitions to audiences around the UK and internationally. Since then, the museum has organised more than 170 tours to 137 venues in 38 countries worldwide. The Design Museum's touring exhibitions range in size from 150 to 1,000 square metres and cover all areas of design – architecture, fashion, furniture, graphics, product and more.

## About the Design Museum

The Design Museum is the world's leading museum devoted to architecture and design. Its work encompasses all elements of design, including fashion, product and graphic design. Since it opened its doors in 1989, the museum has displayed everything from an AK-47 to high heels designed by Christian Louboutin. It has staged over 100 exhibitions, welcomed over five million visitors and showcased the work of some of the world's most celebrated designers and architects including Paul Smith, Zaha Hadid, Jonathan Ive, Miuccia Prada, Frank Gehry, Eileen Gray and Dieter Rams. On 24 November 2016, the Design Museum relocated to Kensington, West London. Architect John Pawson converted the interior of a 1960s modernist building to create a new home for the Design Museum, giving it three times more space in which to show a wider range of exhibitions and significantly extend its learning programme.

In May 2018, the Design Museum was awarded the title of European Museum of the Year.

## Contents

5	Exhibition overview
7	Style
11	Performance
15	Publication and Partnerships
21	Terms and conditions
22	Contact



The Design Museum



‘A technicolour medley of shapes and styles’  
★★★★ Evening Standard

‘This fun show has all the answers –  
including how to get really fat laces.’  
★★★★ The Guardian







**CURATOR**  
**Ligaya Salazar** is a Freelance Curator  
**Shasti Lowton** was formerly a Curator at  
the Design Museum

**EXHIBITION DESIGN**  
**Interesting Projects Ltd.**

**GRAPHIC DESIGN**  
**Studio LP**

**VENUES**  
**the Design Museum, London**  
18 May - 24 October 2021

**Design Museum Den Bosch, Netherlands**  
5 May - 16 October 2022

**Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, Taipei,  
Taiwan**  
22 December 2022 - 5 March 2023

**Sejong Centre, Seoul, Korea**  
1 June - 10 September 2023

**HOTA (Home of the Arts), Gold Coast,  
Australia**  
25 November 2023 - 18 February 2024

**TOUR AVAILABILITY**  
Slots available in 2024 and 2025

**SPACE**  
approx 400 square metres

## Exhibition overview

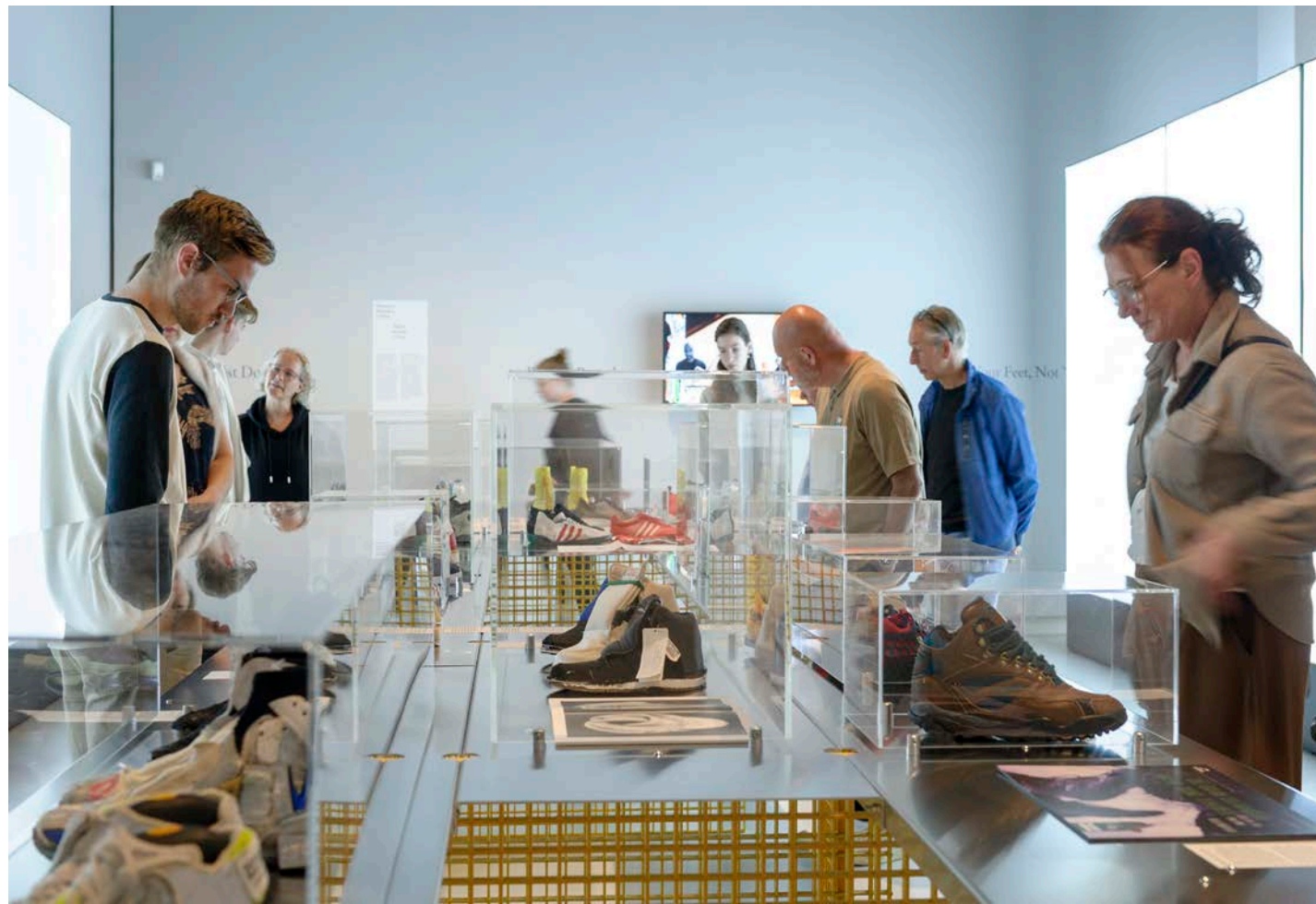
Sneakers Unboxed tells the story of one of the most universal design objects, bought and worn by millions of people worldwide every day. Charting the design and cultural journey of sneakers, shoes originally designed for specific athletic activities, this exhibition explores how they have been adopted as a style element by youth cultures. The show then looks at how this adoption has made sneakers pivotal in shaping the current global industry, one that is today equally driven by design innovation and consumer demand.

