

**Number Five**



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4. voilà





INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Celebration**  
READING TIME  
**1:35**  
KEYWORDS  
**#WhatNow**  
**#Tchai**  
**#60thAnniversary**  
**#Magazine5**  
**#Foresights**

# WHAT NOW?





In the year where we celebrate our 60th anniversary we launch this fifth issue of our TCHI Magazine, an edition with a theme applicable to the mindset of present times. The world has had to face, and deal with, a big reset. Since then, a lingering common thought is: “What now?”

Although it has been a challenging period, it also got us all back to the drawing board to reinvent our daily lives. We are looking back, learning from our past and letting go of what we don't need, in order to grow towards the future. Therefore, in this TCHI #5 edition, we address the overarching themes of previous magazines. Looking back at how these have developed through time we found that they are even more relevant today than ever...

We have brought in a panel of 22 people from various backgrounds and asked them their perspectives on the themes of: Retail, Green, Brands and Connection (page 29). Besides that, we also delved further into these topics.

We've all come to realise that we live in a time with uncertainties. How does this affect us as humans who are used to planning way ahead (page 23)? How likely is it that we are going to (re)invent things that were once out of the question (page 13 and page 15)?

Plus... brands that collaborate I find even more inspiring today than ever, as they manage to build on each other's strengths and create a unique and positive impact in challenging times (page 45). Alongside this, in business, I also noticed a shift in my personal flow. Where can I become really at one with nature, take a breather, retrieve my balance? I discovered Cabin ANNA had an answer (page 21). Its design opened my eyes to our precious world even more. And we must make sustainability a vast condition of our businesses and lifestyle (page 55).

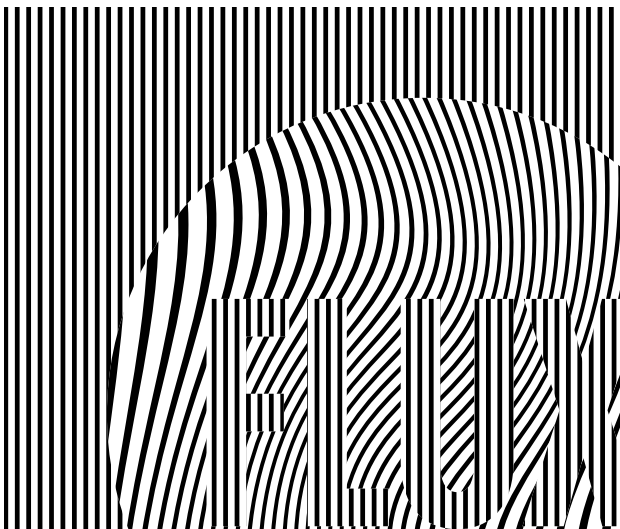
At Tchai, we are creators of physical experiences, executed in the most engaging and enticing way possible. We love to incorporate sustainable practices and with that work towards preserving our precious planet (page 39). We have chosen to make this magazine 'green', using paper from durable solutions, such as: tissue derived from hops, malt, yeast and grapes.

The cherry on the top? Experience the festive cover, celebrating Tchai's anniversary.

Cheers!

