

THE VIRTUE[®] GUIDE TO CULTURE 2025



PRESENTED BY
PIGEON / VIRTUE

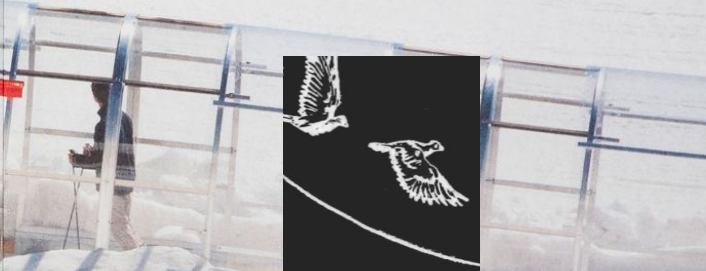


PIGEON



WE ARE A GLOBAL TEAM OF INQUISITIVE FORESIGHT STRATEGISTS, RESEARCHERS AND STORYTELLERS WHO USE ART & SCIENCE TO EXCAVATE AND DECODE HUMAN BEHAVIOURS AND TRUTHS THAT INFORM AND INSPIRE OUR CREATIVE PROCESS.

WE DON'T JUST LIVE IN AD LAND. WE'RE CONCERNED WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE IN THE WORLD AND IN THE LIVES OF REAL PEOPLE. WE DESIGN AND EXECUTE RESEARCH THAT GETS FACE-TO-FACE WITH THE PEOPLE WE ARE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND, HELPING TO RECOGNIZE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES THAT CAN LEAD TO GREAT WORK.



WE COMBINE REAL-WORLD DISCOVERY WITH TECHNOLOGY AND A PROPRIETARY OPERATING SYSTEM (OS) THAT IDENTIFIES THE CULTURAL TERRITORIES AND COMMUNITIES RIPE FOR INTERVENTION.

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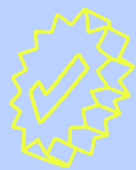
BUILT ON THE *WORLD'S* FIRST CULTURAL OS

OUR PROPRIETARY OPERATING SYSTEM (OS) PROVIDES A NEW MODEL FOR COMPANIES TO QUANTIFY CULTURAL CAPITAL AND EMBED WITHIN THE TERRITORIES AND COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO PLAY. OUR OS LEVERAGES ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING

TO GIVE BRANDS A CULTURAL ADVANTAGE - FROM PINPOINTING INFLUENTIAL COMMUNITIES AND HIGHLIGHTING EMERGING TRENDS, TO IDENTIFYING KEY COMPETITIVE DIFFERENTIATORS AND TALENT.



CULTURAL CAPITAL ANALYSIS
SENSE MAKING (AI & NLP)
COMMUNITY DETECTION & MONITORING
CORE CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM



CULTURAL CODES

(2025)



EXPANDING NORMS

CODE 1 *Infinite Variation*

CODE 2 *Masculinity Reboot*

CODE 3 *The New Skinny*

COLLECTIVE RECALIBRATION

CODE 4 *The Big-Mid*

CODE 5 *Sync Stream*

CODE 6 *Illusionist Mischief*

NEW ESCAPES

CODE 7 *Neo-Soul*

CODE 8 *Speculative Fantasy*

CODE 9 *Playful Living*

CODE 10 *Rebellion Economy*

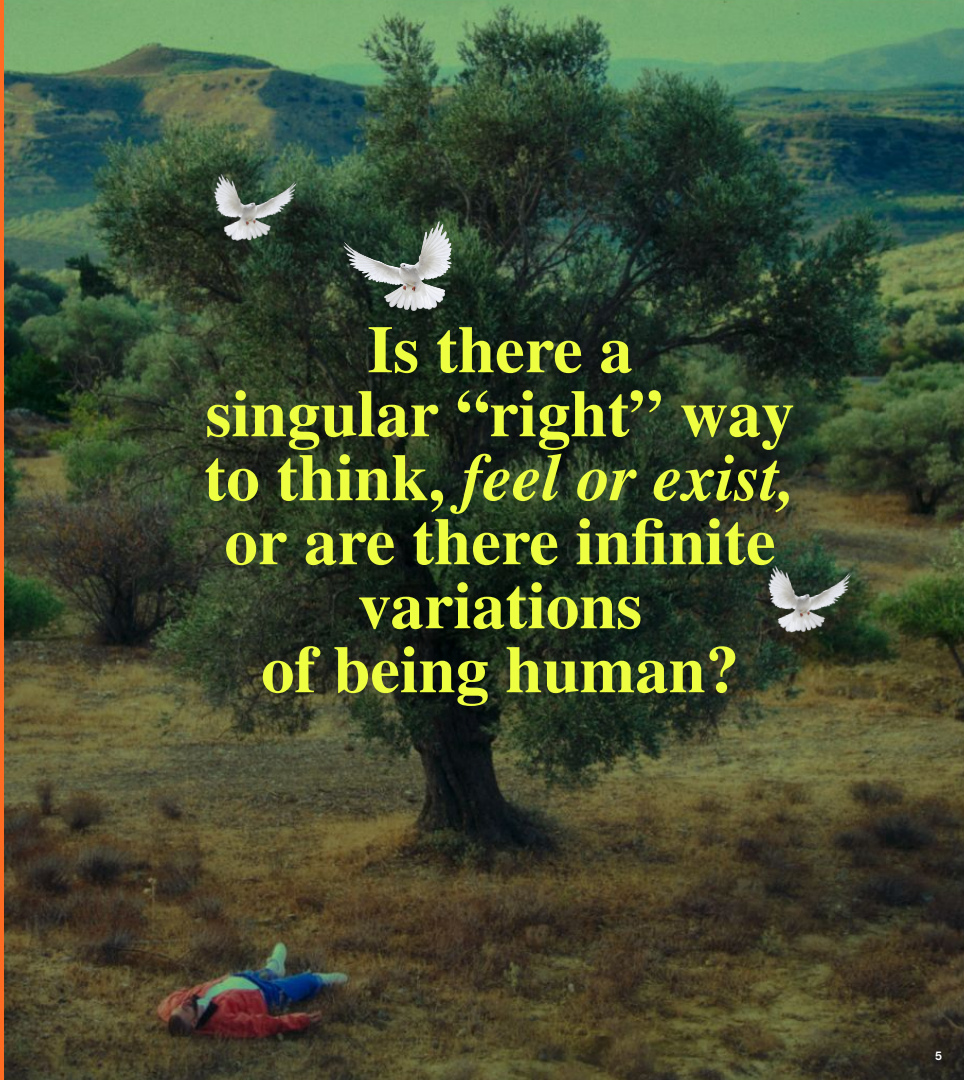
(CODE ONE) Infinite Variation

For a long time, “normal” was treated as the gold standard. But as conversations evolve and neurodiversity firmly enters the cultural mainstream, we’re breaking down rigid, one-size-fits-all blueprints for how to think, feel, and function in society. And no generation is tearing up that blueprint quite like Gen Z.

Youth bring new expectations and is vocal about the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Terms like *neurotypical* and *neurodivergent* are now part of everyday language, and inclusion is a baseline expectation.

Still, while culture moves forward, some institutions are hitting rewind. In the U.S., rollbacks on DEI are exposing a widening gap between what young people demand and what traditional systems are willing to deliver. This tension marks a critical inflection point: will we double down on inclusive practices that reflect the full spectrum of human experience, or regress toward outdated norms?

Today, the very idea of what’s considered “typical” is being questioned. And despite resistance, the push toward a more inclusive, neurodiverse future is coming from the ground up - with youth leading the charge.



Is there a
singular “right” way
to think, *feel or exist*,
or are there infinite
variations
of being human?

THIS IS AN I IDENTITY NOT A DIAGNOSIS

Jenna Suffern sits down with neurodiversity advocate, author and public speaker Sonny Jane Wise. A quick scroll through Sonny's socials should give you an idea of what they're all about – normalising and celebrating the neurodivergent experience, and making space for those who aren't often represented or understood.



"I'm gonna pull you up on something here, a little bit of education. Neurodivergent diagnoses is what we call contradictory, because neurodivergent is an identity. It's a social term just like being queer or non-binary. So you've got neurodivergent which is a social identity, and you've got a diagnosis which is a medical term. "

— SONNY JANE WISE

YOUTH VOCALIZE AN EVER- EXPANDING RANGE OF *NEURO- DIVERGENT* EXPERIENCES

ADDitude Editors noted the Grammys is awash of neurodivergent stars, from the likes of Billie Eilish, to Ariana Grande, Doja Cat, and Selena Gomez.

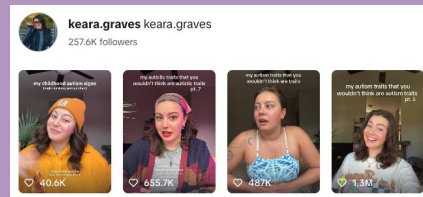
TikTok's #ADHD and #autism has racked up billions of views, and creators are reshaping what it means to live with ADHD, autism, Tourettes, and a spectrum of neurodivergent experiences. The goal: to challenge outdated "cure" narratives while making these identities more visible than ever.

But as neurodiversity goes mainstream, so do the debates: Is this radical awareness or just reductive? Does it empower or oversimplify? And are we fueling a rise in self-diagnosis?

Neurodivergence is to some a movement and others a minefield.

Baylen Dupree's rise to 10.6M social media followers have led to a TLC show, "Baylen Out Loud," that sees her address everything from what Tourette's is, to her capabilities, to how the disorder presents differently in everyone.

Creators like [@keara.graves](#) share their personal journeys on TikTok. In this case embracing autism and sharing insights on living authentically.



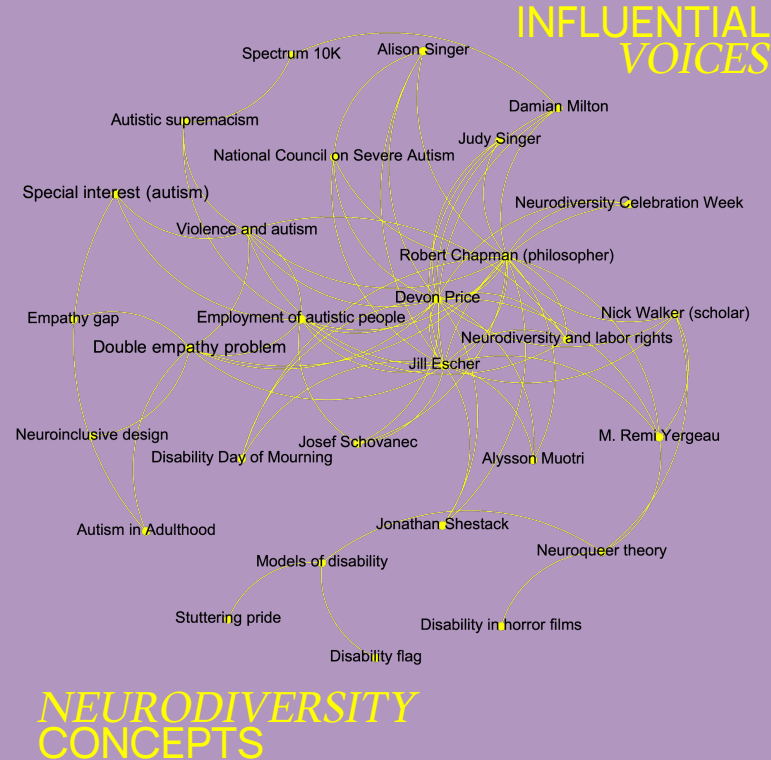
"The White Lotus star Aimee Lou Wood recently shared her diagnosis of ADHD along with autistic traits."



NEW CONCEPTS IN *NEUROINCLUSIVITY* GROWING



In the past four years, a cadre of influential voices (academics, activists, and doctors) like **Judy Singer**, **Robert Chapman**, and **Devon Price** have grown in prominence, helping push new concepts related to neurodiversity – concepts like neuroinclusive design and empathy gap – to the mainstream.



INCREASING DEMAND FOR A *NEURO-INCLUSIVE* WORLD

Brands have been paying attention to the conversation, rolling out sensory-friendly experiences, products and services that consider the needs of neurodivergent people.

The latest TV and films look to break free from outdated, stereotypical portrayals and aim to reflect nuanced neurodivergent experiences, casting neurodivergent actors.



Fashion brands are increasingly celebrating and catering to neurodivergent communities. Lucy & Yak, for example, has introduced sensory-friendly shopping sessions. Once a month, each store adjusts its environment to create a welcoming atmosphere for neurodivergent customers—with softer lighting, carefully curated music, and stickers customers can wear to indicate they'd prefer not to be approached. Neurodivergent, a Manchester-based brand, goes even further. It positions itself as more than just a store—it's a movement, a vibe, and, in their words, “a giant neon sign flashing ‘be yourself!’”



