

BLACK TIES by Harantxa Jean

“Dress code: Black-Tie.”

To be invited under this condition is to be summoned into a space where presence alone is not enough.

One must arrive adorned in the **language of refinement**, draped in fabric that speaks before the wearer does.

The formal black-tie dress code is a tradition, a gesture of respect toward the host, and a quiet understanding that an occasion is of great importance.

But within the Black diaspora, to be well-dressed has never been about adherence.

It is assertion.

Defiance.





A command of presence that does not wait for permission.

Through fashion, Black people have challenged exclusionary norms and created a space for self-determination and cultural storytelling.

This ascension is symbolized in the “tie”, a seemingly simple accessory that, in this project, becomes a powerful metaphor.

Inspired by the layered meanings of the “black-tie” dress code, **BLACK TIES** explores how Black people, across time and continents, have used style to distinguish themselves, and to carve out identities beyond imposed limitations.



This project honors the invisible ties that unite Afro-descendant people globally, and the ties that bind the diaspora, both seen and unseen, stitched into every garment chosen with intention.

From the Congolese Sapeurs to the Harlem Renaissance gentlemen, and the opulence of the Caribbean Sunday's Best to the bold reimaginings of streetwear, **Black style has never been a monolith.**

Influenced by the legacies of Black dandyism, traditional African attire, and today's global fashion movements, **BLACK TIES** exist within hybridity, proving that our identities are various yet anchored, our aesthetics ever-evolving yet rooted in camaraderie.





The photoshoot accompanying this feature highlights this **ongoing evolution**, featuring Black McGill students as models who embody different eras and interpretations of Black style.

Each model channels a distinct persona, ranging from the dandy to the streetwear enthusiast, the preppy schoolgirl to the sporting figure, and the traditional African attire connoisseur.

The shoot, captured in black and white, emphasizes the timeless nature of Black fashion, showing how it continues to unite us, no matter where we come from.



Black ties cinch us together.

The invisible ones that thread our histories, like the literal knots resting against our skin.

We are stitched into one another, as living, breathing archives.

Black-Tie: A Dress Code Made For Us.

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