Kim Tchai





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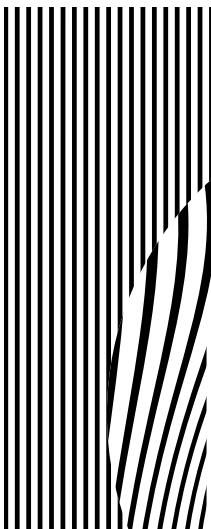
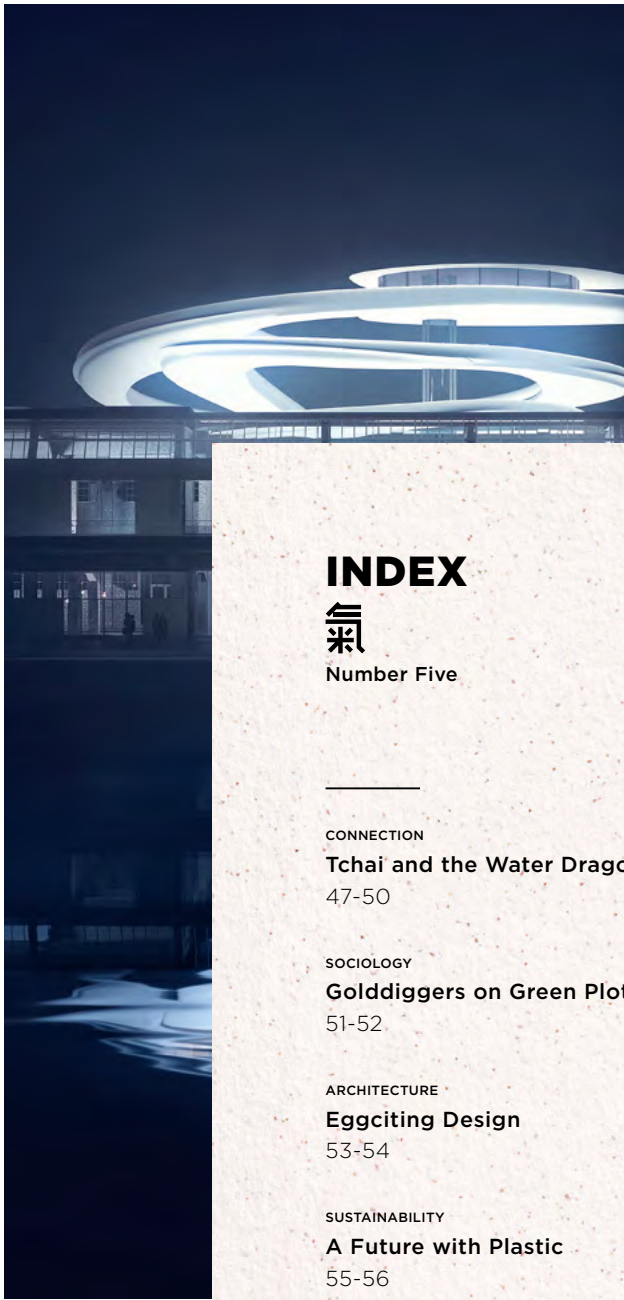
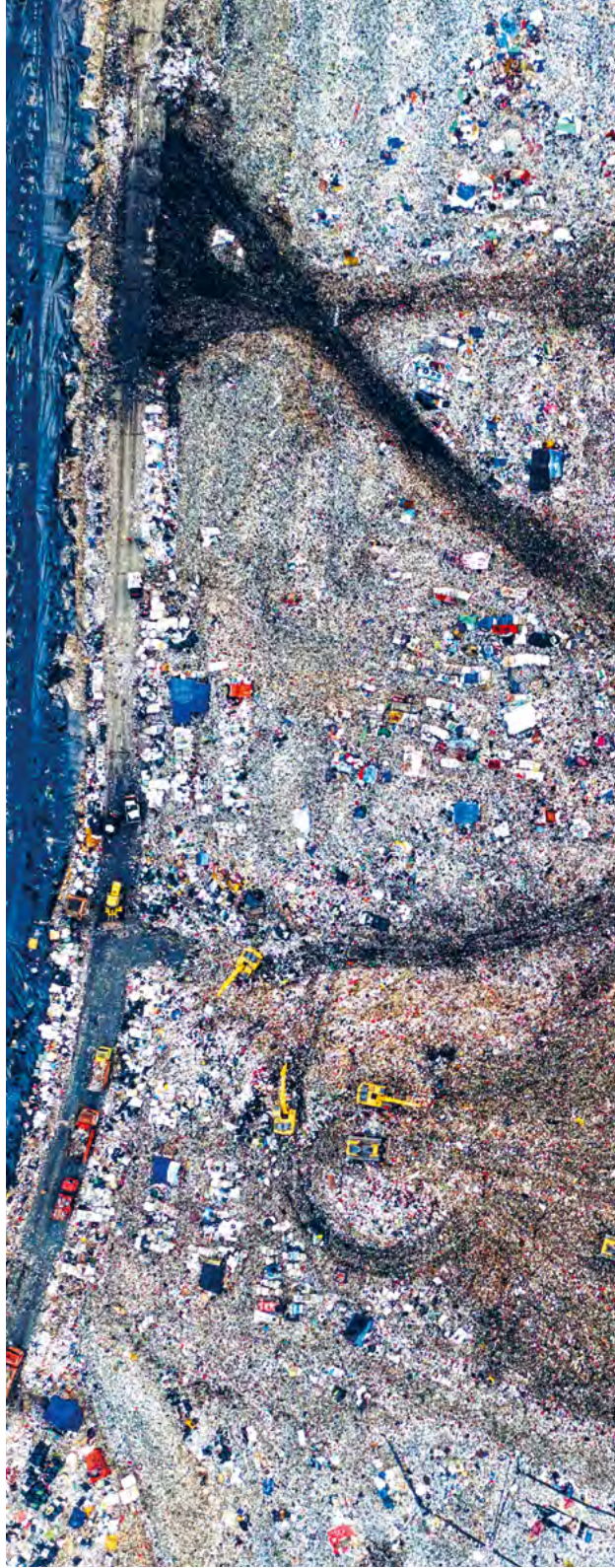
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INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Art**

READING TIME  
**4:19**

KEYWORDS  
**#SioejengTsao**  
**#ChineseRoots**  
**#DoubleIdentity**  
**#WesternisedChineseWomen**

# 双重身份

# DOUBLE IDENTITY

ARTIST SIOEJENG TSAO ABOUT REINVENTING AND RECONCILING HER ROOTS





**Creator of our Tchi visualisation 2021, Amsterdam-born artist and activist Sioejeng Tsao is no stranger to colouring outside the lines: from being the first in her family to pursue a creative career to becoming a voice for marginalised communities. A journey that was sparked by exploring her Chinese roots. Through her art and through her words, she calls on us to open our minds. To make our world a more inclusive place. And to grow —within ourselves and with each other.**

"This reminds me that I am a product of the events, choices and challenges faced by my elders." We are speaking with Sioejeng about *Double Identity*, a dual self-portrait that represents what she calls her double life as a Chinese-Dutch woman. "It started from childhood," she explains. "On the one hand, it's the realisation that you are different somehow. It's speaking a different language at home. It's being the only Asian in the classroom —and everyone pointing that out to you. On the other hand, being raised in a Chinese household means certain things are expected of you, like working in your parents' store, going to Saturday school and definitely no dating-obligations and rules I never saw any of my friends or classmates dealing with." So, how did this affect her sense of cultural identity? "At first, negatively," she

admits. "That's because I began to view my Chinese heritage as something restrictive. So, I rejected it."