Shows like “Austin” follow its 28-year-old namesake (played by autistic actor Michael Theo, known from the reality dating series Love on the Spectrum) and challenge both Austin’s family and the audience to confront—and reconsider—their assumptions about autistic people.

The travel and hospitality industry is rethinking services from the POV of neurodivergent travellers, from how to manage the journey, to sensory kits that include weighted blankets, sound machines, and fidgets



Neuro-inclusive music event series are emerging, such as Out Of Body Pop in London—a new kind of day party featuring co-creative arts and open space, inspired by its founder’s experience navigating the capital’s nightlife as a neurodivergent person.





(53%)

OF GEN Z IDENTIFY AS
NEURODIVERGENT

“TYPICAL”
A THING
OF THE
PAST?

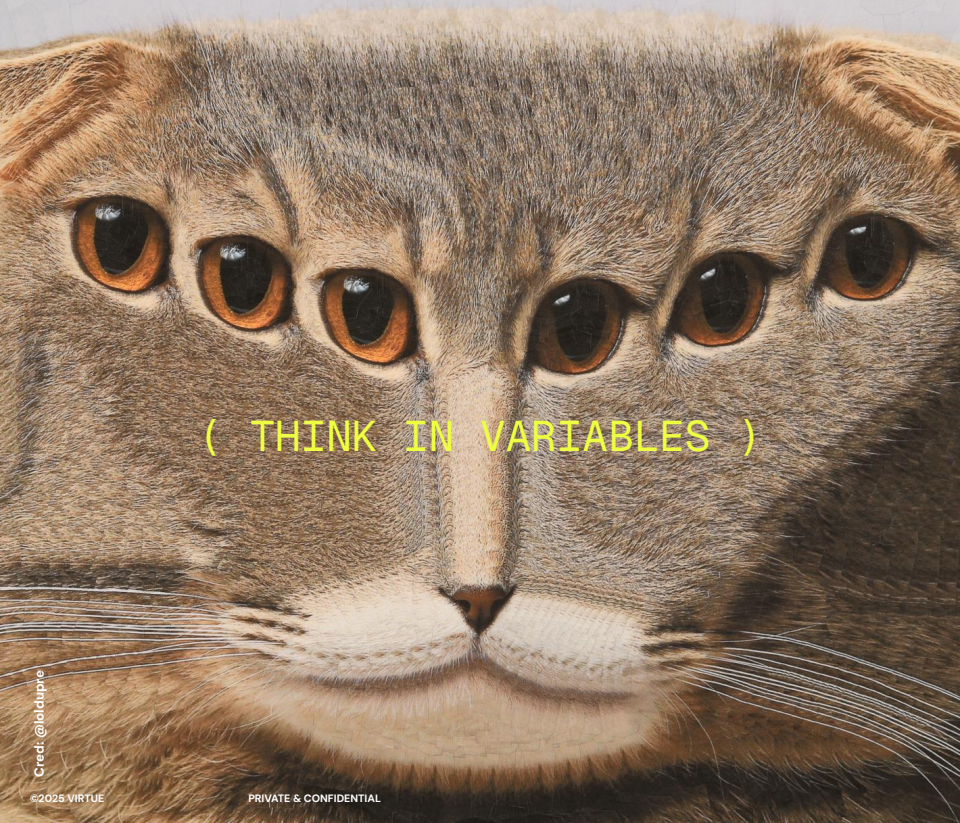
(70%)

OF GEN ALPHA ARE PREDICTED TO IDENTIFY
AS NEURODIVERGENT BY 2030

Society has been neatly sorting people into two neat categories: neurodivergent, the so-called minority who don't fit the rigid mold of “normal” brain function, and neurotypical, the dominant majority who supposedly do.

But as more traits, conditions, and ways of thinking fall under the neurodivergent umbrella, the whole idea of “neurotypical” starts to unravel. If half of Gen Z already identifies as neurodivergent, then who, exactly, is still considered “typical”?

ACTIONS FOR BRANDS



(THINK IN VARIABLES)

01

INNOVATE FOR NEURO INCLUSION

Designing for neuro inclusion benefits everyone, whether neurodivergent or neurotypical. Innovation should embrace flexibility and accessibility, ensuring no one is left behind.

Can you challenge the assumption of "normal" in your design process? Differences are dimensional, not categorical - how are you reflecting that in your approach?

02

BREAK STEREOTYPES

Representation should move beyond clichés to reflect real, diverse experiences.

Are you partnering with neurodivergent voices and organizations to better portray more authentic and nuanced representations?

03

GO BEYOND CAMPAIGN TOKENISM

We're at a critical inflection point, and a gap is widening between what young people demand - real inclusivity - and what some traditional systems and institutions are willing to deliver.

Is your brand's response a true commitment to inclusion, beyond one-off campaigns? What is your brand play in a future where our understanding of the full spectrum of human experience is fundamentally shifting?

(CODE TWO) Masculinity Reboot

While current economic pressures like rising inequality and unaffordable housing impact everyone, boys seem to be doing particularly badly. They're underperforming at school, struggling to find purpose, and facing a world where the old rules of masculinity no longer apply.

Media algorithms are all too often feeding teenage boys a steady diet of toxic, hyper-masculine content, think incel groups and aggressive misogynistic narratives.

It's alarming, especially as independent reports from education systems worldwide flag an unsettling rise in sexism among young men, alongside the grim reality that male suicide rates remain three times higher than those of their female peers.

This isn't just masculinity in crisis - it's a care crisis.

A man in a dark suit and sunglasses is walking away from the viewer on a floor with a large, colorful checkered pattern. The floor is covered in various graffiti tags, including 'NI', 'WICO', and 'EOL'. The man is looking down at the floor as he walks.

**Are we failing to *support*
disaffected young men
across society?**



“I think a lot of times people make
masculinity into a caricature.”

'Be A Man': Modernists and
Traditionalists Debate
Masculinity for VICE NEWS
debates.

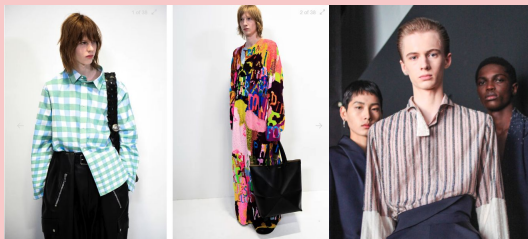
DESPITE CONVERSATIONS AROUND MASCULINITY AND MANHOOD EVOLVING

From Fontaines DC to Kneecap, Bad Bunny to Harry Styles, Hozier, Daniel Caesar, Conan Gray, Rex Orange County, Omar Apollo, Mac Ayres, and Lewis Capaldi (the list goes on) male singers have been rebooting masculinity through their fashion choices to new emotional depths in their music.

Podcasts like “All Black Men Need Therapy” unpack past and present issues that affect black men’s mental health and the power of vulnerability, and grassroots groups tackle the black masculine experience.

Globally, established to emerging fashion designers and creatives explore masculinity by challenging the conventional notions of menswear and pushing against expected constructs.

There are many opening the dialogue and eager to new forms of expression for young men still figuring themselves out.



Designers from James Reeves to Jonathan Anderson and Kim Jones continue to push the boundaries of menswear by embracing reimagination of masculine dressing.



Cult Irish band Fontaines D.C. have always had a thing for dissecting toxic masculinity, but with their latest album, *Romance*, they dived headfirst into raw, unfiltered emotion. This time, they’re tackling the kind of shit men are taught to bury. The song *Starburster* unpacks the chaos of panic attacks, while *Bug* picks apart the wreckage of failed relationships, accountability, and closure.



Riskyboyz are redefining the concept of Masculinity in Egypt and the notion of expression by throwing impromptu catwalks across less advanced urban areas.



Bad Bunny’s music and fashion choices directly confront the “machismo” as he tears down reggaeton’s macho façade, one painted nail and gender-fluid outfit at a time. Whether it’s twerking in heels for *Yo Perreo Sola* or embracing vulnerability in his lyrics, he’s proving that masculinity isn’t about dominance, it’s about owning who you are, unapologetically.

YOUTH ARE STILL
LACKING THE
STORIES AND
SPACES TO SEEK
UNDERSTANDING

Rizzle Kicks' Jordan Stephens talks to the Guardian about heartbreak, addiction and challenges through a male lens and the shortage of 'stories' for men to seek to understand themselves.



"As I was going through that heartbreak, I didn't find cultural references to help me understand what I was feeling. You go to a library or bookshop," he says, "where's the section on male puberty? The male anatomy? Sexual experiences, consent, and certainly heartbreak. For men, these stories are just so limited. I was experiencing a lifetime's worth of heartbreaks all at once, and felt entirely alone."

- JORDAN STEPHENS

BRO-CULTURE MADE A COMEBACK



One viral hit of the summer, for example, was a catchy anthem about finance bros. (The lyrics: "I'm looking for a man in finance, with a trust fund, six-five, blue eyes, finance ...") Once derided as Patrick Bateman types, finance bros suddenly became a hot commodity on the dating scene. -Aiwa Mahdawi, Guardian



The Marie Lueder tank top slogan on her LUEDER runway was a nod to the type of heteronormativity coming back at us.

Yet, despite the voices, society teeters on the edge of reviving the tired, old school version of masculinity, steeped in aggression and strength.

So called bro-culture came back with a vengeance. From the conversation ignited by Zuckerberg around the necessity of masculine energy at work, to Trump's machismo stance and all male tech bro allegiances.

The resurgence of "bro culture": the gym bro, the tech bro, the finance bro has ignited debates around a hyper-masculine, often exclusionary and sometimes toxic social dynamic. Many 'bros' are angry at now being bottom of the hierarchy.

Movements like Legendários Brasil, a Christian men's network built on faith, discipline, and spiritual leadership are gaining ground. They channel that same desire for identity and connection, but offer a different kind of masculine ideal.

Like it or not, these movements tap into something real: a hunger for purpose in a world that feels increasingly hostile or uncertain for men.



Legendários has become a hit among both everyday citizens and celebrities alike, offering fiery speeches about masculinity, purpose and promises of 'transforming men'.

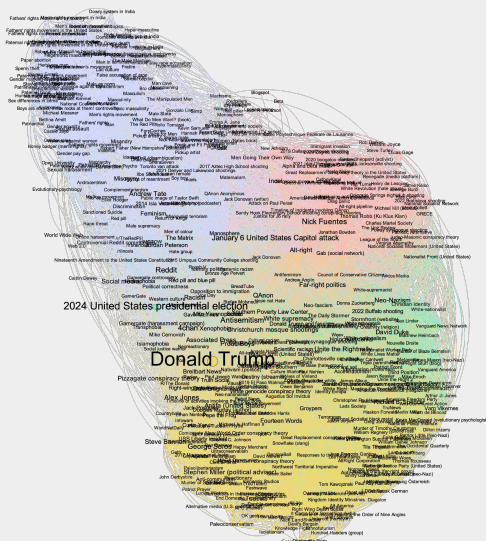
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The number of interconnected elements — people, ideas, things, and spaces related to the manosphere — has nearly doubled, and the number of interlinked connections between these elements has almost tripled.

2025



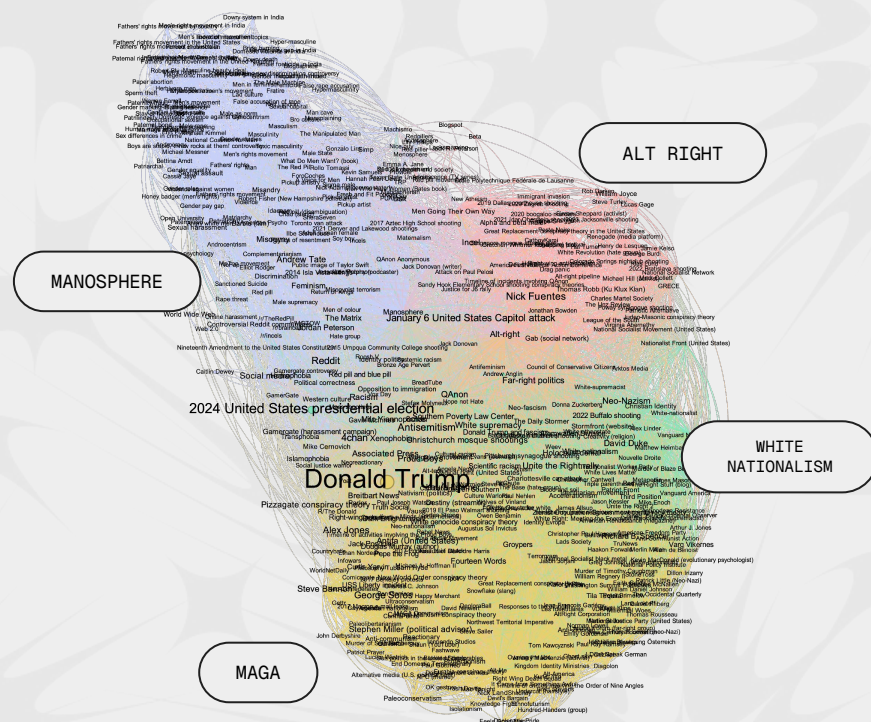
ARE WE A SOCIETY AT RISK OF A POTENT CULTURAL FORCE TURNING YOUNG MEN TO THE EXTREME?

