



SNEAKER CULTURE

KULTURGUT TURN SCHUH

MADE IN HERZOGENAURACH

EXHIBITION GUIDE

MAY 18 - SEPTEMBER 10, 2006



STADTMUSEUM - BASEMENT

SHOES MADE FOR SPORTS

SHOES WITH A CAREER

GYM SHOE, SPORTS SHOE, SNEAKER

Gym shoes have boasted a remarkable career over the last hundred years, taking them from the international sports and football arenas to the catwalks of *haute couture*.

This extraordinary success story began in 1924 in the Franconian town of Herzogenaurach with the establishment of Dassler Brothers Sports Shoes Factory. After World War II, the leaping puma and the Three Stripes logo, the trademarks of these global players, whose headquarters are located on the banks of the river Aurach to the present day, started their triumphant progress around the globe.

The wonder shoes by the Dassler Brothers made their first revolutionary appearance on the football grounds and cinder-tracks of large sports stadiums. Their second appearance was at the feet of the "gym-shoe generation", while their third one was staged in the big concert arenas. Being invented to equip athletes more professionally for modern competitive sports, the use of sports footwear was for a long time restricted to the area of competitive sport. It was the juvenile protest movement that took sports shoes to the streets. Since then, they have easily surmounted the boundaries of gender, age, and continents to become an essential part of our everyday life – as sneakers.

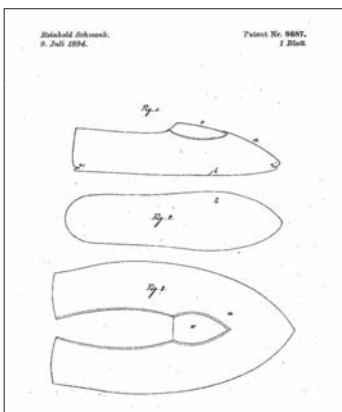
SHOES MADE FOR SPORTS

THE SPORTS SHOE IS INVENTED

The pioneers of modern competitive sports were faced with one problem: specialist sports shoes were not yet available in Germany. Football, athletics, boxing and tennis were becoming increasingly popular. To begin with, however, the players and sportsmen had to wear everyday footwear. The first football boots were more of a working boot than a sports shoe, covering the ankle and weighing as much as 500 grams when dry - and substantially more when rain sodden. Athletes wore lightweight, low-cut leather shoes manufactured using shoe lasts for outdoor shoes.

Demand grew for specialist footwear which was better suited to the forces and movements involved in the different types of sports. In the times of crisis that ensued after the First World War, however, very few manufacturers ventured to produce sports shoes, at very best including a niche product in their ranges. In the town of Herzogenaurach in the region of Franconia, the industrial-scale manufacture of footwear, in particular slippers, was home ground. New ground was broken by the brothers Adolf and Rudolf Dassler when they decided to dedicate their business, a shoe factory founded in 1924, entirely to the area of "shoes made for sports".

This decision marked the beginnings of an astonishing story of success. Within a few years, the ambitious young entrepreneurs managed to revolutionize the sports shoe. Shoes from Dassler proved to be leagues apart from the competitor products that appeared on European markets at the end of the decade.



1898 Rudolf Dassler is born the son of a factory worker and a laundress

1900 Adolf Dassler, the youngest of four siblings, is born

1913 Rudolf Dassler starts work at the Franconian Shoe Works

1914 Adolf Dassler begins a bakery apprenticeship

1919 Rudolf Dassler becomes manager of a porcelain factory

1920 Adolf Dassler makes his first shoe

1924 The wash room of laundress mother Mrs Dassler is turned into a shoe factory

1925 First large-scale contract: the sports association *Turnverein 1861* places an order for 10,000 pairs of training shoes at 2.39 Reichsmarks a pair