In this artwork, the young girl at the bottom is Sioejeng as she sees herself today: the westernised version of a Chinese woman. It is a description she feels applies in both her birth country of the Netherlands and in China, where although she can experience what it is like to be part of a majority, she is equally aware of standing out due to her Dutch upbringing. "The girl in the Adidas sweater represents wearing the western identity and searching for a sense of belonging." Only in recent years has Sioejeng focused that search on what it means to be a Chinese-Dutch person by delving into her family history: "I wanted to know more about my grandparents' reasons for coming to this country. My grandfather arrived in Amsterdam during the Japanese occupation in China, knowing he could not return home. It made me quite emotional realising what that journey meant." She also recognises how it continues to influence the lives of the following generations. Therefore, the woman depicted in traditional dress is also a version of herself: "Her hands are resting on the younger me, as if to say: even if you are struggling with where you're going, or who you are, or who you want to be, know that you are supported by all those who came before you."

IF SOMETHING  
FEELS  
UNCOMFORTABLE,  
THEN IT'S A SIGN  
THAT CHANGE IS  
NECESSARY.  
I WANT TO BE PART  
OF THAT CHANGE.

Nowadays, Sioejeng feels a renewed bond with her Chinese roots, which she considers her defining strength from which she has inherited her ambition, discipline and worldly outlook. In this way, her story is similar to that of our own evolution here at Tchai, whereby we too explored our organisation's cultural heritage and the vision of our founding elders. This is an element Sioejeng has captured in the illustration of our Tchi 2021\*, which, in the bottom left, shows all three generations standing shoulder to shoulder. For us, our exploration has been vital in unlocking a new era of Tchai, growing from display makers to displaying brands —and in connecting our organisation, clients and

people on a deeper, energetic level. An evolution in business culture, if you will, made possible by deciding what to hold onto and what to let go of.

Letting go of stagnant or detrimental cultural ideas is something Sioejeng also passionately advocates: "Culture is not responsible for shaping humankind, humankind is responsible for shaping our culture," she says. "You can still love your culture, but you don't have to agree with everything it promotes. If a culture excludes you, harms you or imposes shame on your identity or sexual orientation, then we must be critical in order to incite change." For Sioejeng, being critical often manifests itself in highly colourful visual work that is able to broach subjects such as gender, racism and female oppression in a way that makes them easier to discuss in the public arena. In this manner, art and activism go hand in hand, as she explains: "For me, art is immensely therapeutic. When it's hard to find the words, art can lighten emotionally charged topics and start a conversation. If something feels uncomfortable, then it's a sign that change is necessary. I want to be part of that change."

Sioejeng's drive for change now not only involves her canvas; in the last few years, we have witnessed her become a prominent voice and





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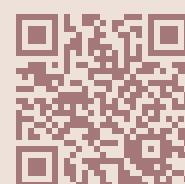
role model. Together with people like Rui Jun Luong and Pete Wu, she was one of the first from the Dutch Asian community to speak out and urge us to take a stand against stereotypes and anti-Asian sentiment, issues that have been magnified during the pandemic. Of this she says: "It's not only about racism

and discrimination against Asians; every form of oppression, whether it affects me directly or not, reveals something flawed within our society and deserves the same attention. How can I ignore injustice towards other people of colour or violence against women, for example?" For this reason, she is using her platform to raise awareness and to teach others how they can be part of the solution too: "If there's nobody to show you that things can be done differently, then you'll never believe that they can be."

And what about her hopes for humankind going forward? "I would like for us to start listening to each other more, to stop making assumptions and, instead, to enter into a respectful discussion. As people, regardless of background, we have more common denominators and more common ground than we often assume. Let's not be selective in who we listen to and whose voices we ignore. Especially the way things are today, it's vital we all keep the conversation going."

