



The resulting “RAW for the Oceans” collection consisted of pieces made from recycled plastic. Meanwhile, Williams’ musical career continued to flourish, and the moment he became a certified global pop star was in 2013, when his song “Happy,” originally created for the soundtrack for the animated film *Despicable Me*, became the subject of numerous covers and tribute videos the world over. In a 2014 interview with Oprah Winfrey, Williams is shown a super-cut of fans around the world who have created their own videos to the song, bringing the artist to tears at how much the song had resonated with people.

During the Grammy Awards that year, Williams caught a different sort of global attention. Showing up in a red leather adidas track jacket, skinny jeans, and Timberland boots, everyone began talking about the vintage Vivienne Westwood hat he wore on top of it. An archival piece from the British designer’s Fall/Winter 1982 “Buffalo” collection, the oversized crown and wide brim became an internet meme, and ended up being purchased by restaurant chain Arby’s (whose logo contains a similarly exaggerated hat) for \$44,000.

For all his contributions in pushing the style envelope forward, and helping break down the barriers between street culture and the fashion industry, Williams was honored by the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) with their prestigious Fashion Icon Award in 2015.

“Pharrell has always been my style idol, and there would be no me, no A\$AP, without Pharrell,” said West in a succinct speech before Williams took the stage. His acceptance speech was a paean to the American people, whose style and authenticity inspires him greatly.

“Since I was a little boy, I lived in my head. There were no rules, just a dreamland,” said Williams. “Whenever someone encourages you for being different, they also free you from the ubiquitous nature of the matrix of opinions.”

Indeed, Williams’ staunch devotion to individuality and empowering the outcasts has certainly resonated within and beyond hip-hop culture. He is a true pioneer who subverted stereotypical design tropes and proved that going against the grain can have a much bigger payoff. But despite his myriad of accomplishments, like a 2017 collaboration with Chanel—an adidas sneaker that could fetch upwards of \$10,000 on the aftermarket—Williams remains as humble as ever, as if he has a tacit understanding that culture is not just about him, but those who will come after.

“I’m not a style icon, I’m just inspired. I am other. And I am okay with that. Someone’s gotta do it,” he continued in his CFDA acceptance speech. “Listen to your instincts and the people who see the quality in your differences. Because you too just might make a difference.”

Pharrell’s sense of style had a polarizing affect on longtime hip-hop heads, who initially weren’t feeling his kits. But as a pioneer, he kept true to himself and showed that it’s okay to deviate from the expected.



Pharrell often wears his Billionaire Boys Club clothing line, but is also a staunch supporter of his inner circle. This includes NIGO, who works with Pharrell on exclusive product for his HUMAN MADE line, and Cynthia Lu, one of his creative proteges and the mind behind nascent psychedelic streetwear label Cactus Plant Flea Market.