



NICHOLAS DALEY AUTUMN/WINTER 23

Ska, two-tone and the cultural contribution of the Midlands' Afro-Caribbean community take centre-stage for Nicholas Daley's Autumn/Winter 2023 collection, the Leicester-born designer mining regional histories to reveal broader narratives around the black British diasporic experience.

Building on established brand themes, Roots to Rebel centers the contributions of subcultures and communities beyond the capital, placing a spotlight on a quintessentially British scene that would shift perceptions, not only around multiculturalism, but post-war Britain itself. Originating in Coventry in the 1970s against a backdrop of political hopelessness and social upheaval, two-tone took its lead from the subversive spirit and infectious groove of classic Jamaican reggae and ska.

Introducing punk realism to these up-tempo soundscapes, the likes of **The Specials** and the **Selecter** gave voice to a specific moment in British working-class history, placing the Midlands firmly on the contemporary music map. For AW23, Daley taps into the scene's sharply outfitted rudeboys, tracing their style ancestry back to the basement blues and soundsystems that came before in a detail-rich wardrobe spanning familiar and unfamiliar modes of dress. For the Roots To Rebel campaign shoot, the featured backdrop was shot by **Adrian Boot**, one of Britain's best-known music photographers. The images used are from The Specials concert in Brighton during their 1979 tour.

The collection draws on two boundary-pushing figures of the era. 'Roots' turns to award-winning Birmingham-born poet **Benjamin Zephaniah**, a consistent champion of "street politics" since the '70s, his words offered hope to a disenfranchised generation looking to place their struggle within a framework of international activism. Informed by his Rastafari beliefs, Zephaniah's dub poetry would be recited on dancefloors and demonstrations throughout the '80s and beyond. Universal themes of community and care securing the writer a place in the contemporary British literary canon.

'Rebellion' arrives in the form of the legendary **Pauline Black**: a stalwart of the Coventry two-tone and Ska revival scene, front woman of the Selecter and the original Rudegirl. The only lead female in a heavily male-dominated culture, with role models absent, the performer became her own idiosyncratic creation, interpreting the highly-stylised dress of her male peers with elegance and edge. Her defiant approach to both music making and persona inspires the rhythm and cadence of AW23, a merging of tradition and nonconformity generating something wholly unique.

Fabric and craft once again lead the narrative. Long-time collaborator **Stephen Walters & Sons of Sudbury** provide a custom cotton chenille argyle, monochrome in a nod to the season's two-tone narrative; alongside a luxurious chevron silk/cotton/wool mix. Both fabrics are utilised across a matching work jacket, straight cut trouser and oversized baker boy hat.

Roots revisited, Daley partners with Scottish maker **Locharron** once again. A bespoke brushed mohair tartan, officially admitted to The Scottish Register of Tartans, recognises the designer's Dundee ancestry whilst spotlighting traditional Scottish craftsmanship. Transformed into a combat vest and classic kilt produced by famed manufacturer Glenisla of Lanarkshire, ancestry informs both fabrication and cut.

New for this season, the Harrapa Shirt showcases a tactile hand-woven striped cloth, made in Japan using 400-year-old weaving techniques carefully preserved by the factory. The region also provides a fresh interpretation on Suminagashi, a traditional Japanese marble dye method producing a dramatic swirl of ethereal pattern and colour, crafted this season into a boxy Wrap Jacket, Aloha Shirt and Kimono pant, all with a distinctive satin finish.

AW23 sees the introduction of the ND classics range offered in minimal black and white. Underlining key Nicholas Daley styles carried across seasons, the capsule includes two pocket cotton shirts and waffle jerseys, with outer layers remade in durable, easy-wear Melton wools and UK made waxed cottons.

Technical water-repellent Italian fabrics make their debut for Autumn/Winter, adding new dimension and utility to the range. Military-inspired black and olive fabrics are proposed in two weights, both functional and comfortable. A lightweight recycled polyamide/cotton has been used as both accent and in full across the Utility Cropped coat, designed to be worn season to season. Meanwhile, a heavier polyamide/cotton can be found in hardwearing pieces including a Smock Parka and multi-pocket Cargo Pant, all made in England.

Knitwear prioritises touch and drape, 100% merino chosen for its soft surface and breathable finish. Adaptable 14 gauge reversible shirts, crewnecks and vests carry sound wave-inspired patterns and contemporary argyles, with matching Balaclavas and scarves providing cold-weather protection. Hand-crocheted cottons return in a long-sleeve relaxed fit crewnecks and a selection of signature accessories including bags, belts and berets.

The collection's Jersey programme, welcomes the return of the Reggae Klub tee, an ode to Daley's parents who designed the graphic in 1978 as an emblem for their legendary grassroots club night as it travelled across Scotland and the Midlands. Classic monochrome tracksuits, bold tie-dye waffles and a newly developed heavyweight zip polo are joined by casual logo long-sleeve t-shirts and panelled hoodies in high quality, durable Portuguese cottons - a subtle 'Roots to Rebel' monogram designed by London-based artist Kione Grandison.

To close out the collection, a first time collaboration with **GH Bass** sees the reinterpretation of a subcultural classic. Worn by rudeboys, mods, jazz icons and Ivy leaguers, the classic Weejun Larson loafer receives a comfortable superlug sole, traditional horsebit hardware and exaggerated cross blanket stitching. Offered in 2 colourways: Navy/Black and Burgundy/Chocolate, the shoe embodies a continued conversation between old world and new, classic and contemporary in constant dialogue across the Autumn/Winter 2023 collection.

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