

rivet

# blueprint

TODAY'S STATE  
OF THE DENIM  
INDUSTRY

COTERIE  
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## Oak & Acorn—Only for the Rebelles

Clothing can do more than just make a fashion statement—and for Oak & Acorn—Only for the Rebelles, the intention has always been to educate consumers on the history of denim. Miko Underwood founded the brand more than 10 years ago to pay homage to what she calls the “untold history” of indigenous Americans and the enslaved Africans’ contributions to American denim.

The brand’s F/W 21-22 collection is a continuation of this as well as themes presented in previous collections, including indigenous African prints and the use of utility fabrics sourced from army and navy surplus stores. The typically indigo-heavy palette was updated to include more color, and the line features new additions to its active category to appeal to the new wellness-focused consumer. Hoodies and active pants—the uniform of 2020 and beyond—are now a key element of the brand.

The collection also continues on two of its defining characteristics:

genderless styles and seasonless drops. In that sense, Oak & Acorn has been ahead of its time from the beginning, offering styles that buck the tradition of gender and rigid fashion calendars. According to Underwood, the line has been well-received among women, and showing at trade shows will help it get more exposure to the men’s market.

“Being genderless is about being balanced,” she said. “We can be represented in anything. The femininity of a woman and the attitude of a man can just come through naturally with these pieces.”

Using garments made of natural fibers such as Refibra, hemp and indigo, and exhibiting a palpable connection to denim’s origins, the Harlem-based brand celebrates American culture and its identity around denim. As such, Underwood considers the color blue to be a main inspiration for her latest work.

“Blue is used in military, in our police uniforms, in our ‘blues’ music and in our flag,” she said. “The collection is really about the color blue, and what it represents, and its connection to our culture.”

The pandemic led Underwood to collaborate with partners closer to home, including Harlem-based artisan Henry Smith who apprenticed with the well-known master tailor Marion William Anderson.

“history,  
sustainability,  
denim”