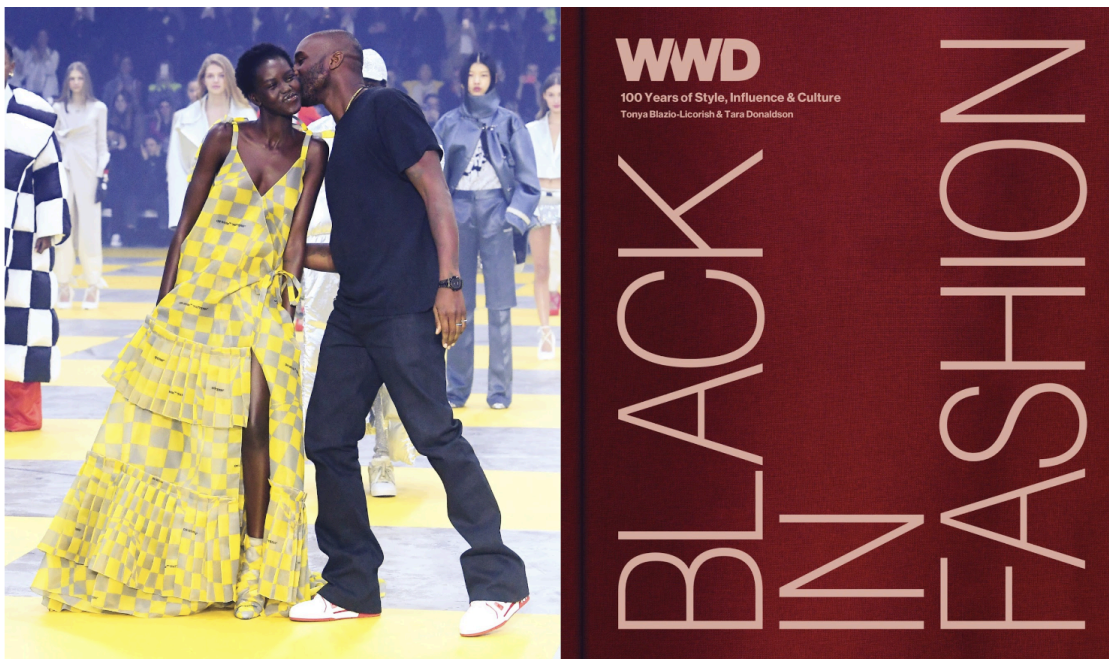


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rodeo Drive - The Podcast presents

***“It Was Like Quiet Thunder”*: The Hidden Stories of WWD’s BLACK IN FASHION**



Left: Adut Akech and Virgil Abloh on the runway at the Off-White fall 2019 show, Paris. From *BLACK IN FASHION*, published by Union Square & Co. in 2024. Photo by Giovanni Giannoni, courtesy WWD/Fairchild Media; Right: Cover *BLACK IN FASHION* published by Union Square & Co. in 2024, courtesy WWD/Fairchild Media.

**[LISTEN](#)**

(Beverly Hills, CA, October 16, 2024) – The Rodeo Drive Committee announced today the launch of ***“It Was Like Quiet Thunder”*: The Hidden Stories of WWD’s BLACK IN FASHION**, the fourth episode in season 5 of *Rodeo Drive – The Podcast*.

For over 100 years *Women’s Wear Daily* has been the bible for the fashion industry, and its archives include numerous hidden contributions of Black designers and models. Now that history has been gathered in a stunning new book, [BLACK IN FASHION](#), by Tonya Blazio-Licorish and Tara Donaldson, showcasing the indelible influence of Black culture on a global scale.

On Episode 5 of *Rodeo Drive-The Podcast*, host Lyn Winter spoke with the authors about the book and the revelations they found in the WWD archives.

“Fashion has a flawed public history because it hasn't included all the voices,” says Blazio-Licorish, also a visual culture historian and editor with PMC Media Archives. “We were always there, and not just there in marginal roles, but in important roles, in roles that were shaping fashion,” adds Donaldson, most recently WWD's executive editor and Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Fairchild Media.

Dating back as early as the Harlem Renaissance, the Black community was making its mark on clothing and style, from Black dolls for young Black children, early fashion shows, business associations, and fashionable scenes like at The Cotton Club.



