



As it pertains to the current fashion landscape and consumer trends, there is a clear increase in the number of non-formally trained designers and creative directors leading various movements and becoming household names. Enter Samuel Ross, who studied Graphic Design and Illustration at De Montfort University in Leicester.

Ross' early Instagram posts caught the attention of the late Virgil Abloh who hired him to work on Donda and Off-White projects in 2012 and would facilitate the working relationships that he built with Hood by Air, Stüssy and A.P.C. Subsequently, Samuel Ross founded the brutalism, and British class system inspired label A-COLD-Wall\* in 2015. Prioritising utility and adaptability, ACW became a heavy hitter in the inner-city streetwear subculture known as techwear.

# A-COLD-WALL\*

**Est. 2015**

**London**

**UK**

Pledging to represent the Black working class and working class environments, ACW is defined not just as a brand but as a design project and cultural commentary. Ross, being born to second-generation Windrush parents of Caribbean descent, has highlighted the lack of Black British designers to look to during the time that he was growing up. As a result, whether or not consciously, he has taken the reins in a way that is exhilaratingly different to his contemporaries.

One of ACW's most attractive qualities is that Samuel Ross' perspective often offers solutions to issues that consumers may not have realised could be solved - a positive side effect of his product design background. It has meant that A-COLD-WALL\* pieces have a reputation for being very long lasting.

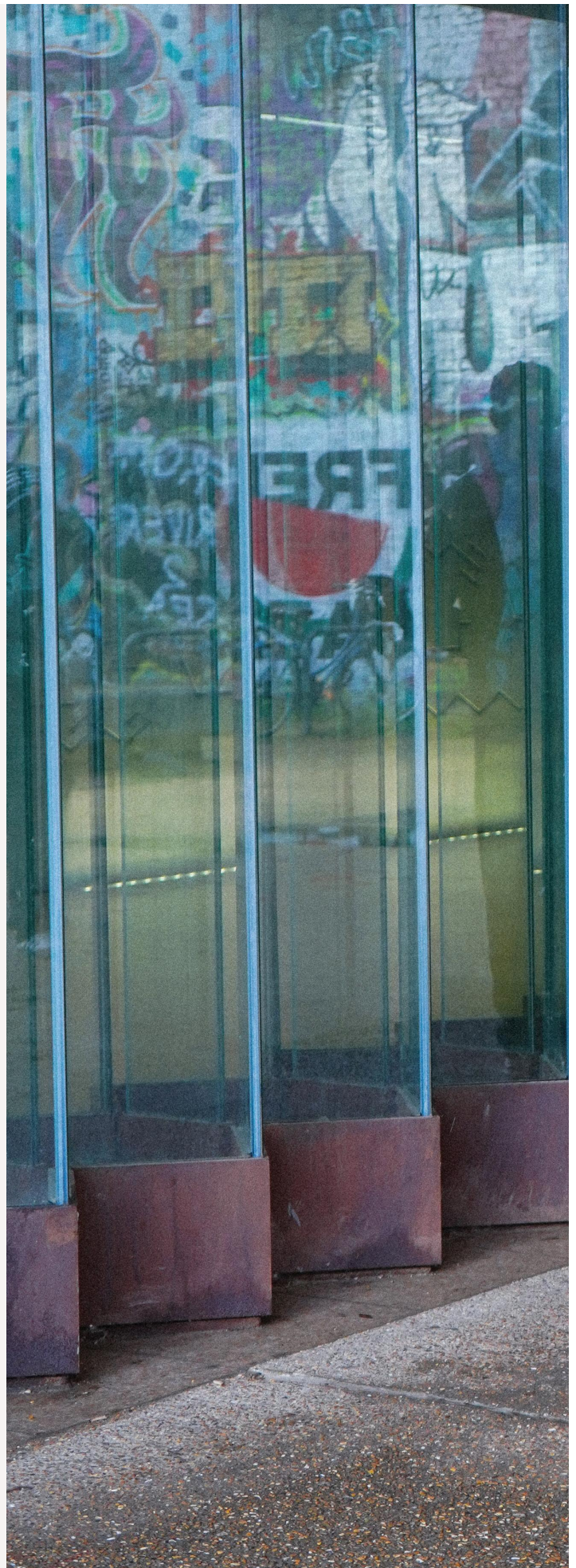



Interestingly however, outside the inner circles of streetwear enthusiasts, Samuel Ross and ACW's contributions to UK fashion and menswear were often overlooked until the tragic passing of Virgil Abloh left both Off-White and Louis Vuitton short of an artistic director in 2021. While at this point Ross' track record was being raised in more mainstream conversations it was already abundantly clear to those who were previously aware, that A-COLD-WALL\* was a force to be reckoned with and that rarely disappointed when it came to fashion week presentations and footwear collaborations.



Launched in 2016 was ACW's early partnership with Nike that has since produced 4 deconstructed and reimaged silhouettes: the first being an Air Force 1 featuring suede overlays, embroidery and a minimalistic take on the Nike Swoosh; the second was a Vomero Zoom stripped of its protective coating to force each wearer's pair to age differently over time; the third was a sequel to the Air Force 1 in the 'low' silhouette, constructed using Flyleather and engineered to be almost crease proof. The fourth and most recent silhouette is the Air Max Plus, known colloquially in the UK as the TN. The refined take on the European classic features full-grain leather which is designed to age and unveil a second hue below the original monochromatic colourways. Nike is unsurprisingly not the only brand to collaborate directly with ACW in the last few years. Consumers have also been treated to capsules with Converse, Dr. Martens, Timberland and Beats.

Straddling the boundary between niche and mainstream, A-COLD-WALL\* is already a heritage label in its field but remains far from losing its novelty within the industry as a whole as Samuel Ross' every move is increasingly anticipated globally.



A full-page photograph of Samuel Ross standing in front of a modern building with large glass windows at night. He is wearing a dark, quilted jacket, dark trousers, and white sneakers with red accents. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

***'I think it's really important to not enter into a partnership or into a house and try and turn everything upside down - I think it's actually about recontextualising. It's about making sure that the dots connect between the new generation and the codes of a house'***

*- Samuel Ross for GQ*