

HIGHSNobiTY

TREMAINE EMORY CRIES "CHAMPION TEARS" FOR ALVIN AILEY

By: Jake Silbert

June 23, 2021

Tremaine Emory aims to incite reform from the inside out, utilizing platforms offered by giant conglomerates to recontextualize inequity and consider lingering effects of discrimination on Black America. Emory's latest move is in alignment with sportswear giant Champion, lionizing Alvin Ailey and his legendary Dance Theater in line with the forthcoming documentary film that explores Ailey's life and legacy.

Ailey founded his eponymous theater in 1958 as an all-Black dance troupe that performed across New York, filtering jazz and roots music through the lens of Ailey's upbringing in rural Texas. The Theater, now a physical NY institution, deeply influenced Emory's Champion line down to the accompanying imagery overseen by dancer and director Taylour Paige and shot at the Queens Museum. Launching in September, "Champion Tears" is a living paean to the artful exploration of Black culture in the face of inequity, a tale rooted in Emory and Ailey's own New York experiences.

In fact, another famous Queens resident sparked Emory's longstanding respect for Champion. "'Over the heart of Champions, C'... That excerpt from Nas' 'A Queens Story' says it all," Emory told Highsnobiety. "I saw the Champion opportunity as the perfect canvas to express the sentiment that dancers are unsung athletes and artists, combined."

Ailey's name appropriately crops up throughout the collection, printed in retro style on the front and rear of bucket hats, sweatsuits, varsity jackets, and coats, all stylistically informed by archival Champion garments. Many of the heritage styles come complete with callouts to 1958 and Ailey's most famous work, Revelations, to further unite inspiration with execution.

Alongside loose gauge knitwear and hats executed in the red, black, and green shades of the Universal Negro Improvement Association , Emory is also reclaiming preppy staples. Here, there are plentiful cricket sweaters, beach bags, and madras plaids, the latter especially steeped in the clutches of colonialism. "Madras is an ethnic fabric that got appropriated by Western culture," Emory continued. "So, I'm taking it back."



Ctrl + Click to watch video.



