

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Louis Vuitton highlights craftsmanship behind Nike collab

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In anticipation of its new exhibit in Brooklyn, Louis Vuitton showcased the craftsmanship behind the iconic creative collaboration. Image courtesy of Louis Vuitton

By NORA HOWE

French fashion house Louis Vuitton is placing a spotlight on its relationship with Nike and the detail, precision and craft that went into its Nike Air Force 1 by Virgil Abloh project.

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Originally designed by Nike in 1982, the "Air Force 1" was deemed a cultural symbol and emblem of the streetwear community by Mr. Abloh. Designed in Fiesso d'Artico, Italy the first time the sneaker has been crafted outside of a Nike factory the shoe blends the athletic brand's original codes with the quality materials and insignia known by the fashion house all while articulating the voice of the late designer.

Air Force 1 by Virgil

Prior to his unexpected passing in November 2021 ([see story](#)), Mr. Abloh staged a collaboration between the French house and Nike, creating 47 unique Air Force 1 editions, thus merging two iconic brands.

Each pair of sneakers was handcrafted by expert artisans, fusing Nike's classic codes with the materials familiar to Louis Vuitton, such as leather, crocodile, faux fur and more.

To showcase this process, Louis Vuitton published a short film depicting the delicate and detailed steps required to create the sneaker, from cutting the materials and hand threading to sewing and sanding.

Nike's Air Force 1 by Virgil Abloh is a testament to luxury craft and street style

In the film, initial close-up shots reveal the patterns, shapes and materials used to conceptualize the shoe. Artisans arrange pieces of leather to create a blueprint before moving on to construction.

As the video unfolds, audiences begin to see the shoe take its shape as pieces of leather are threaded together and attached to the sole. A Louis Vuitton Air tag is sewn into the structure.

The shoes are carefully laced, sanded, brushed and cleaned before they are ready to be in the hands of a dedicated customer.

This style of marketing is somewhat unusual for Louis Vuitton, as it does not often publish craftsmanship-centric content like its counterparts Christian Dior and Chanel. As the brand honors Mr. Abloh's eye for design and fervent attention to detail, however, it is only fitting.

The film, which was published on the brand's social channels last week, also served as a way to garner anticipation for the new Louis Vuitton and Nike "Air Force 1" by Virgil Abloh exhibition in Brooklyn, New York.

Now open until May 31 at the Greenpoint Terminal Warehouse, the showcase charts the creative dialogue between Nike and Louis Vuitton envisioned by Mr. Abloh. The 47 editions of the Nike Air Force 1 sneaker created for Louis Vuitton are displayed in physical and virtual form in immersive spaces reflective of the designer's knack for creation and presentation.



A Louis Vuitton Nike AirForce 1 globe in Columbus Circle, Manhattan. Image courtesy of Louis Vuitton

Coinciding with the exhibition, a number of corresponding installations featuring a custom LV and Nike logo can be seen around New York that will direct fashion enthusiasts to more information about the exhibition ([see story](#)).

Street style as high fashion

While Louis Vuitton's collaboration with Nike symbolizes a confluence of cultural influence, the relationship between high fashion and streetwear has grown stronger over the last several years from exclusive collaborations to new creative directions.

Italian fashion house Gucci and online fashion platform Hypebeast explored the subculture of streetwear in a new video collaboration. 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 ([see story](#)).

In September 2021, French fashion label Kenzo embraced its Japanese heritage and contemporary streetwear sensibilities with the appointment of a new artistic director, Nigo.

The designer, born Tomoaki Nagao, took the helm at the LVMH-owned label on Sept. 20 becoming the first Japanese designer to serve as the label's artistic director since its founder, Kenzo Takada ([see story](#)).