Featuring iconic models and designs from as early as the 1920s, the exhibition will explore and demonstrate how sneaker design is a synthesis of cutting edge-technology, innovative materials, and global style-consciousness. Visitors will be taken on a journey into the design process behind the most technically inventive sneakers, offering a new-found appreciation for these ubiquitous design objects.

The exhibition offers an informative and empowering experience, putting people, designers, and wearers at the heart of the story. It encourages visitors to think about the future of sneaker design and sustainability in the industry.

Aside from a multitude of rare sneakers, the exhibition features a wealth of images, film, and process material.





## Style

The first chapter of the exhibition examines the influence of young people from diverse inner-city neighbourhoods on sneaker culture, and how they have been instrumental in elevating sneakers from pure sportswear to sought-after icons of style.

In the 1970s, sneakers were popularised by a number of youth cultures in different parts of the world. Brands, without knowing it, fuelled a thirst for exclusivity as they only distributed sneakers to athletes, specifically for sports.

They soon attempted to appeal to young people by introducing endorsements from musicians and sports stars. When the desire for uniqueness was recognised more widely in the 1990s, a distinct shift in sneaker culture emerged, leading to some of the earliest limited editions and collaborations between sports brands and fashion designers.

Aided by high-profile partnerships and the growing dominance of the internet, sneakers have seen an unprecedented growth in popularity over the last decade. Now, more than ever, they are a platform for experimental design.

