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**LIFE-CHANGING
DESIGN
TRENDS**

Trends are what allow us to design with purpose.



Introduction

Radical change brings opportunity. This past year has brought us great transformations, ones that'll change the world as we know it. Each event and movement offers a chance to envision the world of design in a new light. Trends are what allow us to design with purpose.

With dramatic changes hovering international economic, social, and environmental welfare, our everyday lives as we know it was bound to change. The domino effect of our modern world has caused significant, impactful trends: hyper technology adoption, the rise of young voices, and the sustainability of humanity. These radical changes have brought our attention to new places, driving a growing need for things like happiness, peace and good health.

These longings apply directly into the creativity used in product packaging, digital content, and more. The vacant longings and desires open a window of opportunity where companies can actively participate in the world's ever-changing course. By making subtle, but significant changes to approaches, strategies, and design, we are better able to cater to the people around us.

In order to pull together an accurate report, we consulted experts and referenced our most reliable resources. From this quest, we've narrowed down the three most relevant movements for the upcoming year 2022. Each concept covers three micro movements, which we predict will have the greatest impact on all areas of design. By staying aware of these trends, one can better direct their efforts to becoming more relatable, desirable, and modern. After all, this is 2022 we're talking about.

A brighter, more creative future lies ahead...

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1. The Future, Now

Things like the metaverse, cryptocurrency, NFTs and Web 3.0 are all soon to become parts of everyday life. The digitalization of the world as we know it is a continuous journey, offering the chance to take creativity to the next level—in and out of the metaverse. Say hello to the future.



2. The Escape to Better Days

The COVID-19 pandemic drove a number of circumstances to their all time high: economic crisis, global income disparity, and the influence of Gen Z. The escape to better days continues as people seek happiness again—whether that means looking back, looking in, or looking forward.



3. Founding a Conscious Utopia

The days of silent support are over. Modern times call for vocalized change, where brands and consumers are held accountable for their absence in important matters. By being more mindful within the design space, brands can communicate their support in a more meaningful way.

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The Future, Now

Boundless Digitalization | Virtual Immersion | Hyper Connectivity

When it comes to all things virtual reality, non-fungible tokens (NFT) and Web 3.0, blockchain technology is to credit for their existence. Blockchain was first outlined in 1991, increasingly gaining attention with its relation to cryptocurrency. As the world of digital currency has grown since then, these coins have begun to offer much more than making passive income with Bitcoin. NFTs as an industry has become a solid use case of cryptocurrency in several ways, allowing companies and creators to monetize digital goods on the blockchain network. The digitalization of art and physical goods will grow to saturate all parts of our society—and it's not just big enterprises.

While the concept seems fairly far-fetched for most companies to adopt, Gartner forecasts that by 2023, over 50% of companies will use low-code platforms (LCAP) to operate at least part of their infrastructure. LCAPs create more automation of various operations so that even non-programmers are able to create Internet applications, reducing the quantity of work required to create them. Not only does this mean that more companies can now implement virtual experiences, but it'll also be cheaper. With Web 3.0 coming fast, it's important for non-coders to be able to take part in the movement—like designers leveraging NFTs.

Virtual mainstreaming is among the number one megatrend pushing the use cases of the blockchain, as people increasingly regard the virtual world as the physical world. With more trust in things like virtual reality and autonomous vehicles like Tesla, machine intelligence is en route to becoming collaborators in the creative processes of these new technologies. And as more people adopt the blockchain in parts of their operations, its emergence may replace aspects of cloud computing and other foundational aspects of what we deem as the standard.



The Future, Now

Boundless Digitization

While the initial concept of NFTs emerged almost a decade ago, the capabilities of modern NFTs has evolved tremendously since then, now being traded with the popular cryptocurrency, Ethereum, along with many others. From early projects like Rare Pepes and Cyryptopunks in 2017, marketplaces have grown by pushing the limits on what is now considered valuable and at times, creative. It remains to be seen where exactly NFTs and the blockchain will go from here, but design can benefit from playing a part in its boundless development from here on out.

