

For the curious and progressive

elminate

New world, new experiences

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ISSUE 23: New world, new experiences

What will happen to real-world experiences?

This is the question we'll be addressing in this issue. If we think back to a world before the pandemic, "experiences" was probably the most overused word by businesses and marketers. The use of the word in the context of experiencing a product or service would drive me crazy because much of what people described as an experience wasn't an experience at all. I define an experience as an event or occurrence that leaves an impression on someone. In order to leave an impression, one must engage multiple sense organs – ideally, all of them. A dinner at Noma is an experience; having Colin Cowie (interviewed for this zine) design your event or party is an experience; visiting a Bompas & Parr exhibition is an experience. An experience is when you're left with a lasting feeling. You can't control an experience: it's a dimension or energy that leaves an impression upon you.

In my world of experiences, we focus on helping brands with digital and physical experiences, primarily retail-related. Since the reopening of retail in the UK on 15 June, I've visited London several times and it's generally a very sad place to be. Understandably, brands haven't invested in permanent retail yet. Hotels, bars and restaurants have now opened, but there's a lack of energy, vibrancy and, of course, people.

Within pockets of the web, however, we're seeing real innovation, experimentation and a world that's far more exciting. We've covered some of the web's most illuminating corners in this zine.

As for experiences in the real world, they may have been put on ice, but what I think we'll experience over time will be beyond our wildest dreams. My own team understand that in order to leave a lasting impression, one must envelope guests in a sensory experience that simply can't be emulated online. This always sits at the heart of what we'd like to achieve, but in reality, designers are often restrained by the brief's objectives.

In my conversations with digital-first and direct-to-consumer brands over the past three months, I've heard so much about pop-up strategies, 'phygital' experiences and community engagement in the most unexpected locations. A new dialogue is being planned and I can't wait to see what materialises.

Steven Kainth
Chief curiosity officer

Words, thoughts and opinions are my own. Facts are found and are subject to change. Check before taking action.

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Cover image: Detail of a death mask from the Vespers series. The Vespers project was developed by the MIT Media Lab's Mediated Matter Group, in collaboration with Stratasys lead: Prof. Neri Oxman (founding director).



This issue is brought to you by



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Steven is the founder of Elluminate, an innovation-focused research and creative consultancy that works with global consumer brands and agencies, helping them to understand what's happening in the world around them. He is deeply curious and analyses innovation developments across major industries. Steven advises consumer brands on product development and go-to-market strategies, both in the real world and online. Alongside his brand work, Steven works with chief innovation officers, CEOs and creative directors on business strategy. He regularly informs leading investors on innovation and inspires both teachers and students at leading international educational institutions, as well as at local public schools.

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Martin is a multi-disciplinary designer specialising in consumer engagement. He helps brands to build more authentic connections with their target audience and ensure that experience is positioned front and foremost. He's always ready to question the status quo and pushing to reimagine how the world works in a smarter, innovative and emotionally fulfilled utopia.

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Colin is one of the world's most respected event planners and designers. With a long list of A-list clients, Colin and his studio are trusted to create the most memorable experiences for the most demanding clients. Colin travels the world seeking inspiration. As a result, he personifies the word "luxury" in the most classic sense.

thrivehospitality.com





VANESSA MATTHEWS – FREELANCE STRATEGIST

Vanessa aims to bring more humanness into how things are done. In doing so, she believes we can build a different system. By thinking and doing differently, we can find more sustainable and creative solutions – a process that bridges the gap between words and actions.

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Gerard is a London-based cultural strategist helping brands innovate and grow by anticipating changing behaviours in culture, commerce and communities. His major strength is using creativity to help brands define their position in culture – and in business. He has worked at some of the world's most creative advertising agencies in both the US and Europe, and most recently served as a strategy partner and head of the cultural strategy department at AMV BBDO in London.

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SOHINI DEY – RETAIL & EXPERIENCE DESIGNER

Sohini is an architect and multidisciplinary designer, based in Mumbai, who specialises in retail experience. Working closely with various recognised and emerging brands in India, she has expertise in creating engaging store identities. An avid art and architecture enthusiast, her quest is about creating a genuine and purposeful connection between a space and its users.

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LUCY SEREMAK – BEAUTY INSIDER

Lucy is a beauty insider with an unquenchable thirst for all things new, unique and exciting. She's a make-up reviewer, hi-tech skincare enthusiast and chocoholic. Read her thoughts on the future of beauty retailing on page 13 and check out her YouTube channel here:

[YouTube.com/c/StandupBeauty](https://www.youtube.com/c/StandupBeauty)



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Filip is passionate about education in the 21st century and its impact on business success. He is currently conducting PhD research on the education of immigrant students and its societal benefits at the Institute of Research and Development of Education at the Faculty of Education, Charles University, Czech Republic.

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Opening thought

TALENTISM

“Capital is being superseded by creativity and the ability to innovate – and therefore by human talents – as the most important factors of production. Just as capital replaced manual trades during the process of industrialisation, capital is now giving way to human talent. Talentism is the new capitalism.”

Klaus Schwab, German engineer and economist, discussing the new notion of ‘talentism’ at the opening of the World Economic Forum at Davos in 2013.



Thrive Hospitality

Sensory event experiences

The hospitality and events industry is among the hardest hit by Covid-19. Many businesses are pivoting, and the new ventures being explored are creating new opportunities, not only for the companies exploring alternate business models, but for the marketplace at large.

For more than three decades, celebrated event designer and producer Colin Cowie has created some of the most talked-about parties and events around the world. With clients like Oprah Winfrey, Jerry Seinfeld, Ryan Seacrest and heads of state and foreign dignitaries, Cowie provides luxury experiences for the most celebrated people. He has designed and produced every conceivable type of celebration – from cocktail receptions, to product launches, to royal weddings. Spanning the globe multiple times, Cowie has travelled over 15 million miles in search of the finest and most authentic experiences for his clients, and has become an expert in guest experience along the way.

Along with his new business venture, Thrive Hospitality, Cowie represents the kind of partner a brand needs in order to curate an exceptional experience. We know many physical-world brand launches in the future will not be about large gatherings, but instead smaller events, where micro-influencers deliver maximum results. Cowie and his team understand exceptional design and service are human-centric. They understand an experience is not limited to the five sense organs, but is planted in one's mind and has a lasting impression beyond a moment in time. Take a look at the services Thrive Hospitality is offering [here](#).



HOSPITAINMENT

Those moments where hospitality and emotional entertainment are one.

Colin Cowie



NEW FASHION

The fashion industry is one of the biggest polluters on the planet, and it's going through a seismic shift. People in developed countries are purchasing excessive numbers of garments, due to fast-fashion brands making clothing so affordable. The waste being created as a consequence is simply unsustainable.

Thankfully, digital innovators are creating new parallel industries, where digital pixels have become a new medium – even at the super-premium end of the spectrum, in the world of haute couture. In this section, we explore other examples, such as modular clothing for children. These items of clothing grow with age, meaning they last longer, produce less waste and save money.



New couturiers

Emerging digital fashion brands such as The Fabricant are proving that we don't need to produce physical garments. Digital garments can be purchased and used to express our identities across social media, and the money saved enables us to buy more sustainably and better. In conversation with digital fashion guru Karinna Nobbs, I asked: how far can we go with this?

