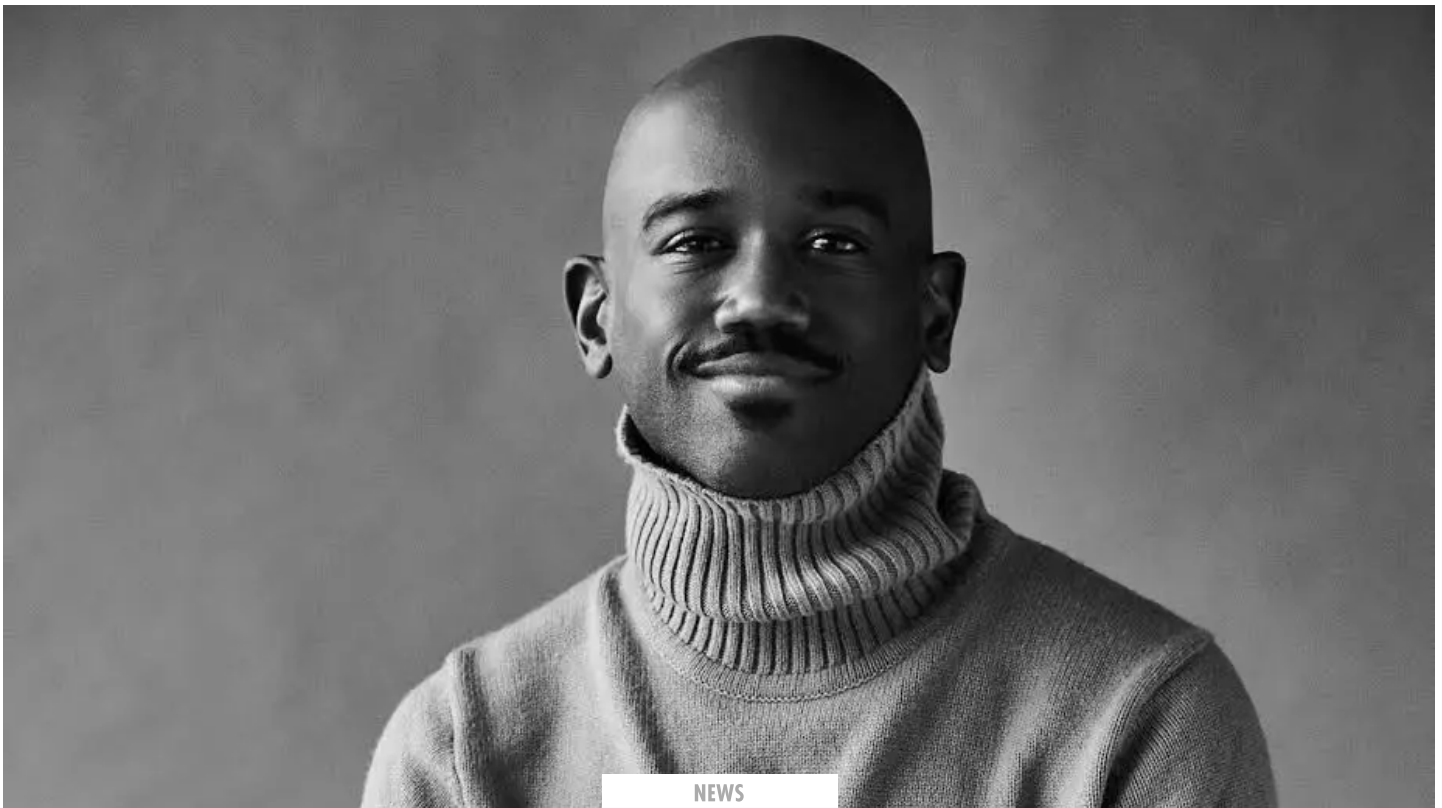


HOME / EDUCATION / NEWS / CREATIVES WANT CHANGE CALLS ON BLACK TEENS TO APPLY FOR FASHION SCHOLARSHIP

Creatives Want Change calls on Black teens to apply for fashion scholarship



By Jackie Mallon

Mar 7, 2021



“I am a unicorn. I should not be here,” says Randy Cousin, SVP of Product Concept and People’s Place program at Tommy Hilfiger, of being a Black creative in the fashion industry. During last summer’s Black Lives Matter uprising while in conversation with friend Joe Medved, founder of recruiting firm Joe’s Blackbook and the annual scholarship competition, and Matthew Kane, Design Manager at Club Monaco, they had an impactful realization: They couldn’t name five Black creative directors working in their industry.

That conversation led to the formation of the non-profit Creatives Want Change. Says Cousin, “CWC will incubate high school level talent, offering support and guidance as they progress through the career pipeline. The support begins by linking Black talent with established pre-

college programs to unleash their creative genius. This development will bring us one step closer to increased representation of Black creatives in

our industry.” Creatives Want Change is currently putting out the call for applications ahead of the March 15 deadline for those wishing to apply for a scholarship.

“To this day, college is still a rite of passage to be a leader in this industry,” says Cousin. “But for many kids of color, this is a North Star.” While the industry is being urged to hire more Black talent, the talent pool itself has never been filled. Without addressing this most fundamental problem, there will be no long-term solution to the industry’s lack of equity and diversity. “Being a merchant or designer is one of the best kept secrets,” says Cousin. “But opportunities aren’t meant to be a secret.”



Young Black talent unaware of opportunities in fashion industry

Marcus LeBlanc, Global Creative Design Director at The North Face, who is one of the mentors of Creatives Want Change, says, “I was actually Resident Advisor at the Otis College of Art and Design precollege program in the early 2000’s, I saw the positive impact that exposure to higher education had on the students. These programs are expensive and there is a likelihood that Black students aren’t even aware of their existence. The fashion industry, design in particular, has an unfortunate underrepresentation of Black voices and I believe this is a smart way to work towards positive change.” Other advocates attached to Creatives Want Change include Maxwell Osborne, co-founder of Public School, Ernest Adams, SVP Talent at Ralph Lauren, Keisha Golding, Head of Community Belonging at Gap Inc.

In partnership with 7 top fashion schools—New York City’s Parsons School of Design, and Fashion Institute of Technology; Rhode Island

School of Design; Savannah College of Art and Design, Academy of Art University in San Francisco; California College of the Arts, Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles—Creatives Want Change will provide funding for high-school level students with a desire to enter the industry and pair them with one of the institutions. Programs commence this summer and candidates do not require a portfolio to apply. The scholarship covers the full cost of tuition and supplies. Recipients will be announced at the beginning of April.



Creatives Want Change see the relationships continuing through the students’ college years, and corporate careers, and its founders are grateful that the pause forced upon us by the pandemic has helped bring universal focus on racial injustice. Systemic racism is not confined to the US and they believe Creatives Want Change could eventually go global. As they prepare to welcome the inaugural batch of talent this summer, says Kane “If we start now, we can really be reshaping the field of design. This is just the start.”

Photos of Randy Cousin, Joe Medved and Matthew Kane provided by Creatives Want Change

Fashion editor Jackie Mallon is also an educator and author of [Silk for the Feed Dogs](#), a novel set in the international fashion industry

DIVERSITY

EQUITY

FASHION SCHOLARSHIPS

RACISM

