

The Future of Streetwear

Highsnobiety founder David Fischer reminisces about streetwear's past, and explains how the energy and community that built the foundation of street culture is stronger than ever. Unlike other jaded veterans, he couldn't be more excited to see where things are headed.

Contributor: David Fischer

It's easy to be negative about streetwear if you've grown up with it over the past few decades. The term itself may be on its way out as niche interests become democratized and the lines between high and low fashion blur, but for the sake of clarity, let's say it refers to a style tribe that was founded on a combination of certain subcultures: hip-hop, surfing, skating, graffiti, club scenes—movements that, for better or worse, are no longer “sub-” cultures. Thanks to the Internet, they've proliferated to the point that we can simply call it all pop culture. Self-proclaimed “old heads” want to argue about what falls under the streetwear label and what doesn't. Is Off-White™ streetwear or not? I suppose, in its purest form, streetwear has been something that is affordable, to a certain degree—and it can't be said that the majority of Off-White™ pieces are accessible to the masses on the basis of price. But just as the experience of luxury has changed over the past few decades, I think streetwear has changed too. What comes to mind now when I think of streetwear is a brand like Brain Dead. A Los Angeles art collective-turned-independent label, Brain Dead specializes in hoodies and cut-and-sew pieces like trucker jackets and workwear trousers, but has also released collaborations with labels like Converse, Carhartt WIP, and A.P.C. It's not Dickies cheap, but it's not Off-White™ expensive. In what context would we place a brand like that today? To me, Brain Dead is streetwear because there's a degree of consideration and nuance in how it executes its products, and a consistency in the brand narrative, from its psychedelic online store to its installations at leading retailers like Dover Street Market. And that's just one example; there are many, many more of them. If Stüssy, The Hundreds, and Supreme are some of the progenitors of the streetwear market, I see these young labels as the ones really carrying the torch. Then there are the people who want to argue that because things move so fast and become mainstream even faster, there's almost no time for brands to ever be subcultural—and that subculture cred is crucial. **I see new brands popping up all the time that challenge the status quo, add a new level of creativity to the space, and very much define the zeitgeist of a new generation.**



Above: A young teen on the street wearing a Burberry bucket hat, Raf Simons sweater, and a Goyard bag around his neck.
Opposite: A look from Brain Dead's collaboration with workwear brand Carhartt WIP.