Could haute couture exist as digital fashion?

"Yes. Just as a real-world artisan will spend hours applying their craft to a garment, in the digital world, an animator will spend equal time crafting their computer-generated models, treating objects with equal skill and precision. Using blockchain, a digital artisan can demonstrate the time taken, which would justify a premium."



A traditional couturier working in an atelier



A software engineer coding digital garments



[CLICK HERE TO SEE HOW DIGITAL ARTISTS USE BLOCKCHAIN](#)



Fashion's next-gen talent

Preparing for a new world

I recently had the pleasure of speaking to Dr Kalbaska and Tekila Harley Nobile PhD Candidate from the Digital Fashion Communication Research team, under the Institute of Digital Technologies for Communication at the Faculty of Communication, Culture and Society of USI (Università della Svizzera italiana) in Lugano, Switzerland.

The group's mission is to investigate online communication as a true human activity, with a long-term, comprehensive and holistic approach. In particular, stressing human growth and the quest for meaning in online communication experiences in the fashion domain.

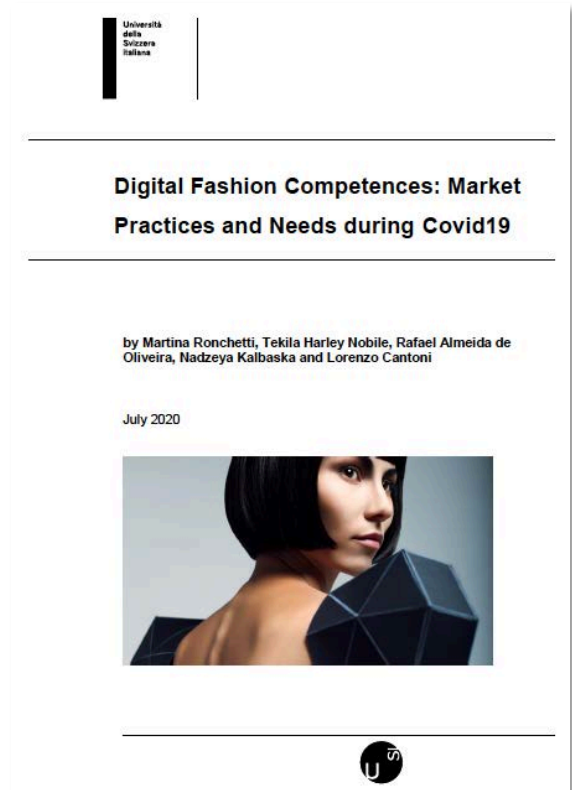
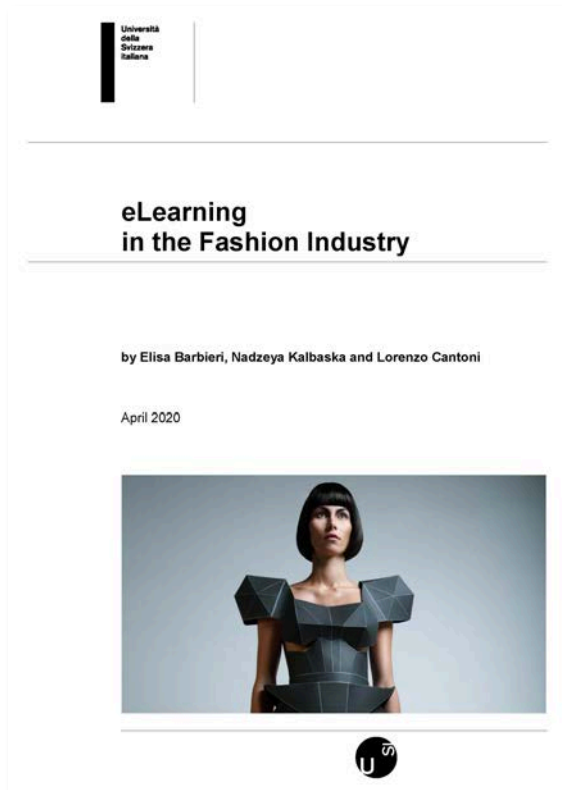
The team has recently published two very insightful research reports exploring:

- 1: [The skills and competences needed in the digital fashion marketplace](#)
- 2: [eLearning in the fashion industry](#)

Find out more about what Dr Kalbaska's team are doing here: www.digitalfashion.ch



Università
della
Svizzera
italiana



Petit Pli

Continuous size adjustment garments

Petit Pli considers itself a wearable tech company that's creating clothing for the future of humanity, starting with children. The London-based company was founded in 2017 by aeronautical engineer Ryan Mario Yasin. Shortly after Ryan gifted clothes to his newborn nephew, they were already too small! This experience served as a signal: childrenswear today fails to recognise the dynamic and rapidly changing bodies of children. Inspired by aerospace engineering, Petit Pli's continuous size adjustment is a new way of approaching garment design – one suitable to height growth rates in children. Petit Pli uses technical materials that are ultra-lightweight, reinforced, waterproof and breathable. Today, Petit Pli's team consists of interdisciplinary design engineers, fashion designers, neuroscientists and sociologists.

Discover more [here](#).



Because International

The shoe that grows

In 2007, Kenton Lee travelled to Nairobi, Kenya, after graduating college. In Nairobi, he lived and worked at a small orphanage. One day, he was walking down a dusty road with the children when he noticed a little girl in a white dress walking next to him. As he looked down at her feet, he was shocked to see how small her shoes were. They were so small that she had to cut open the front of her shoes to let her toes stick out. That was the day that Kenton imagined the idea behind a shoe that could grow. It took Kenton and a group of friends back in their hometown in Idaho more than six years to take this idea and turn it into a reality. But they finally did it; they made The Shoe That Grows, a shoe that grows five sizes and lasts for years. The shoe not only provides vital protection for the feet, but it also helps to reduce soil-borne diseases that affect over one billion. And it enables children to go to school, a prerequisite of the Kenyan government.

Discover more [here](#).



The future of beauty retail

The pandemic has changed the way we shop forever. I'm not talking about plexiglass screens or tape on the floor to help us maintain social distance – those will disappear soon enough, and we won't even remember them. It's the change that's happening behind closed doors, on marketing desks and within IT departments. Future beauty counters will be different and that's exciting. I believe the biggest change we'll see is that the gap between online and physical stores will get smaller and they'll eventually merge. This has already started to happen with virtual mirrors, with Mac leading the way. Mac is using augmented reality (AR), both on the counters and online, to allow customers to 'try' make-up before they buy it. In research I conducted for Edipresse, not being able to try products was one of the biggest obstacles for online consumers, along with extended delivery times and the lack of human contact. Online retailers have an answer to that as well. Most of the stores have a next-day delivery option and Amazon went a step further by offering Amazon Prime Now, a service that will deliver purchases within the hour.

Known for its extraordinary customer service, Selfridges recently introduced virtual appointments – a service that allows customers to have personal consultations from the convenience of their home. Before the appointment, a beauty concierge will ask a few questions and gather a selection of products that will best suit a customer's needs. Then, on a video call, a consultant will advise on the products, show you how to apply them and answer all your questions. After the appointment, your selected products will be shipped to your home.