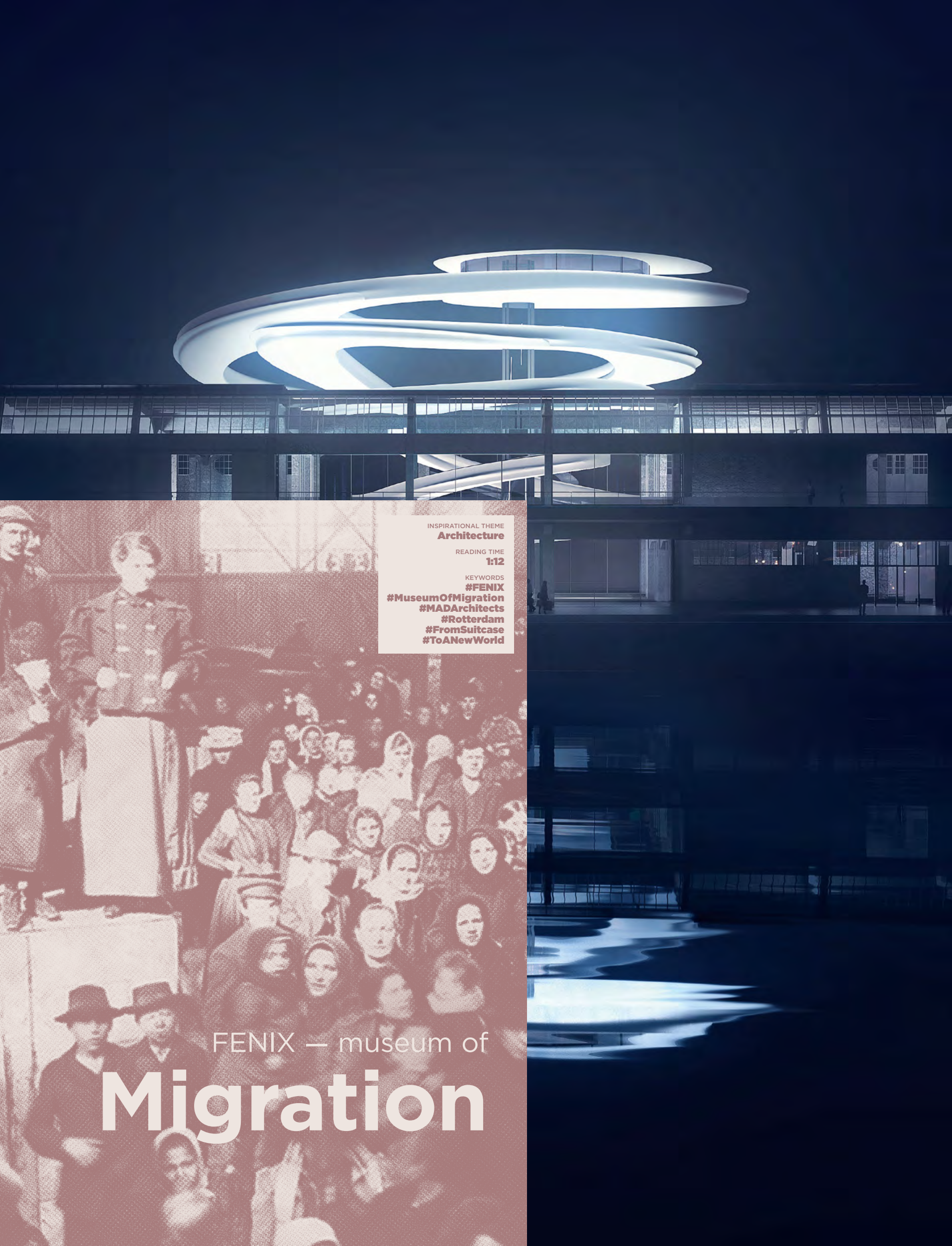
**\*What is Tchi?**

*Our roots lie in China, where Chi is recognised as the life force. At Tchai, Tchi is the flow of energy that enables us to create genuine connections between brands and people. Each year, a different creative mind interprets our Tchi in visual form. Sioejeng Tsao is the creator of our Tchi visualisation in 2021. Find her design via QR:*



苏静蓉  
ABO/2020





INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Architecture**

READING TIME  
**1:12**

KEYWORDS  
**#FENIX**  
**#MuseumOfMigration**  
**#MADAarchitects**  
**#Rotterdam**  
**#FromSuitcase**  
**#ToANewWorld**

FENIX — museum of  
**Migration**





The extensive conversion of the once biggest warehouse in the world in this remarkable public building, is a cultural project by MAD Architects in Europe's largest port city, Rotterdam and was commissioned by the *Droom en Daad Foundation*. The project includes the renovation of the FENIX Warehouse, built in 1923, which is located on the city's Katendrecht Peninsula, an important port of immigration in European history. It's an impressive and complex sculptural work, that invites people to further explore the universal story behind it.

President of the foundation Mr. Wim Pijbes is a leading historian and former general director of Amsterdam's famous Rijksmuseum: "Some people at some point in their lives make the decision —whether it's forced by war, poverty, religious reasons or something else— to put everything they have into one or two suitcases and make a journey to a new world to start all over again. What we want to do is understand and show the emotion."

MAD's architectural renovation of the FENIX warehouse —which has been entwined with the history of Rotterdam, including destruction during World War II, and multiple repairs in the 1940s and 1950s— beautifully connects the characteristic past of Rotterdam with the present.

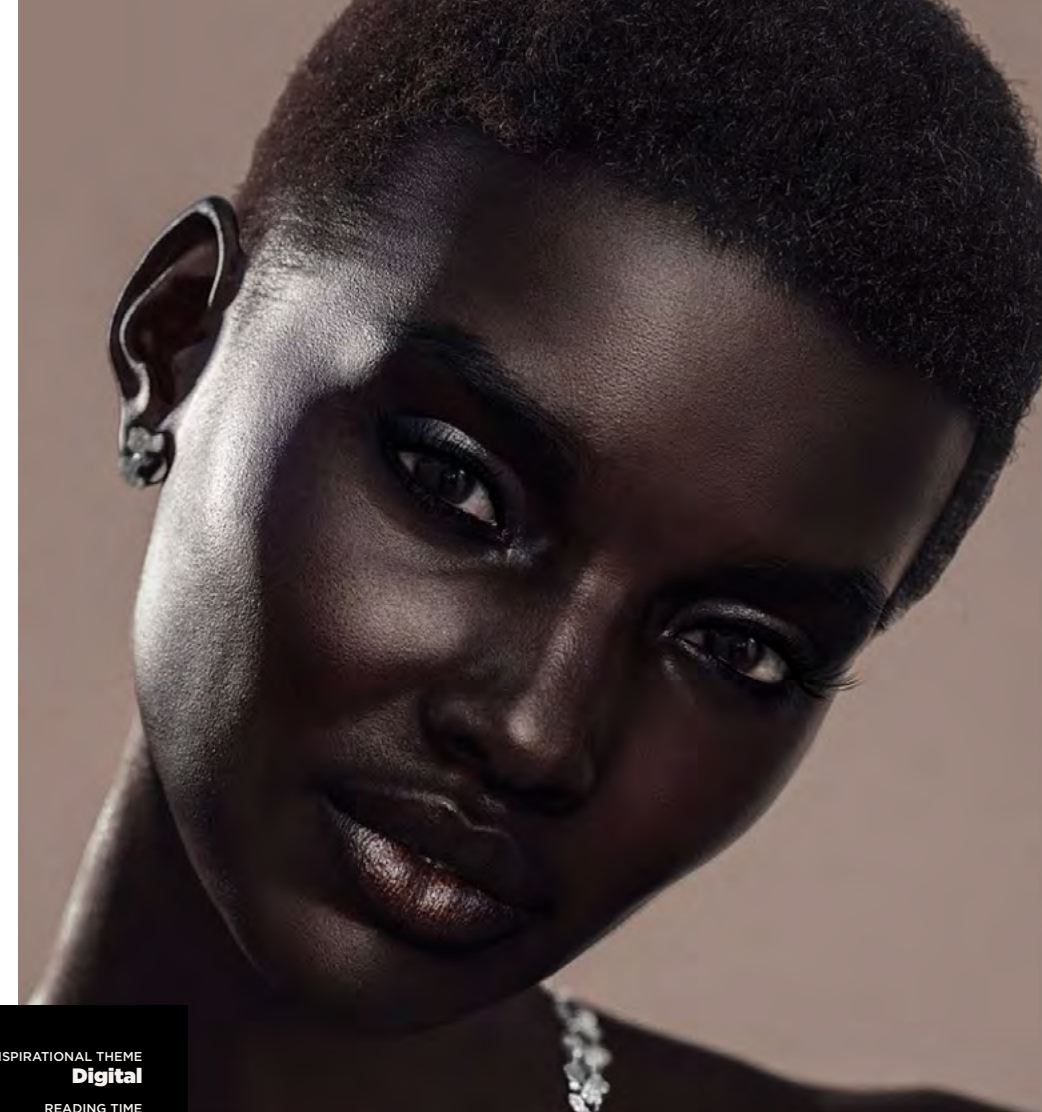
"It signifies the Fenix's witnessing of Europe's history of migration from the port, and symbolises the future of the city," says Ma Yansong, founder of MAD.

