

scndskins



January 2019

Rihanna

A full-page photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a black zip-up hoodie and white pants, sitting on a light-colored skateboard. She is looking directly at the camera. The background is a vibrant, abstract mix of purple, pink, and blue.

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0 MIGHTY

NEW YORK

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From the Streets to Sales

How street-style enters the luxury market.

By Margarite Rebollar

To the casual observer, 9am on Friday 24 February was business as usual in London's Soho. Commuters hurried on their way to work, shutters were raised on shops, rubbish trucks steamed along. But at 26 Brewer Street,

a queue of teenagers was snaking around the block. What for? To get their hands on the latest designs by Palace, the streetwear label known for its triangle logo, skate videos and lol-worthy prints.

This is the "hypebeast" scene, the nickname given to the consumers hungry for whatever hyped streetwear is released in a given week. Palace (founded in London in 2009) and its Soho neighbour Supreme (founded in New York in 1994), are the two kings of streetwear, and the pavements outside both stores are frequently the site of queues, when a "drop" of new clothes comes in store.

Omer, who is 17, queued for six hours today and will spend about £300 even though he doesn't "really like it that much"; Taran, 16, will spend £200, and has travelled for two hours to get to the store. Everyone is dressed up. Taran is in an immaculate white parka and P for Palace cap. Will, another queue member, wears Supreme army fatigues.

Stylist Lotta Volkova, fashion's current favourite mouthpiece, caused a stir last year when she declared "there are no subcultures any more". But the hypebeast scene has all the characteristics of one, both in the gathering of young people on street corners and the obsession over the "right" item to be part of the tribe. In his 1979 book, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Dick Hebdige argues that "humble objects can be magically appropriated; 'stolen' by subcultural groups and made to carry 'secret' meanings which express, in code, a form of resistance." Hebdige pointed to punk's safety pin but the same could be said of streetwear items such as the Supreme Obama hoody or the Palace Elton John T-shirt. Supreme's New York City store, on Lafayette Street, is hypebeast's centre. In 2014, when the brand launched a collaboration with Nike, the NYPD shut the launch down due to concerns for public safety. In February this year, the queues moved to the Broadway/Lafayette subway station where Supreme MetroCards were for sale. Once again, the police were called.

The hypebeast world has its own websites (the appropriately named Hypebeast as well as Highsnobiety) Facebook groups (the Basement with 65,000 members, Sup Talk with 97,000) and its "faces". Gully Guy,

AKA Leo Mandella, is a 14-year-old from Warwickshire who has 197,000 followers on Instagram, and posts pictures of himself in Supreme, Palace and Bape. He claims to have spent more than £9,000 on streetwear, and an average selfie garners more than 20,000 likes. He was spotted in Soho recently followed by a film crew, and models in a video about Supreme's collaborations with North Face on the Basement this month.

Until now streetwear has remained a niche interest. But it is being appropriated by high fashion. Streetwear shapes and staples — sneakers, hoodies, printed T-shirts, tracksuit pants — have been seen at the likes of Givenchy, Vetements and Raf Simons for the past 10 years, but the look truly went mainstream this January when Louis Vuitton collaborated with Supreme. The first model on the catwalk wore a bright red crossbody bag with the Supreme logo writ large. Others followed wearing a pattern that combined the Louis Vuitton monogram canvas with Supreme's logo. A 23-year-old streetwear brand created by a skate scenester was on the runway for the most valuable Parisian brand in the world, one that was founded as a luggage label in 1854 and was valued at £22.5bn in 2016. Highsnobiety ran an article capturing what many within the streetwear community were thinking: "It's official," the title ran, "streetwear and luxury fashion are the same thing."

The collaboration will no doubt sell out before it even gets to stores in July — not just because they are nice designs but also because of the backstory. Louis Vuitton issued a cease-and-desist order to Supreme in 2000 when the brand put a version of the LV double monogram on its skateboards. The order reportedly asked that all products with the design be burned. Seventeen years on, the brands are collaborators.