As the manosphere has grown, it has become inextricably interconnected with the right-wing ecosystem — from major figures in the MAGA movement like Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller to Alt Right “groups” like QAnon and the Groypers. Anti-feminism, men’s rights, white identitarian ideologies, and ultra conservative politics mesh to form a potent cultural force.

But this isn't just about masculinity. The bigger question is why so many young men are feeling lost and drifting toward the alt-right, latching onto hyper-masculine bullshit because they don't see another option.

MANOSPHERE (2025)

Source: PIGEON OS, "Manosphere", 2025



ACTIONS FOR BRANDS

(REBOOT MASCULINITY)

01

STAND FOR MORE THAN A TREND

Self improvement grifts, hustle culture, homesteading, social media trends and aesthetics may seem harmless, but they're rarely just vibes. They're value systems in disguise.

Before adopting a trend, ask yourself: Are you embracing its deeper meaning, or just it's surface aesthetic?

02

REMOVE ~~TOXIC~~ FROM THE EQUATION

Men exist across a spectrum: caregivers, creatives, thinkers, and leaders. If we actually want to fix this, it's not about slapping the word "toxic" on everything. It's about expanding and showing what healthy masculinity can be.

Can your brand help define what good masculinity looks like? Are you choosing ambassadors and voices who reflect and amplify it?

03

CREATE NEW FORMS OF COMMUNITY FOR YOUNG MEN

Society and brands need to actively create spaces where young men feel seen, heard, and supported. That means fostering real conversations, safe environments, and opportunities for self-expression.

How can your brand build and support new communities that allow young men to explore their identities in healthy ways?

(CODE THREE) The New Skinny

As Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro and other GLP-1 weight-loss drugs go mainstream, even among teens, culture is bracing for a shift: thinness is back in the spotlight, and so are the debates about bodies, weight, and worth.

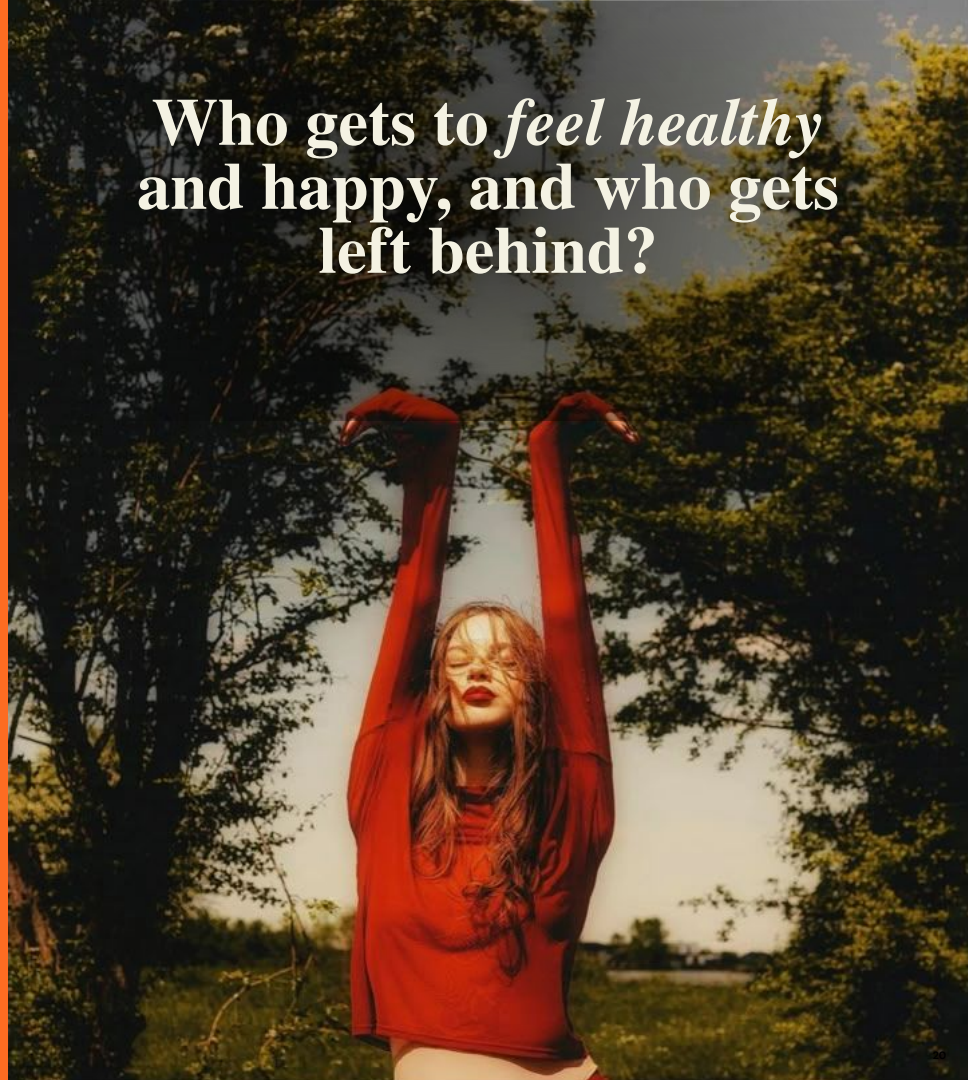
On one side, the “skinniness-at-any-cost” crowd, who see shedding pounds- by any means necessary as the ultimate flex. On the other, the “athletic/natural” purists, who prize discipline, muscle tone, and the belief that bodies should be earned, not engineered. And somewhere in the

middle, body positivity feels like it's getting side lined.

This new wave of commentary simply risks reinforcing the same body hierarchies and shame cycles we've seen in the past eras of fatphobia.

What is clear is that we're entering a new era. One that demands more thoughtful, nuanced frameworks for body autonomy, medical intervention, and what it truly means to live well in a GLP future.

**Who gets to *feel healthy*
and happy, and who gets
left behind?**



TENSIONS ARE PALPABLE

Our feeds and catwalks are full of friction as tensions rise between GLP-1 enthusiasts and naysayers. Many are concerned that body positivity has, in some cases, become a consolation prize for those lacking access to these weight loss interventions.

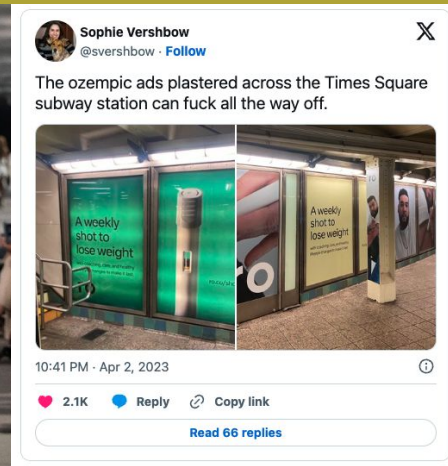
These meds aren't cheap, and access to them already reinforces a wealth-based divide. If you can afford it, you should lose weight; if you can't, then ok, try and love yourself as you are.

In this dynamic, body positivity risks becoming a consolation prize instead of a cultural value.

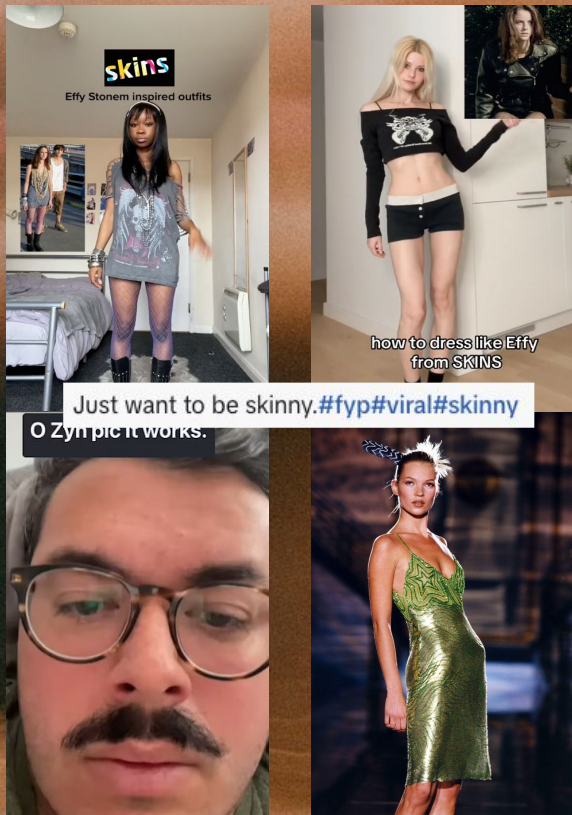


Even the fashion brand Namilia's ironic 'I <3 Ozempic' top stirred contention because the runway is gradually returning to size 0.

Many high-profile celebrities, tech moguls, and influencers have openly (or covertly) used these drugs to shed pounds, reinforcing the notion that slimness is both desirable and attainable, but only if you have the means.



A CULTURAL OBSESSION WITH THINNESS IS CREEPING BACK IN



"SkinnyTok" has gained millions of views on TikTok, Instagram, Reddit, and YouTube. Many concerned accounts are promoting extreme weight loss methods, restrictive eating habits, and harmful "discipline" as the key to happiness- or at least, thinness.

While society's love affair with thinness never truly disappeared, it's clear that for many, an obsession with being thin is back.

References to the '90s and 2000s are everywhere among Gen Z and Gen Alpha - Heroin Chic and Indie Sleaze have returned, with Kate Moss's famously slight frame still held up as iconic in both aesthetics.

"Skins"-era edginess and drug glamorization are resurfacing (so what's a little Ozempic?), and every confused fourteen-year-old on TikTok seems to want to be Effy Stonem. Zyn nicotine pouches are being touted online as 'Gen Z's favourite accidental weight loss drug'.

Tumblr, once criticized as a hub for young bloggers (primarily women) promoting anorexia, has given way to TikTok accounts and #SkinnyTok, touting the joys of skinny and idolizing K-pop stars, not for their talent, but for their current weight.

NEW FAULT LINES IN *WELLNESS* GROWING BY THE DAY?

The meds, the virality of skinny, could fundamentally rewrite how an entire generation interacts with health, food and even their own bodies. The culture of body positivity rolled back in favour of a pharmaceutical fix and hunger optional.

Meanwhile, gyms like the luxury fitness chain Equinox are already catching the wave — offering Ozempic-friendly fitness plans, tailored workouts, and diets built to vibe with the rise of GLP-1 meds.

At some point, we have to ask: are we really creating a healthier society, or just setting ourselves up for a lifetime of dependency, instead of real, sustainable relationships with food and well-being? Will narratives around obesity become even harsher and blame individuals for “choosing” not to medicate? And in a world of outsourced fixes, how do we realign wellness to address the deeper systemic issues at play?

Morgan Stanley analysts expect the market for GLP-1s to be worth a staggering US \$105 billion by 2030.

5.29.24, 12:03 PM EDT / BY NOOR AL-SIBAI

SO, SO MANY KIDS ARE TAKING SO, SO MUCH OZEMPIC

IT'S NOT JUST ADULTS.



The Ozempic workout? How gyms and trainers are catering to a new group of exercisers

More teens are turning to weight loss drugs

The rise in prescriptions follows the approval of Wegovy for kids as young as 12 and updated recommendations for treating childhood obesity from a major medical organization.

Obese children as young as six could receive weight-loss jabs

Possibility of Ozempic-style injections being made available for young people on NHS opens up after trial shows ‘promising’ results

Companies like Nestle and Equinox are rolling out GLP support initiatives, from nutritional programs, to new training protocols that help mitigate against muscle loss.





(BUILD COMMUNITY VS.
QUICK-FIXES)

ACTIONS FOR BRANDS

01

FOR THE COLLECTIVE

As GLP-1s become part of the wellness landscape, it's easy for health to feel individual and isolated. But real well-being thrives in community.

How can you create spaces where youth can share in solidarity, support and ensure health is something we pursue collectively, not alone?

02

STRONG, NOT SKINNY

In all worlds the future of health should be strength, wellness and sustainability - not meeting a pre-set standard.

What's your role in shifting the narrative from weight to well-being and championing long-term wellness over quick fixes?

03

LEAN INTO THE JOY OF APPETITE

In the future where appetite risks becoming an afterthought, food deserves to be more than functional.

Can your brand help re-center joy and connection - reminding people that eating well isn't just about control, but pleasure and presence?

(CODE FOUR) The Big-Mid

We're living in chaos politically, economically and socially. Trump is back in the headlines, the internet is more fractured than ever, and everyone wants you to pick a side, optimise your life, and stand for something at all times.

All internet culture and social media culture have done is to drive young people into a competition to be the most niche, to be the most pilled, to max to the extreme, but because of this – where the niche once was the edge, now the middle is the edge because the edge itself is so commodified and corporatised.