What  
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understand  
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emotion

The new design sees two spiral staircases extend from the ground and form an observation deck at the top. Moving through the space with different rhythms, the staircases break down the massive scale of the original warehouse, adding more human-scale and intimate spaces. The stainless steel and wood materials used for the staircases contrast with the warehouse's original concrete and steel materials, while also stimulating the visitor's imagination of boarding a ship.







INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Digital**

READING TIME  
**1:32**

KEYWORDS  
**#Avatar**  
**#DigitalShepherd**  
**#DigitalAmbassador**  
**#Consumer**  
**#Influencer**  
**#FutureFrontier**

THE CONSUMER  
**GOD**





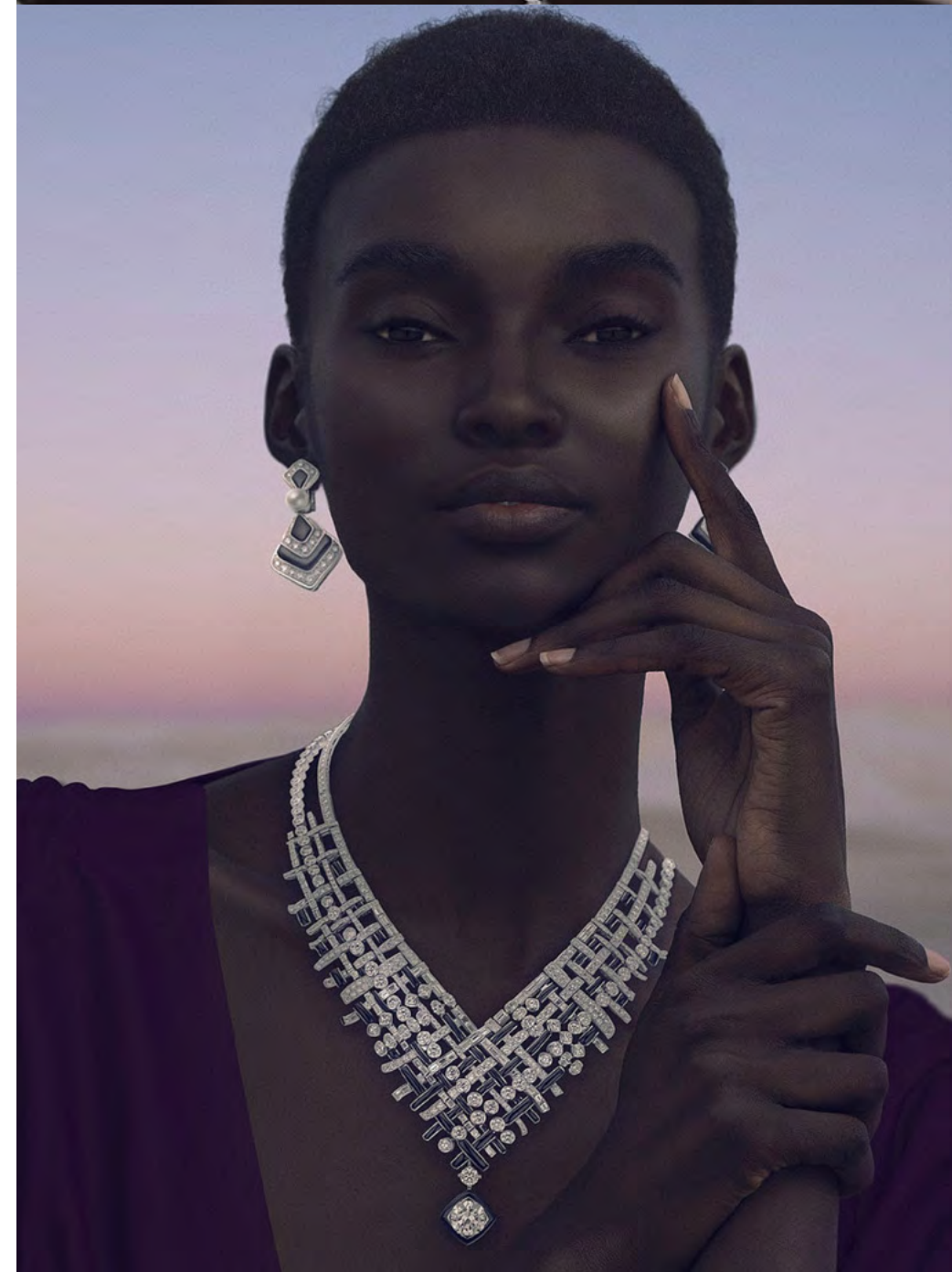


*Just because we crawl increasingly behind our screens, and dive into our digital niches, doesn't mean we don't flock together. We are, and will always be, social beings looking for our own flock. And a flock