



The 2009 Future Sole Jordan Finals

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For the second year in a row, Nike's Future Sole design competition offered aspiring designers a chance to show off their talents in front of the brand's biggest names during the Future Sole Finals. The brainchild of Jordan Brand's Design Director, D'Wayne Edwards, this year Future Sole saw a huge increase in interest and participation from around the country. Last year, their website received a modest 50,000 hits throughout the project's early summer to fall timeline, and this year the views skyrocketed to over 250,000 hits. Add in an increase of 4,500 registered users from last year's 800 and 274 submissions as compared to last year's crop of 149 entries, and in just a year the Future Sole design competition had taken a major leap.



While last year's contest came down to just two finalists, and eventual co-winners, in Juan Carlos Pozo and Ben Adams-Keane, this year there would be an entirely new structure in place, breaking the competition down into two categories: Jordan Brand and Nike Basketball. After making it through a strenuous voting process that weighed the votes of campus employees as well as the voice of the public, both Austin Jermacans and Daniel Gold were announced as finalists in the Jordan Brand category towards the end of the summer.

Held in Beaverton, Oregon on Nike's sprawling campus, the Finals would challenge each designer with creating a unique twist on the upcoming Jordan Melo M6 and presenting their worthy entry to a panel of fifteen judges made up of Nike's top design executives and even a few internet bloggers like myself. Both Jermacans and Gold were given the same brief, to design a performance hoops shoe fit for the demands of Carmelo Anthony, and from there each designer worked with their mentors through a series of phone calls and emails to refine their concepts and sketches. "Both of them had the same information at the beginning about what Melo wants and what he looks for and about his style," explains Justin Taylor, Jordan Brand Designer and the man behind the M6. "His style has evolved and he's a lot more clean cut and he wants to be a little bit more sophisticated and streamlined. They were

able to draw their own inspiration from those key points and develop their own story based on that." Read below for a full-breakdown on both designers' incredibly detailed and well-crafted renderings, and in a contest like this that stresses design, it was great to see both artists shy away from cluttering the upper and instead stay true to Melo's ever-present importance on keeping the shoe clean and sophisticated.

Austin Jermacans — Reading, PA

Mentor: Justin Taylor (Jordan Brand Designer)

From the outset, Austin wanted to take a look at the way that Carmelo has evolved over the years. He's no longer fresh out of college and making rookie mistakes, and now with an Olympic Gold Medal and loving family by his side, he's looking forward to taking his team further into the playoffs, watching as his signature line grows and working towards building a legacy. For Jermacans, the process of pulling inspiration was an easy one. "I wanted to capture his overall transformation," he begins. "Aside from his off-court transformation, his on-court transformation too. He's faster, he's stronger, he's losing weight and he's turning that into muscle. He's becoming a different player." He looked to the latest Lamborghini Gallardo Spyder to capture Melo's quick, explosive and streamlined style, as well as his fondness for luxury items.

To further tie into Melo's newfound style seen in the past year — he's worn more suits in the past year than the rest of his career — Austin placed a huge emphasis on Anthony's penchant for pocket squares. "I ended up using a shape from the pocket square that he uses in most of his suits," he reveals. "Sometime he'll accent the colors of the suit and other times it'll just blend in. I really wanted this section of the overlast to sometimes blend in with the colors and other times that would be first thing you look at and the eye-catching piece." For the polished rendering that he presented during the Future Sole Finals, a Black/ Carolina Blue colorway was on full display, with the pocket square-inspired forefoot support overlay prominently highlighted. In keeping with a clean toe and sleek upper design, you'll also notice two eyelet holes just under the sizeable Jumpman, which serves as a tie-in to the medial eyelets found on classic Chuck Taylor shoes and a nod to Melo's casual side.

With the production M6's pre-determined tooling already in place, featuring heel DHIP and forefoot Zoom Air, Austin worked more with solving Melo's fit and support needs. You'll notice a variable width lacing set-up that's customizable to the wearer, along with a collar fit strap that is fastened through a series of eyelets. Over the years, Melo has shown an increasing concern over the ankle support in his shoes, and in each model there's been an emphasis on collar fit. Shown in a quilted pattern to reflect Melo's recent infatuation with cardigans, the strap is where Jermacans would likely have the most fun with material stories. Style it up with brown tones and croc skin, or maybe take the shoe down a denim path. Just below the collar, a 'Melo' branded hang tag is placed, drafted off of tabs seen in casual shoes or on jeans, and the large midfoot quarter panel is comprised of mesh to offer some breathability and lightweight. Along the tongue, Austin showcases another tie-in to the Lambo, as three tabs featuring the letters M, V, and I tie back to the styling of the Gallardo's E-Gear console buttons. [See [here](#) inside of the silver circle.]