Boundless Digitization

How to Use It:

- Generative art
- Personification
- Holographic design
- GIF animations
- Mashup art

Since its early stages, the NFT ecosystem has expanded tremendously, as seen with the largest NFT marketplace, OpenSea, jumping from \$1.1 million in transactions per month to an all-time high of \$3.4 billion in August 2021 alone. Throughout its development, NFTs themselves have seen an evolution, expanding the definition of what the term “valuable” means. What gives the digital art space so much potential is the way its ultimately limitless. This is especially seen with 12-year old digital artist, Nya Hayes, of the project Long Neckie Ladies, proving that just about anyone can benefit from the monetization of digitalization.

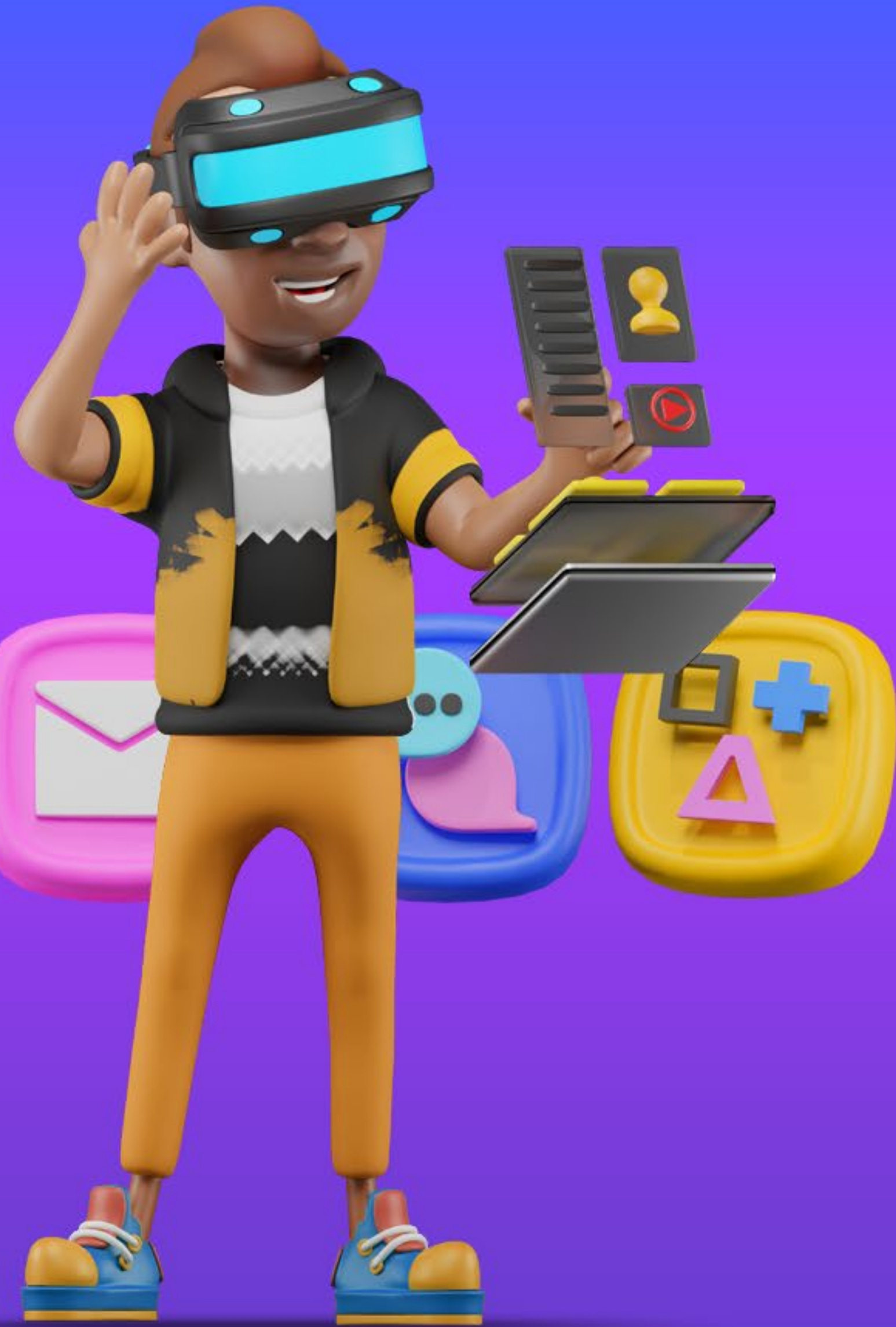
While majority of NFTs in the past have been randomly generated without much thought, the future of the medium is undergoing a major change. Fine art gallery owner, Rudolf Budja, has released NFT replicas of works by famous artist, Andy Warhol, with plans to expand further. The purpose behind the initiative is to distribute value among the masses, where once they would have to pay millions for a piece of physical art. On the other hand, NFTs are entering the sustainable space, as Warren Buffett’s granddaughter, Nicole Buffett, backs OceanDrop, a project aimed to donate all profits to ocean conservation efforts. Nonetheless, where there’s the ability to raise limitless capital, there certainly is a way and a reason to get involved.