Opposite  
1. Exhibition View, Design Museum Den Bosch  
2. Nike Air Max 90

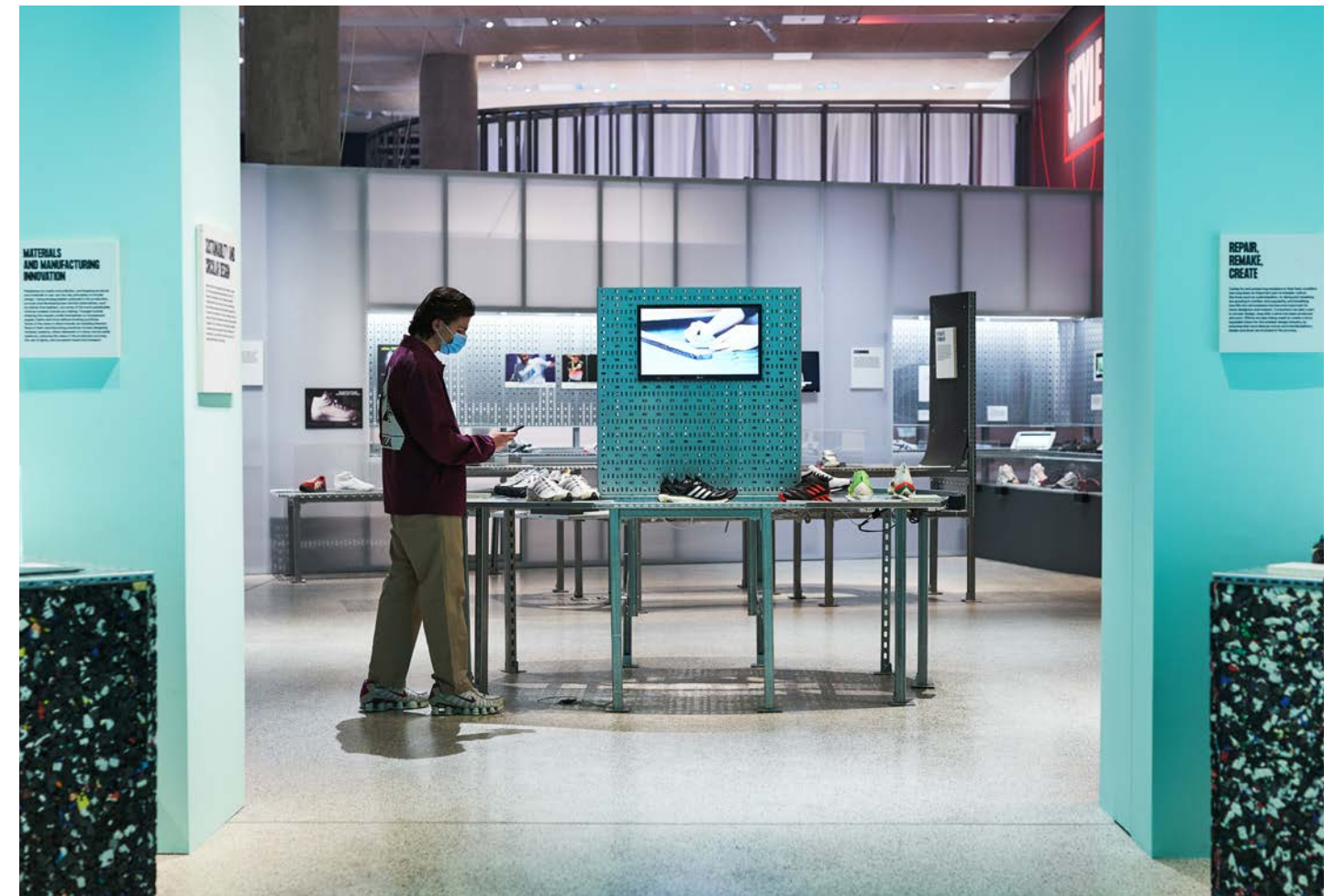
Above  
Balenciaga Triple S



# STYLE







## Performance

Performance is the second chapter of the exhibition. Most sports shoes that we now think of as innovative or ground-breaking arose from a need to meet a core set of interconnected design concerns. Factors such as traction, fit, stability, cushioning and energy return can help to improve athletic performance. These concerns are continually revisited by designers, as brands engage with new technologies and emerging research in sports science, in a quest to make their shoes technically the best.

The most urgent issue facing designers and consumers today is sustainability. Innovation in materials, experimental manufacturing techniques and increased transparency in supply chains are some of the ways in which brands are tackling the environmental impact and human cost of sneaker production. Designers and customisers are also developing more sustainable methods by extending the lifespan of sneakers through upcycling, remaking and refurbishing.

Opposite  
 1. Advert, Converse All Star  
 2. adidas trade catalogue  
 3. Onitsuka Tiger Nylon Spikes, 1968-72