As online becomes more personal, the offline experience will introduce more virtual features. Counters will get smaller, but will offer a better experience. Emilie Colker, executive director at Ideo, says: "Future retail is moving from transactional to relational. Brands will use the offline space to create more opportunities for people to connect with the products." Customers who know what they want to buy will be more likely to make their purchases online when the full range of products is available and with apps like Honey, where they can apply discount codes. A visit to the physical store will be an experience, where customers will spend more time and expect outstanding customer service. Facial recognition technology could play a part, though we know this is controversial technology. This technology hasn't been implemented by stores yet (at least officially), but stores are using other tracking technologies, such as beacons that connect to your phone and send you notifications about special offers and suggestions. Other interesting technologies include OSHbot, a robot assistant that can carry out most customer service tasks. It has image recognition, so you can just show the robot what you are looking for or browse the products on the robot's big screen, and it will take you to the right place in the store. If you need more advice, the robot will connect you to a human consultant. On top of this, it's multilingual. Retail has to adapt to constant changes and evolving customer needs, but will those changes be for the better? Only time will tell.

By Lucy Seremak

Images: Thomas Petherick. Dazed Beauty, Selfridges





Dazed Beauty

Set designer Thomas Petherick created the Dazed Beauty Space at Selfridges, London. The experiential pop-up launched in March, just before the lockdown. “My aim with this project was to translate the world of Dazed Beauty into a physical space that reimagines what beauty retail could be,” Petherick explains. “I did this by merging classical structures with hyper-futurism to create a unique language through shape and texture, which feels distinctly Dazed Beauty.”

“At Dazed Beauty, we believe beauty, and the experience of it, should be a refuge from staid ideals and restrictive standards. Beauty as we see it should be a site of resistance, play and experimentation for the next generation,” says Dazed Beauty editor [Nellie Eden](#). “This is the beauty counter of the future: where the digital and physical collide, and beauty is not simply what we wear on our faces, but what we project on our screens,” says Dazed Beauty editor-in-chief [Bunny Kinney](#).

Can you programme your brand for success?

It isn't uncommon to build your whole marketing strategy around customers' experiences. Back in 2009, when Google couldn't decide which shade of blue would generate the maximum clicks on its search results page, Marissa Mayer – then vice-president of search products and user experience – got her team to test 41 shades of blue to find out which one would receive the most clicks. For the world's most popular search engine, where a slight drop in conversion rate could translate to millions of lost dollars, experimenting with every little change that impacts conversions (clicks, in this case) seems justified.

By Filip Kachnic Karlsson



Sook

Physical retailing by the hour

Sook is a company based in Cambridge, UK, which is taking over empty retail spaces and making them available for as little as £30/\$39/€33 per hour. The innovative business model makes prime retail spaces, such as on London's Oxford Street, accessible to anyone looking for flash events or pop-ups. The adaptable space can also be used for fitness classes like yoga or anything else that requires a prime location at a fraction of the usual costs. Each venue includes the use of Sook's digital canvas (in-store screens) and the company will provide data on visitor behaviour. Sook also helps its customer to trade, using temporary trading licences.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Traditional landlord tenancy agreements are obsolete. Companies today need to be much more agile and what Sook has created allows companies to test the market, build relationships and enjoy a prime location that feels like their own, even if it is just for one hour.

UK sites include Cambridge, South Kensington and Oxford Street, London.

<https://www.sook.space/>





Turning objects into companies that you can buy shares in

Rally is a liquid financial marketplace for buying and selling equity in ultra-rare assets, in the same way you buy and sell stocks. Rally wants to make investing in ideas, emotions and communities safe, easy and accessible.

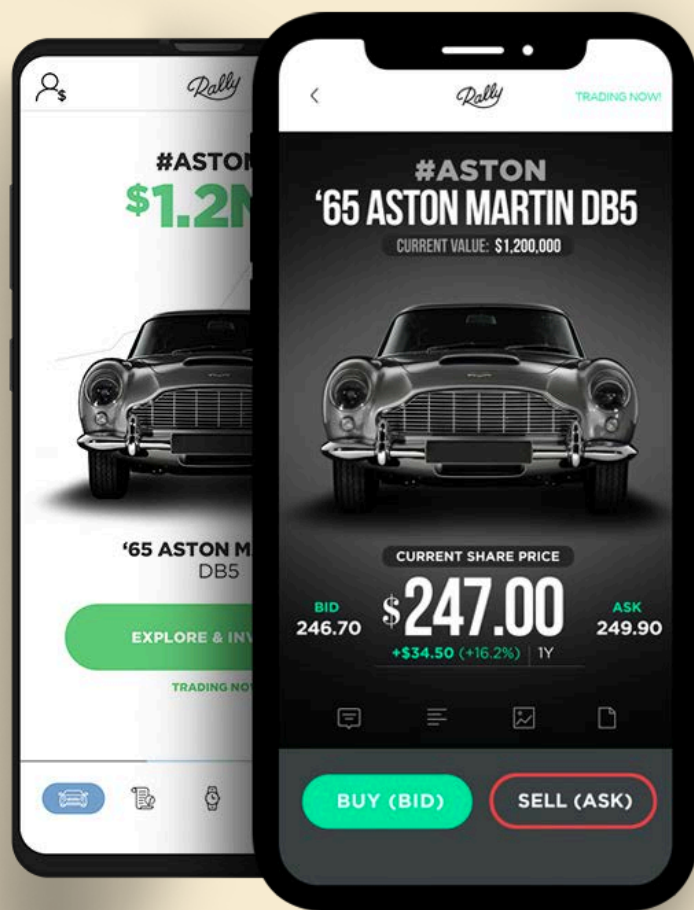
<https://rallyrd.com/>



How it works

Rally has been able to quickly standardise processes through pioneering the consumer-facing A+ regulatory process and removing the confusion and intimidation associated with standard financial tools. Once the company targets an asset, based on a stringent set of requirements and a data-backed checklist, it acquires the collectible item (sometimes via consignment agreement with an owner, at other times through purchase).

An offering circular is then prepared and submitted to the SEC. Once approved, the company runs an Initial Offering, which is essentially a small market-cap IPO, available without accreditation. Currently, Rally goes from targeting an asset to running an SEC-qualified Initial Offering in around 14 days. Shares typically begin to trade via bid/ask, 90 days post-IPO on Rally's proprietary platform – all through registered broker-dealers.