Nyla Hayes, Long Neckie Ladies

Did You Know?

The flexibility of NFTs means almost anything can be tokenized—domain names, in-game assets, tweets, songs, videos, etc.



The Future, Now

Virtual Immersion

Talking about what the metaverse is, is a little like asking what the Internet was in the 1970s. Surprisingly enough, the term was founded by an author in 1992 in a science fiction novel, later becoming a real concept we've experienced with games like Fortnite and Roblox. But the metaverse isn't one specific type of technology, but rather a broad shift in how we interact with it. This method of interaction uses all sorts of modern technology like augmented reality, virtual reality, 3D holographs, videos, and more to pull together an unworldly experience we'll all soon be a part of one way or another.

Virtual Immersion

How to Use It:

- Sensory design
- Dreamlike styles
- Perspective design
- Neumorphism
- Panorama

There's a good reason why Facebook changed its name to Meta, as many companies have begun to operate with the future in mind. Things like premium content on Discord, virtual worlds like Minecraft, the democratization of eCommerce with Shopify, and the adoption of remote productivity like Zoom—are all steps towards a metaverse. The development of these platforms will only become mainstream, as machine learning increasingly grows to make creating these platforms easier, as seen with Promethean AI setting up virtual landscapes. As major companies like Microsoft make transitions into virtual workplaces in 2022, you can expect many others to follow suit.

Even if that's not a catalyst to mainstream adoption, the miniaturization of VR headsets will only push these experiences closer to our bodies. The rise of cybernetics has also helped advance technology to further interpret human gestures, biometrics, and psychological intentions, making it easier for these experiences to take over. Better yet, physical and virtual goods are becoming one and the same. This has been seen with Roblox, who partnered with retailers, Vans and Gucci, where users have the ability to purchase Vans footwear in what's called Vans World, and Gucci accessories in the Gucci Garden. The convergence of the physical and virtual worlds is indeed a social change. The metaverse will not be just a place we go into, but it'll be everywhere around us.



Shahrouz Varshabi

Designity | Founder & CEO

Your virtual presence will be a very important aspect of your life within the next 5 years. What you wear and what you own in VR will be just as important as in real life.

At Designity, we already conduct our meetings in VR, making remote communication much more engaging and effective than Zoom.



