

Johnson, Noah. "Get Back to Workwear," GQ, May 2018.

GQ

The Fix ▶ HOW TO WEAR IT

1 of 2
→



Get Back to Workwear

Clothes pulled straight from construction sites have long been worn by laymen, but now they're crashing into the fashion world and finding new ways to mingle with the less rugged parts of your wardrobe

Workwear has now officially transcended its function. When you wear a Carhartt vest or a pair of Dickies work pants, you aren't just paying tribute to the people who literally built America over the past century. You're hanging with the skaters, rappers, and grunge rockers who built entire cultural movements around their style in the '80s and '90s, like Tupac Shakur, Kurt Cobain, and the Beastie Boys, whose influence

continues to loom large today. Not only do you not need to know how to operate a band saw to dress "authentically" in workwear, you don't even need to know what a band saw does.*

"Cobain to carpenter" is a wide spectrum—wide enough that the workwear trend now has room for all of us, making it as foundational as it is fashionable.

*Want to make irregularly shaped wooden coasters? Band saw.

SEANKELLY

The Fix ▶ HOW TO WEAR IT

Jacket, \$168, and pants, \$118, by Carhartt WIP. Shirt, \$80 (for pack of two), by Velva Sheen.



MATERIAL MAN

Hugo McCloud attends junior college classes to learn what he needs to know about soldering and oxidizing industrial-grade metals to make his paintings. He enrolls in a course just long enough to learn the most basic safety measures and techniques, then drops out and gets to work.



POUR ONE OUT FOR THE STYLE LEGACY OF TUPAC

In the '90s, rappers on both coasts flipped basic workwear into street fashion, and it became part of the quintessential hip-hop wardrobe of the time. It wasn't until Tupac wore a full workwear look on the 1993 Soul Train Music Awards red carpet, alongside an admiring Rosie Perez, that it was written into fashion (not hip-hop fashion—*fashion*) history. Hip-hop has been propelling style culture ever since.

Brand to Know: STAN RAY

→ Pink painter's pants probably weren't at the top of your spring shopping list, but they should be. This family-run outfit in Crockett, Texas, has been quietly making workshop-ready gear for over 40 years. Now it's retooling its designs for the streets.

Jacket, \$119, and pants, \$97, by Stan Ray | stanray.com



Chore coats, carpenter pants, and utility vests aren't just workwear staples—they're menswear staples—like trainers and tracksuits borrowed from sports, or trench coats and field jackets from the military. (Fashion truth: Gear that functions well tends to age well.) These are clothes that fit with almost anything in your closet.

Take artist Hugo McCloud, seen here at his workspace in Bushwick, Brooklyn. He wears Rick Owens and A.P.C. when he's not in the studio, but when

he's busy welding, grinding, and bending industrial-grade metal to make large abstract paintings, he's in Carhartt. And more often than not, just as work and life tend to overlap, he wears the two together.

We suggest you do the same. Wear painter's pants with your favorite sneakers, add a pop of safety orange to an earth-toned fit, or just throw a classic shop coat over jeans and a T-shirt. No experience—or sense of irony—necessary.

—NOAH JOHNSON