Left: The iconic Josephine Baker performs onstage at the Battle of Versailles, Versailles, France, November 27, 1973. From *BLACK IN FASHION*, published by Union Square & Co. in 2024. Photo by Reginald Gray, courtesy WWD/Fairchild Media; Right: Designer Yves Saint Laurent and his muse, Mounia Orosemane modeling a gown from his spring 1979 couture collection. From *BLACK IN FASHION*, published by Union Square & Co. in 2024. Photo by Michel Maurou, courtesy WWD/Fairchild Media.

The authors single out early “influencers” such as Josephine Baker, who even had a hosiery color named in her honor, the dancer Katherine Dunham, who was all the rage in 1940s France, and then the Black models, including Pat Cleveland and Bethann Hardison, who shook up global fashion at the famed 1973 Battle of Versailles.

The late André Leon Talley recalled this momentous event in conversation with the authors before his passing. “You could almost just reach out and touch the energy they gave in the air. It was like quiet thunder, and because everyone saw that and felt that at the battle, French designers – Givenchy, Yves Saint Laurent – they started wanting black models.”



André Leon Talley poses in front of a luxury car in New York, 1979. From *BLACK IN FASHION*, published by Union Square & Co. in 2024. Photo by Dustin Pittman, courtesy WWD/Fairchild Media.

Black fashion has been intertwined with politics – and *BLACK IN FASHION* explores how clothing reflected the moment. “During civil rights, that time was really about respectability politics,” explains Donaldson. “It was coming in your Sunday best, to assert dignity. It was a kind of a polite request for human rights. By the time you get to the 70s, the mood changes, the look changes...then the Black Panther movement, it’s more powerful, it’s more assertive...You have the leather jackets, you have the turtlenecks, you have the berets. And then we see that evolve even into the 2020s. And there’s the branded T-shirts, Black Lives Matter.”

Finally, the story is still unfolding. Black designers are still not getting the high level industry jobs they deserve, argue Blazio-Licorish and Donaldson, and are even ambivalent about being labeled as Black.

So Blazio-Licorish says they finished on a question: “We purposefully left the conversation open to, who's next, who's now, and what do they have to say about where fashion is going to go?”

Season 5 of *Rodeo Drive – The Podcast* is presented by the Rodeo Drive Committee with the support of The Hayman Family, Two Rodeo Drive, Beverly Wilshire, A Four Seasons Hotel, and the Beverly Hills Conference & Visitors Bureau.

**Season 5 Credits:**

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**About WWD**

For 100+ years [WWD](#), a property of Fairchild Media Group, has been the media of record—and THE industry voice of authority—for executives in the global women’s and men’s fashion, retail and beauty communities, as well as related sectors from entertainment to real estate and tech. Often referred to as “the fashion bible,” WWD provides up-to-the-moment business news, in-depth analysis and key trends to a dedicated readership of retailers, designers, manufacturers, marketers, financiers, Wall Street analysts, international moguls, media executives, ad agencies, celebrities, influencers and trend-makers. As an increasingly complex marketplace demands information and competitive intelligence, WWD delivers with frequency, integrity, independence, spirited coverage, and a long tradition that demands staffers get the story right – and that they get it first.

**About Union Square & Co.**

Union Square & Co. is a talent-driven publisher whose mission is to promote excellence in contemporary publishing and to honor the vision of our creators by providing best-in-class production, editorial, and design paired with the highest quality production, sales, and marketing. Headquartered in New York City, Union Square & Co., LLC, is a subsidiary of Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., and includes the adult imprints Union Square & Co., Puzzlewright Press, and Sterling Ethos; the children’s imprints Union Square Kids and Boxer Books; and the gift and stationery publisher Knock Knock. For more information, visit [unionsquareandco.com](http://unionsquareandco.com).

**The Rodeo Drive Committee** was founded in 1977 and incorporated in 1982 as Rodeo Drive, Inc., a 501 C (6) non-profit organization, that provides a forum where its members—consisting of retailers, hoteliers, and landowners—can engage, share a dialogue, and help shape the present and future of the iconic, world-famous shopping destination.

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