Now, the niche is mainstream. Being normal is the reaction.

In 2025, opting out of extremes is the move. Ignore the algorithm. Skip the self-improvement grift. Let go of the pressure to be hyper-informed, hyper-productive, hyper on trend. The coolest people just do normal shit.

A quiet rebellion is taking shape, where simply being a normal, average person is a radical act.



**In a world obsessed with
extremes is the new
counterculture to be
inherently normal?**



WE WITNESSED THE DEATH OF THE MIDDLE GROUND

We're being forced even further into extremes. The internet was supposed to connect us, but instead, it's shattered us into a million micro-identities, each of us locked in an ideological echo chamber. And when identity is increasingly niche and performative, the pressure to prove authenticity skyrockets. People aren't just *vegans*; they're raw food, zero-waste, anti-capitalist vegans who will publicly shame you for eating almonds.

Politics isn't just left or right; it's an arms race of ideological purity where the centre is dismissed as cowardice. The new guards at the helm stoke political polarization and extremist behaviour.

Instead of fostering nuance, this intense fragmentation is pushing youth, well all of us, further toward maximalist, all-or-nothing positions.

MAXXING WENT MAINSTREAM



What started as niche internet subcultures - looksmaxxing, auramaxxing, healthmaxxing, wealthmaxxing - became a full-blown obsession with self-optimization. Everywhere you looked, someone was trying to maxx out their life.

Sure, on the surface, maxxng is about self-improvement. But beneath the motivational buzzwords lies a darker truth. An endless pressure, unattainable ideals, and a sneaky reinforcement of hyper-competitive, borderline dystopian values.

Testosterone-maxxing saw young men flooding their systems with TRT in the name of muscle gains and “high-value” masculinity.



From bone smashing to chin extensions: how ‘looksmaxxing’ is reshaping young men’s faces



replicamaxxing

ReplicaMaxxers · 14.8K Followers

Highest quality rep reviews 30% off shipping +¥1000 coupon sign up link



maxxing_ur_potential

maxxing_ur_potential · 35.4K Followers

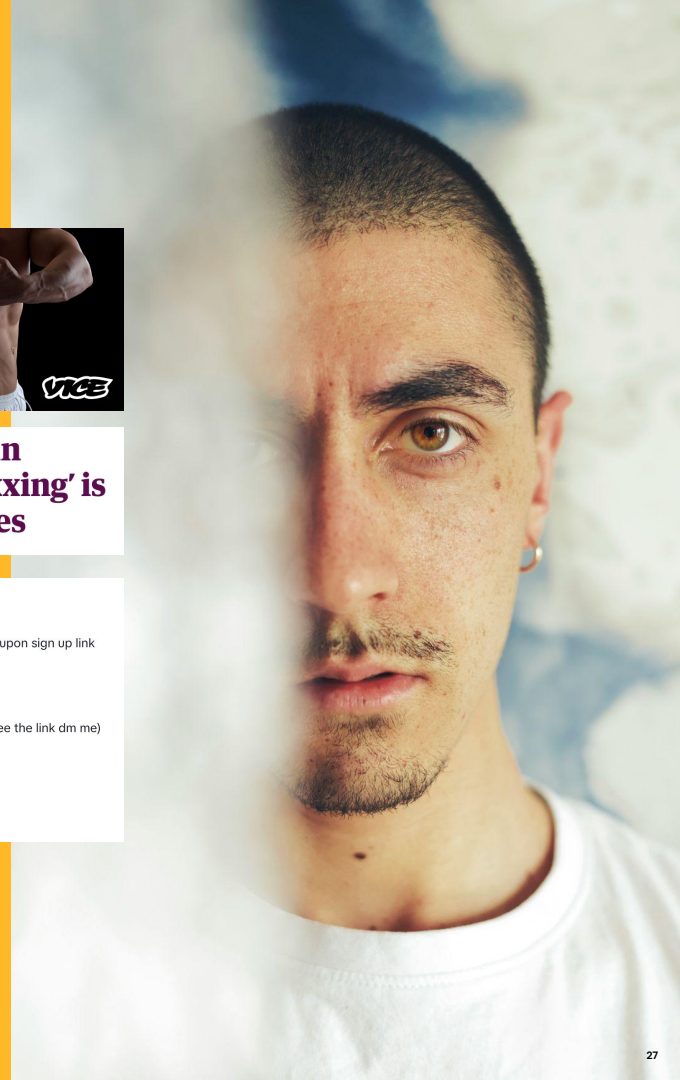
based and free discord server in my bio 🙌🏻 (if u can't see the link dm me)



looks_maxxing0

Looks_Maxxing · 11.5K Followers

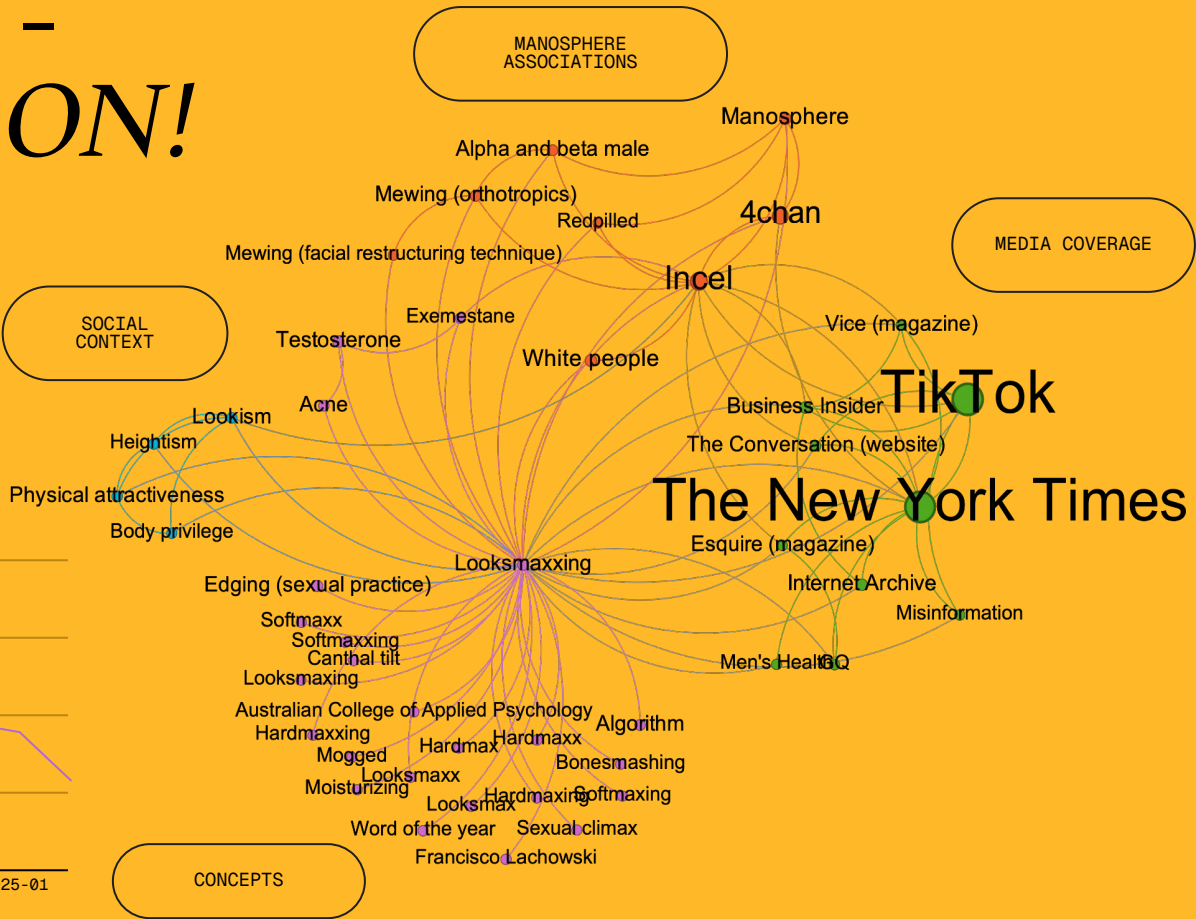
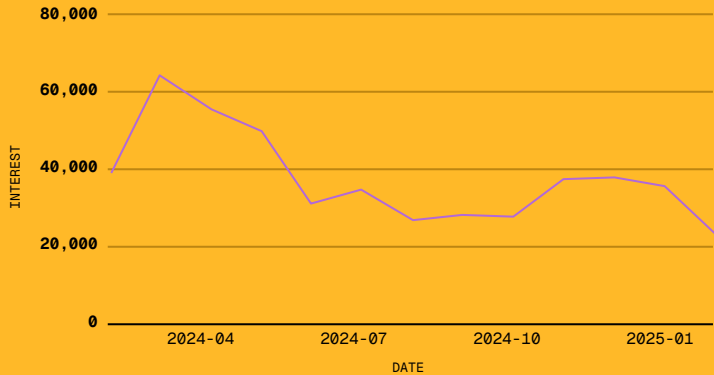
17 Goal 20k Calithe watches and jewellery below



MAXXED OUT - AND *MOVED ON!*

The concept of looksmaxxing originated in the manosphere. While “maxxing” has entered the popular vernacular as a mark of extreme optimization, it is still heavily associated with incel culture. Interest in the concept peaked in March, 2024, and it has been steadily declining since – perhaps due to its association with more extreme elements of the manosphere.

Looksmaxxing





Is basic fashion the trend set to define 2025?

There's been a pointed turn away from the maximalist Drainer and hyperpop aesthetics that dominated the post-pandemic years. Now, it's not so much about the clothes you wear as the aura you give off

JANUARY 8, 2025



Adm_Shelby2 · 4mo ago

It's hard to be passionate about being moderate.



102



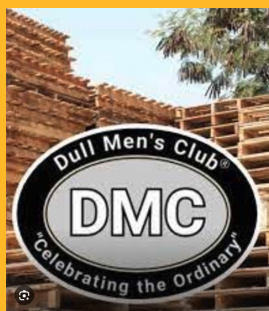
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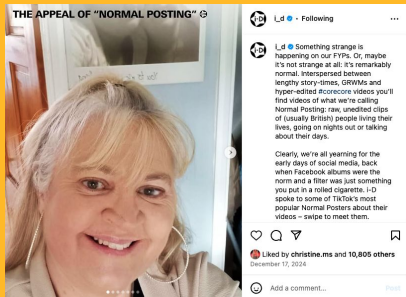
Award



Share



The Dull Men's Club find in mundane, "common, everyday things, things others often think are dull but for us they provide excitement."



EMBRACING BEING A NORMAL AVERAGE PERSON THE NEW ASPIRATION?

In a world where everyone is expected to take a strong stance, optimize every inch of their lives, and be the most niche, the most extreme version of something, a counter-trend is emerging: embracing the unremarkable.

More and more young people are realizing you don't always have to go to the edge. It's ok to connect through our shared humanity, hobbies, and activities that are not rooted in polarizing views.

And when the edge becomes saturated and branded, guess what starts to feel radical? The middle.

Is just being normal - not ironic, not hyper-styled, not extreme - the new aspirational flex?

A close-up, profile view of a brown monkey looking towards the right. It is wearing a black headset with a thin wire extending from its ear. In its right hand, it holds a small, black, rectangular electronic device with a cable attached. The background is a solid, muted yellow-green color.

(EMBRACE BEING MID)

ACTIONS FOR BRANDS

01

STOP PUSHING INTENSITY

Ditch the “maxxing” mindset altogether - period. Stop selling grindset, and start selling ease.

Can you create a counterpoint to the hyper productivity “maxxing” mindset percolating social media and encourage youth to stop chasing extremes at all costs?

02

MAKE ‘MID’ THE ASPIRATION

Challenge the idea that you have to be all in or all out to matter.

Can your brand champion a new kind of aspiration - where it’s okay to enjoy everyday things and find joy in being a ‘normie’?

03

CREATE SPACES FOR CONNECTION, NOT CONFLICT

Move away from engagement tactics that fuel divisiveness and instead make it about low stake conversations.

Can you make space to celebrate small talk, find the connection and create conversations?