1927 Business is moved to factory premises besides the railway station

1928 Annual production of 8,000 pairs of football boots and track shoes

1929 First exports to Hungary, Austria and Switzerland

STADTMUSEUM - BASEMENT

SHOES MADE FOR SPORTS

Dassler Brothers Sports Shoe Factory

The somewhat modest beginnings were soon to be followed by success. While the first training shoes made of canvas and rubber were sewn together using outdated machinery in a converted wash room, the subsequent years brought about an important development: the brothers began specialising in full-leather field and track shoes and football boots for professional sportsmen, developed in close co-operation with trainers and the sportsmen themselves. The first shoes to be patented by the Dasslers were track shoes with six spikes which entered the international sports scene at the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam. In the 1930s, the product range included specialist shoes for eleven different types of sports, ranging from shoes for the high-jump, long-jump and hammer throwing to ice-hockey boots, ski boots and tennis shoes. The international breakthrough came when outstanding athlete Jesse Owens from the USA wowed audiences with his 4-Gold medal performance at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin wearing shoes by Dassler.



Dassler Brother Sports Shoe Factory, 1938

Demand soared thanks to the popularity of international sports competitions and the promotion of sport by the National Socialist regime. Even after the outbreak of the Second World War production continued, albeit on a lesser scale; in 1940, the Dassler shoe factory was the sole remaining manufacturer of sports shoes in the German Reich. While Adolf Dassler was able to continue with the running of the business following a brief period of military service, his brother Rudolf was detained in a US internment camp until 1946. The factory buildings survived the war intact and as early as November 1945, the US military government gave the OK for production to be resumed. When Rudolf Dassler returned to Herzogenaurach, however, it became immediately clear that the relationship between the two company founders was broken once and for all. In 1948, the brothers agreed to go their separate ways and split the company assets. Rudolf Dassler took over the second factory works on *Würzburger Straße*, naming his new business *Puma*. Adolf Dassler ran the works located in the vicinity of Herzogenaurach railway station under the corporate name *adidas*.



1930 Annual production reaches 29,000 pairs

1933 Introduction of work boots and orthopaedic sandals to the production line

1934 Expansion of factory premises

1935 Number of employees rises to 72

1936 Olympic Games in Berlin boost sales

1939 Purchase of factory building on *Würzburger Straße*

1940 Production limited to 6,000 pairs of shoes a month

1942 Production continues despite scarcity of raw materials and workforce shortage

1945 Production of sports shoes for the US Army following the end of WWII

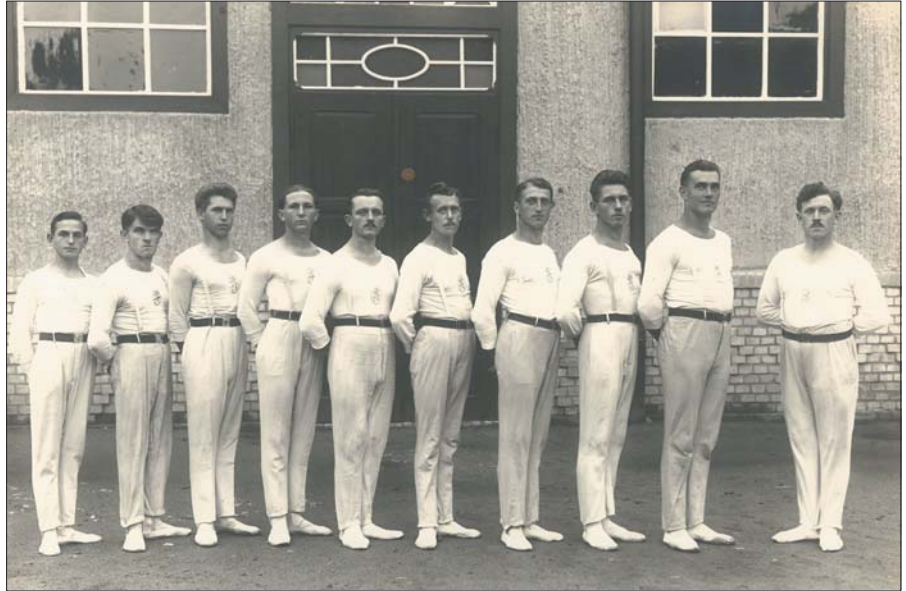
1948 Dassler Brothers Sports Shoes Factory is dissolved

