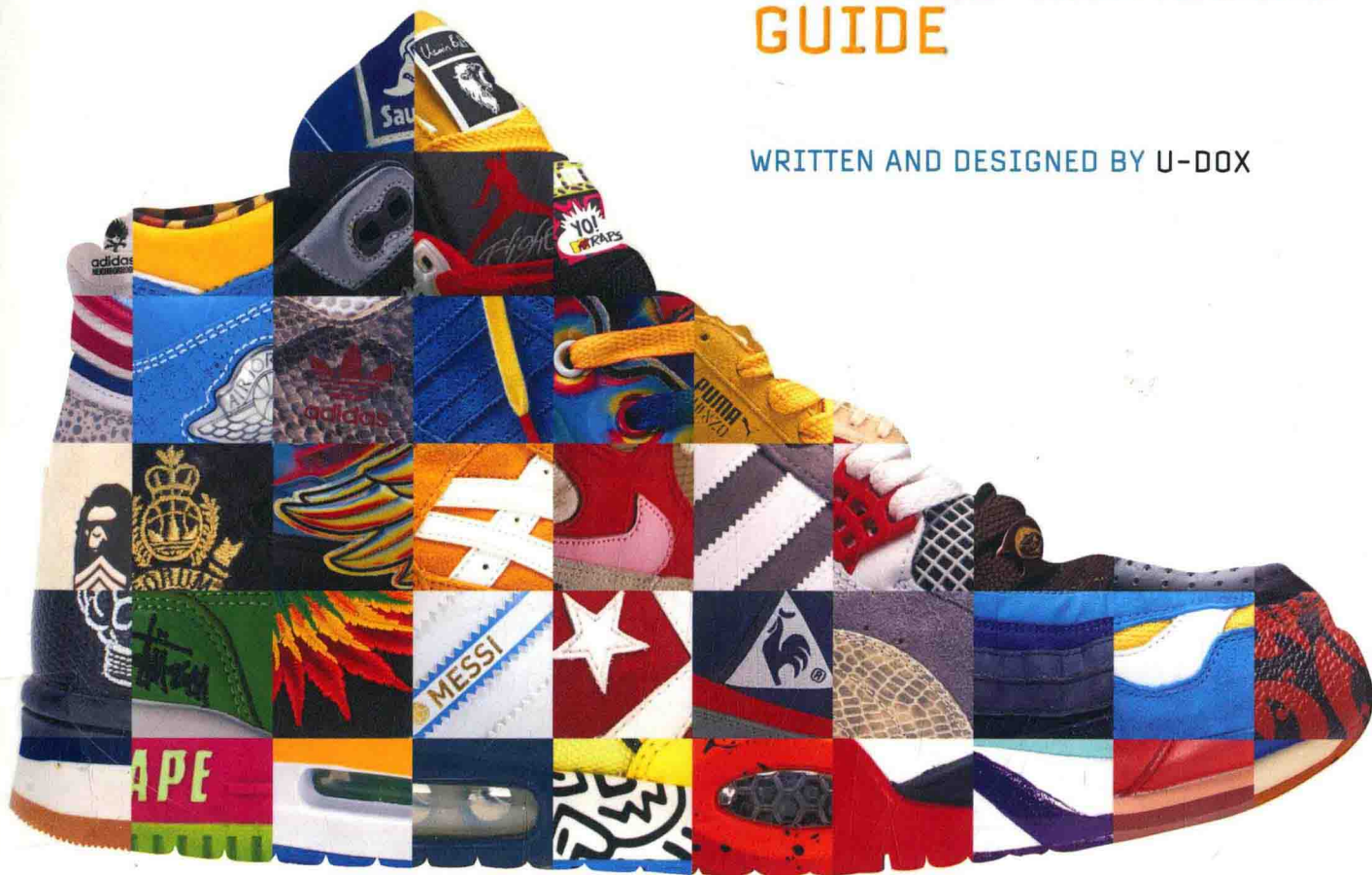


SNEAKERS: THE COMPLETE LIMITED EDITIONS GUIDE

WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY U-DOX



Thames & Hudson

**SNEAKERS THE COMPLETE
LIMITED EDITIONS GUIDE**

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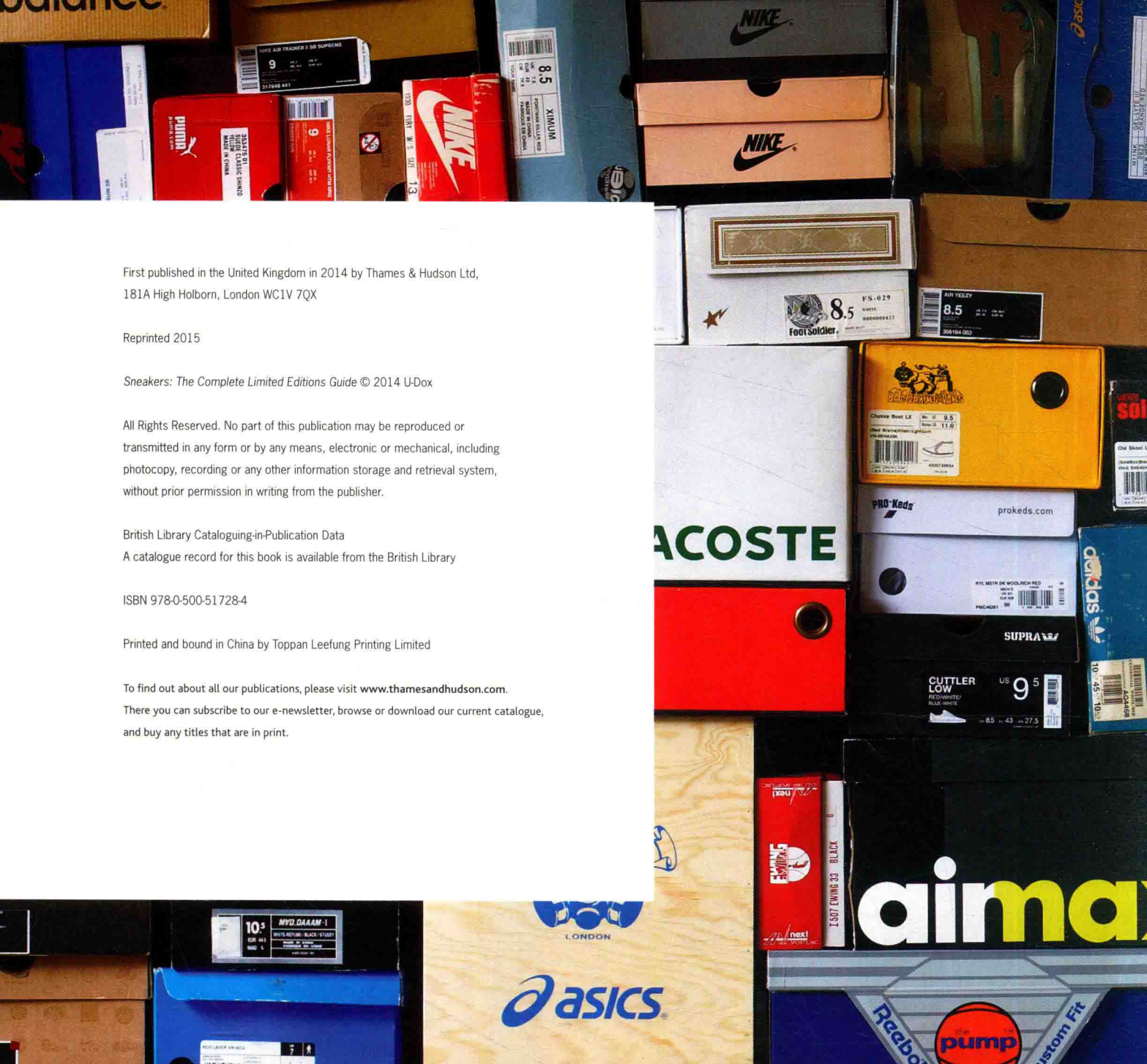
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INTRODUCTION

Since we published *Sneakers: The Complete Collectors' Guide* back in 2005, sneakers have moved right to the forefront of popular culture, cementing their status as both an everyday fashion staple and the cornerstone of a global, multibillion-dollar industry.

In less than a decade we've witnessed a plethora of sneaker boutiques being opened, websites launched, blogs written, sneaker exhibitions toured and sneaker 'celebrities' born. Athletic footwear has transcended its original purpose and is now worn as a badge of honour across a range of subcultures.

Far from being a localized phenomenon, this growing love for sneakers and the culture surrounding them has quickly spread across the planet. The obsession has been fuelled by technological advancements that make information about, and access

