

# THE GENTEEL



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## DESIGN

### Pop Appeal

by [Semmi W.](#) | Posted April 2, 2013

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Human Made Coca-Cola T-Shirt Designs. Source: [present-london.com](#).

NIGO, the designer behind brands like [Human Made](#) and [A Bathing Ape](#), has joined forces with Coca-Cola and Japanese boutique [Beams](#), to launch a [fashion line](#) inspired by the brand's advertising history and memorabilia.

"To me, [Coca-Cola] symbolizes being a design legend," NIGO [explained](#) to *Complex* magazine's James Harris. "From the classic can to the bottle, its enduring appeal lies in the simplicity of its design." Before being approached, NIGO had already nurtured an obsession for the brand and its iconography; he even won the Coca-Cola yo-yo competition in the 1980s. "I am a Coca-Cola collector. I have been collecting memorabilia for over twenty years now... I have wanted to do something with them since founding Human Made."

As one of the world's most recognisable brands, Coca-Cola has been very protective of its cursive trademark and contoured bottle. A symbol of American culture, the Coca-Cola bottle has served as a quasi-diplomatic ambassador for Western values and mass consumerism. From shaping the

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Original Coca-Cola uniform.  
Source: vintageending.com.

industrial workwear uniforms of a bygone era when milkmen could deliver soft drinks to your door. Caps and coveralls are cut with a grey pinstripe textile, while white tees and sweatshirts feature prints of bottle crates and simple logo emblems. NIGO tells a nostalgic tale, carefully choosing design elements that reinforce Coca-Cola's position as a global force.

Getting household names to design bottles, cans and now clothing apparel is part of an overall three-year targeted marketing strategy to make Coca-Cola the brand of choice for fashion lovers. **Zoe Howorth**, a marketing executive for Coca-Cola's British operations confirmed plans for future fashion-inspired campaigns (scheduled towards the end of this year) with **Marketing Week**, "This year is about putting the brand at the heart of our stories in a fashionable, twenty-first century way. We are being bold and getting excited about that. We are launching it with what I think is the best advertising I've seen from the brand in a long time."

Soon after **Pepsi announced its \$50 million contract with Beyonce**, Marc Jacobs was named as the 2013 **Creative Director for Diet Coke**. The 'Diet Coke Sparkling Together with Marc Jacobs' collection cans represent **three style decades** ('80s, '90s, and '00s) and have been promoted across Western Europe and the Nordic regions throughout March. In an official statement, Jacobs shared similar sentiments with NIGO, "I've admired the work of the other designers who have participated in this project in the past. Coke and Diet Coke are iconic brands... and I like an icon."

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From the classic can  
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modern **Santa Claus**, to teaching the world to **buy a coke**, Coca-Cola's marketing campaigns span more than 150 countries. Besides the disastrous name change to **New Coke in 1985** - which was quickly trashed after three months of mass consumer protests - the ubiquitous drink company has remained consistent in its ability to produce creative ad campaigns without heavily diluting its trademark.

To create the collection, NIGO drew ideas from his own archive of vintage Coca-Cola memorabilia; distinctive stitch patterns on Jodhpur shorts and shop coats harkens to the early twentieth-century American. A marketing ploy no less, the capsule collection serves as a brilliant example of how this simple and covert styling teams nostalgia with modern fashion. In an **interview** with *GQ*, the pioneering designer attested to his uncompromising creative process, stating, "I always trust my instincts whether it's fashion or interior design. If I am interested in something visually I don't hold myself back because of conventions or received 'good taste.'"

First launched in Tokyo, the heritage line is exclusively available in Europe at **Present London**. The vintage-inspired collection features



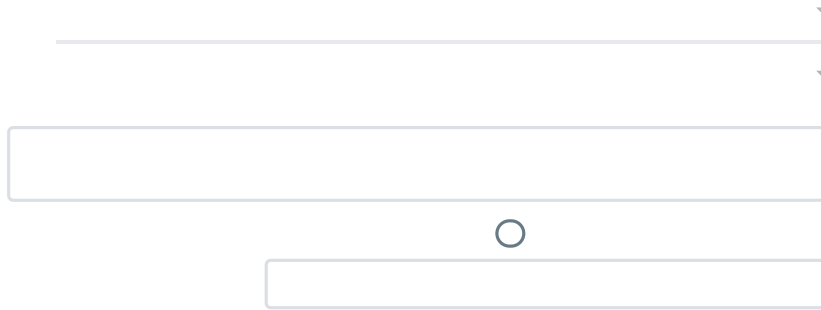
Coca-Cola x Human Made x Beams Pinstripe Shirt.  
Source: style.com.

Whether its Lady Gaga's infamous Diet Coke hair rollers in the music video "Telephone," or being the very first official corporate sponsor of the Olympics, Coca-Cola has taken every opportunity to brand itself as a lifestyle. In partnering with Human Made, Coca-Cola sets a new tradition in its history of marketing achievements. By catering to the interests of the fashion-forward, a clothing line splashed with overt corporate symbols and graphics isn't exactly a logical way to woo streetwear impresarios. But, with NIGO's cosign lending the fashionable credibility, why wouldn't Coca-Cola give it a try?

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design.

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The collaboration with NIGO and his line Human Made attempts to capture that same lighthearted spirit of Americana that the brand has come to represent. The collection's sales will be limited, but this seems fitting with the "classic memorabilia" style of the pieces. Coca-Cola wants be cool, not corny.



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The Genteel unearths the forces shaping global fashion and design through the lens of business, culture, society and best kept secrets.

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*Irene Kim*  
*George Elder*  
*Alina Kulesh*  
*Mona Chammas*  
*David Walmsley*

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