While the prices are much lower than Louis Vuitton (though still £60 for a T-shirt, £120 for a sweater), the commercial acumen of a youth brand such as Supreme wouldn't have gone unnoticed by the powers that be. Streetwear is big business. On a

"drop day", the traffic on the Supreme site can increase by as much as 16,800%. The Louis Vuitton x Supreme collaboration led to unfounded rumours that LVMH, the conglomerate that owns Louis Vuitton, had bought Supreme for £411m. Such a move doesn't seem beyond the realms of possibility. The collaboration provoked wildly differing reactions from the fashion and streetwear communities. Virgil Abloh is the designer behind streetwear-on-the-catwalk brand Off-White and a Kanye West collaborator. He describes the collaboration as "the most modern moment in fashion that existed in our current time". By contrast, Guy Trebay, the New York Times fashion critic, called it "the fashion version of a murder-suicide". Highsnobiety, meanwhile, reported that Supreme's fanbase felt betrayed. "I think it's stupid as shit. It solidifies Supreme's place in fashion, which is so stupid," said one fan. "They started the brand as a fuck-you to fashion, and now they've become it." The backlash prompted Supreme to make a rare statement to the press. "Throughout the history of the brand, we've seen our customers have apprehensions whenever we do something unexpected," it read. "However, we have always stayed true to the culture from which we came." Supreme knows it needs to ward off accusations of that most mortal subculture sin: selling out.

Streetwear is, of course, indisputably associated with hip-hop, another area where keeping it real is held in high regard. Streetwear staples such as tracksuits and logo T-shirts have been, broadly speaking, the uniform for rappers from Grandmaster Flash to Kendrick Lamar. In the Netflix series, *Hip-Hop Evolution*, Nelson George connects Run DMC's success under Def Jam's Russell Simmons specifically with their Adidas tracksuits, a pillar of the streetwear look, and one worn on the streets of New York at the time. "One of the most important things he did in his whole career was get them out of those checkered jackets and put them in the Adidas and make them more street," says George. "That was a gamechanger." The group went on to sign a sponsorship deal with Adidas in 1986, the first non-athletes to do so.

These associations mean that "streetwear", as a term and a style, still comes with what Hypebeast's UK editor Jason Dike calls "racial coding. If you're black and wearing a cap or a bomber jacket or whatever, it's more likely to be called streetwear than if someone white was wearing it." But these roots in hip-hop perhaps partially explain why the hypebeast scene is notably diverse. I walk past Sneakersnstuff (another dot on the hypebeast map) in Shoreditch one Thursday and almost the entire queue is non-white. Neither Palace or Supreme have a black designer at the helm — James Jebbia at Supreme is a white Brit in New York, while Palace's Lev Tanju is the son of a Turkish footballer and British restaurateur mother. But their association with the outsider element of skate culture and notably diverse imagery — everyone from Lee "Scratch" Perry to Kate Moss, Tyler the Creator and Kermit the Frog have starred in Supreme campaigns — means they feel inclusive.



SS(kin) 2019 Faves

By Heath Ruchman

FENDI

Michael Kors

La Pointe



Then there were puffy poacher pockets on silk blouses and a utility jacket and brown leather jackets, pockets that had their own smaller pockets on top of them, and cargo pants and parkas with multiple pockets. Buckled in there, too, was the option of a tool kit belt with pockets hanging off it.



Elsewhere, there were all sorts of nods to the bright days of summer: surf shirts and baja sweaters in cashmere, easy cotton dresses in juicy shades of lime and watermelon, and metallic brocades to wear bare-legged to dinner.



East of West, a sci-fi comic book series that depicts a dystopian version of the American West. It resurfaced recently, as she searched for Spring inspiration. "I'm actually not a big comics fan, but I was taken in by the mix of past and future," she said. In reference to the comic, three black sailcloths suspended from wires spun slowly in circles to ocean sounds, which ceded to drums.