to, any product only a keyboard stroke or screen tap away. Though it was initially fomented in urban centres such as New York, London and Tokyo, today sneaker culture is found everywhere. Even in fairly isolated cities, there are dedicated boutiques where sneakerheads can be seen sleeping out, waiting for the freshest new footwear releases.

The 2005 *Collectors' Guide* was intended to be the complete reference for sneaker enthusiasts or collectors – and, as such, it touched on the burgeoning trend among brands to introduce new interpretations of classic models, often working with creative third parties. Since that time, hundreds of outstanding limited editions and collaborations have hit the shelves, and it is this explosion of creativity that forms the focus of our second volume.

As with the *Collectors' Guide*, it would have been impossible to include here

every limited edition release since 2005 – there has been a non-stop slew of products appearing each year. Our goal had to be to select sneakers that had a global impact – whether they were the most desirable, or the most exclusive.

From one-offs such as the New Balance M576 x House 33 x Crooked Tongues

THERE ARE SIMPLY MANY MORE PEOPLE WHO WANT THESE SNEAKERS THAN THERE ARE PAIRS AVAILABLE

(page 87), to the Nike Air Foamposite One 'Galaxy' (page 139), to adidas ZX 8000 x Jacques Chassaing & Markus Thaler (page 39), we've pulled out some of the key moments in the history of limited editions.