DAY 1
Asset Targeted,
Offering Memo Prepared



SEC
QUALIFICATION



2000-10000 SHARES
READY FOR SALE

DAY 14
Initial Offering
Run + Fully Subscribed In-App



People are people, not numbers

By Vanessa Matthews

We all have to do things differently, even if it looks like we can 'return'. But we can't. The reality of our present is not the same conditions as before. We are living within different circumstances and this means if we want to learn lessons, to grow, we need to appreciate the discomforts of doing things differently. And since nothing is static, we live in constant motion; we will always be in a different setting each day. The fundamental need of people and businesses is survival, i.e. resilience to changes. But resilience does not mean stopping, preventing or avoiding changes. It means the ability to live with changes. It is not a reactionary exercise, but an active practice of presence. With the current conditions, how could the experience economy do it differently? Include the environment. Make it accessible. Work with others. Have integrity. People are people, not numbers.





tjänstledighet

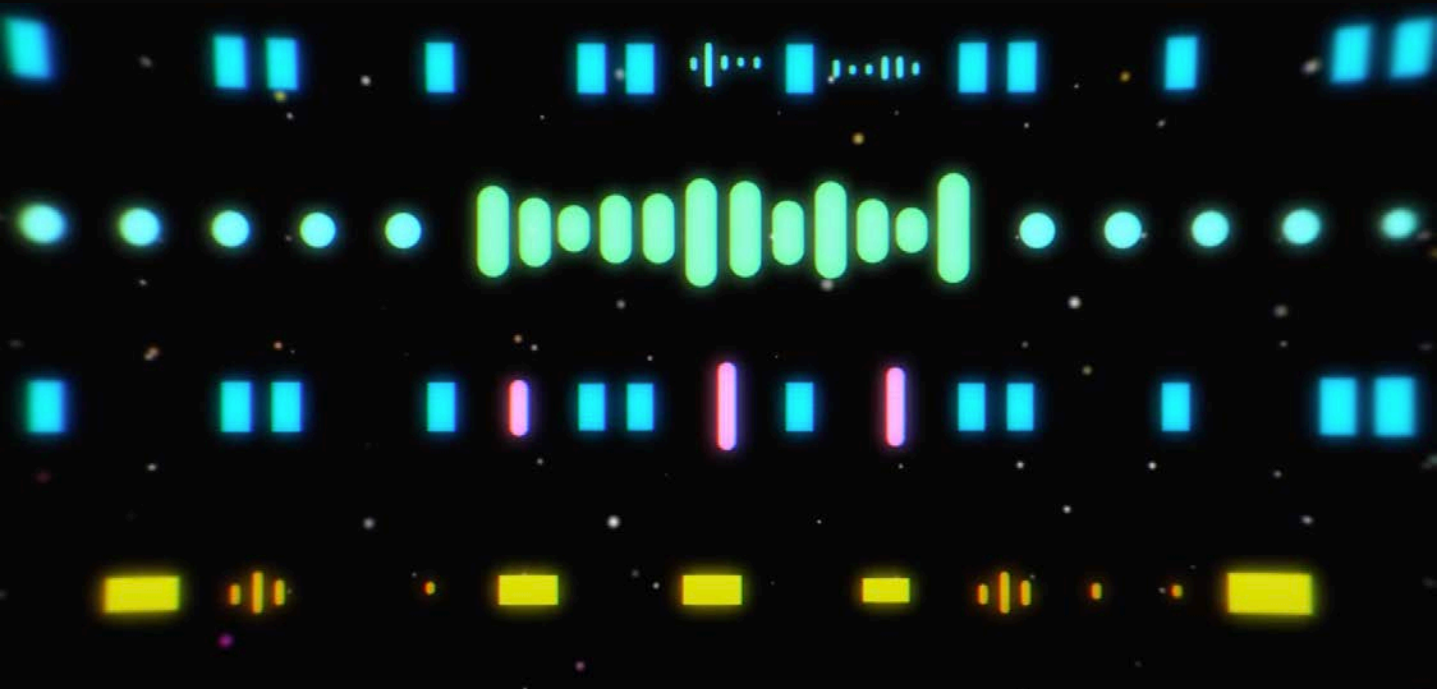
In Sweden, employees can take six months off work to try to establish their own business, but they'll retain employee status and job security should things fail.



Genetic algorithms

Different cultures are naturally attuned to certain areas: Germans are renowned for their engineering, African-Americans for their acute rhythmic ear, and the French for their refined palates. If these innate human traits were algorithms, imagine if we could hack our genetic algorithms to sharpen our abilities. In the future, instead of teaching a standardised curriculum, schools could measure your innate algorithm and personalise a curriculum to enhance and fine tune students' own genetic algorithms.

Gerard Crichlow



Pop-up

Experimental culture

Now that retail has reopened and many clients have returned from furlough, it's clear that there isn't an appetite to invest in retail for the long term, at least until we know more about the changing landscape. Instead, we're hearing brands talking much more about testing experimental ideas within focused communities that go beyond traditional pop-up shops.

More interestingly, we're hearing about much more aggressive pop-up strategies from direct-to-consumer and digital-first brands.

Check out a few pop-ups that caught our attention on the pages that follow this.