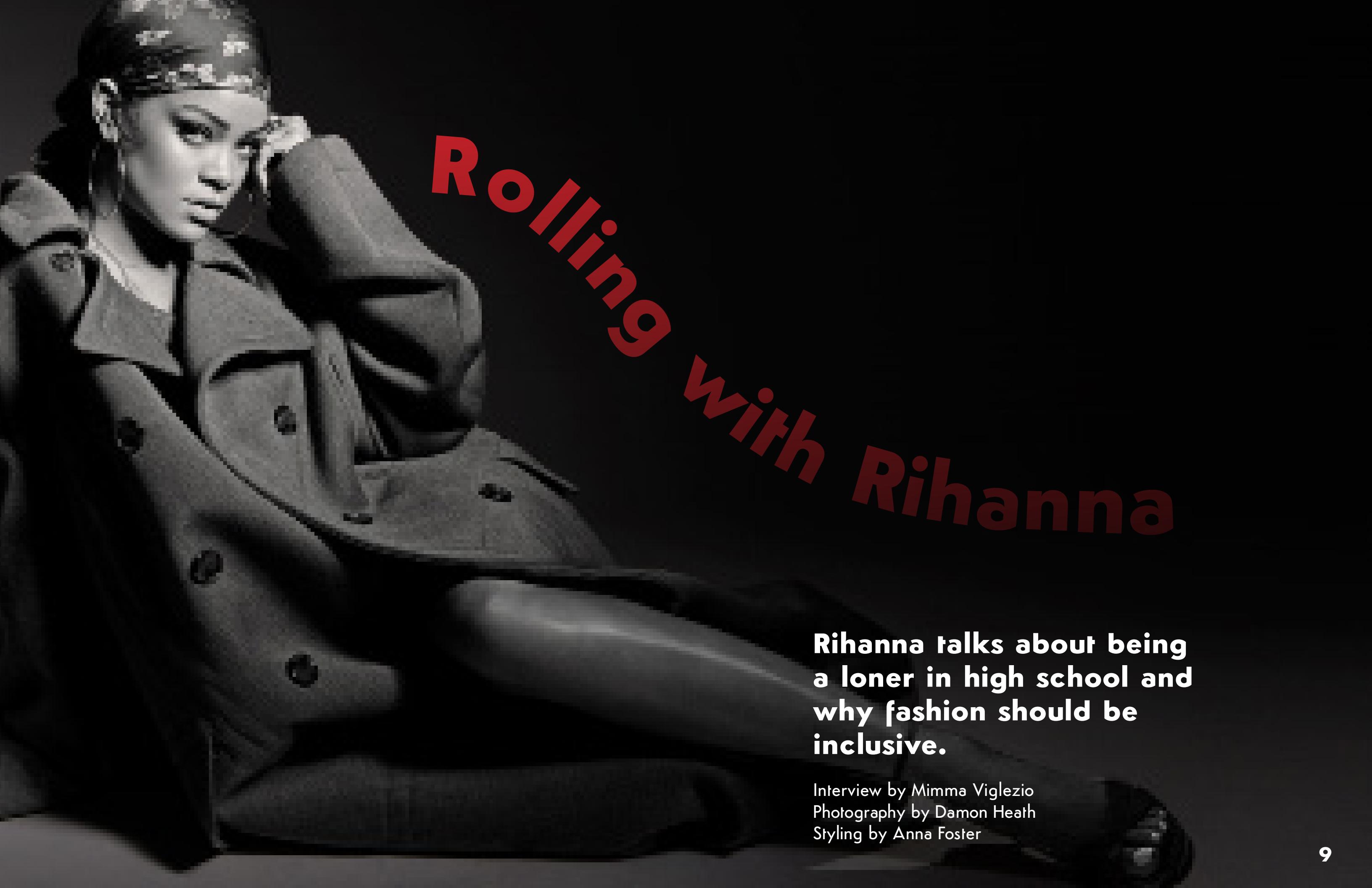
La Pointe

Zimmerman

Fenty x Puma



The pop star has never been afraid of unleashing her inner tomboy either, and the oversize motocross-inspired nylon track pants and anoraks were a nice way to push the athleisure trend out of its current spandex comfort zone.



Rolling with Rihanna

**Rihanna talks about being
a loner in high school and
why fashion should be
inclusive.**

Interview by Mimma Viglezio
Photography by Damon Heath
Styling by Anna Foster



It is not every day that a full marching band welcomes shoppers to Bloomingdale's 59th street flagship. Then again, it's not every day that Rihanna is at Bloomingdale's. On Friday morning, the singer arrived at the midtown store to much fanfare (there were also plenty of dedicated actual fans, some of whom had been waiting outside since the early hours of the particularly crisp fall day) as she celebrated the arrival of her Fall 2017 collection for Fenty x Puma.

