

# An algorithm for style and street culture: How AI is reimagining streetwear.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Fashion designers have meditated on the idea of automatization for decades. In Alexander McQueen's Spring/Summer 1999 show, model Shalom Harlow spun in place as two robotic arms sprayed her white dress with black and yellow ink. But despite signs of fashion fantasizing about the prospects of robotics, the industry has struggled at the thought of fusing technology with design. Can the two sides tunelessly coexist? If so, how does a young UK-trained computer scientist with no formal education in fashion design redirect this narrative? In 2018, Javier Mootee did just that and started his own streetwear label. Instead of hiring fashion designers or graphic artists to create expressive forms of imagery, he developed his own machine to do the creative contextualizing for him. After two years in development, he was able to harness the raw, untapped power of artificial intelligence to create the world's first commercial grade robo-designer named STiCH.

The human behind STiCH is Javier Mootee who grew up with a spirited passion for all things technology, but harbored a deep devotion for the arts, dreaming one day of creating a



Urbancoolab Co-founder Javier Mootee



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medium that proves structurally conducive to both sides. The tech maestro points to the cultural hodgepodge of Canada's diversity and the social underpinnings found piercing throughout London as the main catalysts to his creative philosophies. It was here at these crossroads where he discovered independent expression outside the hollow nuances of high-fashion circles, and instead learned to view stylized articulation through streetwear's design prism. The computer scientist dreamt one day of starting his own clothing brand, but did not possess the traditional background those in the fashion space were known for having. High-fashion's very own man of the moment, Virgil Abloh, is a creator of the highest caliber whose story drives home this point completely. Not only does the Off-White frontman credit his Master of Architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology for much of his sartorial successes, he often references such teachings throughout his work. Javier ripped a page from Abloh's playbook, making it his personal mission to scratch his design itch through his own specialized background. He learned to tune out all of the unnecessary noise stemming from those who warned against entering the field, and instead rolled the dice to bet on himself.



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Similar to how the Antwerp 6 were formed, aspiring designers once upon a time bolstered their portfolios in attempts to secure a spot at Parsons School of Design, Central Saint Martins, or another school of similar stature. It was this "scholarly" disconnect that had members of Javier's inner circle questioning his ability to penetrate the streetwear sphere. Although his formal education lies outside of traditional fashion curriculums, he did find a way to parlay that knowledge base to control the design process without having to actively participate in it. From a high-level structural standpoint, Javier's efforts looked radically different from any other brand, in that sewing machines, needles, thread and textiles were noticeably missing from operations. Such customary tools of the trade were in fact swapped out for Javier's own weapons of choice; computers and the technical jargon used to steer its actions.

With such an unconventional approach to the arts, the tech engineer opened up a new realm of creative energy, providing individuals from disparate backgrounds an avenue to live out childhood dreams through fashion. Different methods of how to articulate that level of adeptness were explored, with the technician discovering a way to release waves of untapped creativity into the wild, allowing anyone, anywhere the power to create in a manner comparable to that of their favorite designers.

The subversive graphic language upheld by Supreme, along with Stüssy's '80-style surf scrawls helped inform Javier's design sensitivities, and is considered one of the primary layers in STiCH's complex neural network. His technical aptitude juxtaposed against his love for pop-culture's other pillars, including rap music, cult classic films and contemporary art all play a role in characterizing [Urbancoolab](#)'s pioneering aesthetic.

Fear of What is the result of Javier and his team creating art while in the presence of fear. Utilizing what man fears most, the brand is formed on the backs of humans surrendering to machines. With fear a key component fueling much of the design directive, Javier realized early on that in order to unlock Fear of What's true potential, he must relinquish control to his very own masterful creation; a creation free from the shackles of suffocating sentiments.

At the end of the day, fear is a natural occurrence in our day-to-day lives that cannot magically disappear simply because we wish it too. Fear of the unknown is a barrier to entry for most ventures, however, should never be looked at as a reason to not reach for the stars. If there is one single, solitary fear STiCH encourages us to embrace and interact with, it is fear of not accomplishing what you were destined to do.

"Virgil always says it is 3% that makes the difference. Does it matter whether it was man or machine who sparked that change? I don't think it's far off to assume a future where clothing brands list items like 30% human, 70% machine and 100% sustainable. - Javier Mootee, Co-Founder

Considered to be the very first artificial intelligence-designed fashion brand of its kind anywhere, Fear of What was hatched through Javier's own view of the dark ages, skewed, of course, by today's technological competencies. His mission was to explore the relationship humans have with computers and how technological advances are often stymied by those who fear its true power. Pushing past fear based solely on naivety can yield astonishing results, and is essentially the baseline essence to unlocking STiCH's artistic mastery. Javier felt it necessary to show how symbiosis between man and machine can be achieved in a way that all can distill.

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