

Far left: Pettis smiles wearing his own brand shirt. Middle: Two of Pettis's brand designs for Fashion Design class. Right: Pettis draws his design on a pair of Vans. Photos by Italia Caro

Freshman finds passion, future in fashion design

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Editor

As the fashion cycle operates, older fashion trends often make a return. Shoulders in the 1980s were once again bulky as shoulder pads returned from the 1930s. Figures became highlighted anew in the 1990s as form-fitting clothes returned from the 1950s. Hair now is being held high by scrunchies from the '90s. Like the scrunchie, another trend has reappeared from the '80s and '90s: the white sneaker. However, the trend has been tweaked to fit today's style, Vans and Converse replacing Filas, Pumas and Reeboks, and shoes are now being customized via paint, ink or embroidery.

Freshman Bodie Pettis is one of the creators of customized sneakers. He started drawing on shoes when he was in fifth grade, finding inspiration in the book "Big Nate: In the Zone" by Lincoln Peirce. Pettis was spurred to draw on his own sneakers by a part of the story in which the main character draws on his shoes, covering them in comics and doodles.

"I had a white pair of low top Vans and I thought it was kind of boring to just have a pair of white shoes, because they're just going to get dirty anyway. So, I drew patterns all over the shoe and I thought that was really cool," Pettis said.

Later, he turned the idle drawing into something profitable. He now customizes white sneakers for a minimum of \$10. "Nothing over \$20—I'm trying to make it affordable," Pettis explained. "Otherwise



Pettis models his customized pink and blue Jordans. Photo by Italia Caro

I wouldn't get any business." His designs include the Lorax, roses and Monsters, Inc. These designs are requested by his customers. Then he begins his process. Pettis takes the white shoes given to him by a customer and cleans them with his cleaning kit. After the mud, grass stains and dirt are removed, Pettis starts sketching the design.

"I have a piece of paper that I'll sketch out what they want. I'll write down stuff that they want, like what specific details that they've said and then I'll sketch out what the design will look like and I'll send it to the customer," Pettis explained. "I'll see if that sounds like it looks good, and if it does, I'll go with it. If it doesn't, I'll change it up, repeat it."

After he is given permission to move forward, he starts drawing on the shoes, first with pencil, then with black and white markers, and finally color is added to the design and Pettis sprays the shoes with waterproof spray to stop ink from running.

Pettis primarily uses sharpies and artists pens but has recently

started using Angelus Paints. The first pair that Pettis used Angelus Paint on, one of his favorites, is a pair of Air Jordan I Flights.

"I was at a sneaker con in Denver, and somebody had a really cheap pair of Jordans, and they were black, and I don't really want black Jordans. I like being unique," Pettis said. "I painted one of them completely pink and one of them completely dark blue and they turned out great and I put white laces on them too. It turned out great and that's the first time I've ever used Angelus paints and yeah, I wear those a lot."

While Pettis has mostly focused on shoe design as a source of income, he sees a future in fashion.

"I do want to be a fashion designer when I get older. I'm taking a fashion design class now at Collins. I think it's great—the class is great. I'm looking into trying to start my own brand, but I think it's going to be a local brand, like I'm just going to sell to my friends and stuff."

Pettis has started his own brand name, titled "Bodie" which is inspired

by his middle name, the name he goes by. Pettis's brand has several shirts featuring a polar bear symbol.

The polar bear symbol is a common feature on Pettis's work; it is painted or drawn on each of the shoes he's done, and it holds a deeper meaning for him. He first used the polar bear as a design in fourth grade for a project in which he studied the coffins of Ancient Egypt.

"I tried to draw a like crude drawing of a polar bear like a very easy sign of a polar bear, and I came up with this; you can see that there's the eyebrows that connect to the nose and the mouth. It's all connected except for the eyes."

The polar bear is a main inspiration for Pettis' designs. Additionally, his passion for fashion was aided by a visit to Japan and an Airbnb experience from Reggie Casual, the host of the YouTube channel "The Casual." This visit only spurred his interest in fashion design.

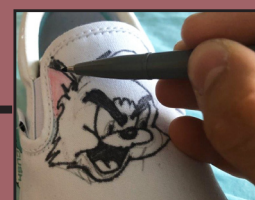
"There's this one cool piece that I'm going to try and recreate," he said. "I don't know if I'm going to be able to find a zipper but there's this tracksuit looking jacket, but the zipper was huge. It's this massive zipper, so I thought it was really cool and I love oversized stuff. I like the way Kanye West dresses and minimalistic looking stuff and I like oversized, minimalistic fashion."

Pettis looks forward to creating the tracksuit similar to the one he saw in Japan and continuing fashion design, both in school and on his own. He maintains focus on his shoe and clothing designs and hopes to have an established fashion brand in the future.

Pettis's Design Process



Step 1: Pettis sketches the design in pencil on the shoe.



Step 2: Pettis outlines the design in black pen.



Step 3: Pettis colors in the design with pens