For the occasion, the musician, actress, and designer crafted a full-scale high school pep rally, complete with cheerleaders, banners, and yes, a marching band. (By the looks of a crowd, attendance in New York

high schools may have been a bit lacking). It was all a nod to the school theme of the fall collection—because as we all know, Rihanna never shies away from a theme.

Before heading down to address the class of Fenty Fall 2018, Rihanna made a quick appearance in Bloomingdale's makeshift green room (the personal dressing suite on any other day). "It is crazy. I did not expect a welcome like that," Rihanna told W. "It was so thrilling and big and exciting. I enjoyed it. It felt very special."

Here, Rihanna opens up about her own high school experience, embracing size-inclusion, and why fashion should always be fun.



"That's one of the things that was most important to me—to make sure everyone was included."

What was your high school like for you? Do you look back fondly on it?

I was a bit of a loner at times. Cadets was my one outlet. I didn't do any sports, I just did cadets. Little things that you learn in cadets follow you all through your life. Even the way I line my toiletries from tallest to smallest. The discipline really sticks with you. I enjoyed it. I kind of still am that same way. I like to be able to dip in and out of the scene. I like to dip in, but I like to dip out when I'm ready to be by myself and watch TV.

You are so good at wearing new designers, and getting designer runway looks right after they hit the runway. What is your secret?

My secret weapon! I just use mind tricks. I enjoy new perspective. I get bored really easily, so I love when things can trigger an inspiration in my mind. Things I love the most are the things that I get jealous that I didn't think of or come up with myself. Young, fresh, new perspective—even from Parsons students, who are so great. Matthew Adams Dolan, who was one of those students, has become one of my favorite designers and we have had the pleasure of working together.

With Fenty Beauty, you talk about how important it is to have a range for a very diverse group of people. How do you incorporate that mentality into your Fenty Puma line?

I want to make things for all body types. That was very intentional when I first started, even back with River Island. With [Fenty x Puma], I have so much freedom. I want everybody in my crew to have something. You don't just design for yourself. You use your taste as the muse of everything. I like to play around with silhouettes. Trust me, I could always use a good fat day outfit. I like to be comfortable.

"You can tell so much about how someone is, just by their style."

This event is pretty huge, and you always put on a major show during fashion week. Why do you think it is important for fashion to be fun?

Everything has to be fun for me. I have so much on my plate, so if I'm not enjoying then I feel like I'm working and it feels like a chore. I'm more passionate about things that I enjoy.

What are you watching on TV right now?

Anything that is a documentary or reality TV. Anything that has the word "wife" in it. And every city. It doesn't matter [if they are good.] I like watching real situations and real reactions; I'm just obsessed. Even when it is terrible, that makes me want to watch it even more.

For documentaries, are you into true crime?

Oh, murder! Anything murder-y. Snapped, The First 48, anything mystery docu-series, I love. I always feel weird when people come over and are like, "What do you have to watch?" And I'm like, "Uh, Snapped."

What in fashion really excites you right now?

I love a good shoulder-pad. I never think that should go out of style. A broad shoulder makes a small waist, and I like that idea, a lot. I realize Celine and Balenciaga, which are two brands that I really love right now, are getting into stuff like that in their latest collection, and it is really amazing.

Air Max 90

Air Max 90

Air Max 90

Air Max 90



Air Max 90

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Air Max 90

Girls break the Sneaker Industry

By Nicole Kirichanskaya

Nike wants to grow its women's business from \$6.6 billion to \$11 billion by 2020—and sneakerheads are key.

For years, the sneakerhead market was a boys' club. Everything centered on men's tastes and men's sizes—testosterone all but oozed from sneakerhead blogs like Highsnobiety, Hypebeast, and Complex. Women, myself included, were often left out when it came to finding exclusive editions in their sizes. But with the women's sneaker market growing 5% in the last year, athletic brands are paying attention. Just look at Nike, which unveiled a female-focused retail concept called Unlaced during Paris Fashion Week.

Unlaced will debut to the public March 27 as the primary online destination for Nike sneakers for women. Shop-in-shop locations will appear this summer. The concept takes the sneakerhead formula—new styles, increased product offering, customization—and aims it squarely at women. "The idea of providing access to [a woman's] favorite Nike

sneakers and the best of Nike is something that we're really passionate about," says Julie Igarashi, the vice president and creative director for NikeWomen.

