

Cass x Prada

'I was painting shoes, taking photos, and turning those photos into complex vinyl stencils that became abstract designs. I would mask off part of the body of the shoe, and then wrap the whole shoe in the stencil. It looked crazy. I sent a photo to my dad [Damien Hirst], and then he sent a photo of that to Miuccia [Prada]. And she said, 'This looks amazing, let's do something.' The best part about this project - this collaboration - was how willing Prada are to invest their time, to be open to ideas, to challenges. And to really commit to something new.' said Cassius Hirst.

'The Cass x Prada collection finds parallels between the bold work of this fresh talent and the heritage of Prada - the sense of the hand, an excellence in manufacture, a constant search for innovation, a restless urge to re-examine and reinvent our history. Here, the iconic silhouette of the Prada America's Cup sneaker becomes a canvas for creation, offered in a special capsule. Something unique, something new.' said Lorenzo Bertelli, Prada Group Marketing Director and Head of Corporate Social Responsibility.

A fresh talent reflecting new horizons and showcasing different perspectives. Prada collaborates with the artist Cassius Hirst - known as Cass - to imagine the Prada America's Cup sneaker anew, through a customised capsule collection of four styles, in 22 variables.

Cassius Hirst painted his first pair of sneakers when he was 14 - a gift for his father, the artist Damien Hirst. Growing up in a household where exposure to art was inevitable, sneakers became his canvas: sculptural objects whose topographies were reworked through hand spray-painting, no two pairs exactly alike. His work has garnered a cult following, purchased by the likes of A\$AP Rocky, Playboi Carti, Offset, Rihanna, AJ Tracey and the late Virgil Abloh.

In a unique project with Prada Linea Rossa, Cassius collaborates to reinvent the America's Cup sneaker across a full range of special pieces, reconfiguring its distinct surfaces to rework a 20th century design classic for a 21st century generation. The capsule is showcased in a still and motion-image campaign by Axel Morin - a surreal performance invading a pristine space, showcasing the Cass x Prada sneaker styles and custom-made, one-of-a-kind masks - each character simultaneously anonymous, yet unique. The soundtrack to the campaign film features music specially created by Cass.

The four Cass x Prada sneaker styles draw their names from the world of music, reflective of the interests of Cassius and the passions of his fans. ATT4CK, D3CAY, SUST4IN, REL3ASE are all named after the 'envelope' or life of a sound, the stages of its evolution, reflecting this new evolution of the America's Cup sneaker. The title of each style suggests their look and feel: the hard-edged, molded spikes of ATT4CK, sprayed with neon; the distressed leather of D3CAY, stripped and intentionally faded; the solid brights of SUST4IN, with overpainted white relief details; and the neon-spray finish of REL3ASE.

PRADA

All styles are hand-worked in Italy by Prada in a meshing of traditional craft and cutting-edge imagination – wholly unique, no two pairs exactly alike, with signature labels each with a distinct CASS signature. Each pair is sold in a co-branded Prada box, featuring the logo of Cassius Hirst – a scan of his brain.

‘The brain scan represents hope and knowledge in a world of shadows and uncertainty. The brain is where the thoughts happen – for me it all became about creativity and the creative process. I’ve learned that sometimes we have to look inside ourselves to see what’s really going on. We shouldn’t be afraid of that.’ declared Cassius Hirst.

At the core of each of the Cass x Prada styles is the iconic America’s Cup sneaker: invented in the late ’90s for the sailing crew of the Luna Rossa, in all-leather, or leather with distinctive cross-hatched breathable bike fabric inserts. Ergonomic, technically innovative, the silhouette is immediately recognizable – the perfect canvas for seemingly endless reinvention.

The Cass x Prada collection is an edition limited to 3,000 pairs globally, sold through a selection of Prada boutiques and via prada.com.

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For further information:
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CREDITS OF THE CAMPAIGN:

Director: Axel Morin
Photographer: Jonathan Baron
Music: Cassius Hirst
Creative Direction: Frosty

ABOUT CASSIUS HIRST

Cass began using sneakers as a blank canvas for painting in 2018. Since then, the son of British contemporary artist Damien Hirst has developed his own creative outlet, using the classic Nike Air Force 1 sneaker as his canvas. In May 2019, Virgil Abloh invited him to host one of the inaugural workshops at Nikelab’s Chicago Re-creation Center and sell his shoes at the ‘Church & State’ pop-up at the Museum Of Contemporary Art Chicago. His spray-painted designs have a cult following, with A\$AP Rocky, Samuel Ross of A-COLD-WALL* and 24KGoldn all counted as fans of his work. In June 2019, Cass branched out into painting on traditional canvas, realising that he could achieve a similar effect as with sneakers, in a simplified way. Cass lives and works in London.