

Valley Designer's Sole Reason Behind Men's Fashion

Written by Joanna Brathwaite

Men's footwear has donned some genius male designers throughout the years. Trying to break the mold is up-and-coming men's footwear designer, Dianne Holloway. Born and raised in Arizona, Holloway is making a name for herself. As the first African-American woman to venture into men's shoe design, she is confident that her brand will transcend the stereotypes. With a keen eye for what men deem fashionable and comfortable, Holloway and her collections are one of a kind and the rest of the fashion community are beginning to realize her potential. Dianne sat down with AFM and shared her story and why her designs are perfect for men of sophistication.



AFM: How did you get started in men's fashion with a focus on footwear?

DH: I got started in 2010 after seeing the lack of women in the men's footwear industry. I pursued in college and I was an athlete at the time. Changed my major to industrial design and found a great mentor. I've always liked men's footwear and creating them was just a huge stepping stone and challenge that I've wanted to accomplish.

AFM: Why did you choose Spain as the location to manufacture your footwear?

DH: Spain is such an epitome of authentic goods and materials. Not discrediting the other gorgeous places, but choosing my footwear to be manufactured in Spain brings the rich culture and accents that I believe make my designs stand out.

AFM: Tell us about the idea behind the concierge service and the briefcases? Do all the shoes come in briefcases?

DH: The idea of the briefcase was to bring a different marketing and packaging approach. Not all the footwear comes in a briefcase; they are for our executive club fans—celebrities, high-profile personal shoppers, athletes and fans who we consider part of our executive members club for our brand. I believe it allows the consumer to feel individual and special. The idea of the footwear is luxury. If the client has the money to splurge on the package, then the client should be rewarded. People buying expensive footwear should be gifted with more perks because not only are you spending \$500-plus, there's not much that comes after that. So to spice up the Holloway collection we provide extra perks for our buyers. The thing with our footwear is that it isn't for everyone. So it allows us to have rewards. And the concierge service would be the delivery method for the executive club fans.

AFM: Will you be appearing at any Fashion Week shows this year?

DH: I'm definitely participating in a few fashion shows. My team and I will be attending Magic in Las Vegas and NOLCHA Fashion week in New York City for the Mercedes Benz Fashion week. We will also be appearing in two European fashion shows. The first one is for Brighton Fashion Week in England. We're doing a collaboration with Phoenix clothing designer GetKinged in September. The second is in Paris, France in October for the "Who's Next" as a stand-alone designer. I also have plans to be debuting my newest collection (NOIR BOLIVON) for the first time in Tokyo this year. Being involved in collaboration with GetKinged in the Brighton Fashion Show I think will be epic because it's more of a live runway show. The others will take place in a more private showroom. Overall, I'm definitely planning to have my own sneaker fashion show that people will see as if they were seeing designers presenting their clothing lines at one of the biggest fashion shows so be on the lookout for that.



AFM: Although your shoes aren't sold in stores just yet, how would clients go about purchasing them?

DH: Right now I am working on some contracts with large department stores. We have samples of the sneakers for our executive club, but not a full fleet of them as yet. Definitely by the end of this year we will be able to broadcast to the world where they can purchase this unique footwear.

AFM: How important is it to you to be the first African-American woman to be designing men's high-end footwear?

DH: It is important to bring my project to life as of being an African-American woman. A recent independent analysis stated that woman in the

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field of men's footwear is at four percent, and even a smaller percentage (0.2) of that is minority. As menswear begins to climb, there are a few men designers being recognized for their work which include Thom Browne, Rag & Bone, and Marcus Wainwright & David Nevill are all nominated and awarded as the best men designers of the year at the CFDA. The list continues on with great men designers and what you don't usually see is a woman within those nominations, especially in the field of menswear or men's footwear. It's the woman's turn to dress the man.

AFM: Where do you hope men's fashion footwear will take you?

I hope that it takes me into my own lane and higher heights to make history in the fashion world. Because this field is dominated by males, I would like to pave the way for females to be among the top in men's fashion—a woman who can hang with the boys. The responses I would want to hear are that "She's the only girl that can compete with the big boys and actually win."

For more information on the Dianne Halloway Collections and what she's up to next visit www.diannehalloway.com.