Leading the revolution have been the brands that were willing to tear up the

rulebook and look at new and interesting models of product development. From Nike working with seminal New York graffiti artists Futura (page 147) and Stash (page 134), to adidas creating a new level of product desirability and exclusivity through its work with Japanese streetwear giants A Bathing Ape (pages 20–21), brands have embraced the opportunity to showcase

their sneakers in new ways. In the process, they've opened up avenues to reach new consumers in previously untapped markets.

Along the way, existing sneaker lovers have had their passion for athletic footwear reignited as they have seen their favourite models reissued in new





colourways and materials, often in collaboration with a person they respect.

Obviously, the other crucial element in this equation is the collaborators themselves. They are artists, musicians, taste makers, brand guardians, shop owners, magazine editors, bloggers, blaggers, tattooists, photographers, athletes, designers... the variety is enormous and their number is ever growing.

What they all have in common, though, is a love of sneakers. And being approached by a brand with the chance to tell a story through a piece of footwear, although nowadays a relatively commonplace activity, is still exciting enough that even the most jaded sneakerhead's thoughts will be abuzz with colour blocking and material application possibilities.

Storytelling is also a key part of this phenomenon. With today's consumers

ever more engaged and aware, brands need to go even further in an effort to grab their attention and sustain their interest. Initially a bold material make-up and striking colourway were enough, but there has been an unmistakable trend in recent years for designs that attempt to translate something as vague as a 'concept' into sneaker form.

Editions such as the Nike SB 'Pigeon' Dunk (page 149), which references the legendary avian pest of New York City, or the Footpatrol Air Stab (page 132), which riffs on the London public transport upholstery colour scheme, convey a deeper narrative through application of concepts to athletic footwear. The scope for creative interpretation is limitless.

Distribution channels have also changed, and the spread of people interested in sports footwear has grown exponentially. From the thirty-something shoe nerds

who reminisce, misty-eyed, about the 'good old days', to the teenagers who are still getting hyped and sleeping out for the latest Air Yeezy (page 154), sneaker culture today really does have something to offer everybody.

Production of these limited collections in such a hungry, knowledgeable and fashion-led market is regulated by one of the most basic economic laws: supply and demand. There are simply many more people who want these sneakers than there are pairs available, and this inspires individuals to go to extreme measures to obtain them, at the same time generating an active resale market with often inflated prices.

People sleep outside stores, scheme, cajole and save for months to obtain that one unobtainable pair. Then they're on to the next one. Once you start to explore the multitude of sneaker forums and websites, or tap into streams of sneaker

consciousness on Twitter, the true scale of the obsession in our society becomes clear. It's largely for this reason that we feel now is the time for us to look again at the culture that fascinates and inspires us on a daily basis.

Compiling this second volume has been fun and frustrating in equal measure. From the predictable arguments around which shoes would make the cut, to the challenges of then sourcing some of the rarest sneakers ever produced, it truly has been a labour of love.

We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we did making it.




ADIDAS



With a brand history that reaches all the way back to the first half of the twentieth century, German company adidas has long been at the forefront of athletic footwear and the myriad subcultures it has inspired.

In the late 1980s the groundbreaking collaboration between adidas and Run-DMC spawned an entire sneaker collection. This was one of the first times a brand had made a serious effort to find a new way of marketing sneakers – adidas was arguably a pioneer in forging a strong connection with music, and, in particular, with hip-hop. Check the 'My adidas' Run-DMC Superstar Vintage (page 19) that was released to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the rap outfit's '3 -stripes' shout-out in their 1986 song.



Since 2001 adidas has also had a long-standing association with high fashion through its collaboration with Yohji Yamamoto on the Y-3 collection. These forays into working with partners on product collaborations and marketing initiatives stood adidas in good stead for the industry changes that were to come.

In 2003 the brand teamed up with New York sneaker shop Alife for a take on the seminal Top Ten. This low interpretation of the model was featured in our first book as a side-note to the original Top Ten – little did we know that we were looking at the forerunner of an impressive deluge of adidas collaborations that would continue to the present day.

adidas has an unprecedented number of game-changing sneaker models split across its core divisions. The Performance range pushes technological developments, creating footwear that enhances an athlete's actions. Originals are iconic archive silhouettes that are re-released in new and exciting interpretations for people to fall in love with all over again. These releases are often 'tiered'; the highest tier is the Consortium range, which was born of a desire to further explore creative opportunities and sits at the cutting edge of the brand's collaborative projects. The recent Consortium 'B-Sides' shoes were particularly sought after. Not to mention the Style line, which incorporates the SLVR casualwear range.

Over the past decade adidas has collaborated with a wide variety of artists and influencers to produce an impressively diverse range of co-authored sneakers, from whole collections with influential fashion designers such as Jeremy Scott (pages 42–43) under the adidas Originals by Originals (ObyO) umbrella, to executions with some of the key industry players, including Undeclared (pages 12 and 21), Crooked Tongues (pages 13, 27 and 38), Footpatrol (pages 22–23) and A Bathing Ape (pages 20–21). Iconic archive models such as the Campus, Superstar and various members of the ZX family have been reworked numerous times, leading to some interpretations of the originals that are as eye-catching as they are popular.