



The New York Times
Open Thread

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The Juneteenth parade in Galveston, Texas, in June 2021. Go Nakamura/Getty Images



By Vanessa Friedman
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Hello, Open Thread. Happy almost Father's Day. Also almost Juneteenth. Also Pride month.

The promotional merch opportunities boggle the mind. Rainbow this! Dad that!

For the last few weeks such emails have been flooding my inbox. Father's Day is

one thing, but there's always something slightly dispiriting about reducing these shared moments of celebration to purchasing opportunities. And it's hard not to feel that brands are exploiting the connections between emotions, identity and stuff in a very calculated way.

But at least when it comes to Juneteenth, companies seem to be taking a more measured approach to their profiteering: fewer T-shirts and mugs, more thought about what the holiday means, and how best to honor it.

Juneteenth, after all, marks the end of slavery in the United States — two years after the Emancipation Proclamation had been issued and after federal troops were sent into Texas to enforce the edict. And it became a federal holiday only last year. That's a complicated history, and one that reflects the long shadow of racism and how it was built into society.

That's really not something to leverage for corporate financial gain.

But it's also true that not all purchasing opportunities are created equal, and one way to observe Juneteenth is to support small businesses run by Black founders. To that end, Wirecutter has some [recommendations](#).

Constance C.R. White, the author of “How to Slay: Inspiration From the Kings and Queens of Black Style” (and a former New York Times fashion journalist), also suggests the following names for discovery — if you haven't found them already:

- [The Oula Company](#): A business founded by Erika Dalya Massaquoi and based in Seattle that uses vintage and African Ankara fabrics in dresses that are locally made.
- [Buttered by Kenya](#): Made-to-order creams and lip balms developed by the owner Kenya Heyliger.
- [Custom Collaborative.org](#): A Harlem nonprofit led by Ngozi Okara that trains and supports low-income and immigrant women for jobs in the apparel industry. Check out the Pinpin pouches, a houndstooth vest and a leather bracelet.
- [Lisa McFadden Millinery](#): Her Kente Super Wide Brim is the ultimate sophisticated sun chaser.

And speaking of shopping, my colleague Jessica Testa took a deep dive (pun

intended) into [why swimsuits are so expensive](#). Read her answers and then consider the [new Hypebeast store](#) that just opened in New York and how [Nike \(turning 50 this year\) became the most valuable apparel brand](#) in the world — and tunneled its way into all of our brains.

Finally, the men's shows have begun in Italy, and Guy Trebay is there. Look out for his reports next week.

Have a good, safe weekend.



Adam Ferriss

How Nike Won the Cultural Marathon

As the brand turns 50, it's not letting up.

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