

# The Stabiliser, the Settler and the New Optimist

Esquire's design expert  
**CYRIL ZAMMIT** on the  
permanent reinvention of self



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So here we are, a month into 2022. A year that has already been unsurprisingly full of surprises. Just when we thought that we'd come to terms with a post-Covid world and were hoping for an old fashioned, smooth transition between years, plans were changed... again.

As *The Economist* recently published: "we must now integrate and embrace that our lives are part of a predictable unpredictability". It seems that we are entering a cycle of permanent reinvention of self. It is a challenging (and energy consuming) exercise but perhaps this is our best chance to evolve if we don't want to become mammoths wandering aimlessly towards a cliff's edge without looking where we're putting our feet.

Over the holidays I re-read *King Lear*, and there is a quote from Edgar (Act Four, Scene 1—for those taking notes) which stuck with me: "And worse I may be yet. The worst is not. So long as we can say "This is the worst". Beside this lyrical and metaphysical quote, what 2022 is offering us is a nice combo of new digital experiences and good old fashioned human relationships.

Change is good, or so we are often told. Maybe our survival requires us to be more chameleon-like, being able to adapt to a challenging environment by changing our armour—and in some cases this can be quite literal. Last month, for example, at the annual Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, BMW introduced its new 'Flow Electric SUV' concept, a vehicle whose exterior can turn from white to grey and back again at the press of a button. The company explained that it is in response to the rising demand of personalisation, and it confirms the end of standardisation that I mentioned in a recent column for *Esquire*.

A colour-changing vehicle may quell our desire to buy a new car every six-months but, wider than that, the move supports a case for the evolution of consumerism with the hope that 2022 will finally see us learning to be more considered with our consumption habits especially when it comes to saving our planet.

On that note, I always enjoy reading the WGSN Insight report forecasting the Future Consumer. For its 2022 edition, we learn that 29 billion connected devices will be on by the end of the year, three times the human population (source Ericsson's 2019 Internet of Things forecast). The report identifies four consumer sentiments: Fear, Desynchronised Society, Equitable Resilience and Radical Optimism to be integrated by three consumer profiles: The Stabilisers, The Settlers and The New Optimists.

If the Stabilisers want simplified retail experiences and reassuring relationship with brands, the Settlers prefer to root in their community and develop an era of localism. The New Optimists embrace joy which is for sure a brave choice in this uncertain world.

Mine is undoubtedly the latter. I choose Optimism. But the big question I pose to you, dear reader, is which profile best fits you? 🤔

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