STADTMUSEUM - BASEMENT

SHOES MADE FOR SPORTS

„ENGLISH SPORTS“

Club sports established themselves as the new leisure time activity for the bourgeois society of the German Empire. 'English sports', performance-oriented competitive sports as we know them today, spread from England to continental Europe and brought about the modernisation of traditional forms of physical activity and exercise. Football became a national phenomenon. The 1920s saw the introduction of the first ever sports fields and facilities for track and field athletics, in some cases run by local communities, in other cases set up by sports clubs and associations themselves. Before World War II, international sports competitions played an eminently



Turnerbund Herzogenaurach, 1926

political role, a fact which could be seen in the substantial state backing in the sports sector. At a somewhat slower pace than in countries with more Anglo-Saxon influences, a market for sports-friendly footwear emerged in Germany. From the outset, this market was dominated by the Dassler Brothers Sports Shoe Factory. As for the design criteria for the modern sports shoe, the aim was to create the ultimate shoe in terms of weight, speed and grip.



SUBSTITUTE MATERIALS

During World War II, despite being allowed to produce a small quantity of sports shoes for civilian use in addition to goods that were "essential to the war effort", Dassler Brothers Sports Shoes was unable to maintain its high standard of product quality. Import bans and difficulties with the procurement of production materials meant that substitute materials were used in production.

During the first two post-war years, the Dassler brothers tried to take up their business again. At first, they manufactured footwear for the US occupation forces only, utilizing disused US military material. Heavy tarpaulin and fuel tanks from military aircraft were recycled, as were old baseball gloves.



STADTMUSEUM - 1. FLOOR

SHOES MADE FOR SPORTS

RACE FOR THE ULTIMATE SHOE DESIGN

Until the late 1960s, the use of sports footwear was limited to sports fields and gym halls across the globe. During the German Wirtschaftswunder, the period of economic boom in Germany in the 60s, both Dassler businesses got off to phenomenal new starts which left the brands *Puma* and *adidas* synonymous with sports shoes. The fact that the two Herzogenaurach-based companies - which stood just a few hundred metres apart on opposite banks of the river Aurach - had dominated the international market for sports shoes unchallenged for many years was clearly down to the excellent quality of their products. Due to their personal and professional split, the two brothers had gone from being business partners to becoming bitter competitors in the sports goods industry – and it was this very split that was the driving force behind the development of the modern sports shoe.

In the 1950s the Dassler companies from Herzogenaurach began competing to design the ultimate sports shoe. The credo that marked this race was 'the perfect shoe for every type of sport', something which benefited professional and amateur sportsmen alike. The growing interest in football, which culminated in colossal enthusiasm following Germany's World Cup victory, was instrumental in the astonishing success of the companies from Herzogenaurach. In the 1960s, thanks

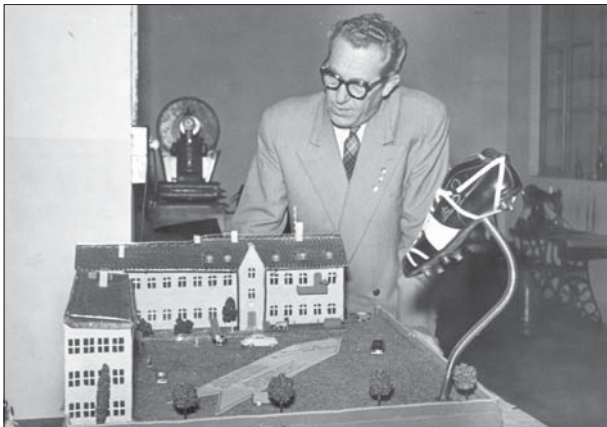
to the use of industrial production methods and newly developed synthetic materials such as nylon, stylon or polyamide, sports shoes became an affordable mass product for amateur club sportsmen. In the early 1970s, 80 percent of professional sportsmen and women were wearing sports shoes made in Herzogenaurach.