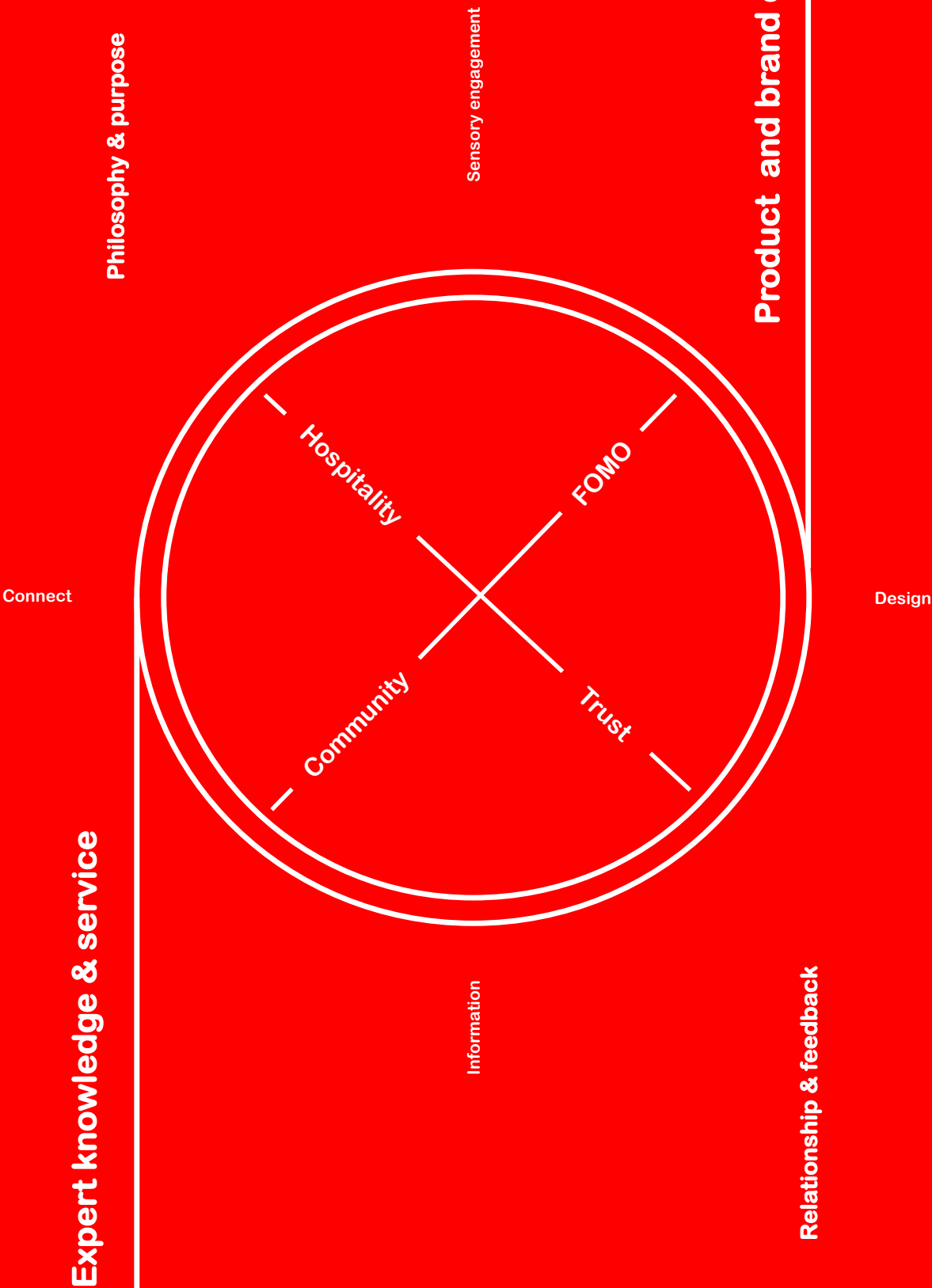
WHY THIS MATTERS

- Testing concepts and offering experiences with audiences is a key reason to go physical.
- Once the preserve of major cities, pop-ups will no longer be exclusive to flagship stores.
- As online sales channels have been established, pop-ups are not about generating immediate sales.
- Smart brands are thinking about blitz sales in order to shift old stock at RRP prices, but they'll be doing it with fun and FOMO in mind.
- DTC and digital-first brands understand they must dial up what they can't do online, such as by engaging all of the senses, gaining feedback and building relationships.
- Nowhere is off bounds: think apartment blocks, parks and trucks.
- Physical pop-ups will be part of an integrated 'phygital' experience.



Ingredients

To bake the perfect pop-up



Expert knowledge & service

Relationship & feedback



Jentle Home

Gentle Monster x Jennie of Blackpink pop-up, Seoul

Jentle Home is fantasy world, dreamt in collaboration with K-pop star Jennie of Blackpink. Check out her interview with Gentle Monster on the next page.



Gentle Monster x Jennie of Blackpink interview

Jentle Home was inspired by doll houses. Do you have any particular memories?

Jentle Home is just like what I dreamt of as a young girl! I remember playing with my dolls, and I would have lots of brothers and sisters, and all the pets I could imagine in my imaginary world. I would give names to my new family and choose rooms for them inside my beautiful doll house.

What does 'home' mean to you?

I love relaxing at home. When I'm on tour or in other countries, I would sometimes close my eyes, wishing that when I open them again, I would be back home. Home is where I can be 100% myself, a place I can truly be at peace.

Can you tell us more about the Jentle Home pop-up?

Jentle Home is a place straight out of a fairy tale. I was excited about working on this collaboration, but I looked forward to working on the pop-up the most. I partnered with Gentle Monster early on for the pop-up, and I think it turned out perfect! I spent the most time on the Pink Fountain Room – I wanted a dressing room that would transition into a dreamland with a garden and lots of teddy bears. It was first called the Secret Room, but we decided to focus more on the room's character and ultimately changed the name. I really hope you can all come to experience it!

How was your experience working with Hugo Comte?

The shoot in London was so fun. I was excited to work with Hugo because I was already familiar with his work. Hugo and Gentle Monster's concept of the clones was so unique I couldn't wait to see the results. I think they came out amazing and I'm so happy everyone else loved it as well!

Do you have any BTS episodes with Hugo?

We weren't able to bring in real clones... so we had to plan every angle and pose so the photos could perfectly come together into one. This was a challenge for Hugo since he had to constantly adjust the lighting and angles. It was a long and intense session, but Hugo was absolutely amazing, and I had a great time.

Choose a personal favourite from this collaboration – and how would you style it?

Daisy has a nostalgic meaning to me, since it looks a lot like the frames my parents used to wear when I was young. Style Daisy with either the Sunlight or Moonlight, along with some vintage accessories, and I'm ready to go!

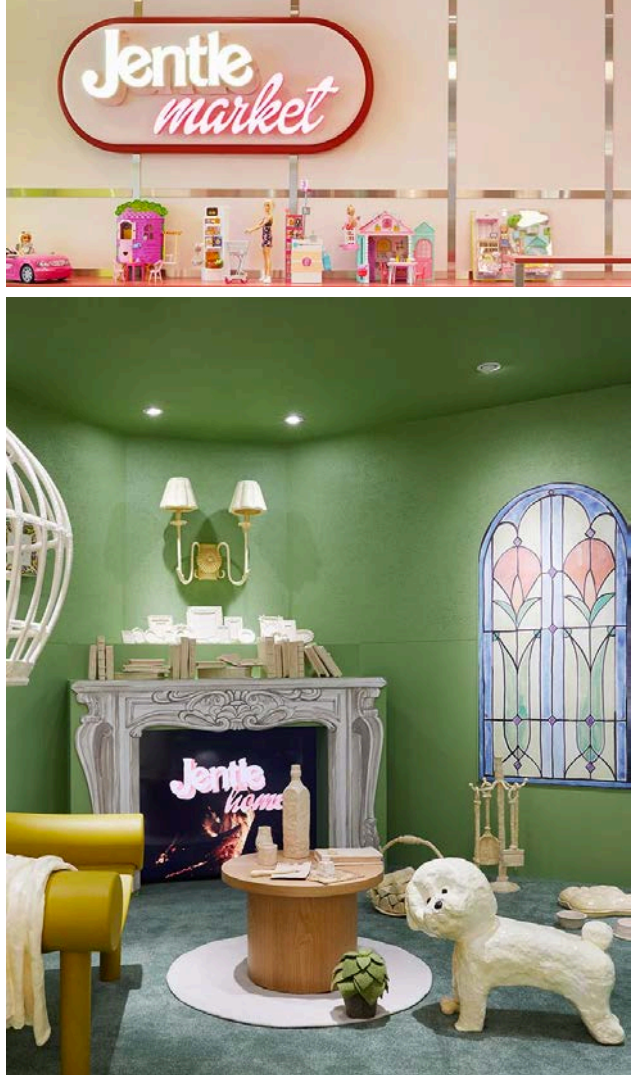
Do you have any future plans with Gentle Monster?

There is so much I'm curious about and wanted to do! Knowing Gentle Monster and their ability to build dreams, it's impossible to set any limits. I believe that experience is among the few that truly grows your mind and spirit. I hope these projects help to inspire me as a musician, and I also hope I can be some inspiration for others to go seek new things as well!

Read the full interview [here](#).

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE A VR TOUR OF THE HOUSE](#)





Gentle Monster x Kris Wu

The Roller pop-up, Shanghai

Located at Gentle Monster's flagship store on Huaihai Zhong Lu in Shanghai, The Roller pop-up space is an eclectic mash-up of a car-parking complex and artist hideaway. It features elements that reflect Wu's penchant for fast cars and a lavish lifestyle. Upon entering the premises, shoppers are greeted by two large monitors, which feature the eyewear collection. In between, as if a modern sculpture, a futuristic car is on display. A roller skating rink also forms a playful element of the setting. The two-month pop-up opened on 18 July.