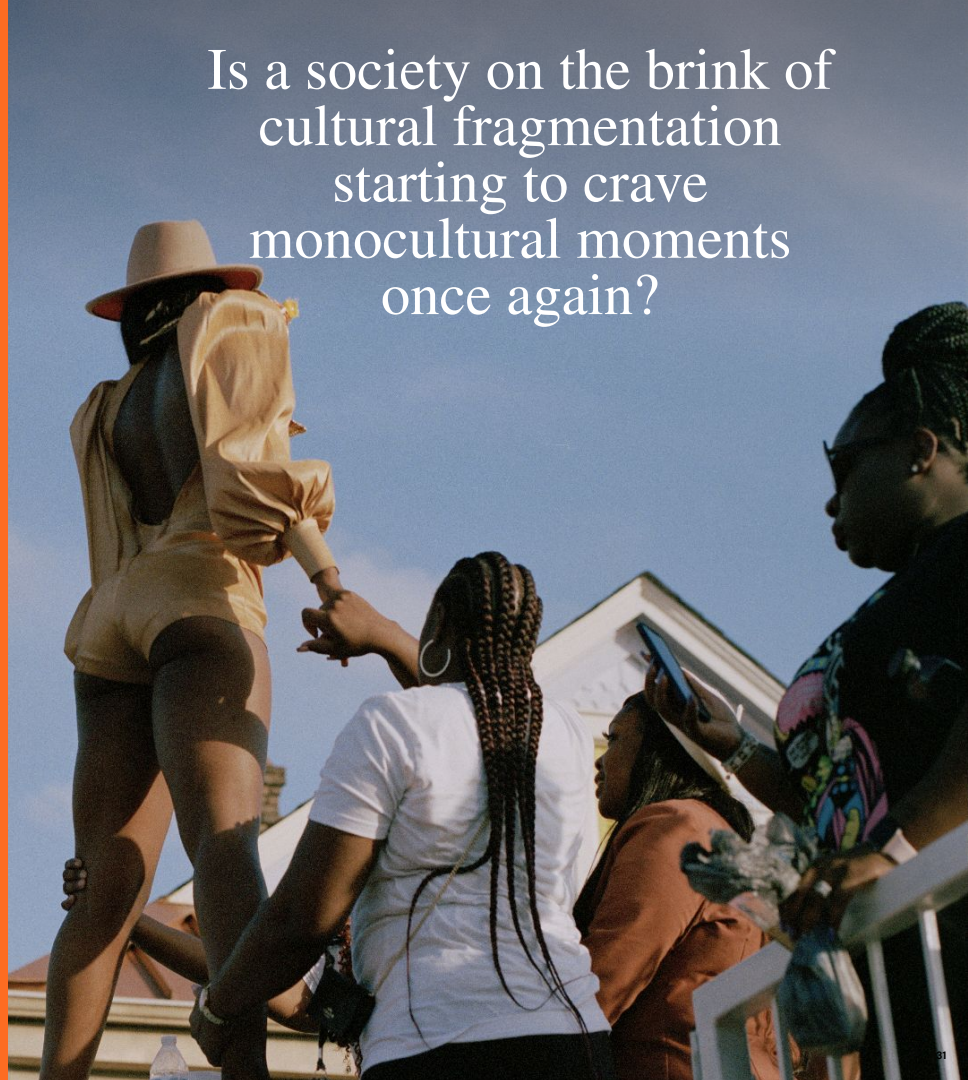
(CODE FIVE) Sync Stream

The monoculture has splintered into a multitude of asynchronous niches. When everything is hyper-personalized, everything is on-demand, everything is IYKYK, we feel untethered and alone.

The explosion of online subcultures and the death of a monoculture means that we all have fewer and fewer shared, references, even on the internet.

There's a growing yearning for narratives we can all experience together in real time as they unfold, stories that sync us into a collective pulse with every installment, creating communal touchpoints that make us feel part of something bigger than ourselves - for as long as possible.

Is a society on the brink of
cultural fragmentation
starting to crave
monocultural moments
once again?





IYKYK, THE IN-JOKES POINTS OF DISTINCTION, *NOT* CONNECTION

The platforms our young audience use are all constantly competing to improve their algorithms to keep their attention. The content they see is hyper-optimized to perform based on both the platform physics and the exact niches they are into.

Everything is hyper-personalized, everything is on-demand, everything is IFYKYK – increasingly driven by our exact tastes and interests and subtly tweaked to keep our attention. The in-jokes become points of distinction not connection, the narratives become individualised, the sources of truth become ever more dispersed and contentious

The nicheifying of Halloween costumes is compounded by viralification, in which inflated metrics and algorithmic feeds have made viral content more frequent yet more fleeting than ever. The explosion of online subcultures and the death of a monoculture also means that we all have fewer and fewer shared references, even on the internet.

 **anactuallivepenguin** I recognized exactly zero of these wtf
67w Reply



Are meme costumes destroying the holiday or helping us process our internet-mediated reality?

- BY TAYLOR LORENZ

“Chalamet’s gambit is that culture has fragmented beyond the sort of monoculture necessary to produce era-defining stars. At the same time, this mass cultural disintegration has occurred alongside a very real shift in fandom—specifically fandom as mediated by the internet—as a legitimate identity. You are, increasingly, what you consume, a form of self-conception that is only made possible by the fact that people are no longer all consuming the same thing at the same time.”

- BY OCK SPORTELLO



DIGITAL MEDIA PARADOXICALLY INTENSIFYING OUR YEARNING FOR *COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCES*

There's a hunger for stories we can experience together. Young people want narratives that sync them into a collective pulse, turning each new instalment into a shared ritual that keeps them locked in for as long as possible.

Streamers like Kai Cenat fuel this by turning long-form 'hangouts' into content, from marathon *Elden Ring* streams to virtual sleepovers. From relationship voyeurism and drama to real-time storytelling on *CruiseTok*, youth are obsessed with the daily lives of strangers.

We're even enjoying collectively 'hating' on people (think Katy Perry's recent escapades to space).



Streamers like Kai Cenat are packaging up and streaming lengthy 'hangouts' online, from mammoth *Elden Ring* streams to Sleepovers.



NICHE DRAMA | OCT. 23, 2024

Are You Also Following Every Minute of TikTok Influencer Aspyr Ovord's Divorce?



By Alle Jones, a freelance writer who covers celebrity, culture, and influence.



Tyler Bergantino and Gabby Gonzalez say their TikTok viral romance is for real: EXCLUSIVE



IS IT TIME TO REBUILD MONOCULTURE?

From the growth of live-streaming, event based television of major sports shows and awards show, to real-time social media phenomena, the unpredictability and collective anticipation of a live event recreate a sense of community in an otherwise asynchronous world.

As we continue to splinter, will desire increase for monolithic moments and synchronous engagement both IRL and digitally?



Celebrity-led book clubs are booming, from musician Laufey's dedicated Discord server, to model and actress Kaia Gerber and Singer Dua Lipa's dedicated platforms. Celebrities and fans engage in shared discussions over their latest novels and sync up over author interviews and livestreams.

@Public Libraries Singapore



Live-streamed sporting events are back, with Jake Paul vs Mike Tyson making history as the most streamed global event ever with over 108 Million LIVE global viewers.



(CREATE FOR THE COMMUNAL)

ACTIONS FOR BRANDS

01

CREATE FOR COMMUNAL MOMENTS

People look for unity across demographics, time zones and continents as digital life splinters us in millions of directions..

Are you in a position to bring back “eventized” content and collective viewing experiences?

02

CHAMPION THE RENAISSANCE OF PHYSICAL GATHERINGS

Renew your enthusiasm for community-driven spaces where people seek real-world connections.

Can you offer a return-to-house parties, concerts, and spaces for those craving deeper human connection?

03

ADVANCE THE NOSTALGIA FACTOR

There's a growing romanticization of past cultural moments because they represented times when people collectively felt something in sync.

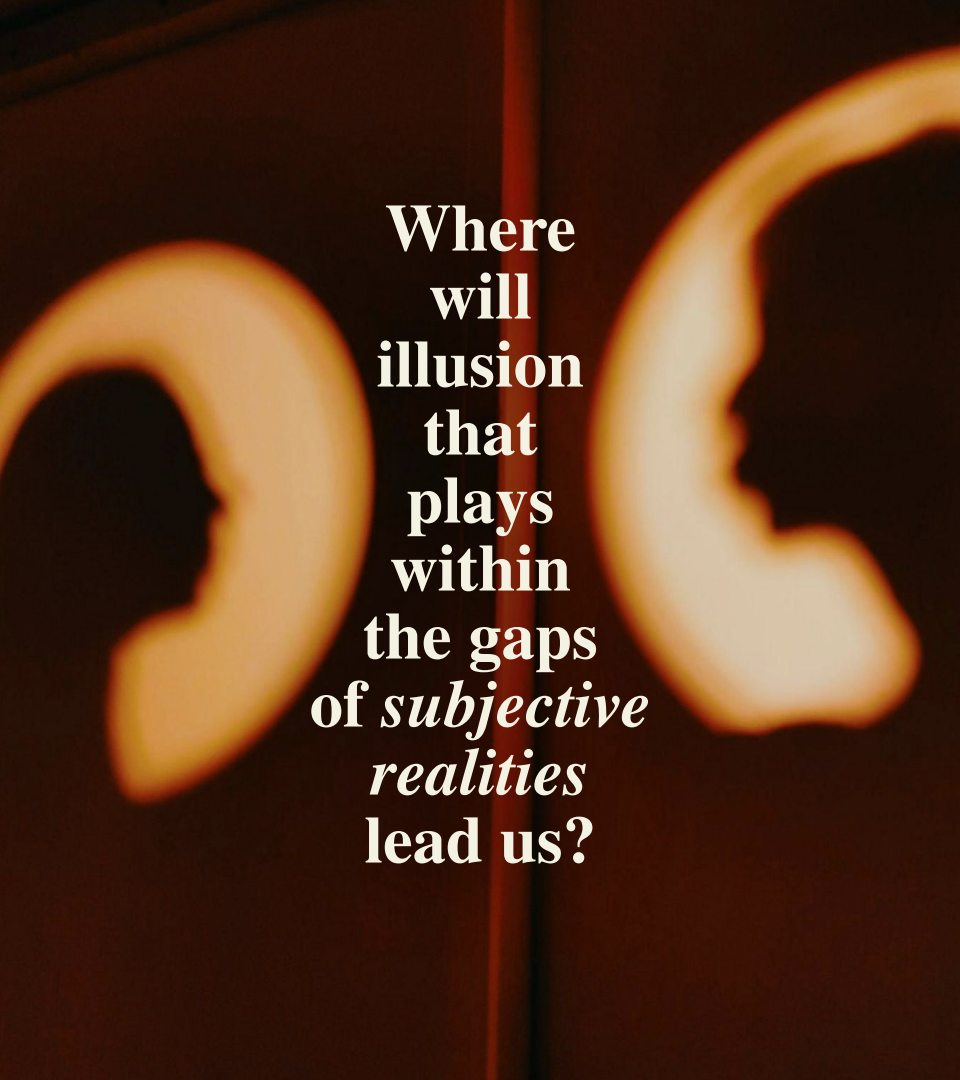
But as we potentially enter an era of perma nostalgic exhaustion, what's the new collective entry point to shared passions?

(CODE SIX) Illusionist Mischief

We're in a cultural shift where emotional truth and self-expression often carry more weight than rigid, "objective" reality. Coupled with the rapid acceleration of AI, deepfakes, and bot-generated content, the boundaries of what's real or what isn't are being pushed to their limits.

Today, illusion no longer needs to rely on tricking the senses within an agreed-upon framework of reality (remember the magician pulling a rabbit from a hat?). Modern illusion and mischief makers leverage advanced technology, intentionally blurring the lines between perception and belief.

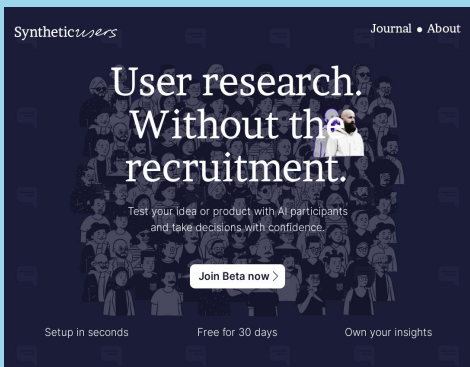
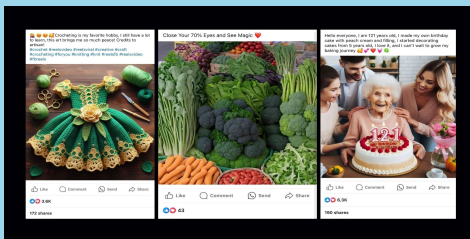
Youth aren't fooled because they are naive - they're in on the act. They knowingly embrace the illusion and choose to believe.