There's a shrewd strategy at work. Sales of athletic footwear generated \$19.6 billion in sales in 2017, growing 2% over the previous year, according to the market research company NPD Group. The women's market overshadowed men's with sales growing by 5% from 2016. "So far sneaker culture has always been about the guys but with the women's sneaker market growing and actually outpacing the men's that's changing," says Clare Varga, active director at trend forecasting agency WGSN. "Social media has played a key part in this and now female sneakerheads like Aleali May [an influencer who is the second woman to collaborate with the Jordan brand] and Jess Gavigan [an influencer and founder of online

retailer Small Feet Big Kicks] are really establishing themselves as influences. There's also online groups like the International Girl Crew—which Nike has worked with—who are creating sneaker communities to empower girls and female designers."

Matt Powell, the vice president and senior industry advisor -sports at NPD, echoes that women have long been neglected in the athletic footwear and apparel market, but that's starting to change with startups like Shoes of Prey and Allbirds. "I have described the women's footwear and apparel market and activewear as our greatest failure and our greatest opportunity, so I'm glad to see brands are now finally beginning to address this market more aggressively," he says. "There are female sneakerheads out there, and they've been forced to buy boys' shoes for the most part."

Nike hopes its sneakerhead play will help the company grow its

“The future of sneakers is female.”



Made By Her. For Her.

women's business from \$6.6 billion to \$11 billion by 2020. Other product initiatives in the women's business include more plus-size options, the Nike FE/NOM Flyknit Sports Bra, and the Nike Pro Hijab, which won the Fast Company Innovation by Design Award for General Excellence in 2017. "It's really about removing barriers that prohibit people from accessing and participating in sport, because we know the power of sport in people's lives, and we've done research on the impact of sport in women's lives, and we know that women with a sport in their backgrounds are successful as they go through life," says Igarashi.

The Unlaced preview in Paris started with a look into Nike's archive through highlights of women's sneakers from the past 40 years, beginning with the shoe that started it all—the Nike Señorita Cortez, the female version of the Nike Cortez, a minimal white sneaker with an orange swoosh, which was released two years after the male version in 1974. The archive also includes the Nike Airmax 97 LX Swarovski, which dusts the curves in the original Airmax

97 in a coating of sparkly Swarovski crystals, and the Nikecourt Flare BHM Serena Williams that pays homage to Black History Month through black and white marbling that symbolizes harmony and a metallic gold swoosh. Both of these shoes debuted in 2017. The preview ended with a showroom meant to evoke the feel of an Unlaced retail destination: a circular space lined with shelves of shoes, with a large spinning seat in the middle—prime Instastory material. Dozens of shoes in myriad colorways were organized into groups by trend, from dad shoes, to chunky-soled kicks to pink confections. There were performance designs, like the new Nike React, a light, springy running shoe that debuted last month. There were Jordans, notably the OFF-WHITE x Nike Air Jordan 1, a collaboration with Off-White fashion designer Virgil Abloh, who put on his brand's signature marks, like a plastic tag on the iconic sneaker, which was just released in women's sizing. And there were lifestyle models, too; with the 1 Reimagined, a team of female designers invent new renditions of the

Nike Air Force 1 and the Air Jordan 1. It's a virtual sneaker buffet.

The brand's competitors are also on the pulse of this trend; Adidas is focusing on women's initiatives, like a sneaker collaboration with female artists who designed bespoke sneakers representing each U.S. state that benefited Women Win, an organization that provides opportunities for empowerment to girls in Pakistan through sport, and a new colorway of its EQT series specifically for International Women's Day 2018. Just last week, British department store Selfridges unveiled a women's sneaker space featuring 700 styles from brands like Gucci, Nike, Stella McCartney, and Vans.

"Nike are innovators and have always done a great job on diversity in its women's products," Varga says. "But until the launch of its Fe/Nom bra last year, it hadn't really put all its might and resources behind a women-specific technology. Nike isn't the first sports brand to launch... female-focus sneaker stores but they are exceptionally good at bringing things to the masses and making them mainstream."

Acknowledgments

We are the leading destination for women's contemporary fashion and streetwear.

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