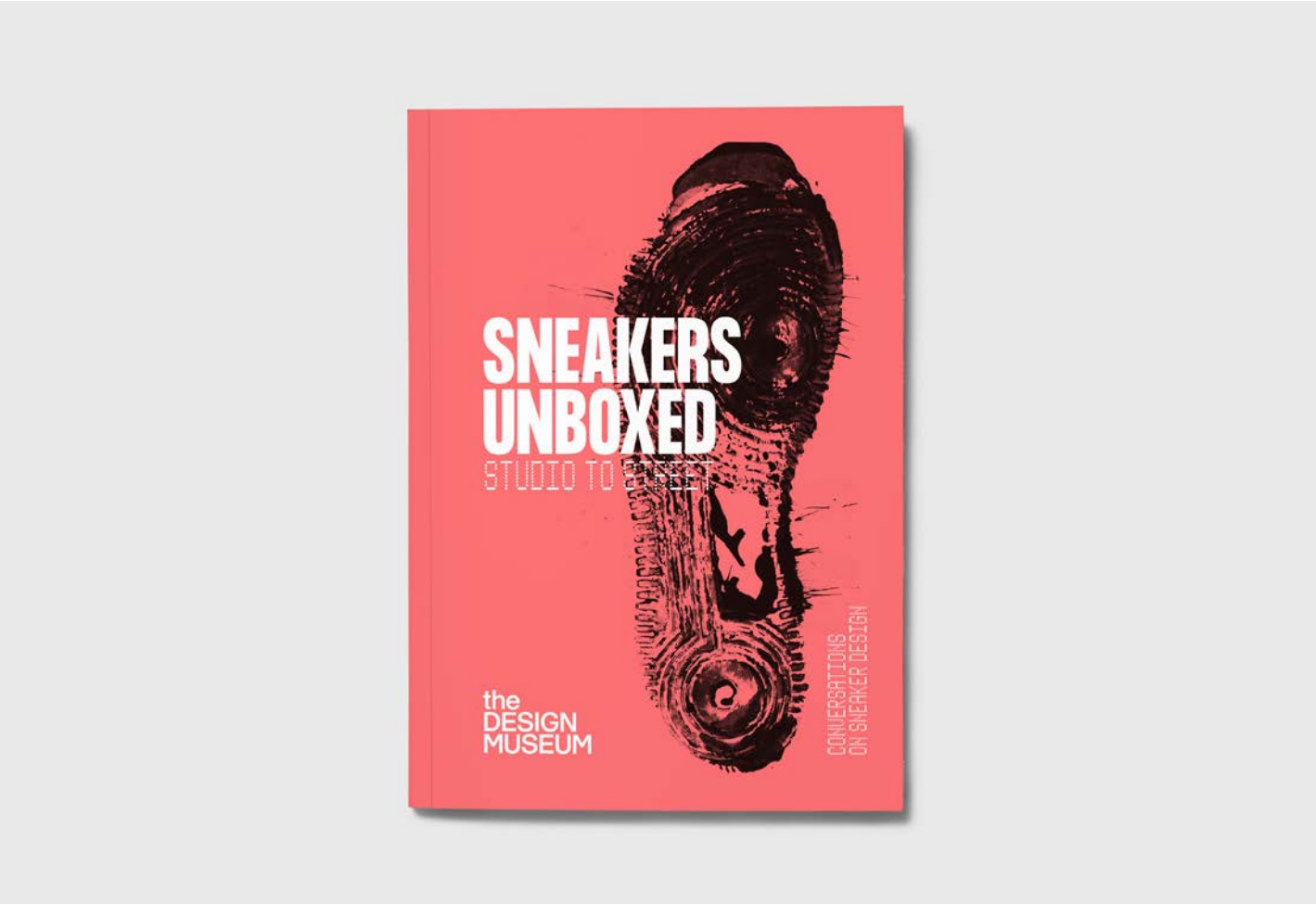
This page  
 Exhibition View, the Design Museum, London



# PERFORMANCE







## Publication

### Conversations on Sneaker Design

Lavishly illustrated, featuring previously unpublished images, this book charts the journey of sneakers, exploring how and why they transitioned from athletic performance objects to symbols of style, status and belonging.

Contributors include industry-defining designers such as Alexander Taylor, Asha Harper, COTTWEILER, Helen Kirkum, Peter Moore, Samuel Ross, Steven Smith and many more. Featuring insights from forty industry experts with a breadth of experience that charts the sneaker industry from its earliest days to its future, this publication is uniquely placed to attract a wide audience, from the casual wearer to the most diehard 'sneaker head'.

The most comprehensive sneaker book to feature the thoughts, opinions, stories and insights of leading designers, creators and industry insiders who have shaped the global sneaker phenomenon.

THE OFFICIAL BOOK TO ACCOMPANY THE SNEAKERS UNBOXED EXHIBITION

CREATED BY AND EXCLUSIVE TO THE DESIGN MUSEUM

SOFTCOVER

176 PAGES

21 X 14.3 CM











## Terms and conditions

Hire fee, on request, includes:

- Curation and exhibition concept
- Tour management by Design Museum staff
- Exhibits
- Images and films
- Exhibition text in English
- 2D and 3D design concept
- Selected display kit

Costs payable by the venue:

- Hire fee, in instalments
- Exhibition and graphic design adaptation
- Share of transport and crating costs
- Storage of empty crates
- Nail-to-nail insurance
- All costs relating to exhibition production
- Installation and de-installation costs
- Marketing



## Contact

To find out more about this exhibition and other tours available from 2024 onwards, please contact:

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### PICTURE CREDITS

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Cover image: Sneaker Archeology, Helen Kirkum



