

Unapologetic rebel

For design columnist **CYRIL ZAMMIT** the year ahead will be a rebellious one

By Cyril Zammit



BEING SELF-RELIANT HAS BEEN ONE OF THE KEY LEARNINGS OF THE PAST YEARS. SO WHAT WILL 2023 BRING?

What a year we've just had. The world finally disconnected from endless video calls and virtual meetings. We reunited with our friends, family and strangers thanks to a health crisis that is now seemingly in the rear view mirror. Something in the air has changed—and not just due to global warming—we are witnessing a collective growing concern for our immediate and mid-term future.

Last month, the first edition of 'Prototypes for Humanity' was held in Dubai. It was an example of an innovative project that tries to lead us to be less reliant on materials from the other side of the planet. Being self-reliant has been one of the key learnings of the past two years. But what will 2023 bring?

For the past two years, I have turned into a clairvoyant—not by looking into a crystal ball, but by checking what the trend forecasters are telling us.

According to Foresight Factory, consumers will enter 2023 in a rebellious mood. After months of uncertainty, people want to take control and create the lives and rules they see for themselves. The company spoke of four main trends: 'Unapologetically Me', 'Now or Never', 'Moveable Morality', and 'Going Incognito'. All four show a desire to escape from self-imposed restraints and adopt a certain type of hedonism.

Adding a little colour to this idea (literally), Pantone has announced that lavender will continue to be an important colour for 2023, with 'Digital Lavender' following on from 'Veri Peri'—a violet-infused blue—in 2022. It is rare that a colour remains on trend over two years, but Digital Lavender perfectly reflects the consumer behaviours predicted above: it is neutral, positive, optimistic, and creates a sense of stability and tranquillity.

When it comes to interiors, the year will bid farewell to cold wall-to-wall marble, herringbone tiles and colourful plaster walls and—at long last!—maximalism. Instead, our homes will see an adoption of lighter wood tones, white and grey monochromatic colour schemes in rooms full of arches and curves.

Naturally, the sustainability of our home interiors is becoming an important feature—with an increasing interest in investing in furniture that will last, alongside some key vintage items too. Similar to fashion, fast furniture is associated to waste and an increasingly undesirable footprint. After rediscovering how to live indoors for the past two years, we became used to seeing our homes as a safety net, and want to turn them into a sanctuary with elements from the natural world. It makes me happy that hand-crafted sourcing is becoming trendy again. I wish you could see my smile as I wrote that.

Finally, the online world seems to be showing signs of weaknesses. Beyond Twitter's ongoing meltdown and the downturn in tech stocks, many observers believe that both the internet and social media are reaching a tipping point. In the Middle East, daily online time has fallen by 20 minutes since 2021—even with younger audiences.

So there is hope that going into 2023, seeing is not exactly believing. Will we finally start making the virtual a reality? As Nelson Mandela once said: 'May your choices reflect your hopes, and not your fears.' 🍷

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