The Future, Now

Hyper Connectivity

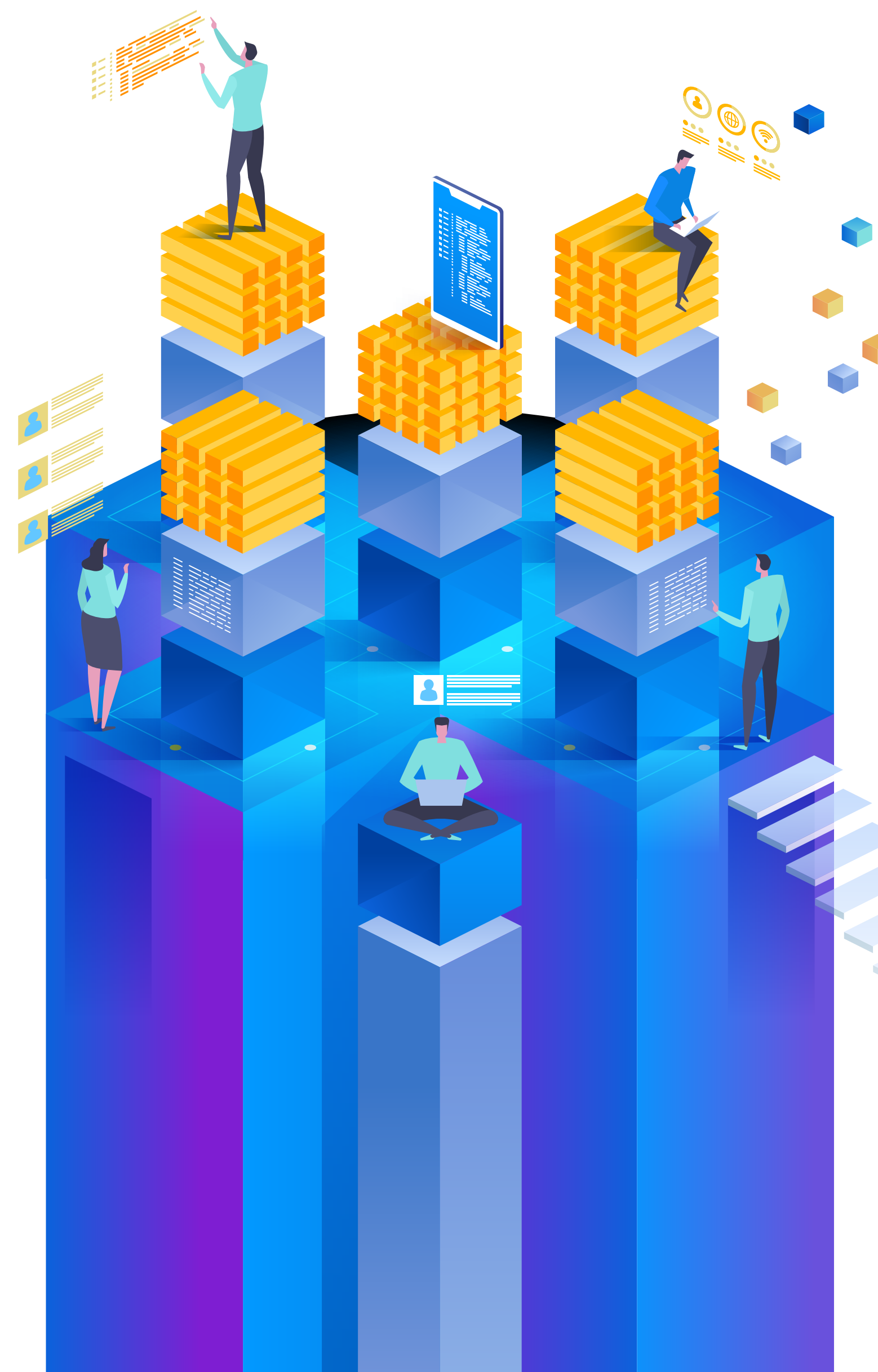
For too long, a few large corporations have dominated the Internet, capitalizing off of users' personal data in exchange for access to their platforms. Web 3.0, however, is a vision of the future of the Internet where people operate on decentralized anonymous platforms, rather than relying on organizations like Facebook. We've watched iterations of the Internet evolve from Web 1.0, where webpages were solely static, to Web 2.0, where we got things like comments, likes, and ads. The next phase of a more secure, transparent Web is here, opening doors to what's now possible in areas like web design and UX & UI design.

How to Use It:

- Interactive visuals
- Futuristic space themes
- 3D elements
- Social cause messaging
- Emotional design

Web 3.0 being a more secure phase of the Internet isn't random. In the past recent months, we've watched numerous organizations fall into data leaks and crashes, affecting just about anyone using their platform. Facebook was a prime example of this problem, who experienced a major data leak of 550+ million people on their Web 2.0 platform they so promise to keep safe. Amazon Web Services, a leading cloud computing platform housing over 9 million websites, underwent multiple crashes, putting down major applications like Netflix, Tinder, McDonalds, and more. Needless to say, the security of something as simple as our websites are technically always at risk as proven with these headlines.

