

The colour of things to come

Our design columnist **CYRIL ZAMMIT** delves into history to learn the lessons of the past



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ABDULLAH TOUK

To say that 2023 was intense would be an understatement. My year was a tapestry of discoveries, new encounters, and places, yet with a growing apprehension about securing a stable future for not just myself, as I count myself fortunate if not blessed, but for the world around me.

Precisely a year ago, I was writing about the trends to come for 2023 and one of them was the mood of rebellion. Regrettably, recent months have validated that prediction, with analysts foreseeing its continuation into 2024. Foresight Factory goes as far as forecasting ‘an era of reckoning,’ where consumers and brands confront the challenging reality we’re all immersed in.

During COP 28 in Dubai, the message was resounding: Sacrifices must be made to achieve net-zero targets. We must support endangered populations and address their urgent health needs. Moreover, it’s time to reimagine humanity’s role as A.I. assumes more responsibilities. Balancing trust in the digital world with a rekindling of human skills and emotions will pave the way for a technological revolution to be seen as an opportunity rather than a threat.

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The tragedies at our doorstep have evoked deep emotions—confusion, sadness, despair, even hatred—and these wounds, physical and mental, will endure. Particularly among the younger generations, who strive for a more inclusive and sustainable world.

Though their environment feels suffocating, they are prepared to take action, pushing for necessary measures, even if they entail tough decisions. Hopefully, in 2024, genuine intimacy won’t be a luxury but a mandate.

As always, design and fashion mirror the world’s evolution. During Dubai Design Week, Li Edelkoort, a prominent trend forecaster, emphasized this: Next year, these fields will embrace a protective stance, fostering a warm, sheltering environment while endeavouring to minimize our needs and demands across the board. Almost as if, instinctively, we have shifted into survival mode.

In terms of colours, while Pantone’s colour of the year hasn’t been announced as I write this, indications point to deep hues spanning from blues to earthy tones. Expect nature-inspired palettes dominating our walls, interiors, and wardrobes, with deep forest greens reigning supreme.

Our intricate world demands a paradoxical matrix for survival—a blend of pursuing quality (a symbol of safety) while prioritizing value over price. Stress relief methods become crucial, while acknowledging that leveraging big data is inevitable to tailor our ideal or near-perfect homes.

With a staggering 300 percent increase in organizations planning to use A.I. for customer support and a 260 percent increase in utilizing A.I. for image editing (source: Hootsuite), a recurring principle surfaces in press and trend forecasts—a principle that I’ve always upheld: Embrace authenticity.

Ultimately, perhaps echoing Abraham Lincoln’s sentiment that “the most reliable way to predict the future is to create it,” I extend my wishes for a ‘Guten Rutsch!’—a German expression for a happy new year—a metaphorical leap into the coming year. 🍀

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