

Introduction:

Raf Simons started out in 1995 and has since been a staple in the industry. Have roots from furniture design and interning at Walter Van Beirendonck, to pursuing fashion as his main career, Raf Simons has built himself quite the reputation for pushing boundaries and having a signature but unpredictable style. He has worked with top name brands and has produced his best art for them, also completing one of the toughest feats ever done in the fashion industry. Cementing himself in the industry.

Background

Raf Simons was born in Neerpelt, Belgium. He is the son of Jacques Simons, an army watchman, and Alda Beckers, a house cleaner. Raf Simons graduated in industry design and interior design from a college in Genk in '91. Simons also congregated at Antwerp cafe Witzli-Poetzli. He began to work as an interior design for a variety of galleries, having previously interned at the design studio of [Walter Van Beirendonck](#). In 1991, Van Beirendonck took Simons to his first fashion show during Paris fashion week, to see Martin Margiela's all white show. This influenced him to pursue a career in fashion designing. ("Raf Simons." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 4 Dec. 2017, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raf_Simons.)

In 1995, inspired by Linda Loppa, head of the fashion department at Antwerp at the time, Raf Simons became a self-trained menswear designer and launched his self-named clothing brand, Raf Simons (Bumpus, Jessica. "Raf Simons." *Vogue*, British

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Vogue, 23 Aug. 2017, www.vogue.co.uk/article/raf-simons.). Ten years later he also created a diffusion line called 'Raf by Raf Simons'. Around this time, he would also become the Creative Director at Jill Sanders. A position he would hold until 2012. This would be the start of an illustrious and solidifying career, as Raf Simons would move on to become the Creative Director at Dior, having been tasked to create and showcase a collection with only eight weeks of time after being hired. Raf Simons accomplished one of the biggest feats in the fashion industry having made the deadline set by Dior, having done a Couture dress collection for Dior, but adding his own twist by playing with color schemes, patterns and fabrics. There is a documentary called "Dior and I" documenting and highlighting the eight weeks of work Simons had to accomplish. This feat cemented Simons place in the fashion industry. Simons would continue to work with Dior until 2015 (Doyle, India. "The Style Guide to Raf Simons: Fashion's Provocateur." *Culture Trip*, 3 Aug. 2016, theculturetrip.com/europe/belgium/articles/the-style-guide-to-raf-simons/). Raf Simons stated his departure from Dior was for personal reasons, stating in an interview with System Magazine, that he left because there was not enough creative freedom. In 2016 he became the Creative Chief Officer at Calvin Klein. Apart from this Simons has also collaborated with brands like Fred Perry, Linda Farrow, and Adidas.

Raf Simons currently resides in New York City, with his partner and pet dog, as he continues to work with Calvin Klein, and also his self-named brand. (Johnson, Noah. "Raf Simons on Life in New York, Designing Under Trump, and the New

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Generation of Designers Who Look Up To Him (Exclusive).” GQ, GQ, 27 Jan. 2017, www.gq.com/story/raf-simons-exclusive-interview.)

Market Segments

Simons started out using youth culture as an inspiration. With a great following of today's youth and even being referenced in today's pop culture by artists such as the ASAP Mob and their affiliates. Simons wants his clothes to be for anyone and not just a small group. In a GQ interview, he stated, that in today's era we define a lot of things as high fashion, and it's not the case at all as high fashion pertains to a small group of people. He stated that the youth now have a driving presence in the industry and designers have to know how to deal with it, stating that the bourgeoisie spit on the youth, but they fail to realize that they are going to lose the game. Simons creates designs inspired by the youth, for the youth. (Johnson, Noah. “Raf Simons on Life in New York, Designing Under Trump, and the New Generation of Designers Who Look Up To Him (Exclusive).” GQ, GQ, 27 Jan. 2017, www.gq.com/story/raf-simons-exclusive-interview.)

Design

Rooted to the youth and rebellious, Simons uses youth culture to inspire his designs. Using traditional designs and create something new. His use of colors and crazy patterns and designs have earned him the reputation of an enigmatic designer. Which is very apparent with not only his self-named brand, but with his collaborations and work with brands (Jill Sanders, Dior, Calvin Klein). (Doyle, India. “The Style Guide

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to Raf Simons: Fashion's Provocateur." *Culture Trip*, 3 Aug. 2016, [theculturetrip.com/europe/belgium/articles/the-style-guide-to-raf-simons/.](http://theculturetrip.com/europe/belgium/articles/the-style-guide-to-raf-simons/))

His self-named brand shows the most of Simon's creative ability. From lab coats with sketches and scribbles, to over sized hoodies, his designs are very unorthodox. He's taken designs like a traditional peat coat and made oversized sleeves. He's taken puffer coats and oversized them with a variety of colors. Long fishtail parkas have pictures of models on them, sometimes posing nude. And very oversized knit sweaters. ("RAF SIMONS." *RAF SIMONS*, [rafsimons.com/.](http://rafsimons.com/))

Raf Simons encapsulates his creativity through his designs, while working with brands he is able to have an extensive access to their resources, with Dior he was able to use their materials and workers to help accomplish his couture collection. The same for when he worked for Jill Sanders, where he created three couture lines.

Promotion

Raf Simons has worked with Jill Sanders, Dior, and currently Calvin Klein. Doing this, he has taken steps away from his self-named brand. he only has two flagship stores, both of which are in japan. But his clothes can be found in boutiques such as Oaks in New York City, Browns in London, No74 in Berlin, and Number 3 in Athens. His collaborative works can be find in stores like Barneys New York, and Nieman Marcus. (storeguide.highsnobiety.com/?s=raf+simons.)

Relevance

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Raf Simons has been awarded three times. He won the CFDA international award in 2014, and won “Women’s and Men’s designer of the year” awards both in 2017. Over his twenty-one-year career in the fashion industry. Raf Simons has made a mark on the industry. His work is best acknowledged as distinctive but unpredictable and the evidence is in his clothes. He’s referenced in songs and pop culture, so even those who don’t follow fashion know who Raf Simons is, or know the name Raf Simons. My viewpoint on his work is that Simons is an extraordinary designer. He self trained himself to become a designer, and made a radical change in career from industrial and interior design to men’s clothing and women’s couture. Its something that he still mentions today (Johnson, Noah. “Raf Simons on Life in New York, Designing Under Trump, and the New Generation of Designers Who Look Up To Him (Exclusive).” GQ, GQ, 27 Jan. 2017, www.gq.com/story/raf-simons-exclusive-interview.). I also believe in him wanting to push the boundaries in men’s fashion. He is raising the bar simply by using traditional silhouettes and adding his taste or giving it a twist in design. I am definitely a fan of Raf Simons work, especially on his self-name label. His designs which are inspired by the youth culture and sometimes driven by what’s going on in the current events are intriguing to me. With him working with Calvin Klein and sticking with the streetwear scene, I’m anxious to see what’s in store for the future of Raf Simons and his label.

Conclusion

Since 1995 Raf Simons has been creating works of arts, from couture with Jill Sanders and Dior, to his work with Calvin Klein now and his Raf Simons brand. He

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certainly has solidified his spot in the industry and certainly has the accolades and resume to prove it. And though Raf Simons takes his time to produce, he never fails to deliver. With Raf Simons as the CCO of Calvin Klein, he already drop the first collection, we have to wonder what is in store for the future and wonder what Raf Simons will come out with next.

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Billboard artwork: Andy Warhol, *Elvis II Trixie* (Studio Type), 1963 © The Andy Warhol Foundation / ARTS, photographed at The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; CALVIN KLEIN 205W39NYC Fall 2007, photographed May 2007, Muzjove Design, California

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