**Where
will
illusion
that
plays
within
the gaps
of *subjective
realities*
lead us?**



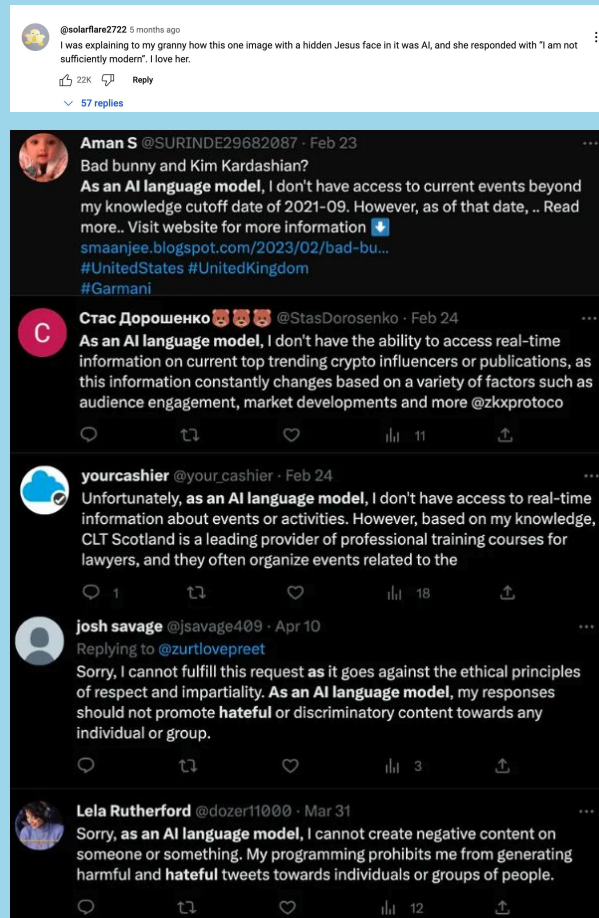
THE FAKE HAS ALREADY BECOME THE NORM



“Uncanny Valley” is a thing of the past. Generative AI virtual influencers, deep fakes, and synthetic media are all becoming integrated seamlessly into our lives.

Sludge content has overtaken feeds, bots have become the reply guys, and we’re even running research to discover human truths through synthetic users.

For youth, the line between real and fake isn’t blurred; it’s irrelevant.



PERSONAL TRUTHS THE NEW AUTHORITY

Emotional reality over empirical reality has become normalized. Belief systems like manifestation, vibrational reality and personal truths continue to thrive online - all part of the cultural shift towards emotional truth.

In this era, what feels real is real.

(63%)

OF GEN Z DO NOT BELIEVE IN MORAL ABSOLUTES

(60%)

OF GEN Z THINK THAT WHAT IS RIGHT OR WRONG DEPENDS ON AN INDIVIDUALS' BELIEFS



Reality shifting continues to be a viral phenomenon, where youth claim to move their consciousness into alternate worlds. While there's no scientific proof that anyone is actually jumping into new dimensions, reality shifting is embraced as a subjective and personal experience rather than a literal alteration of reality.

AUTHENTICITY' A THING OF THE PAST?

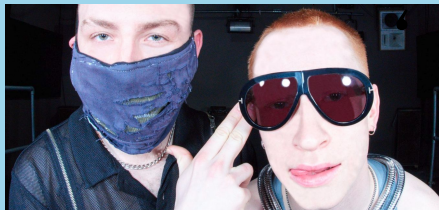
The word 'authentic' had a good run, but now it's just another filter. In a shape-shifting digital world, "authenticity" can be another aesthetic choice, curated, performed and gamified.

The allure for youth is often in the mischief that comes with challenging audience perceptions and suspending disbelief. They are drawn to artists and collectives who exemplify how embracing anonymity and illusion can create a potent force.

Never wholly pretend, but always part enigma.

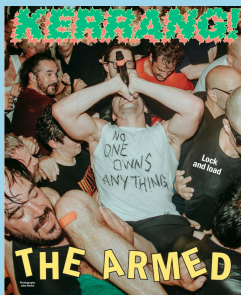
“Ask whatever you like...” Tony teases, “And, to the best of *your* knowledge, we’ll tell the truth.”

- TONY WOLSKI [THE ARMED] IN KERRANG



Dance music's elusive duo Two Shell launched an incredibly cheeky lead-up campaign featuring AI versions of [Frank Ocean](#), [Taylor Swift](#), et al, before leading to the [FKA twigs version](#) with the “real” twigs. In addition, tracks like 'Mind_Flip' are powered by AI voice tracks, further cementing their mysticism.

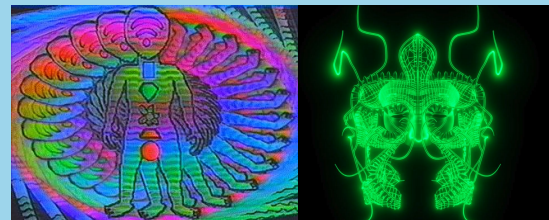
Orville Peck, a country musician, is renowned for his signature fringed mask that obscures his face, cultivating an enigmatic persona. This concealment invites listeners to focus on his music's emotional depth rather than his personal identity, adding a sense of mystery to his performances.



“Originally, anonymity was a way to keep this big, collaborative project ego-free so that whichever member was best suited to do something would just be the one to do it,” Tony unpacks. “Then on the last couple of albums, it began to tie in with themes of information control, misinformation and the obfuscation of reality.”

- TONY WOLSKI [THE ARMED] IN KERRANG

Artists such as @thesarahshow merge humour, myth, and mysticism and often move between the real and unreal, as well as the physical and digital.



ACTIONS FOR BRANDS

(EMBRACE THE ILLUSION)

01

DITCH 'AUTHENTICITY' FOR ILLUSION

Why pretend to be real when no one cares? In an illusion-driven world, the best performers are the ones who play with the boundaries.

How can your brand embrace the performance and blur the lines between fact and fiction?

02

FIND THE MYSTICISM

As rigid rationalism declines in favour of emotional and experiential truths, mysticism and esotericism continue to surge.

What's your brand's role in esoteric aesthetics, themes, hidden knowledge, or spiritual or mystical understanding?

03

REVEL IN THE TRICKSTER

The new influence is a memic force, part mystery and a contemporary illusionist. The line between a personal brand and a manufactured illusion dissolving.

How can you embrace or work alongside this trickstar energy: playful, unpredictable and always one step ahead of the obvious?

(CODE SEVEN) Neo Soul

Neo-Soul is calling youth back to analog vibes, natural rhythms, and unapologetically intuitive living.

In a world constantly online, more and more Gen Zers are rejecting the performative nature of social media. They're pushing back against misconceptions that they're always plugged in and embracing the power of human instincts and intentionality. Stepping back from the scroll and tuning into themselves, their surroundings and their senses.

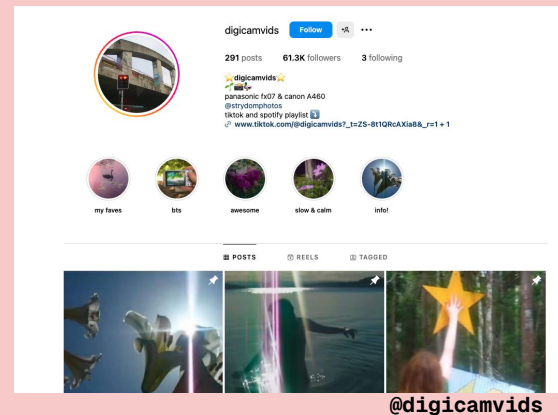


**Will instincts and intuition
become the *most powerful*
tools we have to navigate the
digital age on our terms?**



GEN Z CONTINUES THEIR RETREAT TOWARDS ANALOGUE LIVING

Many Gen-Zers include 'digi cam' pictures in their photo dumps or have entire Instagram accounts dedicated to digicam content.



The analogue renaissance among youth continues unabated.

From the rise of so-called "Boomer Hobbies", think crochet, handicraft, birdwatching, book clubs, gardening and knitting, to a surge in vinyl records, film photography, handwritten letters, and board games.

It's not necessarily a rejection of technology but a recalibration in an effort to create boundaries between the curated digital self and the real, tangible world.

GRAVITATING BACK TO INSTINCTS AND INTUITION

The quest to connect with the tangible continues to lead them down a path towards the re-embrace of intuition and new philosophies of choosing 'what feels right' and the innate wisdom of humans.

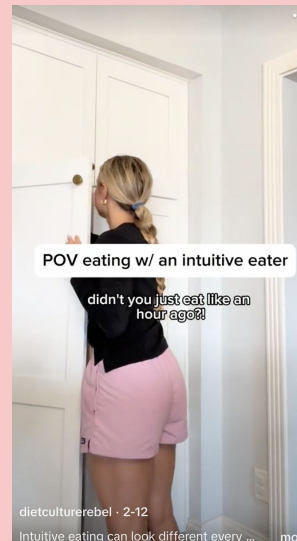
Intuition, once seen as soft or unscientific is quickly becoming one of the most powerful tools youth have for navigating the digital age on their own terms.



The "Back-to-Nature" movements promote an awareness of our surroundings, encourage us to avoid technological distractions and inspire more instinctual living. Creators like @Hikingshawty capture quiet, intentional moments and take walks through the British countryside. Her initiative, Today I Walked, has transformed a simple daily ritual into a collective practice and advocates that more intuitive living is not about abandoning technology but finding a balance.



Podcasters like Mel Robbins are cherished by youth for guiding them to tune into their innate intuition, quiet their minds, and listen to their inner voices.



On TikTok, the benefits of adopting intuitive eating are being shared: a non-diet approach that emphasizes listening to your body's hunger and fullness signals.



A devotion to spiritualism, mysticism, astrology, witchcraft, magic and manifestation continues. Youth seek experiences that transcend mere data or logic, embracing life's mysteries through intuition.

A RISING TENSION BETWEEN THE PUSH AND PULL OF CONNECTIVITY VS PRESENCE:

Youth are acutely aware of the paradox of needing social media for connection and cultural relevance while recognizing the impact on mental health.

As new generations grow more hyper-aware of the trade-offs, we'll undoubtedly seek and need to find new ways to balance connectivity and presence.

(45%)

OF TEENS SAY THEY SPEND TOO MUCH TIME
ON SOCIAL MEDIA, **UP 36% FROM 2022**

(48%)

OF TEENS SAY SOCIAL MEDIA HARMS PEOPLE
THEIR AGE, **UP FROM 32% IN 2022**



ACTIONS FOR BRANDS

A photograph of two young men in a body of water. The man in the foreground is in profile, blowing a stream of water from his mouth. The man in the background is also blowing a bubble with water. The water is dark and rippling, and the background shows a hazy shoreline under a bright sky.

(BRING BACK
INSTINCT)

01

CREATE SPACE FOR INTENTIONALITY

The analogue resurgence is not necessarily anti-tech; rather, it's about reclaiming time and attention.

How does your brand foster real connections amid virtual noise?

02

REWRITE THE RULES OF DIGITAL LIFE

The digital world isn't going anywhere, but that doesn't mean we can't help youth create a healthier relationship with it.

How does your brand give youth the tools to create boundaries and spaces that feel healthier and more present?

03

ENCOURAGE INSTINCTS

In a world where algorithms shape our tastes and decisions, reconnecting with instincts feels more radical than ever.

How does your brand empower youth to trust themselves and embrace what feels right and natural?

(CODE EIGHT) Speculative Fantasy

Future generations will likely inherit a world facing intense social, environmental, and existential challenges.

But, new portals have revealed new social possibilities, facilitating the development of new cultural practices. Fantasy, sci-fi, surrealism, and myth are used to dig into real-life issues like identity, inequality, climate change, mental health and real-world problems.

Fantasy could be our greatest ally in helping youth interpret and improve this world in imaginative ways.



**What if fantasy is no
longer about running away
but about *running toward*
what could be?**

FANTASY HAS PROVEN POWER TO ENGAGE GEN A & Z

Escapism has already proven itself a route to capture young audiences. Fantasy isn't just popular, it's the favourite genre of Gen Z, drawing eyeballs and engagement.



Publishers like Folio Society are able to allure young buyers by selling more fantasy and sci-fi titles, boosted by BookTok and limited editions announced via TikTok.



Gen Z continue to pore over plots of "Romantasy" because of its escapism and ability to mirror real emotional journeys.



Minecraft, the most successful video game in history has spawned "A Minecraft Movie" and despite mixed reviews, left Hollywood in a state of giddy shock over the final box office numbers driven by Gen Z & Alpha. "A Minecraft Movie is the Rocky Horror Picture Show for Gen Z," wrote one person on X.

CREATING NEW WORLDS FOR SOCIAL IMAGINATION TO FLOURISH

But, fantasy is no longer just for fairytales. These worlds offer safe space to confront difficult topics and serve as a lens through which to view society from a different perspective.

Young people are adopting tools, narratives, and spaces that allow them to explore radical new ways of being. From WitchTok to solarpunk zines, from roleplay to queer utopias in games, fantasy is becoming a creative test lab for social imagination.



**Real-Life Dating Sim Becomes
Number One Game on Steam**

Dating sims, particularly those featuring real-life elements or even real actresses, have gained popularity among gamers. The genre has evolved to tell more inclusive, complex stories. From representing LGBTQ+ relationships to unpacking heavy themes like toxic love and becoming a reflection of the relationships we're navigating IRL.

With Bamboo and Jade, Silkpunk Rebuilds History

The Chinese video game Honkai: Star Rail borrows from an emerging literary subgenre that imagines modern worlds founded on East Asian traditions.

Share full article



Punk aesthetics have influenced popular video games, with titles like the Chinese game Honkai: Star Rail using silkpunk to emphasize Asia and envision modern worlds rooted in East Asian traditions.

