

# A polarising summer

Esquire's resident design expert  
**Cyril Zammit** on the growing  
 paradox of choice



**W**hat a summer that was! I'm sure I speak for most of us when saying it was one of the most polarising summers ever experienced. While half of Europe and North Africa was on fire, I travelled to France and The Netherlands to live through constant downpours and flood risks. Countries ping ponged between Green, Amber and Red on various sets of travel lists, and most of us never quite understood just where and how long we would have to isolate for, if at all. But we were finally free to travel, and travel we did.

We all know the world has changed, and it is fascinating to witness the ways in which that has taken affect in different places. While people in Europe roamed about (mainly without masks), the open-air food markets were stacked with local products, organic food and people bringing in reusable bags and baskets. It is something that Hanni Rützler, a food expert, has labeled 'Local Exotics' detailing that our time spent at home during lockdowns has made us both expand our appetite for adventure, but also reinforce our desire to support our community.

The paradoxical summer continued with a different type of flooding. The flooding of my inbox. This month sees the kick-off of an unprecedented calendar of design weeks, events, fairs and festivals.

It's great that the design industry is eager to make up for lost time, but things are becoming a little hectic. Suddenly, if you are a design professional, you'll likely need to pack your bags for a round trip that could easily involve stops in Helsinki, Paris, Milan, London, Copenhagen, Vienna, Stockholm, Seoul, Shanghai, Boston and Basel—I am sure that I am

missing a few more. Needless to say things don't let up much in October or November either.

On one hand, it is great that things are happening again. On the other, it is worrying that despite the almost daily alert of a brand new, unique, hot-off-the-press and instagramable piece of furniture being launched—almost nothing has caught my attention.

At this point, I think it is important to stress that the industry need to adopt the same consciousness that its consumers are showing. Yes, new local markets are (re) opening, but fewer professionals are able to cross the globe to in order to discover the works. People are consciously choosing to spend more time indoors, but the industry wants us to travel more. The news reports daily on either flooding or fire, and yet we are being encouraged to fly again.

Recently, the writer and podcaster, David Perell spoke about the paradox created by an over-abundance of information, "By telling us to care about everything, the news leads to apathy instead of action" he tweeted. I believe he is right and that our world is becoming more of a paradox every day, considering that we have more choices than ever before, but still chose to revel in our nostalgia for a simpler time. It begs the question, how can we care about anything, if we are now expected to care about everything? 🤖

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