

Shoes Or No-Shoes

Shoes, shoes, shoes. The soles beneath our soles, the second skin we always wear. Whether it's the rugged rubber of boots for the outside world, or the thin layer of slippers for our homes. Shoes walk and talk at the same time. Taking us from one place to another, and messaging the world about who and what we are: male or female, rich or poor, western or eastern. Dividing the world between the haves and have-nots.

Just as shoes act like a silent message about who and what we are, being shoeless, not having shoes, being part of the no-shoes, does the same. Speaking volumes about our world, how we treat and value each other. The shoeless foot is a silent accusation against our greed and inhumanity to each other.

Earth, wind, fire and water. Fragile, soft, and easily broken skin, is no protection against the elements that make up our wild and wonderful planet. So we create our defences – for some of us. Solid homes, tarmacked roads and well run economies, spawn shoe cultures that are not just practical and plentiful, but also full of beauty, elegance, mischief and subtlety. Telling the story of work to be done, parties to be attended, and romantic idylls to be enjoyed. Telling the story of work, relationships and desires. Shoes are the sub-text of our planet.

If aliens came to our world and looked at the shoes and no-shoes state of the planet, they'd easily deduce what lies at the heart of our species: our ability to be inventive, practical and brilliantly artistic, as well as our ruthless inhumanity in keeping the no-shoes as no-shoes. Our gifts and tragedies walk with us.

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