Because Web 3.0 platforms are alternatively ran by decentralized autonomous organizations (DAO), we'll likely see a major increase in their adoption as companies begin incorporating blockchain operations and more DAOs are founded. This has already been expedited with Microsoft and Pavilion Hotels & Resorts accepting crypto payments for their transactions, as well as the founding of royal.io, a Web 3.0 platform where users can buy ownership in songs directly from their favorite artists and earn royalties with them. As more and more companies leverage the blockchain integration of the Internet within Web 3.0, design is likely to be tailored to push the movement forward.



Did You Know?

The expansion of Web 3.0 is simultaneous with the expansion of decentralization. This growth can be seen in the total blocked value (TVL) present in them. On January 1, 2021, the TVL of decentralized brokerage Curve was \$1.45 billion, reaching \$16.28 billion in December.



The Escape to Better Days

Youth Nostalgia | Optimistic Futurism | Extreme Euphoria

As consumers found themselves enclosed within their homes during the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of them turned to their childhood comfort foods—which according to OnePoll, 41% of 2,000 American pollers claimed that the familiar foods brought them happiness in uncertain times. So much so that even 67% of them said they'd rather give up social media than give up their childhood comfort food. The reasoning behind this longing for familiar comfort food is simple: it offers a sense of nostalgia.

This nostalgic emotional pull won't be restricted to the food and beverage industry much longer, as the tactic will likely venture into other sectors to be leveraged in design and marketing. Gen Z, in particular, has extended the trend to platforms like TikTok, where the hashtag #2014aesthetic has reached over 3.1 million views. Ironically, many of the trend's participants were too young to experience 2014, proving that nostalgia isn't a feeling limited to birth year. The generation continues to find joy in past notable trends with content referencing '70s retro art, '80s punk fashion, and '90s polaroid filters.

As post-pandemic effects begin to settle into place, consumers are left to make the most of what is. The escape to better days continues as people seek happiness again—whether that means looking back, looking in, or looking forward.



The Escape to Better Days

Youth Nostalgia

No matter what year you were born in, there are years to look back on. For Gen Z, this means looking back to the 2000s and recreating what they believe the decade would feel like. For others, this means looking back to the '90s and beyond—both bringing a comforting sense of nostalgia. Regardless of what decade your youth took place in, the emotional pull is a relatable feeling we can all agree on. The memories of an imaginative or experienced past can help make the heavier times feel all that much lighter.

With Gen Z leading this trend via TikTok, expect more and more brands to follow suit moving into 2022. From digital to print design, youth nostalgia will play an important part in the design tactics many industries will use to capitalize on emotional triggers. The first industry to leverage the trend was the fashion industry, introducing '90s inspired apparel and complimentary marketing tactics to hook consumers throughout the past year. This need for comfort won't see an end anytime soon, though, pushing more sectors beyond fashion to introduce the new, fun approach to their content. With fashion getting a head start on this opportunity, you can expect a variety of industries to do the same.

How to Use It:

- Grainy filters
- Retro typefaces
- 90's prints
- Neon colors
- Geometric shapes



Did You Know?

Nostalgia has the ability to induce positive decision-making by influencing people to want to replicate the nostalgic memory or emotion in the present.



The Escape to Better Days

Optimistic Futurism

Let's face it, the future of technology and robots isn't all that glamorous. In fact, with rising scares in security and reliability of such advancements—the futuristic version of our world has a growing reputation of everything but euphoria. However, with unsettling times at the current forefront, many consumers are ready for what's next, as long as it's better. Optimistic futurism encompasses a version of the future we all long for. Only this time around, it's purely imaginative and its only purpose is providing comfort and joy as we wait for the future to come.

Optimistic Futurism

How to Use It:

- Vivid colors
- Programming typefaces
- Retro references
- Cyberpunk styles
- Neo noire

A great driver of optimistic futurism can be found within the Gen Z community. The generational battle between “Gen Me vs. Gen We” is one direct representation of how optimistic futurism is becoming increasingly relevant. “Gen Me” refers to those within the Gen Z generation who value the quality of their own life over the collective. “Gen We” on the other hand, is the complete opposite—favoring the wellbeing and future of the collective as a whole.

