



Exhibition artwork by Jack Harper

Sneakers Unboxed: From Studio to Street

30 April – 24 October 2021

the Design Museum

Media Preview: Tuesday 27 April 2021

#SneakersUnboxed

@DesignMuseum

[IMAGE LINK](#)

The Design Museum, in London is set to open a major exhibition exploring one of the most universal design objects, bought and worn by millions of people worldwide every day

From sneakers originally designed for specific athletic activities such as the Converse Chuck Taylor All Star, the Puma Disc, and Nike Alpha fly Next%, to their cultural resonance across the globe, discover how the shoe became the undisputed cultural symbol of our times

Take a journey through the design process behind some of the most technically inventive shoes of today, see the adidas 'FutureCraft.Strung' shoe-making robot designed by Kram/Weisshaar, learn about Satoshi, a brand using blockchain certification and see the world's first biologically active shoes developed by MIT Design Lab and Biorealize for Puma

Uncover the icons and collaborations that have shaped this phenomenon over the years from Michael Jordan and Run-DMC to Supreme and Kanye West; experience visuals and graphic work from Jamel Shabazz, Grace Ladoja, Simon Wheatley and Reuben Dangoor,

and meet the designers working to make the industry more sustainable such as Stella McCartney, Helen Kirkum and Alex Taylor

Delve into the lucrative resale market that is currently valued at more than \$6 billion through data visualisations from StockX, before reliving the high-fashion reinvention of a streetwear staple including sneakers by Balenciaga, Comme des Garçons and Y3, alongside runway looks from A-COLD-WALL* and Craig Green

Dropping in April 2021, the Design Museum in London launches its long-awaited exhibition, *Sneakers Unboxed: From Studio to Street*, sponsored by global e-commerce marketplace for current culture products, StockX. Split into two sections, Style and Performance, the exhibition invites visitors behind the scenes of the footwear phenomenon that has challenged performance design, inspired new youth cultures and shaken the world of fashion.

Over the years, many iconic trainers have been adopted by social movements and youth cultures across the globe. Originating in **New York during the 1970s, the basketball and hip-hop communities elevated the sneaker from sportswear accessory to cultural symbol through the likes of Clyde Frazier and Run-DMC. Featuring over 200 shoes alone,** the exhibition looks at various influential movements including the **West Coast Skaters, the Casuals, Grime and the Bubbleheads in Cape Town.**

Starting in Tokyo, discover the tipping point of the genre with early collaborations between streetwear boutiques and designers, including the **Atmos Air Max 1 Safari** and the first **Adidas and Yohji Yamamoto sneaker. Explore the key small retailers around the globe who were at the heart of the beginnings of sneaker culture, such as Footwork, Reed Space in New York and Patta in Amsterdam.** Following the explosion of commercialisation, the exhibition also questions if collaborations are being developed **for the love of sneakers or for commercial benefit.**

Sneaker sales continued to rise during 2020; uncover **the surge of limited-edition products and collaborations** reaching mass exclusivity including **Colette, Sean Wotherspoon and Travis Scott with Nike, and Kanye and Pharell for Adidas, as well as some highlights from StockX including the most valuable sneaker release of 2020, the Jordan 1 Retro High Dior; the most hyped women's sneaker release of 2020, the Jordan 4 Retro Off-White Sail; and the most traded of all time, the Yeezy 350 Zebra.**

Relive past collections and see how the streetwear staple infiltrated the catwalk through full looks from A-COLD-WALL* by Samuel Ross and Craig

Green's 2021 Collection. Crossing the boundaries of fashion, designers such as Sacai and Martine Rose are taking design experimentation to new levels, through models such as the **Nike x Sacai LD Waffle** and **Nike x Martine Rose Monarch**.

Ligaya Salazar, Curator said:

"A footwear staple for style, performance and comfort wear, Sneakers Unboxed: Studio to Street reveals the role young people from diverse backgrounds have played in making individual sneakers into style icons and in driving an industry now worth billions. The exhibition also gives behind-the-scenes insight into new upcycling and sustainable design practices, unseen prototypes predicting the future of performance design, and streetwear and fashion collaborations that changed the face of the industry."

Derek Morrison, Senior Director, Europe, StockX said:

"We're thrilled to be partnering with the Design Museum on this major exhibition about sneakers. The global sneaker resale market is experiencing massive growth – with an anticipated market size of over \$30 billion by 2030 - and we've seen that first-hand on StockX. Sneakers make us feel connected to brands, people and cultural moments and they serve as a means of self-expression, whether you're a collector or wearing them right out of the box. They also have the power to unlock economic opportunity, and we have a vibrant community of sellers ranging from students funding their education to sophisticated businesses selling thousands of pairs daily. The love for sneakers transcends age, gender and location, and no matter your background, you probably have a connection, memory, or story about your favourite pair."