Adi Dassler

BASKING IN THE GLORY OF SUCCESS

In the struggle to gain market shares and boost sales figures both companies turned to promotional activities. While a general advertising ban applied to track and field athletes, who would be regarded as mere amateur sportsmen for many years to come, sponsors were free to use well-known football players in their advertising campaigns thanks to



Rudolf Dassler

the establishment of a professional football league in Germany. Football went on to become the most popular spectator sport and international sports broadcasts were transformed into media events and gigantic advertising platforms. TV images of successful athletes standing high on the winners' rostrum bearing the three-stripes logo or the formstrip set a shining example and became ingrained in the minds of the viewers.

For a long time, it seemed that the dominance of global player adidas on the international stage could not be swayed. The era of the sports fanatic and shoe-design perfectionist-cum-boss finally reached an end, however, when international competitors tackled the market dominance of the tradition-rooted companies from Herzogenaurach using the weapon of 'marketing as a priority'. For a long time, market leader adidas and, in its pursuit, the much smaller company

Puma had relied on their technical expertise and the success of 'their' leading sportsmen and women bearing the companies' logos on their shoes and clothing. The turning point for the next chapter in the history of the sports shoe occurred across the Atlantic in the USA, where aerobics and running shoes were flooding the market, backed by enormous advertising budgets and clever marketing strategies. While adidas and Puma were still producing a large proportion of their shoes and sportswear themselves in Germany and Western Europe at relatively high costs, American manufacturers produced their products in low-wage countries from the very start. In 1986, adidas and Puma were still market leaders in Germany, boasting an unchallenged 90% market share. In the USA, by way of contrast, sales started to slump considerably.

STADTMUSEUM - 1. FLOOR

SHOES MADE FOR SPORTS

PUMA – A CHRONOLOGY

- 1948 Rudolf Dassler establishes PUMA sports shoe company
- 1949 51 employees, main production line: football boots
- 1952 Armin Dassler Jr. joins the Executive Board
- 1955 Export of shoes to 55 countries
- 1956 Staff increased to 160 employees
- 1958 The wide, uni-coloured stripe becomes the eye-catching trademark
- 1962 Armin Dassler opens the first branch factory in Salzburg
- 1963 370 employees working for PUMA
- 1966 Branch factory opened in Reckendorf near Bamberg (training shoes)
- 1967 Gerd Dassler becomes senior manager of the branch factory in Soufflenheim, Alsace
- 1968 The modern PUMA logo is introduced
- 1974 After the death of the company founder, Armin Dassler becomes General Manager
- 1975 Sports textiles added to the product range
- 1982 560 employees working in Herzogenaurach, 350 of which are in production
- 1983 150,000 pairs of shoes produced daily
- 1986 PUMA goes public
- 1987 The two sons of the company founder, Armin and Gerd Dassler, leave the Executive Board
- 1990 Operating results plunge into the red
- 1993 Successful corporate restructuring initiated by Jochen Zeitz, CEO and Chairman of the Board
- 1993 Production in Herzogenaurach discontinued
- 2005 New premises built for corporate headquarters; 550 employees in Herzogenaurach – upward trend



