

East Village Shoe Repair and Designer Seek Copyright Recognition for 1992 Footwear Designs

Administrative reconsideration filed with the U.S. Copyright Office requesting registration and public attribution for ornamental shoe elements first documented in Manhattan's East Village in 1992



Norwalk, Connecticut Nov 18, 2025 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - **Lede:** East Village Shoe Repair LLC and designer Boris Zuborev have filed an administrative reconsideration with the U.S. Copyright Office requesting recognition and registration of ornamental shoe design features conceived, prototyped, publicly worn, and documented in New York's East Village in 1992.

Boris Zuborev and the makers at East Village Shoe Repair are first-generation immigrant designers whose work emerged from a culture of resourceful creativity in Manhattan's East Village. Drawing on techniques learned across borders and adapted to local materials and streetwear practices, they prototyped, performed services to create for customers, and publicly wore these silhouettes in 1992 as part of a community of artists, performers, and craftsmen. These designs reflect a lived practice of adaptation and craft, a material record of immigrant ingenuity that informed local style long before later mass-market iterations appeared.

- **Historical context:** In the late 1980s and early 1990s, immigrant artisans in the East Village transformed thrift and surplus materials into distinct ornamental details and hybrid silhouettes,

contributing to a vibrant local design ecology that fed into broader trends.

- **Cultural significance:** Recognition of these works acknowledges not only individual authorship but the creative labor of immigrant communities whose contributions are frequently undocumented in corporate histories.
- **Legal relevance:** The narrative supports the provenance timeline by establishing consistent, public use and community visibility from the time of conception relevant to administrative reconsideration and media storytelling.

Summary

- **Record submitted:** original 1992 prototypes; dated photographs; affidavits.
- **Applications this year:** 30 filed; **registrations granted:** 15; **pending:** 6; **withdrawn (rights reserved):** 9.
- **Works at stake:** Moccasin Sneaker Hybrid; 70's Lux Sole Sneaker; Zipper Closure Sneaker with Faux Eyelets; Faux Fur Sneaker; Knee/Thigh-High Sneaker-Boot Hybrid; High-Heel Feminized Work Boot.
- **Relief sought:** administrative registration and public attribution; negotiated licensing and attribution discussions invited; all legal remedies preserved if administrative relief is not granted.

Brand mapping

- **Moccasin Sneaker Hybrid:** alleged to share ornamental features with later products marketed as an "All Star Moccasin."
- **70's Lux Sole Sneaker:** alleged to share ornamental features with later Chuck 70 De Luxe style variants.
- **Zipper Closure Sneaker with Faux Eyelets:** alleged to share ornamental features with later zip-closure sneaker models.
- **Faux Fur Sneaker:** alleged to share ornamental features with later faux-fur variants.
- **Knee/Thigh-High Sneaker-Boot Hybrid:** alleged to share ornamental features with later high-hi hybrid silhouettes.
- **High-Heel Feminized Work Boot:** alleged to share ornamental features with later work-boot heel variants.

Evidence summary

Original physical prototypes dated 1992; dated photographs showing one of the creators present with the designs in the photograph 30 years ago; affidavits from the creators; A copy of the submission to the Copyright Office including the brief with affidavits.

Evidence Photos

- Photo 1 — Moccasin Sneaker Hybrid

Left: East Village Shoe Repair prototype, 1992. Right: Later product attributed to Converse (decades later).

- Photo 2 — 70's Lux Sole Sneaker

Left: East Village Shoe Repair prototype, 1992. Right: Later product attributed to Converse Chuck 70 De Luxe Heel/Wedge (decades later).

- Photo 3 — Zipper Closure Sneaker with Faux Eyelets

Photograph available upon request.

- Photo 4 — Faux Fur Sneaker

Left: East Village Shoe Repair prototype, 1992. Right: Later faux-fur variant attributed to Converse (decades later).

- Photo 5 — Knee/Thigh High Sneaker Boot Hybrid with Faux Laces and Zipper Closure

Left: East Village Shoe Repair prototype, 1992. Right: Later product attributed to Converse (decades later).

- Photo 6 — High-Heel Feminized Work Boot

Left: East Village Shoe Repair prototype, 1992. Right: Later product attributed to Timberland (decades later).

Legal posture

The reconsideration asks the U.S. Copyright Office to apply *Star Athletica v. Varsity Brands* consistently and to grant registration where ornamental elements satisfy the minimal creativity and separability standards. Applicants seek negotiated attribution and licensing outcomes and reserve all remedies available under law if administrative relief is not granted.

Legal Argument and Office Error

The legal argument is that each shoe contains original ornamental features that meet the Supreme Court's two-step separability test from *Star Athletica*: the contested elements are perceptible as pictorial, graphic, or sculptural works separate from the shoes' utilitarian functions and could exist independently in another medium, and the record (dated photographs, preserved samples, and affidavits) establishes independent creation and the "modicum of creativity" required by *Feist*; *Bleistein* and *Mazer* confirm that artistic judgment in applied art is protectable; *Satava*, *Boisson*, and *Alfred Bell* support protection for original selections and arrangements of familiar elements; and *Nimmer's* triviality doctrine is a narrow exception that does not apply here.

The Office's error is procedural and analytical: the examiner explicitly found the contested features "have sculptural qualities" and could be "conceptually removed" and "imagined in another medium," which are precisely the factual predicates *Star Athletica* requires, yet the rejection concludes there are "no separable, copyrightable features." That internal contradiction admitting both prongs of separability in fact but denying copyrightability in conclusion misapplies controlling precedent and treats cumulative, authored arrangements as trivial despite established case law recognizing that coordinated, original combinations of ordinary elements are protectable.

Media access and verification

Credentialed reporters may request side-by-side comparative images, the affidavits and the briefs filed with the Copyright Office by emailing AttorneyMarkK@aol.com. Requests must include publication name, reporter full name, and press credentials. Responses will be provided within 48 business hours.

In-person review of original prototyped shoes crafted in the early 1990's require a scheduled appointment.

Quotes

- **Boris Zuborev, Designer:** "These silhouettes were prototyped and publicly worn in 1992; we ask that the record reflect that origin."
- **Eugene Finkelberg, Collaborator:** "When ornamental artistry is original and distinct, copyright should protect grassroots creators."

Call to industry

East Village Shoe Repair invites Converse (Nike) and Timberland to engage in good-faith discussions about attribution and equitable remedies while the administrative reconsideration proceeds.

Disclaimer

This press release contains allegations and factual statements made by the applicants. Nothing in this release constitutes an admission of liability, a waiver of any rights, or a complete statement of all facts or defenses. The parties expressly reserve all rights and remedies under law.

About East Village Shoe Repair LLC

Founded in Manhattan's East Village in the late 1980s, East Village Shoe Repair is a workshop and design studio specializing in custom footwear, experimental silhouettes, and repair-as-creation. The shop's ornamental detailing was prototyped and publicly worn in the early 1990s and remains central to its creative mission.

Contact

Law Offices of Mark M. Kratter, LLC

Email: AttorneyMarkK@aol.com | **Phone:** 203-853-2312

71 East Avenue, Suite K, Norwalk, CT 06851

SOCIAL

Follow the work and original designs on **Instagram:** @eastvillageshoerepair_bk — for rapid updates, behind-the-scenes looks, and exclusive previews.

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Media Contact

Zubo, LLC

*****@aol.com

203-853-2312

71 East Avenue, Suite K, Norwalk, CT 06851

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