This has been transparent with countless Gen Z activists like Greta Thunberg and Amanda Gorman, who believe that we together can make a difference. The days of settling for less are over, as more and more people of the Gen We group join in paving a path to a brighter, more optimistic future—even if that means the way to getting there is loud and extreme. Design holds the power to harness this expedition and make it all seem possible.



Melissa Showers

Designity | Creative Director

'The Power of Positive Thinking' by Norman Peale is a book that changed my life in difficult times. Now, I see Gen Z as a light shining bright in dark seasons, breaking free from the shackles of conformity—leading with unabashed positivity, and a thirst for change. Liberation in Gen Z design is apparent, blasting on repeat how "different" is better.

A new revolution of design unfolds, as this generation breaks out creatively with the optimistic futurism we all crave.



The Escape to Better Days

Extreme Euphoria

Finding joy in the present moment looks different for everyone, as does escaping it all together. With the rise of things like cannabis and adaptogens, escapism is slowly becoming the new present moment. However, escapism doesn't necessarily mean escaping anything at all, but finding mediums that enable euphoric experiences. Providing such outlets can help boost mood and incite positivity—something the world is known to need more of. This modern use of euphoric elements is beyond what we've been used to, embracing a version that's just as radical as it is necessary.

Extreme Euphoria

How to Use It:

- Vibrant duotones
- Surrealism
- Fun typefaces
- Mixed media
- Distortion



Extrême euphoria has been seen across many industries—from the launch of niche beverage company, Kin Euphorics, to the HBO series, “Euphoria.” While Kin was founded in 2017 and “Euphoria” was aired in 2019, the popular look isn't going away anytime soon. Supermodel, Bella Hadid, was just named the official cofounder of Kin Euphorics in September of 2021. The well-known influencer approached the partnership with one thing in mind: making happiness more accessible—something her 48.2 million fans on Instagram just so happen to wish for too.

On the flip side, fans of “Euphoria” have started a series of trends inspired by the show back in 2019, awaiting the release of season 2. Since then, the fashion and beauty industries have taken to lead on implementing euphoric references in product launches and runway looks. With season 2 of “Euphoria” airing in early 2022 and Hadid adding to Kin’s influence, you can count on extreme euphoria not leaving the scene.



Becca Little
Designity | Creative

I'm excited to continue to incorporate extreme euphoria into my designs in 2022. The vibrant colors create an otherworldly, dreamlike aesthetic that's sure to elevate the look of your brand and catch the eye of your consumers.



Founding a Conscious Utopia

Inclusive Representation | Mindful Accessibility | Design Activism

The days of silent support are over. Modern times call for vocalized change, where brands and consumers are held accountable for their absence in important matters. Gen Z, in particular, has expedited several movements: brand transparency, diversity and inclusion, climate action, and more. With 41% of Gen Z identifying as gender-neutral and 48% of 6-21 year-olds in the US belonging to racial or ethnic minority groups, it's safe to say this trend isn't much of a trend—it's the future.

With a global spending power of \$143 billion, it's important that brands prioritize and support these movements both internally and externally. That's a whole lot of capital looking to be spent on sustainably ethical and transparent goods and services. So much so that 73% of them said they would even pay more for sustainable items—a 10% premium to be exact. But this isn't just an interest of Gen Z either. 75% of US Millennials say that manufacturers should make recycling directions more prominent on packaging so that they too can participate in the sustainability movement.

As both the younger and older generations continue to push for change, the time has come for all to be mindful and vocal. Faking the transition into a conscious utopia won't do, as consumers are now trained to see through the lies set forth by brands over the years. Today calls for significant change—a change that's visible inside and out. And by being more mindful within the design space, brands can communicate their support in a more meaningful, effective way.



Founding a Conscious Utopia

Inclusive Representation

Diversity and inclusion is a world within itself. The push for extensive representation of humanity in all of its facets isn't seeing an end, ever. This includes race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and sexual orientation—just to touch the surface. It's no longer an option to leave anyone out, as we the people represent everything and everyone. The time has come to celebrate our differences and highlighting the one thing we all have in common: being different.