Take a journey into the **design process behind some of the most technically inventive sneakers in the world** and **discover the cutting-edge technology**, innovative materials and performative power integral to this footwear style. From the **early Converse 'Big 9'** and materials from basketball clinics first run in the 1920s by **Chuck Taylor**, to the **record-breaking Nike 'Alphafly NEXT%'** and **self-lacing 'Fit Intelligence' shoe by Puma** released last year, unveil the true history of the sport shoe and the incredible designs developed to create more effective athletes through an exploration of eight design concerns.

Expect to see early experiments by Nike, such as the **classic blue and yellow 'Waffle' sneaker**. Stretching the bounds of innovation, the exhibition also features a number of unseen prototypes including a **shoe that breathes by using heat patterns from your foot created by the MIT Design Lab and Biorealize** and the **Reebok 'Instapump Fury'**, which was designed for an optimal fit.

Visitors will be immersed in futuristic designs from the past and present. Explore the emergence of **sneaker-tech in the 1980s with the Adidas**

‘Micropacer’, featuring an LCD microcomputer embedded in the tongue, to even more **controversial designs that question the formation of footwear**, such as the **first ‘5 finger’ prototype shoe from Vibram that replicates the feeling of running barefoot.**

Given that trainer soles are lasting in landfills for up to one thousand years, the exhibition ends with **a look to more sustainable futures** through three prominent themes: upcycling and repair, circular design and consideration of materials. **Unearth plant-based sneakers from around the world from brands including Veja and Native Shoes**, then learn more about the ‘repair, remake, create’ philosophy sweeping the fashion scene with **customised designs from Helen Kirkum, Alexander Taylor in collaboration with Adidas, and the Adikoggs ‘Billy Bremner themed trainers’** inspired by the Leeds United footballer. The show culminates with the **adidas ‘Future.Craft Strung’ designed by Kram/Weisshaar, a shoe-making robot that pioneers a 3D knitting technology enabling it to produce full shoe uppers on the spot.**

The exhibition artwork, featuring the footprints of popular sneakers, has been created by London designer Jack Harper. Applying paint onto the base sole of a Nike Air Force shoe, Adidas Stan Smith, Converse Chuck Taylor All Star and the Van Classic shoe, the artwork experiments with differing amounts of force to produce impactful relief prints.

Sneakers Unboxed: Studio to Street opens on Friday 30 April 2021 at the Design Museum. Early bird ticket vouchers for this exhibition are available to book now, with more ticket information to be revealed in March 2021.

-Ends-

Notes to Editor

Curated by

Ligaya Salazar, Curator

Rachel Hajek, Assistant Curator

Exhibition 3D Design

Interesting Projects

Exhibition 2D Design

Studio LP

Exhibition Sponsored by StockX

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About Stock X:

StockX is proud to be a Detroit-based technology leader focused on the large and growing online market for sneakers, apparel, electronics, accessories, and collectibles. StockX's powerful platform connects buyers and sellers of high-demand consumer goods from around the world using dynamic pricing mechanics. This approach brings unparalleled access and transparency powered by real-time data that empowers buyers and sellers to determine and transact based on fair market value. The StockX platform features hundreds of brands across verticals including Jordan Brand, adidas, Nike, Supreme, BAPE, Off-White, Louis Vuitton, Gucci; collectibles from artists including KAWS and Takashi Murakami; and electronics from industry-leading manufacturers, Sony, Microsoft, Nvidia, and Apple. Founded in 2016, the company employs more than 1,000 people in 13 offices and authentication centers around the world, and facilitates sales in more than 200 countries and territories. Learn more at www.stockx.com.

About the Design Museum:

The Design Museum is the world's leading museum devoted to contemporary 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 seven million visitors and showcased the work of some of the world's most celebrated designers and architects including Paul Smith, Zaha Hadid, Jonathan Ive, Frank Gehry, Eileen Gray and Dieter Rams. On 24 November 2016, The Design Museum relocated to Kensington, west London. Leading architect John Pawson has 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 October 2020, the Design Museum was awarded £2,968,634 by Arts Council England from the Culture Recovery Fund announced by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

In July 2020, the Design Museum was awarded nearly £1 million National Lottery funding through the Arts Council's Emergency Response Fund.

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