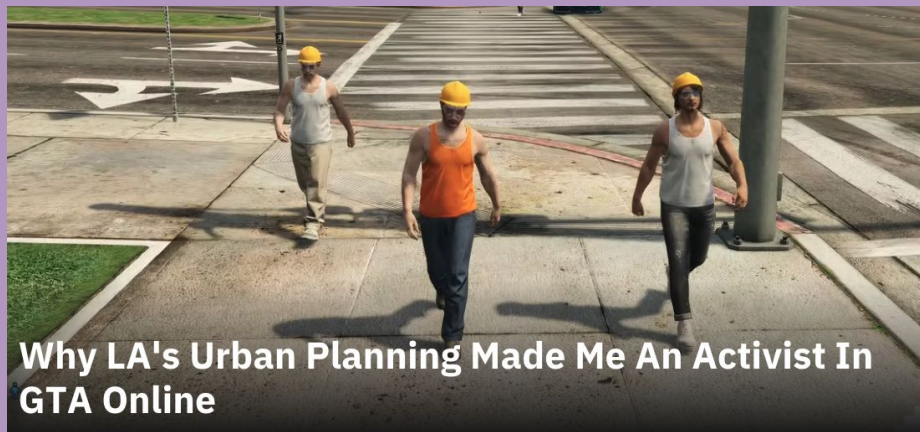


RS GAMING
**HOW 'SOUTH OF MIDNIGHT' WEAVES A
STOP-MOTION FANTASY FROM DEEP
SOUTH LORE**

Xbox's 'South of Midnight' taps into a vein often unexplored in video games: America's Deep South to recognize the history, folklore and to celebrate Black heritage and Southern Culture.



'Post-Apocalyptic Optimism' is rising in 25 as a popular book genre, with readers increasingly drawn to narratives of rebuilding and resiliency vs nihilism and doom.



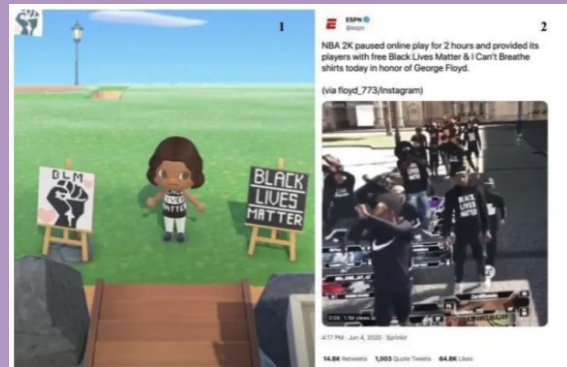
Students protest and activism against LA's poor transportation and infrastructure by slowly walking through the streets of Los Santos in Grand Theft Auto V Online.

GAMING CO: OPTED BY YOUTH AS SPACES FOR ACTIVISM

While certain games lend themselves to social activism and world-building, many are taking activism into their own hands and hijacking gaming and virtual worlds - from Animal Crossing to Grand Theft Auto and Roblox - to push out messages, drive social interaction, and advocate.



Roblox stands out as one of the leading gaming platforms for children. In 2020, it was reported that two-thirds of U.S. kids aged 9 to 12 played the game, with 54% of all users being under the age of 13. However, Roblox is not just a gaming platform; children have also participated in pro-Palestinian protests on the site following the Israel-Hamas war.



One of the most prominent instances occurred in Animal Crossing: New Horizons when youth protested real-world injustice with slogans and protests supporting Black Lives Matter.

IS FANTASY OUR ROUTE TO NEW HOPEFUL FUTURES?

Speculative fantasy is no longer niche. It's mainstream for youth.

Speculative fantasy can act as a mythic roadmap for society and brands, offering not only an escape but also blueprints for radically new ways of living and a vision for futures that have not yet been articulated in our current reality.



ACTIONS FOR BRANDS

(PROTOTYPE RADICAL HOPE)

01

EMBRACE WORLD-BUILDING

Fantasy isn't just a genre; it's emergent belief systems and a space to envision new worlds.

Are you contributing and asking what kind of world your brand can help build vs products to sell?

02

COLLABORATE WITH FANTASY CREATORS

Escapism and fantasy have shown to be the genres that captivate the attention and emotions of young audiences.

What partners, IP and creators can you team up with to develop speculative fiction and content that aligns with the ambitions and interests of today's youth?

03

MAKE SPACE FOR SPECULATION

Fantasy offers safe spaces for youth to reimagine, rebuild and shape culture.

How are you developing brand narratives that afford spaces for visioning vs. simply reinforcing what already exists?

(CODE NINE) Playful Living

We've all heard the term kidulting - but the reality is, youth heading into adulthood are facing harsher socioeconomic conditions and many can't move out of their parents houses. Alongside student debt and job market instability many have had to delay traditional markers of adulthood.

Couple this with our obsession with nostalgia and the virality of the internet to sweep trends across borders, and we now find ourselves going deeper into a complex cultural phenomenon where kid-time is adult-time and we're embracing immaturity and play as a route to relief.



**What happens when play
isn't *considered regression* -
it's seen as resistance?**

PLAYTIME CULTURE IS ALL AROUND US



Much has been written on the jellycat and plushie trend, as plushies have become a cultural phenomenon among Gen Z. Brands like Labubu are loved by celebrities like Olivia Attwood, Dua Lipa, and Rihanna. They've become cult collectables.



Coperni's Disneyland Paris Runway Show and spring/summer 2025 collection celebrated youth and nostalgia, featuring vintage Disney T-shirts and prints of our favourite characters.

Social media allows both adults and kids to readily share their collections and hobbies, building community and removing the stigma around so called "childish" activities. Even Politicians now jump on the latest TikTok challenges to connect with voters.

What was once considered 'geek culture' is mainstreaming, driven by the popularity of collectibles and nostalgia based hobbies. Fandoms like Marvel, Star Wars, and Pokémon have normalized participation in gaming and cosplaying.

Today, we're all collecting squishes, stacking charm bracelets, and decking out our lives with cute stickers and cartoon t-shirts.



So-called silly, trashy, cartoonish tattoos are making a comeback amongst Gen Z.

Takashi Murakami Transforms K-pop group NewJeans Into The Powerpuff Girls, delivering bags and plush figurines to support the group's EP, 'Supernatural.'

Mario birthday party for adults

Discover Pinterest's best ideas and inspiration for Mario birthday party for adults. Get inspired and try out new things.



"McDonald's fans say their 'inner child is healed' after 'Adult Happy Meal' reveal..."

McDonald's Is Launching Its
First Ever 'Adult Happy Meal'
And We're Obsessed



THE BINARY BETWEEN “FOR KIDS” VS “FOR ADULTS” NO LONGER EXISTS

Age is no longer a reliable identity market and engaging in hobbies traditionally associated with children doesn't carry the same stigma it once did.

The Kidult phenomenon only continues to rise with a growing acceptance that adults can embrace childlike pursuits.

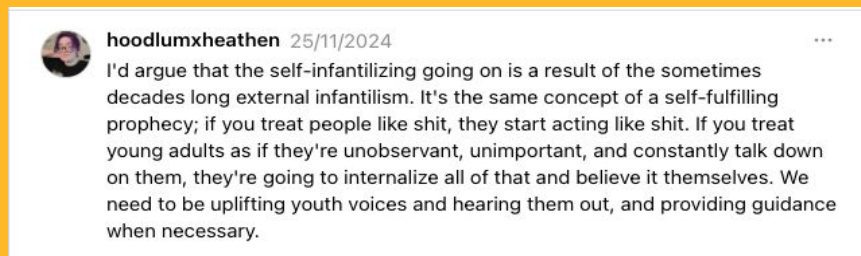
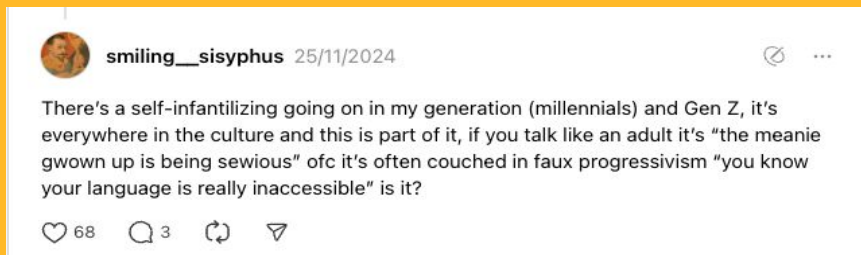


A Disney Cruise isn't just for the kids. Adults, too, crave a genuinely unforgettable experience (sans kids), gravitating to adults-only brunches, fireworks at sea and, of course, character meetings.

SO: IS THIS COLLECTIVE THERAPY OR INFANTILIZED FUTURES?

The question of whether this represents a joyful reinvention or a cultural regression is open to debate. Critics argue that our culture is undermining adulthood, suggesting that mass media and modern lifestyles are encouraging many people to adopt behaviors and mindsets that were once reserved for children.

Perhaps the way forward is to embrace playtime as a joyful source of relief at any age, while ensuring it does not turn into an easy escape from real responsibilities or a loss of essential life skills.



'Just a Girl' is still going strong. With girl maths and girl dinner being examples of anti-intellectualism and self-infantilization, are women engaging with this trend reclaiming the way that men view them? Or do young women not want to be responsible for things that feel too adult?

01

CONSIDER WHAT 'GROWN-UP' LOOKS LIKE

As adulthood and kidulthood continue to blur, it's an opportunity to play with the boundaries of what maturity means.

What opportunities exist to break stereotypes and age norms and deliver on play time at any age?

02

CREATE COMFORT SYSTEMS

Youth are turning to products, platforms and rituals of self-soothing and emotional regulation in turbulent times.

What products, partnerships or sensory experiences can your brand build to support this emotional need state?

03

BUILD COMMUNITIES OF PLAY

Fandoms play, and collectables are the centre of modern-day communities for youth, built around joy and fun.

How can your brand become a hub for those who play and collect together, not just objects they buy, but also a club they belong to?

ACTIONS FOR BRANDS

(MAKE SPACE FOR PLAY)

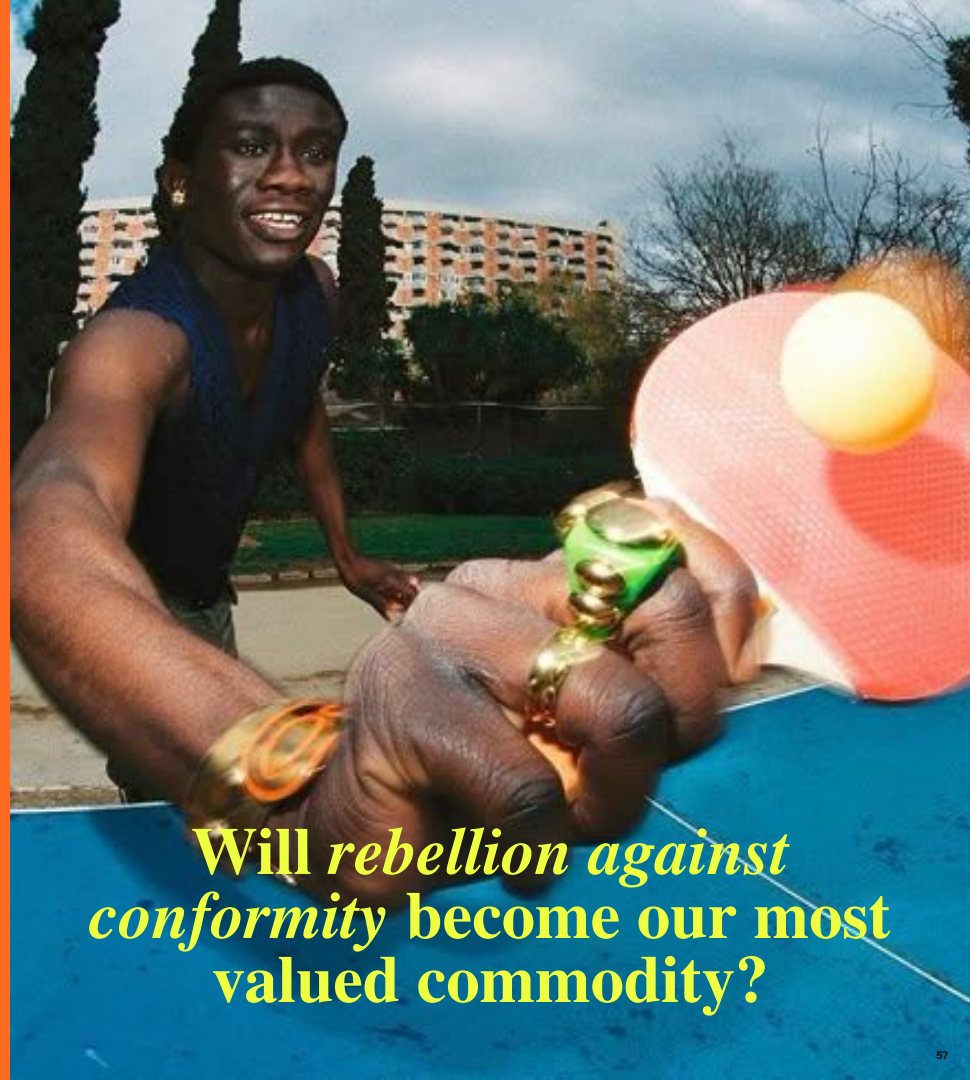


(CODE TEN) Rebellion Economy

Chronically online youth live in a world of algorithmic predictability - every TikTok trend, Spotify playlist, and AI-generated "vibe" is designed to engage, not surprise. Once a chaotic hub of weird subcultures, the internet is now a feedback loop of sameness.