Inclusive Representation

How to Use It:

- Inclusive illustrations
- Gender-neutral colors
- Unisex typefaces
- Minimalist icons
- Diverse photography

Diversity in design has been an ongoing issue for decades. With concerns clouding higher management and leadership, inclusion has become a hot topic for good reasons. Design as an industry has made progress with organizations like Diversity in Design and business certificates that acknowledge the ownership of vast groups of people that deserve to be seen. With this said, there's space for brands to take up and make an impact. This "trend" isn't going away, it's just getting started on marking its territory. Making any movement into the right counts. After all, what is design without diversity? It's the greatest creative advantage for both designers and brands to share and exchange.

#c7c7c7

#d4c8bb

#90b4db



Sitara D.

Designity | Creative Director

Raising two biracial children, I know first hand how deeply meaningful diverse representation is. All visual communication and choices send subliminal, sometimes even obvious messages to consumers, who have a growing awareness thereof. Creatives and brands can't afford to be oblivious to the subliminal messages they send anymore. We all have a responsibility and opportunity to be more intentional with design and how it relates to representation.



Founding a Conscious Utopia

Mindful Accessibility

You can't make strides in diversity and inclusion without keeping accessibility in mind. Making sure more people have access to more things is a growing priority. The challenge here becomes that consumption looks different for everyone. But with advanced tech comes the ability to provide more personalized, mindful options that cater to a wider range of consumers. Whether it's addressing disabilities that impair one's ability to experience design or overall mental wellness, it's important to make design access easier and safer.

Mindful Accessibility

How to Use It:

- UI/UX personalization
- Color psychology
- Minimalism
- Dark mode
- Universal symbols

With only 21% of people believing that the brands they use have the best interests of society in mind, there's a lot of opportunity for improvement. At the turn of the millennium, the web design industry began crafting interfaces for multiple screen sizes, bringing the responsive design capabilities it has today. However, what about the responsiveness of users? Surely the needs of users have changed since then and require much more than responsive screen sizes. With California's ADA compliance law requiring websites to be digitally accessible by 2019—the movement will likely see a spike in other areas.

The good news is this ecosystem is changing at a rapid pace, but requires a mind-shift as to how we think about design and its effects. With CSS evolving and the new era of responsive web design on the horizon, it's only a matter of time before more robust and personalized web experiences become the norm. The popular media query `@prefers-color-scheme` allows users to change the design of an interface to light or dark mode, based on their preference. But what if this was taken further for those with color blindness or anxiety? Where there's a will, there's a way—and there certainly is a need.



Did You Know?

An estimated \$6.9 billion is lost to competitors every year by companies that don't have accessible sites.

#9FC5E8

Blue creates a calm atmosphere

#COBCF7

Yellow can help stimulate appetite

#FFF07C

Purple enhances creativity and spirituality



Founding a Conscious Utopia

Design Activism

Design activism encompasses using creativity as a means of communicating a message in support of a movement. Like our voices, design too can become a powerful medium for communication. With endless possibilities, visuals and text have the ability to impact in limitless ways. This is especially useful when looking to make a statement, spread a message, or simply catch attention. Where in some instances one cannot speak up, they can use their creativity to raise up the volume.

How to Use It:

- Bold typography
- Custom typefaces
- Distinctive symbols
- Plainspoken copy
- Radical illustrations

When it comes to founding a conscious utopia, it's not just about supporting something, it's also just as important to be vocal about it. Certificates of awareness and partnerships with supporting organizations are just one stepping stone into this reimagined future. While not necessarily a trend, design activism has been around forever—over 50 years of prominence dating back to the 1960's surge of social movements.