needs a shepherd. A metaphor for our human behaviour, nicely noted and adopted by religion. But what will happen to us as we turn increasingly secular? Who will guide us in our behaviour as consumers —our most basic identity as humans in our hypercapitalist society?*

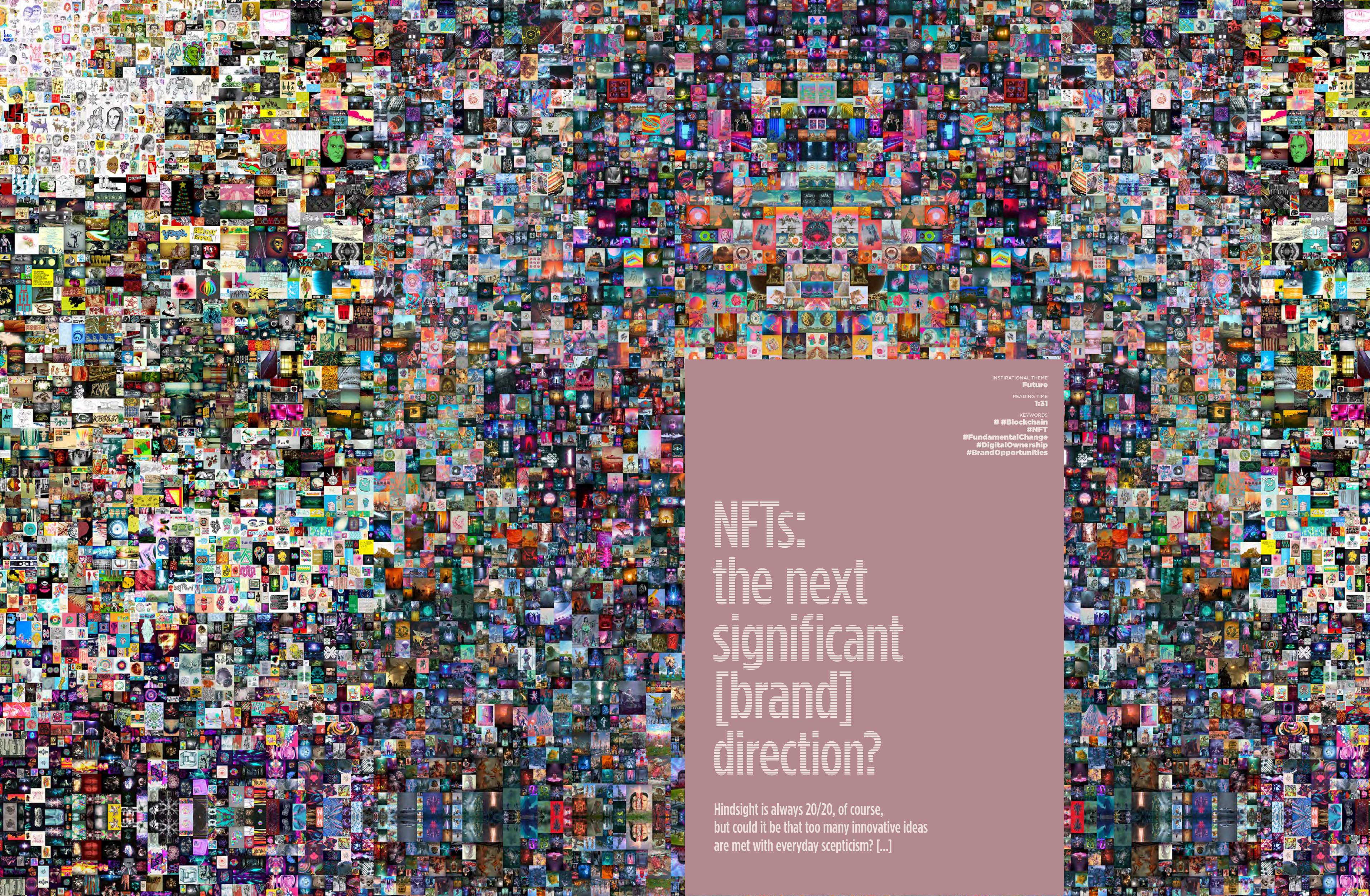
**DEMOCRATIC INFLUENCE** – New generations of consumers form strong bonds that come together in niche online communities. Their online expressions function as an extension of their physical identity. Consumers overall, have at the same time become weary of old-fashioned marketing. Instead of being fed the brand's values, they expect dialogue, and to become more informed and savvy through a growing open-source mindset. This free-flowing of information has created influential, vibrant consumer groups that became micro-democracies per niche, and that brands need to learn to collaborate with. It's a movement that is widely embraced... creating new interaction with brands and their demographics, and enabling a healthy interaction between consumer and brand, that influences the brand's vision.

