

Press Information

**Nike
Form Follows Motion**

21 September 2024 – 2 March 2025

In autumn 2024 the Vitra Design Museum will present the first ever museum exhibition about Nike, the world's most revered sport brand. The exhibition will mark the milestones in Nike's fifty year history and will explore its ascent into a global brand that holds a central role in popular culture. The focus of the exhibition is on Nike's design practice – from the company's beginnings in the 1960s and the design of its famous »swoosh« logo to iconic products such as Air Max and current research devoted to future materials and sustainability.

The main source for the exhibition is the Department of Nike Archives, which contains a unique collection of drawings, prototypes and other documentation. The exhibition marks the most comprehensive access ever given to this archive. Among the exhibits are rarities and one-offs from the company's early days in the 1960s, original design drawings and prototypes of iconic sneaker models, historical documents and films, as well as the results of collaborations with creative figures such as Virgil Abloh and Marc Newson.

With these and other works on display, the exhibition will trace Nike's design process, which begins with the scientific analysis of the human body in motion and material research and culminates in the finished product and its branding. Along with Nike designers like Bill Bowerman, Diane Katz, Tinker Hatfield and Wilson Smith, athletes – from the world's greatest to the everyday – have played an important role in this design process by bringing their own experiences and requirements into product development. At the same time, the exhibition illuminates the numerous narratives behind iconic objects and innovations, such as the development of the first waffle sole in the kitchen of Nike co-founder Bill Bowerman, or the story of the Tennessee State University Tigerbelles, a team of Black female athletes during the Black Power era in the United States.

The exhibition coincides with the 2024 Paris Olympics and marks the first time that the Vitra Design Museum examines the close affiliation between sports and design. The show emphasizes the importance of this symbiosis for social change and technological innovation, while also shedding light on the almost mythical devotion to sneakers and sportswear in popular culture and social media.

Mateo Kries, director of the Vitra Design Museum, explains: »For a long time, we have wanted to organize an exhibition on design and sports. When we approached Nike, we learned more about their incredible design archive – a huge treasure that had never been presented in an exhibition. That was how the idea of this exhibition was born. The show offers a unique opportunity to focus on design through the lens of a single brand, and to display fascinating objects that illustrate the process of design development – some of which have never been shown before.«

Exhibition curator Glenn Adamson notes: »In addition to our interest in the evolution of iconic products, we will look at the larger social and historical context. Over the past 50 years, sport has had a tremendous impact on our perception of the human body, beyond the field – for example, on conceptions of gender roles. Our exhibition will track these changes, from an initial emphasis on performance and optimization to greater diversity and inclusion. Nike has been at the heart of these transformations, and by looking at their design strategies, we gain insights into that bigger cultural picture.«

Following its premiere at the Vitra Design Museum, the exhibition will travel to further international museum venues. A comprehensive catalogue will be published in conjunction with the exhibition.

Press images



01

VaporMax Air Bag unit, Air Max, 2016
© Courtesy of Nike, Inc.



02

Oregon Waffle, photo by Jeff Johnson, 1973
© Courtesy of Nike, Inc.



03

Sketch of original Swoosh design
by Carolyn Davidson, 1972
© Courtesy of Nike, Inc.



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3D Grown by Nikita Troufanov from
Experiments in Natural Motion, 2016
© Courtesy of Nike, Inc.

General Information

Exhibition title:	Nike. Form Follows Motion
Dates:	21 September 2024 to 2 March 2025
Idea:	Mateo Kries
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