Puma, 1957

STADTMUSEUM - 1. FLOOR

SHOES MADE FOR SPORTS

ADIDAS – A CHRONOLOGY

1948 Adolf (“Adi”) Dassler establishes adidas sports shoe company with an initial staff of 47

1949 “Three stripes” are introduced as a trademark

1952 Production of sports bags

1956 Daily production of 800 pairs of sports shoes

1958 Parts of the production transferred to Scheinfeld (approx. 25 miles west of Herzogenaurach)

1959 Start of production in Dettwiller, France

1963 The first football is sewn

1967 Tracksuits added to the product range

1972 Three-leaves logo is introduced

1974 Casual footwear and tennis racquets
included in product range

1977 Daily production of 180,000 pairs of shoes

1978 After the death of the company founder,
Käthe Dassler runs the company

1982 852 employees working in Herzogenaurach

1984 Horst Dassler entrusted with position of General Manager

1987 Production in Germany discontinued

1993 A group of investors takes over after operative losses

1995 adidas goes public

1999 Move to the new corporate headquarters “adidas world of sports”

2001 1,800 employees now working in Herzogenaurach – upward trend



Adidas, 1954

STADTMUSEUM - HALLWAY

THE SPORTS SHOE LEAVES THE ARENAS

THE „GYM-SHOE GENERATION“

More than three decades have passed, since sports footwear found its place beyond cinder tracks and indoor sports arenas. The generation of 1968 took to the streets wearing sports shoes as a provocative gesture of protest against the bourgeois establishment. Casual clothing expressed antiauthoritarian and non-conformist attitudes and was a symbol of a mind critical of social norms. Grubby, worn-out training shoes were a must – nothing less would do in the youth movement's protests against the established order. Clothing became the means of rejecting accepted norms; protest a cultural phenomenon. West German society changed and, after a long journey through the institutions, the protest generation took its place in the establishment in the 1980s.

THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE SPORTS SHOE

A youth protest movement turned into a cultural revolution. Admittedly, casual jeans and gym shoes were more of an expression of protest against a world governed by the performance principle than to provide physical comfort - the reign of triumph enjoyed by the sports shoe in the non-sports area, however, was unstoppable. Sports shoes that were suitable for everyday wear became popular among people from all cultural backgrounds across the world. In the 1970s, wearing training shoes to the opera was still regarded as a statement of non-conformity; very soon, however, there was virtually no area of everyday life that had not been infiltrated by the sports shoe. Since then, the sports shoe symbolizes creativity in the office, and signals an active lifestyle of the person stretched out in the armchair in front of the TV. In situations such as these, which are far removed from the world of sports, there is a market for sportswear manufacturers to sell their shoes, apparel and accessories and potentially reach turnover figures matching those in the pure sports sector.



Demonstration 1972

FUN AND FITNESS AND THE MATCHING SHOES



skateboarding

The ample bellies of the German economic boom were finally out in the seventies. An era of leisure, fitness and fun sports began and a movement wave took the nation which was increasingly absorbed by leisure time and what to do with it. In jogging trot, a rapidly growing mass sports movement swept the Federal Republic of Germany and turned tracksuits and colourful all-round sports shoes into fashion items. Not competition, but fitness was the credo. The big companies responded to this trend with the design of sportive casual wear for everyone.

Sports that people could do themselves outdoors without being members of sports clubs and associations became particularly popular and marked the leisure time of West Germans in the 1980s. In some instances the fitness wave was more of a fitness craze than a wave. Physical decay was to be combated in the early stages and new types of sports with a high fun factor were the perfect way to do so. Sports goods manufacturers discovered that they could enter new markets by coming up with new types of sports and found women and the youth to be the ideal target groups for the new sports. Besides classic sports footwear such as training shoes, track shoes, tennis shoes and basketball boots, the sports goods market saw the introduction of new specialist footwear for the new type of sports on the sports scene: aerobics, running, walking, street soccer, skateboarding, mountain-biking, step aerobics or squash.

SPORTS TRAIL IN THE TOWN CENTRE

SPORTPARCOUR INNENSTADT - KEEP FIT !

KEEP FIT!