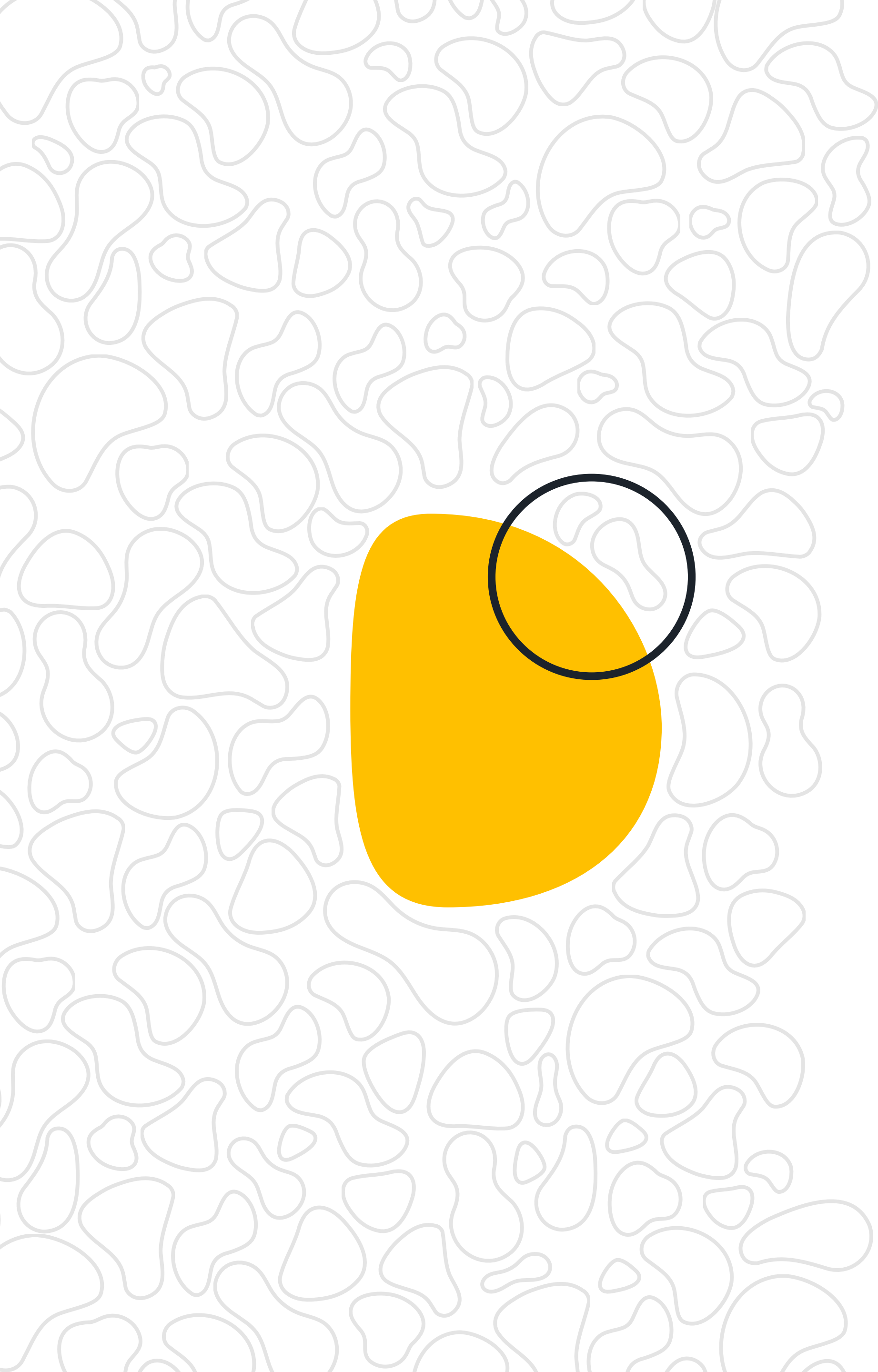
It's been most recently seen within the Black Lives Matter movement, who made the iconic hand gesture a globally-recognized symbol. Similarly, design activism has also been seen in solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community, as well as with gender equality and women's reproductive rights. As protests and movements continue to spread awareness in areas like climate change, gender equality and racial injustice—this means of expression will only become louder.



Pooyan A.

Designity | Creative Director

Employing design as a catalyzer for social transformation is not an unknown story, though, with vast technological opportunities of today, societies can empower themselves to envision a more promising future. Now more than ever, it's time for design to be by the people and for the people.



500+ brands including Oracle, Audible and Marriott trust Designity to revolutionize their creative department. The unmatched combination of limitless collaboration and ingenious innovation enables companies to explore and scale to new horizons.

Designity is your on-demand, virtual creative team with a designated creative director to manage projects and guarantee 5-star quality. A diverse network of vetted, US-based creatives are in their hands to collaborate with and support you in 80+ areas of expertise like website & app design, logo & branding, video production, digital advertising, and more.

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