**AVATAR** – An excellent way for brands to connect with communities has been through influencers. But influencers are human. This has its pro's (they're authentic and drive real connection) and cons (they cannot be scripted and aren't fluid). There must be something better. And it could be avatars. As digitalisation advances, so do avatars. The beauty about them is that they are programmable and therefore predictable. And they're fluid, meaning they can change to continuously represent their niche community.

**DIGITAL SHEPHERD** – It's built into us to turn to something for guidance, influence, and answers. If we don't worship a god, spirit or nature, then we're busy worshipping models, movie stars or influencers. Religion is not only a means for worship but an outlet for personal expression. An avatar, akin to Shudu Gram —digital ambassador for brands such as Balmain and Samsung, inspires a faithful following and fluidly represents its niche community. This we imagine as the future frontier for brands. Perhaps one Avatar to lead them all. And the brands that get behind it —as well as their retail spaces— could become the new place for worship.







INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Future**

READING TIME  
**1:31**

KEYWORDS  
**#Blockchain**  
**#NFT**  
**#FundamentalChange**  
**#DigitalOwnership**  
**#BrandOpportunities**

# NFTs: the next significant [brand] direction?

Hindsight is always 20/20, of course,  
but could it be that too many innovative ideas  
are met with everyday scepticism? [...]

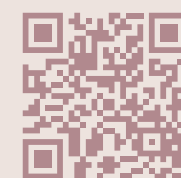




[...] Take blockchain, for example: a system for recording blocks of information that are digitally initialed —like a unique fingerprint— making it difficult or impossible to change, hack or cheat the system. Despite considerable scepticism, the distributed ledger technology behind blockchain has already powered important steps forward: from enhancing personal identity security and securing medical data to supply chain monitoring and beyond. And what's further down the road? Well, there's a chance blockchain could also fundamentally change the way we consume experiences —including art, fashion, music and film. Non-fungible tokens (NFTs), in particular, are interchangeable, one-of-a-kind digital assets linked to physical entities. They can be bought and sold like any other piece of property, even if —breaking with traditions stretching back thousands of years— they have no tangible form of their own. These digital trading cards are already changing hands for significant amounts of money. An animated GIF of Nyan Cat —a 2011 meme of a flying pop-tart cat— sold for over \$500K while Christie's sale of an NFT by digital artist Beeple for \$69m set a new record for digital art. So, NFTs are clearly up and coming... But what's in it for brands? Above all, the rise of NFTs underlines that technology is shifting how we value and

appreciate consumer goods. While we all have basic needs to be fulfilled (food, shelter, etc.), humans will also always crave (and therefore value) newness and innovation. The advanced technology that enables new forms of digital ownership also ensures scarcity and uniqueness. These too are strong drivers of emotional connection; people want what others can't have. If things are scarce or in short order, they are inherently tipping the supply-demand balance in favour of the owner.

As experience creators, brands across industries should pay careful attention to the opportunities surrounding NFTs, as well as the factors that make them so attractive to people around the world. Indeed, as with all emerging technologies, surely there is no better moment than now to explore the possibilities of NFTs to add value for your audiences.



**Need further inspiration?**  
*Watch Nike shaking up the sneaker world or the NBA introducing NFT Top Shot tokens... With such exciting brands getting involved in this space, 'NFT' may soon stand for Non Forgettable Trading!*