Hermès

Silk pop-up, Via Condotti, Rome

Housed inside Hermès' boutique on Via Condotti, this beautiful space celebrates the brand's iconic range of silk scarves. The use of bold colour, architectural display elements and a museum-like experience is a world away from creating just another retail experience. The space opened on 27 July.





Burberry x WeChat

Burberry's new social retail store

Burberry's new store in Shenzhen, China, is designed to seamlessly merge physical and digital touchpoints. The company aims to do this by using WeChat as the bridge between the digital and physical world. Guests who navigate their way around the store are encouraged to gamify their visit in a playful way, allowing them to discover hidden information, features and experiences.

Guests can interface with a living sculpture installed in the store's window, which is inspired by the mirrored runway from the brand's 2020 show.

On a product level, garment tags feature QR codes that unlock information, such as product details, styling tips and runway clips. Scanning the tags generates social currency, which is paid out in various ways, including avatars of cute animals.

Interactivity runs right through the store, from its 10 rooms, to its changing rooms and even at Thomas's Café, where social currency can be used to unlock a hidden menu. The experience is also accessible from home on the WeChat platform.

"We can't think anymore about e-commerce and physical stores as two separate channels. It really is about connecting and joining the dots, between social and physical. I think it's going to be a lot of fun."

Marco Gobetti, CEO, Burberry

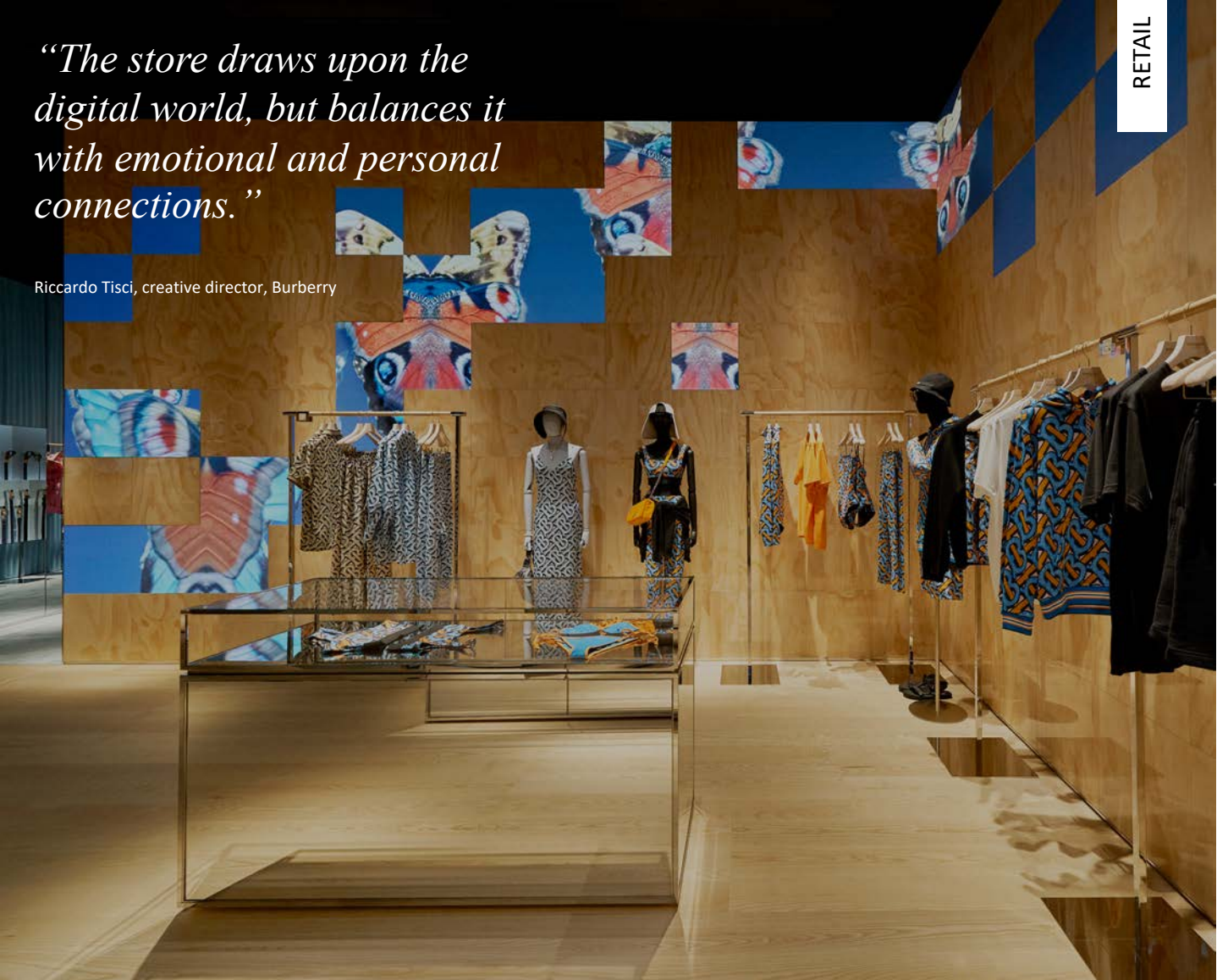
Image: Burberry



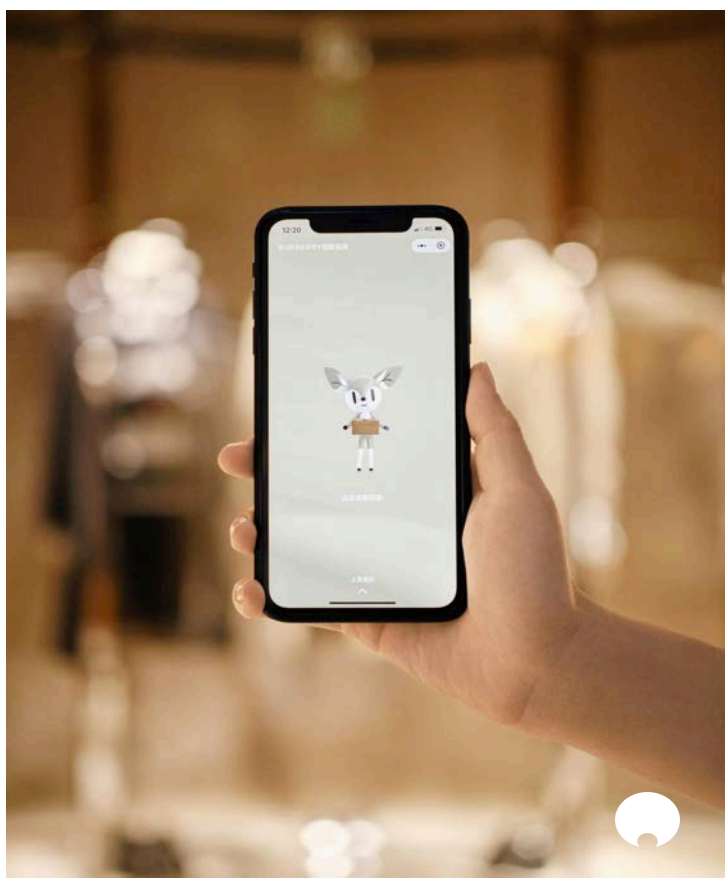
“The store draws upon the digital world, but balances it with emotional and personal connections.”

