



FASHION ISSUE

OUR **2 YEAR** ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

SUSPECT

STARRING **OLI LACEY** BY BELL SOTO

ADAM DALTON BLAKE THE NEW BOY IN TOWN

BY KRISTOPHER FRASER

Every young design student dreams of moving to New York and having their fashion career dreams come true. Life isn't a CW series though, unless of course you're Adam Dalton Blake. The menswear designer, only a year fresh out of design school, debuted his latest collection under his eponymous label at New York Fashion Week in September.

Blake was one of three lucky designers chosen to be part of the CFDA and LIFEWTR showcase, where he also got to design a special LIFEWTR bottle that was available for guests at Fashion Week. His design featured a crowd of people who were literally every color of the rainbow wearing every style of sunglasses from star to heart shaped.

While he's enjoyed meteoric success at a young age, Blake didn't grow up with dreams of being a designer. "My mother wanted me to be a soap opera star. I got my name because she thought it sounded actor worthy" Blake said.

However, his true loves growing up were opera and art. Eventually, he decided to go the art route focusing on becoming a painter. He applied early decision to Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), and describes the moment he got his acceptance letter as the happiest day of his life. Blake describes his time at RISD as "being at art camp for four years."

Like all RISD students, he went through his first year of basic foundation classes before he declared his major. Up until the end of his freshman year, he was still focused on painting. The turning point for him came when he went to the senior critique for the apparel design majors, and he left realizing fashion design was his calling.

The first menswear piece he designed his sophomore year was thanks to Nicole Miller. As an alumnus of RISD, Miller is still very involved with the apparel design program. She provided one of his classes with prints from some of her previous collections to create something new. Blake created a rainbow Amish inspired man romper, and thus his design aesthetic was born.





Four years of so-called art camp culminated in his NYFW debut during the RISD graduating class of 2016 showcase. The theme for his collection was baseball, where he did a kitschy take on masculinity called “Big League Chew.”

Since then, he’s done two other collections, including fall/winter 2017’s “Riot Boys”, based on the 2016 election cycle, and his collection that debuted with CFDA and LIFEWTR titled “Fifteen Love,” a tennis inspired collection based on his affinity for sweaters and short shorts.

He might have a love for color and flamboyant aesthetics, but everything he does has a deeper meaning.

“Riot Boys was my analysis of how politics could be used as a sales tactic rather than a system of beliefs,” Blake said.

That collection gave us pieces with statements like “United States of America Ferrera” and “Redo” emblazoned in sequins. It debuted right after inauguration day, just the perfect timing to get the public’s attention.

The designer is no stranger to getting his work noticed though. In 2016, prior to getting involved with CFDA and LIFEWTR, Blake was highlighted by the CFDA + program, which highlights exemplary graduating talent, as a designer to watch.

When he got the phone call with the offer to be involved with CFDA and LIFEWTR, he had only been living in New York for two months. “It was insane,” Blake said. “I just moved to the city and I find out I have an opportunity a recent graduate could only dream of. To have the support of both CFDA and LIFEWTR is crazy. After they called me, I just remember immediately calling my mother to freak out.”

In addition to his eponymous line, Blake also works as an assistant designer at Bonobos, so, yes, you probably have him to thank for some of those recent Bonobos purchases in your closet.

As for how he handles both working at Bonobos and doing his own line, Blake simply said, “You always find the time to do what you love, plus I draw all the time!”

With everything he does, Blake wants to make sure his appreciation for diversity always shines through.

“I learned so much about different cultures from the international students at RISD, and it really helped make my work more impactful,” Blake said. “The more knowledge you have about people with different cultures and beliefs helps you create work that’s more impactful. That’s what my whole print for the LIFEWTR bottle was about, embracing diversity and showing how everyone is interconnected.”

That little boy with a paint brush grew up to be one of the most talked about young American menswear designers. Blake is proof dreams really can come true.

COURTESY OF ADAM DALTON BLAKE