While his revamped Melo M6 rendering was full of details connected to Carmelo Anthony's personal style as well as the design cues of the Gallardo Spyder, Austin pulled yet another connection that surprised even the more innovative designers in the brand's history. "Carmelo Anthony recently signed a deal with TAG, so now he has his own trademarked scent," says Jermacans. "Growing up, I always wanted to be like my favorite players and that's why I would buy their shoes. I thought it'd be cool that if I wanted to purchase Carmelo's shoe and be like Carmelo, his insoles could be scented like his new TAG. The lines are inspired by the exterior vents on top of the Gallardo." While you can certainly buy after-market insoles to help with any odor problems, I don't recall seeing a similarly scented insole ever executed in a signature shoe quite like Austin dreamed up. After a series of thumbnail renderings and design concepts, his final entry was surely performance

driven with several great connecting points to the life of Carmelo Anthony.



Daniel Gold — Los Angeles, CA
Mentor: Mark Miner (Women's Training Designer)



While both finalists were given identical briefs when they began their design work to build the ultimate performance basketball shoe for Carmelo Anthony, it was interesting to see how they both ended up with entirely different, yet equally capable design solutions for the do-it-all style of Melo's game. As you can immediately see in the rendering of Daniel Gold, gone is the forefoot overlay that originated on the Melo M6. He practically fooled everyone into thinking he was using an entirely different platform by double-lasting the heel and strategically placing the Jumpman elsewhere.



For Gold, he had a clear set of goals right from the start, as he wanted to give the upper a smooth and flowing look, but also build the shoe up from the inside out, tying back to Melo's love of subtlety and sophistication. It all began with a fully integrated inner sockliner. "I once saw a commercial advertising tires, and it talked about how important they are because it's what's touching the ground and they should be a priority when you're outfitting your car," explains Gold. "With that said, I wanted to bring a sockliner to the shoe and offer as much as possible because that's what's grabbing the foot." While you can't see it plainly in the above Z-Corp model, just above the 'Revisions' portion of his storyboard below, you'll notice the mesh sockliner. Rather than build an external heel counter to lock in the foot, he wanted to incorporate Nike's Flywire support strands in the liner, as an interlocking pattern is used to cradle the heel, while also reducing the shoe's weight. Although using Flywire in his M6 rendering would mark a first for Jordan Brand, he didn't want the pattern to dominate the shoe's appearance as it tends to in Nike Basketball products, and instead he places a quiet confidence in the proven paneling doing the work from the interior.

Along the upper, he took shape inspiration from Nike's Winged Goddess, as the upper panels take on a rounded and flowing shape. The heel design comes to a more

abrupt ending by choice, with Melo's Wings logo proudly shown as a nice tie-in. For materials, Daniel's rendering relies on a faux Foamposite textile, found recently in Flightposite-inspired versions of the Hyperdunk. "I wanted these to have the Green Goblin/Flightposite effect so that no matter where the light hits and catches it you'll see different colors from Carmelo's jersey," he says. The colors shift from dark at the toe to lighter towards the heel. Another touch along the upper is the perforated Melo 'M' logo seen atop the toe, a nod to wingtip dress shoes and Melo's affinity for suits these days.

With less importance placed on more visibly recognizable technologies and call-outs and an emphasis on simplicity and following along with the lineage and design language of Melo's signature line, Daniel Gold's version shaped up smoothly and elegantly. With piping accents along the collar, as seen on the Nuggets jerseys, and a profile look of it's own with an upper that takes color well and would likely have a sweet court view, Gold's Melo M6 could easily be seen on the feet of its namesake during a NBA game.

When it was all said and done and the votes from the fifteen judges in attendance were tallied up, the 2009 Future Sole Jordan Finals was awarded to Austin Jermacans for his detailed backstory and many connecting points to Carmelo's evolving and refined style. For both designers, the opportunity to visit the Nike World Headquarters and visit with several of the company's most skilled artists would be prove to be invaluable as they hope to further their education in the realm of industrial design and one day find themselves back on the Nike campus for good.

Congratulations to Austin Jermacans — Winner of the 2009 Future Sole Jordan Finals!!

Talk about it on the forum here: <http://www.solecollector.com/forums/and-the-09-future-sole-winner-is-t990180.html>

This post was written by: [Nick](#) - who has written 82 posts on [Sole Collector](#).