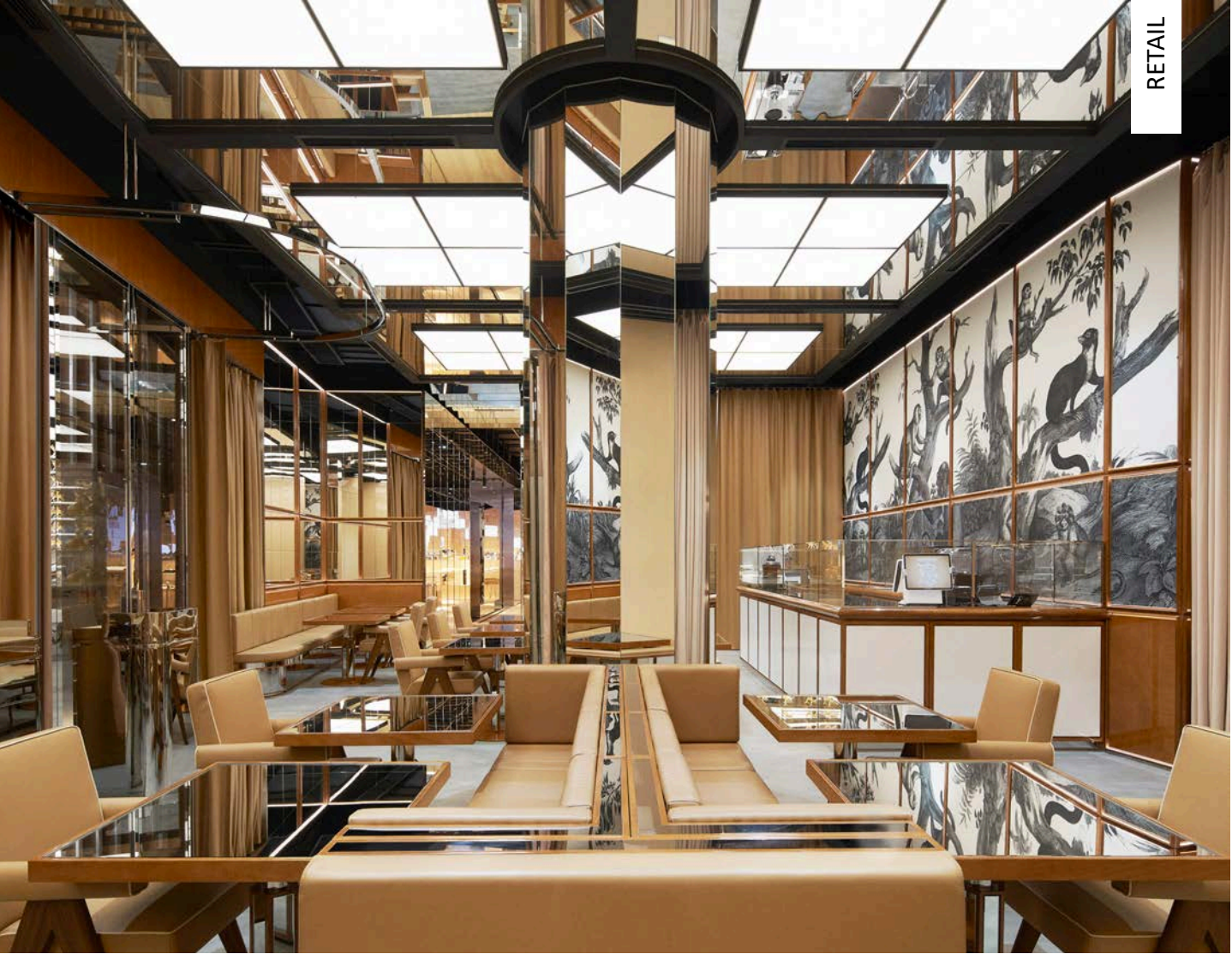
Riccardo Tisci, creative director, Burberry

RETAIL



Images: Burberry





IKEA

Vacation in a box

With IKEA's take-away vacations, you'll now be able to recreate experiences from the world's top destinations from the comfort of your home, Paris, Cappadocia (Turkey), Tokyo, the Maldives and more.

IKEA's Vacation in a box contains home furnishing products and other surprises to help set the scene and mood, including recipes, soundtracks and suggested movies. All you need to add is a little imagination. Checkout the campaign designed by Ogilvy Dubai [here](#).

شروق الشمس في
كابادوكيا
Sunrise in Cappadocia
5:00 am



Sunrise in Cappadocia



Sunrise in Cappadocia

Can't make it to Turkey this year? We'll bring it to you. We've got everything you need to recreate a tranquil morning in Cappadocia with home furnishing accessories, recipes, music, movies and even some activities to try at home. It's everything you need to set the scene, just add a little imagination.

[Download booklet >](#)



UPPHETTA
Coffee/tea maker, 0.4 l
Dhs 29



TEMPERERAD
Coffee measure and clip
Dhs 15



VÄRDERA
Coffee cup and saucer, 20 cl
Dhs 9



IKEA 365+
Espresso cup and saucer, 6 cl
Dhs 9



BLOMNING



MASKERING

36%



MASKERING

36%



TILLSTÄLLNING



700,000 Heures

A wandering hotel

700,000 Heures (the number of hours the average human lives for), does not have a permanent address, the "hotel" moves location every six months. For the most demanding and well travelled globetrotters, traditional luxuries are not necessary, for these travellers they're looking for unique, tailored experiences that are not accessible through traditional channels.

The concept was founded by Frenchman Thierry Teyssier whose team of experts curate the experience at the destination, selecting incredible accommodations (often sites in apartment blocks) and designing tailor-made itineraries. The business uses a membership model that starts from



Forget Zoom. Meeting inside a computer game is far more fun

Zoom doom! Is anyone else suffering with it? Don't get me wrong, it's lovely to see people's faces and to connect virtually when real meetings aren't possible. And I don't mind one-on-one meetings. But for me, virtual group meetings are painful, especially when there are so many people online and you have tiny thumbnails of everyone in attendance. You then have people who fire private messages throughout the meeting, rendering participation useless because your attention simply isn't there!

When I recently discovered a client had just bought an Oculus virtual-reality (VR) headset, I suggested we meet in a virtual world. He's based in Stockholm, but we picked a Japanese bar on VRChat. Headsets on, avatars selected, we found each other in the bar, which turned out not to be the best place for a meeting because it was impossible to have a private chat, with others wanting to interrupt and say hi. So we moved to an empty forest with birds tweeting, falling leaves and the sound of a gentle breeze. We spoke about so many topics, including personal branding, the evolving nature of computing platforms, working out in VR and virtual teambuilding inside games. I was delighted to read in The New York Times recently that we were not alone in looking for alternate spaces to meet. Lewis Smithingham, an advertising executive in Brooklyn, emailed a prospective client who works in investment banking with the subject "Let's go rob a bank in Grand Theft Auto". The intriguing meeting request caught the client's attention. They met and raced around the streets of LA, causing havoc. Though Smithingham met his client inside a game, this experience was the modern equivalent of a boozy lunch.