“Keep fit by exercising” was the first get-people-moving campaign which was to serve as a model for later fitness and wellness trends. There was hardly any town or city without a fitness or trim trail, where 2 - 2.5 mile cross-country circuits had to be completed at jogging speed. Training stations every 200 yards or so along the way offered equipment for doing simple exercises. The exercise tasks were illustrated on little picture boards: pull-ups, vaults, or jumping across logs. Sometimes, exercises were recommended which orthopaedists would urge you rather not to do today. Sportswear manufacturers produced tracksuits and footwear fittingly named *Trimm Trab*, *Trimm Quick* or *Trimm Fit*, for example.

AEROBICS

In the sixties, a US-American physician developed a training method to improve cardiac and pulmonary function. The real breakthrough came in 1982, when Jane Fonda started marketing aerobics as a form of physical exercises, developing her own training programs on audio and video tape. The fitness wave soon rolled onto European shores, and managed the unthinkable : to get women into fitness studios.

It was Reebok that thought to design special sports footwear for women. Their lifestyle product known as Freestyle was very much in tune with the aerobics boom and went on to become the best-selling sports shoe ever in the company's business history. Other sportswear manufacturers also responded to this business opportunity with clothing designed specifically for fitness training.

JOGGING

Jogging is the most widespread leisure sport and involves gentle running or 'trotting' to improve stamina. Sprinter and shoe designer Bill Bowerman from New Zealand introduced jogging to the USA in 1962. Jogging then went on to spread from the USA across the globe. For yuppies in the 1980s, jogging with a walkman dangling from the neck was compulsory to demonstrate their membership in a certain social class.

More important, however, is the right choice of footwear. Heel cushioning, gas cushioning, gel cushioning, shock absorbers or mid-sole stabilizers help absorb the shock of each step the jogger takes, which can even be several times the body weight of the jogger. As the jogger runs to lose those excess pounds, the sports shoes put on more and more weight.



jogging shoe, 1984

SKATEBOARDING

Initially, it was surfers that discovered the joys of the skateboard. The first skateboarding contest took place in California in 1963. At that time, people skated mainly in the streets and on pavements. In the seventies, the first outdoor skate park was opened and in the following decade, the first professional ramps were built. In the eyes of many skateboarders, skating is considered to be more of an expression of individual lifestyle than a sport. The use of public areas often created conflicts which made skating become rooted in a subculture. A scene developed around the sport in which clothes and music played an increasingly important role. Sports manufacturers responded quickly with special skateboarding footwear. The *Special Super Skate* by adidas became the first shoe specially designed for the skateboarder.

BREAKDANCING

Breakdancing is an acrobatic dance style that has its origins in youth culture in the USA. For many of the youths living in poor and deprived inner-city areas, breakdancing was an alternative to street fighting and gang warfare. Together with hip hop culture, this entirely new, independent form of art emerged in urban ghettos. Breakdancing, which developed in the 1970s in New York and Los Angeles, combines opposites such as fight and dance, strict choreography and improvisation.

The breakdancing 'look' includes training shoes with a style of their own – worn with the tongues hanging out and with extra-wide shoelaces – combined with tracksuits made by the Herzogenaurach-based sportswear manufacturers.

KUNSTRAUM

THE TRIUMPHANT PROGRESS OF THE SNEAKER

THE TRIUMPHANT PROGRESS OF THE SNEAKER



Madonna in Oosterbeek

In the course of its development, the training shoe or sneaker, to use the contemporary term, has become a rather presentable item; one might go as far as to say it has become a cult object. Why sneakers have become increasingly popular, which social developments underlie this increase in popularity, and why there are people who own dozens of pairs of sneakers – these are all questions that the arts sections of our papers take great relish in analysing.

