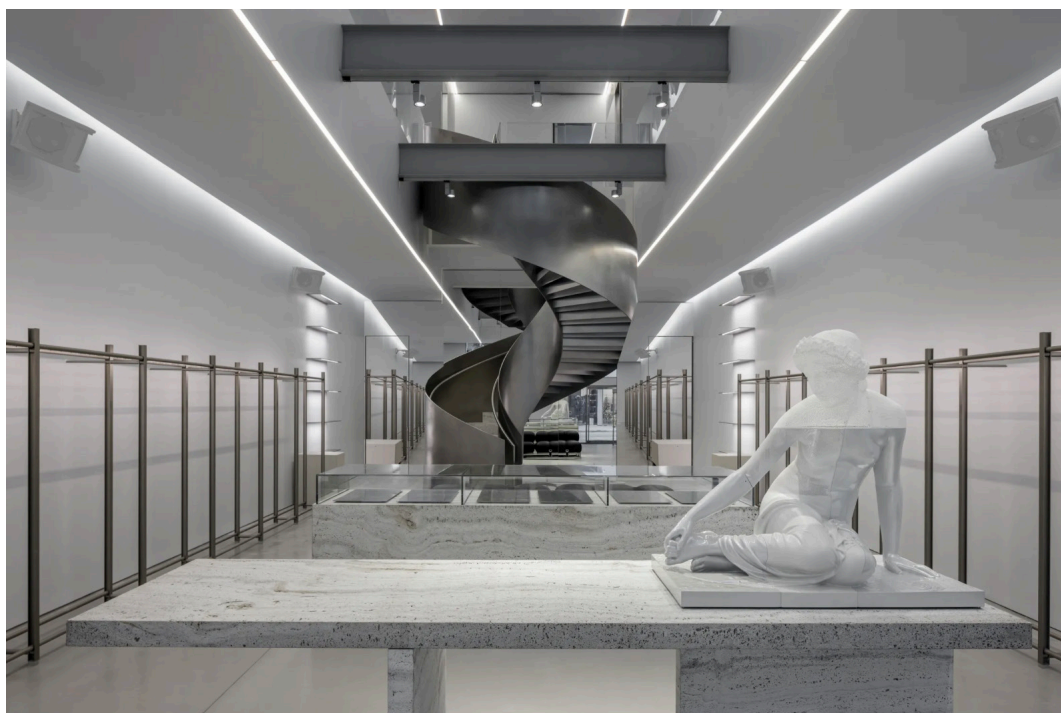


## VOGUE

### The Slow Burn of Hot Clothes—Dion Lee Opens His First US Store

BY JOSÉ CRIALES-UNZUETA



The Dion Lee store in Miami will open to the public this coming weekend. These images were shot before any merchandise was added to show the space and its design. Kris Tamburello

It's impossible to go out in New York without running into [Dion Lee](#). His clothes, that is. Be it his hefty cargos, his razor-sharp tailoring, or his omnipresent second-skin jersey fabrications, the Australian designer has woven himself into the fabric of the downtown New York uniform. It should come as no shock that the US is Lee's biggest market; what's surprising is that the designer, who currently operates six retail stores in Australia, has not yet expanded his physical footprint in this country. That will change soon enough. This coming weekend, Lee is opening his first international store in Miami's Design District after celebrating with a party during [Art Basel](#).

"I first went to the Design District years ago when friends said that it was a place to be," says Lee. "Miami has a unique perspective, especially when it comes to fashion, but we could see that we had a customer there from wholesalers and from our digital channels and the product being shipped there." That the Miami lifestyle is not entirely dissimilar to that of Sydney and Melbourne was an added bonus: "It was easy to see that there's potential to translate the type of customer we've built in Australia," adds Lee. "There's a focus on athleticism and the body, they love showing it off."

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# Tanya Leighton



Dion Lee in Miami. Kris Tamburello

Lee staged his fall 2021 show in February of that year at 11 Mercer Street in New York, announcing that the raw space would become his first store in America when it opened later that summer. It never happened. Blame the “unforeseen challenges” of renovating a heritage building in New York, but, says Lee, “it’s *very* much still in the works.” When it *does* open next year (Lee is being wisely coy about sharing a date), it will have 4,000 square feet of space, making it bigger than the Miami location, which occupies 3,000. Both stores will feature custom furniture with Dion Lee detailing, lifestyle spaces, and room for artist collaborations. Up first in Miami is the Berlin-based artist Oliver Laric. Lee is also unveiling a brand new flagship store in Melbourne later this month.

“When I first opened my stores, I was showing primarily womenswear collections,” says Lee. Much has changed since. “We introduced a men’s capsule, launched our unisex line [Lee doesn’t formally have a menswear collection, rather labeling it as unisex], and expanded into footwear, handbags, and jewelry.” This new wave of spaces is designed to show off the full range of Dion Lee. “With online retailers in the US and a small representation of specialty boutiques and concept stores, you don’t get to see the breadth of the product,” Lee says. “I’m excited to invite people to experience all aspects of the brand, but also to challenge people’s perception of it as well.”

He’s been showing stateside for a decade, but it’s in the last couple of years that he’s become a designer to watch. “I think it’s me maturing, my taste maturing, and the product paralleling that,” says Lee. You can see it in his tailoring and in his more evening-leaning product, but there’s a new finesse to his fabrications across the board. Lee has an undeniably sizable business, which may surprise his New York Fashion Week peers. The thing about being young and making clothes that are seen as sexy and “on trend,” is that you’re boxed into the idea of being “emerging.”

“I do feel that I’ve been in a holding pattern waiting for these projects to materialize in order for people’s perception of the brand to evolve and for that misconception to be corrected,” he says. He knows that people don’t always have the strongest understanding of the brand, but he doesn’t see it as a problem. “Having shown in New York for close to 10 years, I’m aware that many brands come and go,” he says. “Brands can become the next big thing in two seconds, and I’ve taken a very slow-burn approach to building myself within the industry, having sat outside of the CFDA platform and not coming up through the industry here.” His outsider status may actually be his biggest asset. “What I’ve learned from my now quite lengthy time in the industry is that it’s about sticking to what you do and taking measured steps, even if they’re slow.”

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