I'm intrigued to see how younger generations will use all of the tools at their disposal to communicate and do business. It's safe to say the future will be far more interesting than squinting at thumbnails of people wasting time on Zoom calls.



Connecting with the Indian audience.

To the world, the harmonious coexistence of India's diversity is an intriguing study. It exemplifies the country's willingness to accept the new while preserving the old. Perceptions continue to change with the landscape, culture and new generations, brands decoding this complex psyche are able to succeed.

THE ONLINE PLATFORM

Brands that have robust online platforms of their own ([Pepperfry](#), [Ajio](#)) or have access to them via a joint venture ([Amazon](#), [Myntra](#)) are swiftly tapping young consumers with disposable income. With escalating smartphone ownership in deeper pockets of the country, most brands are able to reach consumers without having to spend on brick-and-mortar formats.

THE S-COMMERCE WAVE

Almost everyone follows at least one brand on social media. Global and homegrown brands are able to connect with potential customers through feeds and interactions. S-commerce is emerging as a great tool to engage with the vernacular audience (non-English speaking), who consume social content. PayPal's Beyond Networking: Social Commerce as a Driver of Digital Payments report stated that 79% of online merchants in India use social commerce to widen their customer base.

THE GLOBAL FORUM

Choices influenced by Global trends are shaping the urban lifestyle. Be it an immersive product interaction at the Apple store, a test run in the Asics store (with feedback on posture and foot landing pattern) or accessing the omnichannel service at Zara (in case of a size unavailability), global brands have successfully penetrated the inner circle of the millennial shoppers.



EXPERIENCE BEFORE EXPENSE

Brands are constantly exploring ways to increase product interaction with their audiences. Beauty brand Mac offers make-up programmes for a fee redeemable at the store. Lifestyle brands Lenskart and CaratLane offer home trials, booked online at no additional cost. Jewellery brand Tanishq introduced a karat-meter in stores and invited customers to walk in with any piece of jewellery, to measure its purity at no additional cost.

THE DELIVERY NETWORK

To ensure swift gratification, brands are striving to reduce the gap from click to collect, with time-sensitive delivery. Amazon is leading by example. Besides its robust network, it uses bicycle and motorbike couriers for last-mile deliveries in both urban and rural communities. Also, easy returns ensure doubt-free buying for value-conscious Indians. Various partner brands have leveraged this to reach audiences in impervious locations.

LEVERAGING MOM-AND-POP STORES

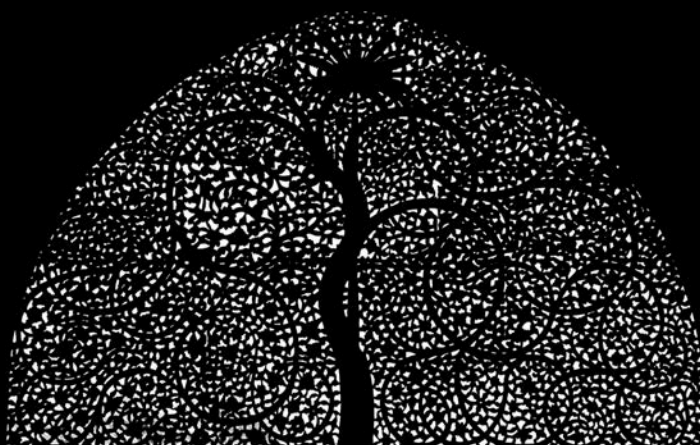
One group that is extremely relevant in India includes consumers with purchasing power, who are unable to reach branded merchandise, due to living in a remote location and not having internet access. Amazon onboarded mom-and-pop stores in these areas, enabling customers to shop online using the store owner's internet connection. This arrangement neatly circumvents the problem of conducting e-commerce in remote locations.

GOING 'GLOCAL'

Several brands have changed hats to make them relevant to the Indian context. Starbucks made its cafes look Indian, McDonald's (known for beef burgers) introduced vegetarian recipes, and Ikea ushered in an auto-rickshaw fleet for deliveries. Thanks to these nuances, Indians have warmed up to global brands, irrespective of their age, location or beliefs.

With the world changing its ways at present, a brand's relationship with its audience will depend on need, reach and relevance.

By Sohini Dey



PERCEPTION

Should we address people by their first name?

Age, experience and culture all leave some people happier being addressed as “Mr”, “Mrs”, or “Ms”. So, when it comes to addressing someone, simply asking “How would you like to be addressed?” or saying “I didn’t catch your name” is a simple way to show a level of respect, while building immediate rapport. After all, addressing someone by name involves the sweetest words anyone can utter (outside intimate scenarios).



Announcement

This year has been tough for many of us, but it's also been incredibly enlightening in so many ways – especially for me, spiritually and professionally. Readers will know I'm deeply curious on so many levels. This is often expressed in the wide-ranging topics covered in this magazine. In order to provide even more value to my subscribers and to attract new fans to Elluminate, we're launching something new and exciting.

This year, I formalised plans to launch a new venture: my own store, but not a store format you'll be familiar with. The Elluminate Me Virtual Department Store (working title) will exist online, with the occasional pop-up. We won't sell anything directly, but we'll help you make a purchase. We'll respect your data and we'll never violate your digital privacy. Also, we won't be taking any affiliate link commissions. Your trust in us will be the most valuable thing.

Our department store will unearth new things for you and let you digitally experience them online – from digital fashion, to virtual make-up, to access to online tutorials and so much more. We're going to celebrate ethical and sustainable brands, we'll give amazing start-ups a space where they can tell their origin story and we'll share what the best brands in the world are up to. Most importantly, we hope you'll fall in love with us.

My team of curators have already started work. You may not see much materialise immediately, but watch this space.



Steven Kainth



Closing thought

A baby is not educated from birth — it simply observes the world and makes sense by touching, smelling and hearing the sounds in its environment. Its first words are magical for any parent. But these words are not taught. They're developed through pure experience.



ABOUT US

Elluminate helps the best brands in the world with business strategy. Founded in 2017, our virtual business focuses on consumer marketing and strategy across all communication touchpoints, from digital and online, to retail and events. Our overall objective is to think about innovative creative design concepts and business models that help our clients to be successful.

This free magazine forms part of our research and insights function. It's used to inform our commercial business strategy and creative design work. No part of this magazine is sponsored, nor is it biased towards any sector or marketing channel.

Some of our brand experiences, clients and subscribers include



Mercedes-Benz

MICHAEL KORS



OMEGA



PRADA



SONY

SONOS



Customised reports are available at request and cover the following subjects:

AI | AR | Audio | Digital, Social & Media | Experiential Marketing | Fashion Tech | Health & Wellness | MR | Materials | Mobility | RR | Retail
Robotics | Sports Tech | Smart Cities | Transportation | Wearable Technology | Workspaces | VR

The logo for 'elluminate' features the word in a lowercase, sans-serif font. A small white circle is positioned above the 'i' in 'minate', acting as a dot and a design element.

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