The transformation that the sports shoe has undergone – from a sports product to a lifestyle object with a past rooted in sport – is a global cultural phenomenon, the background to which can be found in the ‘sportization’ of modern society, in other words the infiltration of sports into every sphere of modern society. Sports shoes and apparel no longer bear the grime and sweat of changing rooms and gym halls, but have made their way into the worlds of art, fashion, pop music and film. The sleek advertisements that appear in glossy magazines and polished video clips help propagate the chic sneaker look and place sporty elements in non-sport-related contexts. The object of desire has managed to win over not only the traditional sneaker fan community but also droves of dedicated followers of fashion across the globe. A global ‘sneaker boom’ has changed the face of fashion for good.

The gym shoe has reached a point in its career which marks a change in direction – it is going from being a mere commodity item to becoming a genuine part of its owner’s look. Exactly how the sneaker manages to show a given taste in fashion and

music and express individual attitudes is often apparent to insiders only. But one thing is clear: sneakers are a statement of belief, a philosophy and an elite consumer product. What was once a small fan community running after unusual shoe designs, the latest shoe fashions, or revamped classic shoes designs in innumerate colour combinations and materials, is now a global trend.

SHOES AND STYLE

The sneaker has established itself as a status symbol in youth culture. Its triumphant progress on the way to becoming a mythical cult object began in the ghettos of New York und Los Angeles, where certain sneakers from Old Europe became an inherent part of the hip-hop movement. The more global market shares the shoe brands from Herzogenaurach lost, the more ‘hip’ they became in the backyards of US metropolises and in clubs and bars across Europe. They were seen as something special, were not expensive - a decent pair of sneakers cost no more than 25 US dollars - and were sturdy enough to breakdance in. People wore sneakers to stand out from the masses in their bulky, air-cushioned basketball shoes. “What you wear shows who you are, and your style determines which group you belong to”. What had started off in the hip-hop culture of the 80s as an act of rebellion against popular US brands inevitably became an international trend as it moved into the realms of pop culture. Very soon no musician would go on stage or to a photo shooting in anything but sneakers and sports jacket, and what had started as a street trend became fashion. In keeping with the trend, in the mid 90s manufacturers ‘recycled’ former shoe lines. Lines that were especially high in demand were revamped and the market filled with re-designed classic lines, in some cases even as special designs by hip-hop stars or top designers.

Just how ‘tight’ hip-hop artists are with their footwear can be seen in the track by New York rappers Run D.M.C, released in 1986. The track entitled “my adidas” is engraved forever in the cultural history of the ‘gym shoe’.



Madonna in London

KUNSTRAUM

THE TRIUMPHANT PROGRESS OF THE SNEAKER

MY ADIDAS - RUN DMC

My Adidas walked through concert doors
 And roamed all over Coliseum floors
 I stepped on stage at Live Aid
 All the people gave, and the poor got paid
 And out of speakers I did speak
 I wore my sneakers, but I'm not a sneak
 My Adidas touched the sands of foreign lands
 With mike in hand, I cold took command
 My Adidas and me, close as can be
 We make a mean team, my Adidas and me
 We get around together, we're down forever
 And we won't be mad when caught in bad weather

My Adidas, My Adidas
 My Adidas, standin' on 2 Fifth St.
 Funky fresh and yes, cold on my feet
 With no shoestring in 'em, I did not win 'em
 I bought 'em off the ave with the black Lee denim
 I like to sport 'em, that's why I bought 'em
 A sucker tried to steal 'em so I caught 'em and I fought 'em
 And I walk down the street and bop to the beat
 With Lee on my legs and Adidas on my feet
 And, yo, now I'm just standin' here shootin' the gip
 Me and D and my Adidas standin' on 2 Fifth

My Adidas, My Adidas
 Now, me and my Adidas do the illest things
 We like to stomp out pimps with diamond rings
 We slay all suckers who perpetrate
 And lay down law from state to state
 We travel on gravel, dirt road or street
 I wear my Adidas when I rock the beat
 On stage front page every show I go
 It's Adidas on my feet, high top or low

