

# Joe Casely-Hayford, Pioneering Fashion Designer, Dies at 62

One of the first black designers to win international acclaim, Mr. Casely-Hayford alternately embraced and rejected the norms of the fashion establishment.

By Elizabeth Paton

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Joseph Casely-Hayford, left, with his son, Charlie, in 2014. They were co-designers of a fashion label that carried the family name. Jonathan Player for The New York Times

LONDON — Joseph Casely-Hayford, one of the first black British fashion designers to win international acclaim, whose clothes were worn by Michael Jackson, Bono and Drake, died on Thursday. He was 62.

His family said in a statement that the cause was cancer.

Acclaimed as one of the most talented British designers of his generation, with a distinctive approach that fused sharp Savile Row-honed tailoring with a quirky East End streetwear sensibility, Mr. Casely-Hayford alternately embraced and rejected the norms of the fashion establishment over a four-decade career.

Working as a black designer in a largely white industry “definitely dictates my approach to design,” Mr. Casely-Hayford told The New York Times in 2014. “I designed from an outsider’s point of view. When I first started, there were no role models for me. I was very interested in creating a cult for the individual, for outsiders who wanted to make their own expression without shame.”

His early collections presented sportswear, made from surplus World War II tents, for his label Kit; he later had a three-year tenure as creative director of Gieves & Hawkes, the 200-year old Savile Row label. In 2009, he asked his son, Charlie, to join him at Casely-Hayford, a label inspired by life in contemporary London but produced by cutting-edge factories in Japan.

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