

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Gucci examines streetwear in basketball-inspired series

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The Shoe Surgeon designed three exclusive Gucci Basket sneakers. Image credit: Gucci

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Italian fashion label Gucci and online fashion platform Hypebeast are exploring the subculture of streetwear in a new video collaboration.

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The first episode of "Gucci Stream" follows artist Dominic "The Shoe Surgeon" Ciambrone, who created three limited-edition collection pairs of Gucci Basket sneakers. The shoes themselves are inspired in part by how the sport of basketball has influenced street culture and style.

"Anytime a fashion house allows someone else to take a twist on what they do, there is a trust there," said Kimmie Smith, cofounder and creative director of **Athleisure Mag**, New York. "Gucci has been increasing their styles within streetwear albeit in a Gucci way and tone.

"By partnering with those that are already on the cusp of this trend, it is willing to have its line include a voice that it may not have been able to achieve in-house," she said. "They also garner the eyes and attention of those that follow Hypebeast and Shoe Surgeon.

"For both of the collaborators, it allows additional conversations to take place with other houses that may not have thought that this was something that they would have done traditionally."

Stiches in time

Gucci's first vignette in the series, "Stiches in Time," stars the Shoe Surgeon and Kyle Kuzma, a player on the National Basketball Association's Los Angeles Lakers. The 25-year-old, who has more than 5.1 million Instagram followers, is as well known for his colorful and versatile style off the court as he is for his basketball skills.

Set in Los Angeles, the film opens with Mr. Kuzma arriving at Mr. Ciambrone's home. It alternates between shots of the designer working at his sewing machine and the two men hanging out.

The Shoe Surgeon and Kyle Kuzma for Gucci

First, they pose in chairs as Mr. Kuzma authoritatively holds a cup of tea. They also play backyard golf, trading their

cleats for the Gucci Basket sneakers.

Gucci motifs are incorporated throughout the film, not only in the men's wardrobe but also in details such as a patterned clock and the sneakers themselves, which are presented multiple times.

"The Shoe Surgeon is known for making custom shoes that take a style that you're aware of and turning it on its head," Ms. Smith said. "Being able to do this with the house of Gucci is a great way to interpret their perspective on this design house.

"It truly is a well-balanced and blended collaboration that is worth seeing," she said.

The Shoe Surgeon's three limited-edition pairs of Gucci Basket sneakers will be sold exclusively at the Gucci Beverly Hills boutique. The designer incorporated upcycled materials from the house's iconic prints to create the bespoke basketball shoes.



The exclusive Gucci Basket sneakers designed by the Shoe Surgeon. Image credit: Gucci

All proceeds from the three exclusive pairs will benefit the Oakland School of the Arts' Step It Up program, which helps make arts education accessible to students of colors in an underserved community. The funds will provide technology resources for participants, including design tablets and computers.

The complete Gucci Basket collection includes '90s-inspired sneakers for both men and women, priced at \$950. The kicks are made with Demetra, a new animal-free, plant-based material that is the result of two years of research and development at Gucci ([see story](#)).

Luxury on the court

Gucci is not the only luxury label to look to basketball culture for inspiration.

French fashion label Louis Vuitton collaborated with the NBA for its spring/summer 2021 menswear capsule collection. Under the creative direction of Virgil Abloh, the collection was inspired by the exchange between French craftsmanship and American sports.

The Louis Vuitton x NBA collection included more than 40 products including apparel, bags, jewelry and shoes. Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander was the face of the campaign ([see story](#)).

German fashion house Hugo Boss also teamed with the NBA on a capsule collection, including T-shirts, joggers, hoodies, sneakers and more. To promote the collection, the fashion label assembled a new #BossTeam including three-time NBA champion and Golden State Warriors star Draymond Green ([see story](#)).

More recently, Italian fashion house Dolce & Gabbana partnered with American professional basketball player Anthony Leon "P.J." Tucker Jr. on new iterations of its Miami sneaker. The 100 pairs of the sneakers, signed by Mr. Tucker, were paired to an exclusive NFT digital authenticity certificate ([see story](#)).

"Those who are followers of the collaborators have a chance to see a style or aesthetic that they have enjoyed on a canvas that they would have never thought could have taken place," Ms. Smith said. "If everyone involved is bringing their true insight, followers will end up having the privilege of seeing the ultimate goal of a combination, a hybrid that is truly distinct that reflects the focus of those that came together bringing the best of themselves to be seen in a wholly new light."

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