

Digital detox or digital reboot?

Esquire's resident design expert CYRIL ZAMMIT goes deep to reset ahead of the busy season



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So that was summer, huh? Another lightning fast trio of months packed with more work and meetings than ever before. I want to say it was 'strangely busy,' but I think the idea of a 'quiet summer' has now become a thing of the past.

That said, I did manage to take some time off at the beginning of July where for a couple of weeks my 16-year-old god son and I travelled to America's Pacific Northwest. The surrounding wilderness made it easy to default into a digital detox mode, however, it was also interesting to talk to and catch up with the thoughts and latest vocabulary of a GenZ-er — IYKYK. Perhaps it was more a digital reboot, than a detox.

I like the idea of a digital reboot. It is a way that we can check back in with things to see that we are up to date on culture and the wider read around us. It is very easy to be swept away with the pace of life, and so plugging back in can be an exercise in allowing us to question what we know, and take for granted. Earlier this year, *Fortune* magazine claimed that the next era of work will be about 'skills, not pedigree' —if that's the case, adaptability and curiosity are likely to be key tools for us going forward. Detox and reboot.

Speaking of the future, I am currently part of a team preparing an international conference next year in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and in doing so have been reading reports and research about not only A.I., but what comes after it—the next big thing. Overall, one of the priorities over the next half-decade is education and how, by using big (and small) data and deep learning, we can evolve some quite rigid methods of education into transformative and tailored ones.

While, design continues to be an agent of good for our lives (and the planet) in helping challenge and change the perceptions of what we take as granted, this month will not see me doing my part to reduce my carbon footprint due to an endless list of design events coming up. From Seoul to Detroit, Shanghai to Helsinki, Krakow to Valencia, London to Singapore, without forgetting Vienna or even Tallinn, the schedule of design weeks, trade shows, and fairs is back from its own form of detox.

In the region, global interior designers will flock to INDEX in Riyadh, but what continued to be evident over the summer was the continuing presence Middle East design is having across the world. Beside the Arab Design Award at the Arab World Institute in Paris, the second edition of the AIUla Design Award was presented by the Royal Commission for AIUla during Paris Design Week. More than 400 entries from around the world were submitted and the ten finalists (including the five winners) were exhibited in the French capital. As one of the judges it is always a pleasure to reward talent from Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, seeing a refreshing line-up of products created for retail. In many ways, it is a further sign of a wider cultural reboot. 🌐

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ABDULLAH TOUK

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