

MARK SMITH / HEDCHEQ

Mark Smith joined Nike in April, 1989. Hired by then VP of Design Mark Parker to explore concept apparel and graphics. Quickly drafted into Nike's work with In Living Color, Madonna, Janet Jackson, and Heavy D, he was identified as the go-to guy for "energy" projects, out of the box design and elevated presentations. His other primary contributions helped establish Nike's newly forming International Tee Shirt Program. The original FORCE logo was his first global graphic brand product mark.

In 1991, footwear guru, Tinker Hatfield tapped Smith to partner on AIR RAID, and ultimately hired him into Nike Footwear Design where he apprenticed with Hatfield on Jordan, Running, Training, Tennis, and concept ideations including N Series, ACG, and Relay. Smith helped elevate Nike product communication and presentation by bringing diverse creative disciplines to projects and team, including, audio-video direction and production, environmental and retail concepting, interactive computer and digital, as well as product, apparel, graphics, and branding design work. Smith's multilingual "performance graphic" outsole design was a notable contribution to Air Jordan IX. Color, graphic, and support design duties on AJXIII, AJXIV, and AJXV continued to elevate Smith's experience and teamwork with Hatfield and Michael Jordan.

In 2000, Smith "took a break" from Nike to return to his family and West Coast beach roots in Southern California. "VP Design at Vans, that's where I earned, in effect, a Masters of Business degree in a year and a day."

Returning to Portland in 2002, Smith rejoined Nike and slotted naturally into the Innovation Kitchen, Nike's newly formed technical and creative 'black-ops think tank'. Bringing new laser technology to the sneaker world, Smith introduced the Nike Laser Pack in 2003, catapulting him into the headlines with a sport culture offering that went beyond product, with an eye toward elevating packaging, event, and retail, and storytelling, truly creating next level "product as creative canvas", in effect, heightening the collector mindset and Sneakerhead frenzy for generations to come.

Along with countless customization projects including the Olympics, Eric Clapton, Bono, Carlos Santana, Sheryl Crow, and HBO's Entourage, Smith was drafted to help create product, graphics, and communication presentations for bringing Kobe Bryant and LeBron James, among others, and Hurley Brand, into the Nike family of athletes and brands.

Meanwhile, his continued collaboration with Michael Jordan and Hatfield, led to the release of the AJXX, where Tinker referred to Smith as co-designer on the Jordan Game Shoe - refining his latest signature story telling "living tapestry" graphic style technique and applying it as the first use of laser on performance product. During this period he also began his decade long role as Creative Director of Jordan's newly formed AMA Michael Jordan Motorsports team. Every aspect of the annual look and feel of the race team fell on Smith to innovate team branding and presence on and off the race course. Air Jordan XXIII marked Smith, again, as co-designer with Hatfield, on the first ever "Gold Level Considered Performance Product", paving the way for continued elevation of sustainable performance product design and integrated storytelling as performance benefit. He also designed Nike's new 78,000 square foot Innovation facility, including the fabled "Winnebago Conference Room." His work with Kanye West resulted in the highly collectible original Yeezy 1.

Then, in 2008, Smith was tapped to create the role of Global Creative Director of Jordan Brand. Uniting the Footwear, Apparel, and Brand Design teams under one roof... Jordan Creative. Additionally, he ideated the World Basketball Festival, and worked with Nike Executives to bring it to life in 2010. Always with a hand in Product Design, he authored the AJ2010 with Tinker and numerous athlete signature products during his stay "within" Jordan Brand. "My time in Jordan was like earning a PhD in business", he says of his "executive" stint.

"I returned to Innovation in 2011 to get my hands down and dirty into product again." He began exploring printing and customization techniques immediately. Partnering on AJXXVIII, and XXIX with Hatfield on delivering highest level performance product excellence. Elevating the future of storytelling and performance Nike customization are currently his primary explorations. He recently created "The Eagle" Air Force 1's for the President of the United States. The AJXXX again, combines his diverse creative disciplines in product design and development, storytelling performance graphics, branding, communications and digital media direction, also brand communication soundtrack production and innovation media strategies with Tinker and Jordan Brand. "Bringing Michael and Tinker's vision to life - that's the most unique job description anyone could ask for in this game."

Keegan Bradley, Shane Victorino, Justin Timberlake, Narciso Rodriguez, Drake, Chi McBride, Dave Grohl, among many, many others, have Smith customs in their closets.

Smith is an avid musical performer and multi-instrumentalist, artist, sculptor, illustrator, painter and a creator / producer of environments, events, and mood. He writes, acts, and directs digital shorts for Nike, himself and others. "Student of many, master of none..." he laughs. He actively exhibits his artwork. "But first, I am the Neanderthal husband of my crazy talented, beautiful and refined wife, Valerie, and goofy parent of two creative and dynamic offspring, Hayden and Serena. And there are always Rottweilers and Frenchies running around the

house.” Snowboarding, cycling, body surfing, and golf are his favorites, and regular schedule of surgeries and injury rehabs have kept him busy healing and learning about the wonders of the athletic anatomy, which he regularly draws and shares on Instagram under his personal creative handle “HEDCHEQ”.

Smith currently leads his Innovation Pirate Ship crew exploring the outer reaches of where Athlete/Experience/Technology blend into near future Fun in Gaming, Retail, Event, and Footwear and Apparel.