My Adidas, My Adidas
 Now the Adidas I possess for one man is rare
 Myself homeboy got fifty pair
 Got blue and black 'cause I likes to chill
 And yellow and green when it's time to get ill
 Got a pair that I wear when I'm playin' ball
 With the heel inside make me 10 feet tall
 My Adidas only bring good news
 And they are not used as selling shoes
 They're black and white, white with black stripe
 The ones I like to wear when I rock the mic
 On the strength of our famous university
 We took the beat from the street and put it on TV
 My Adidas are seen on the movie screen
 Hollywood knows we're good, if you know what I mean
 We started in the alley, now we chill in Cali
 And I won't trade my Adidas for no beat up Ballys
 My Adidas



Run DMC, Hip-Hop-Band



KUNSTRAUM

THE TRIUMPHANT PROGRESS OF THE SNEAKER

SPORTS, FASHION AND LIFESTYLE

Much to the surprise of established fashion companies, the Puma label and the Three Stripes found their way into extravagant fashion boutiques, challenging established fashion labels. In recent years, the corporations from Herzogenaurach have developed fashion lines inspired by sports and represented by icons from the music and fashion scenes and 'clothed' motor-sports teams, skateboarders or popular US moto-crossers. Sports and fashion have become increasingly intertwined in recent years. Designers comb their corporate archives for inspiration from the past, and even the established fashion makers dabble in the new cult surrounding the classic sportswear companies. What got corporate strategists far enough away from the sweat-soaked origins was their cooperation with prominent fashion designers such as Jil Sander, Stella McCartney or the Japanese designers Yasuhiro Mihara and Yohji Yamamoto.



Puma-Conceptstore in Frankfurt

Boasting an unmatched career, trainer boots, which are a must in every shoe closet these days, have managed to reach the upper levels of fashionable footwear. Designer models are now made to be both presentable at business dinners and suitable for a round of jogging afterwards. The purchase of a certain shoe is associated with image, personalization and the expression of an individual perspective on life – attributes which were previously personified by successful top athletes, who are now being replaced more and more frequently by prominent figures and celebrities

from the music and film business. The transformation of the sports shoe into a fashion accessory has opened up the doors to extravagant fashion boutiques.

Which role does sport play in the brand portfolio of the big corporations? The original idea of providing the top names in competitive sport with specialist footwear still marks the corporate image to the present day. Puma has managed to re-establish itself amongst its competitors by blending sports and lifestyle into a trendy label. Adidas, the global player, also tailors "trendy" fashion lines, but the largest turnover, with a share of more than 80%, is still made in the 'Sport Performance' segment which is predominantly intended to furnish the sportsman with high-quality apparel and shoes.

SHOE CULT

If we believe the saying "You are what you wear" to be true, then how can it not apply to the shoe? The cult surrounding the sneaker, the chic sibling of the good old gym shoe, was most apparent in the 1990s. Interest in collector items, something which was for a long time reserved for serious collectors only, became something of a cultural phenomenon. Sneakers came out every three months in new designs and colour combinations, classic lines revamped in retro-style and limited-edition haute couture lines. The hungry collectors market is well fed with regular courses of cleverly marketed new shoe lines. In the world of the Internet fanatical sneaker fans chat on what are known as sneaker sites containing vast archives of digital images of shoes. To round it all off there are sneaker encyclopaedias, training shoe rankings, shoe shopping guides, anecdotes, shoe care tips or the much loved „Shoe Review“, a critical stylistic assessment of new shoe lines. What started off as a youth-specific clothing style has since become fully commercialised and is marketed as a target-group-oriented consumer product. A new turn in the saga of the shoe, however, is the extent to which consumer products are said to boost a person's self-esteem, even in the school yard: wearing the right style and make of sneakers means acceptance by your peers. Thankfully, however, media attention, for instance through newspaper reports on street fights for expensive sports shoes, have set the ball rolling for discussions on brand recognition, consumer pressure and the consequences of globalisation.



adidas superstar, 1969