AI is making it worse, rehashing trends and regurgitating the past instead of creating the new. Music is optimized for engagement, art for virality, and books for ranking. Everything is engineered to be liked, shared, and forgotten.

In this world, chaos, imagination and unpredictability are the rarest commodity. The future and the hearts and minds of youth belong to those who break the system. Confuse the feed.



*Will rebellion against
conformity become our most
valued commodity?*



Brands like Disney have long been remodelling original series and films to capitalize on consumer tastes. Netflix and streamers quickly fill their catalogues with (re-)adaptations and recycled IP.

The web is a sea of logo sameness as brands adopt the 'modern utility' of sans serif typefaces for optimization online.

Why do so many brands change their logos and look like everyone else?

Someone Else's Work (Rule 21)

Tech		Fashion	
Revolut	» Revolut	BALENCIAGA	» BALENCIAGA
facebook	» FACEBOOK	BURBERRY	» BURBERRY
Google	» Google	YVES SAINT LAURENT	» SAINT LAURENT
Microsoft	» Microsoft	Berluti	» BERLUTI
airbnb	» airbnb	BALMAIN	» BALMAIN
Spotify	» Spotify	RIMOWA	» RIMOWA
Pinterest	» Pinterest	DIANE VON FURSTENBERG	» DIANE VON FURSTENBERG
ebay	» ebay		

WE'RE LIVING IN A CHRONICALLY ENGINEERED SOCIETY

Everything today is designed for maximum engagement, from ads and logos, to franchise-driven films, repetitive fashion trends, and formulaic music. Songs open with hooks in the first 15 seconds, lean on repetitive choruses, and chase replayability.

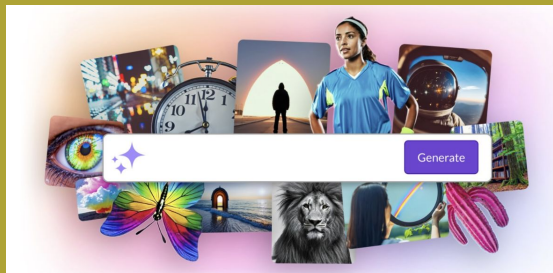
The result?

Culture starts to blur and everything starts to feel eerily similar. Music sounds the same, brands are identical, movies follow recycled formulas and ads blur together. Even personal expression online feels prepackaged for virality.

This environment breeds homogeneity, not innovation.



If AI tools use existing data for content and cannot generate fresh ideas, we could all reproduce the same styles and trends without contributing new ideas or perspectives.



COUNTER CULTURES GROWING TO CHALLENGE ALGORITHMIC CONFORMITY

When everyone follows the same feeds, nothing feels new. When a niche becomes accessible to all, it's no longer a niche - it's mass culture.

However, a new wave of young creators and communities are pushing back against algorithm-driven conformity.

SOURCE: DAZED (2025), Could phone-free clubs save nightlife? / Fast Company (2025), The Tumblr revival is real - and Gen Z is leading the charge / Music Industry Blog (2024) <https://musicindustryblog.wordpress.com/tag/scenes/>



Gen Z is rediscovering Tumblr – a chaotic, cozy corner of the internet untouched by algorithmic gloss and influencer overload... "writes Fast Company, "embracing the platform as a refuge from an internet saturated with influencers and algorithm fatigue."



Could phone-free clubs save nightlife?

From Manchester to Ibiza to Berlin, a growing number of venues are banning attendees from using their phones on the dancefloor

New offline movements are growing: phone-free clubs, secret art shows, and DIY music scenes thrive as our digital spaces become oversaturated and homogenized.

1 month ago

SUBTRONICS
BACKBONE BOOTLEG
+ yasuo!

As Mark Mulligan noted via *Music Industry Blog*, young aspiring DJs and driving bootleg, mashup, and remix culture through SoundCloud and reviving underground dance scenes. Many productions are deliberately raw, intentionally rough-edged, and distinctly anti-polish-standing as a rebellion against algorithm-driven mainstream sounds.

Repeat your outfits to go with anti-algorithm style

DRESS SENS 1972
AUSTIN DOWELL

In a world of micro trends, the new fashion mantra should be authenticity over excess, and a wardrobe that speaks to you.

Higher than the fast fashion world, where the constant churn of new styles is a never-ending cycle of overconsumption, anti-algorithm style is a movement that celebrates individuality and creativity. It's a fashion philosophy that rejects the idea of a single, dominant style in favor of a more eclectic, personalized approach. This isn't just about clothing; it's about a mindset. It's about embracing your unique voice and expressing it through your wardrobe. In a world where algorithms dictate what's popular, anti-algorithm style is a rebellion. It's a way to stand out, to be seen, and to feel confident in your own skin. It's about taking control of your image and making it your own. It's about creating a wardrobe that is truly yours, one that reflects your personality and your values. It's about rejecting the idea of a single, dominant style and embracing a more diverse, more inclusive fashion world. It's about creating a space where everyone can feel like they belong, where everyone can express themselves and where everyone can feel like they are part of something special.

Art, music and wine

A mint guide to the art and music scene in London.

HOW TO: The art and music scene in London is a vibrant and diverse one, with a wide range of events and venues to choose from. Whether you're a fan of contemporary art, classical music, or indie rock, there's something for everyone. This guide will help you navigate the scene and find the best events and venues to visit.

RECOMMENDATIONS: For art, check out the Tate Modern and the British Museum. For music, try the Royal Albert Hall and the Royal Opera House. For wine, visit the South Downs and the South Coast. These are just a few of the many options available in London. Be sure to explore them all and enjoy the best of the city's culture.

Mint Lounge

sujstyle ANTI-ALGORITHM FASHION: First Column of the Year for @live_mint.

Having your own personal dress identity is more important than following trends dictated by the industry, a celebrity or social media. Express your own individuality with your fashion choices this year. As @taruntahiliani who launches his luxury pret line @ottaruntahiliani soon says, "I think it is a bit of a tragedy—rather, a huge tragedy—that people have given up their personal style to become victims of the bombardment of imagery,



There's a new rise of "Anti-Trend" Culture amongst the fast fashion and TikTok trends cycle. Dressing in microtrends has become a low-status behaviour for youth and celebrities alike.

@eugbrandstrat

TRUE ORIGINALITY, UNPREDICTABILITY AND SUBVERSION THE NEW FORM OF LUXURY?

In a world run by algorithms, creative chaos is our final act of rebellion.

Will we see a future where unpredictability and subversion become the ultimate luxury?

“Anything we like, we know it’s because other people — the ones whose content has been served up by a form of code in our social feeds — are instilling it into us”

MRS. PRADA SAID BACKSTAGE

MSCHF is a model for the rebellion economy. A Brooklyn-based art collective that challenges consumer culture and creates unpredictable, viral chaos. Unlike typical brands, MSCHF embraces subversive behaviour, evident in the now infamous "Satan Nikes" featuring human blood, the Blur Sneakers mocking AI-generated trends, or The Global Supply Chain Telephone Bag, which highlights that leather goods-producing factories are "not a computer, taking in perfect instructions and outputting perfect execution."



Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons showcased their spring 2025 ready-to-wear collection, addressing the concept of style echo chambers. Their collection urges a return to individuality, encouraging wearers to break free from the algorithmic influences that shape contemporary fashion.



ACTIONS FOR BRANDS



(REBELLION AS COMMODITY)

01

EMBRACE THE GRIT OF REAL-LIFE

In Ad-land, the temptation is to sit behind a desk and follow trends and hype cycles

How can you get your hands dirty again, get out from behind your desk, and speak to real people who represent distinct cultures and a POV not your own?

02

BREAK THE TEMPLATE

We live in a logic-driven society, and the norm has become formulaic and built on algorithmic predictability. But the future belongs to the brave, not the formulaic.

Can you make space for risky creative projects that defy category conventions?

03

DIG WEIRD, GO DEEP

Originality thrives in the margins, where inspiration can be discovered in obscure, fascinating, and often unrelated mediums and spaces.

Where can you find inspiration from outside your sphere: contexts and references you hadn't even dreamed of?

THE END.
FOR NOW.

➞ JOIN US
AS WE NAVIGATE
TOMORROW.



MOVE AT THE SPEED OF CULTURE

Flying high in the sky in every city, every corner of culture, Pigeon is out there - searching, gathering knowledge, and seeing where the world is moving.

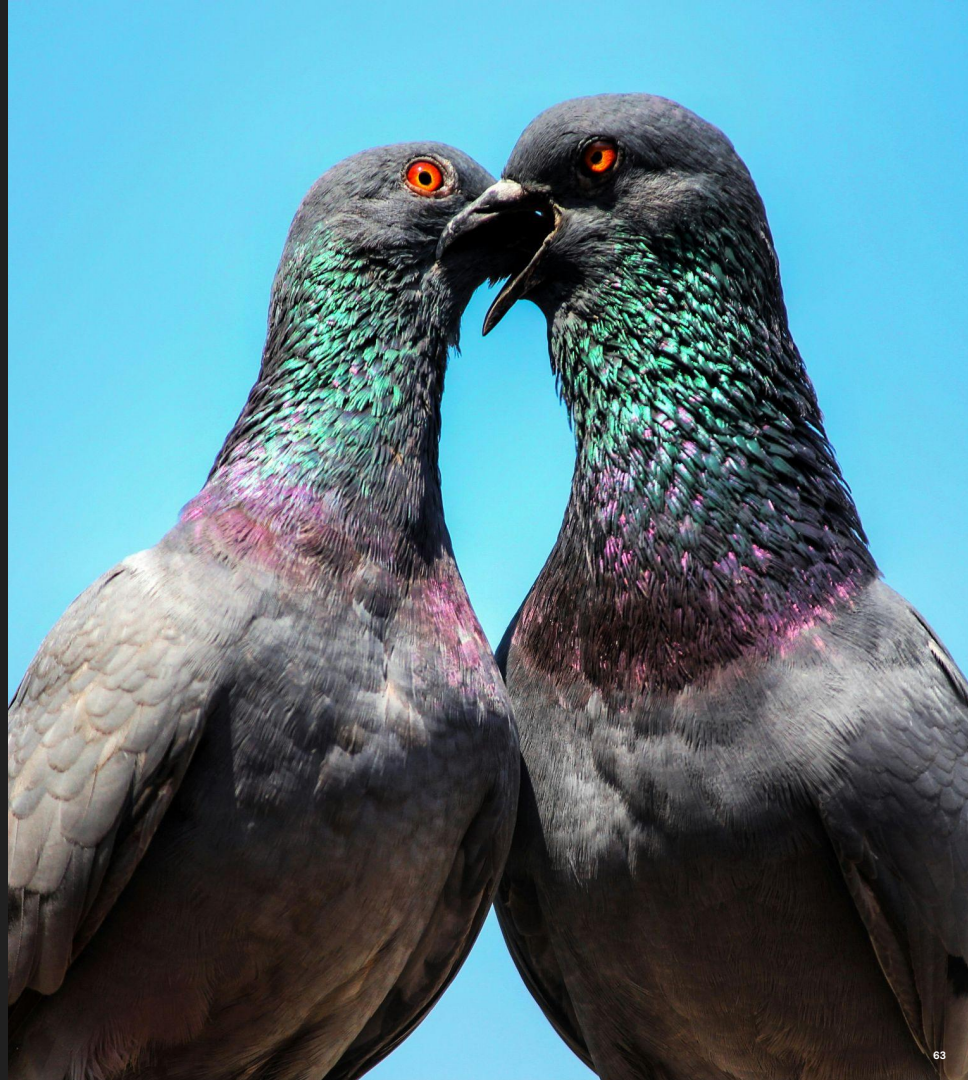
As the internal insight arm of VIRTUE Worldwide, we're a global crew of foresight strategists, researchers, and storytellers who aren't afraid to get our hands dirty in real life. We mix street-level discovery with cutting-edge technology to decode what people really think, feel and need from brands.

Powered by our proprietary cultural operating system, we map your brand's evolving cultural ecosystem, uncover emerging trends, and identify top talent within your network.

We're moving at the speed of culture, but will gladly stop to talk to great people. get in touch:

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LET VIRTUE
BE THY GUIDE