INSPIRATIONAL THEME

**Branding**

READING TIME

**3:26**

KEYWORDS

**#CannabisOnAHigh**

**#America**

**#Rebranding**

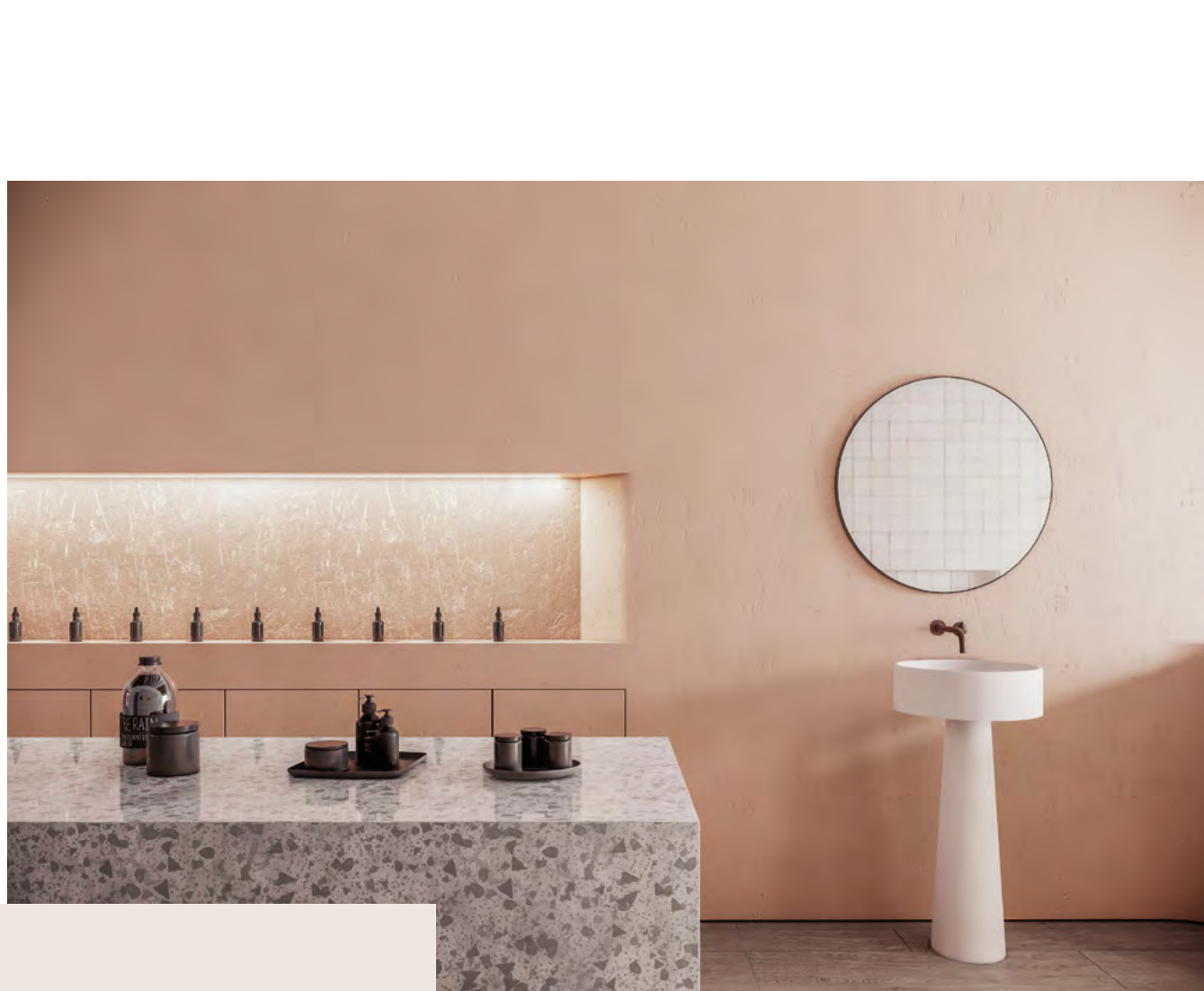
**#FullSpectrumRetail**

**#LuxuriousSelfCare**

# CANNABIS ON A HIGH

the successful  
repositioning of  
a mighty plant





Since the (partial) legalisation of marijuana in many states across the USA, and the full legalisation on the west coast, the cannabis industry went from tabooed to booming. Most astonishing and inspiring about this is the rebranding of this magical green plant that went from hushed to hyped in a green flash.

FROM  
HUSHED  
TO HYPED  
IN A GREEN  
FLASH

**THE GREEN LIGHT**  
America has given cannabis the green light. In most states, medicinal weed is now legal; in others, possession and sale of any type are entirely legal and decriminalised. And with that, a whole industry that was once rooted underground and hiding in the dark corners of the woods of Oregon and California (watch Murder Mountain), is now blooming in bright daylight. Forget the archetypal, romantic notion of the dank coffee shops of Amsterdam.

Imagine instead brightly lit, well-designed concept dispensaries that hold the middle of an Apple store, a sneaker shop, a pharmacy and a cool cafe. Places like Electric Lettuce and Seaweed in Portland, Serra in Los Angeles or Standard Dose in New York (imagery) are not just a means to an end. While many of us might still recall the yellowed walls, purple neon lit logos, velour drapes and half dead plants in the windowsills of the old coffeeshops, the sector has matured, and shops have now become

delightful destinations. But it's not simply the decor in which cannabis is now sold, as a legitimate consumer product, that makes this branch so fascinating. The entire shopping experience offers a tremendous retail lesson in a very effective repositioning of this product.

**THE FULL TRIP**  
The American cannabis industry caters far beyond those who are looking for just a buzz.

IT'S BECOME A SUPER DETAILED RETAIL BRANCH, OFFERING A LARGE SPECTRUM OF PRODUCTS THAT MEET A WIDE RANGE OF NEEDS.

Of course, you can still get some good old fashioned buds and flowers. Not a fan of inhaling smoke? Then there are other ways, topically and internally, of enjoying the benefits of marijuana. Even CBD infused beers and coffees, as well as culinary experiences embrace cannabis as a nuanced ingredient. The ratio of CBD to THC varies drastically depending on your need. Muscle pain? Grab yourself some CBD rub.

Experience anxiety? Try some CBD gummies. Off to a party? Then take stuff that requires a higher tolerance. Purchasing cannabis on the west coast, in places like Portland or Los Angeles, is as self-indulgent as picking out a good wine for a special occasion. Most dispensaries offer a full-spectrum retail experience with impeccable customer service, plenty of personal attention, heaps of helpful information, and infectiously passionate sales people.

**FROM PLANT TO BRAND**  
The experience of cannabis has moved way beyond the happy effects of the plant. Entrepreneurs have birthed entire chains with this product, treating it as a brand, not simply a plant. They have embraced the power of a beautiful 360° experience: from the physical dispensaries to the well-designed online platforms. Brands and dispensaries offer loyalty programs, delivery service and even subscription boxes and build brand awareness through the use of extensive merch. With beautifully designed packaging, authentic brand stories, a natural and luxurious look & feel, high-quality products and total transparency in the supply chain, this industry understands the needs of this generation's consumers like no other. Quite honestly, anybody trying to sell anything, and not just in the cannabis industry, should







take note of this ridiculously successful repositioning of a product that went from tabooed to sometimes tolerated to seriously celebrated.

#### TEND TO GROWTH

To seed cannabis and its products successfully and profitably means growing a community. Cannabis brands, in the USA especially, seem to know this well. Perhaps because many of them are gardeners at heart, they know how to grow their products and tend to their digital platforms as well as they do their crop. Most brands have keenly curated Instagram feeds that show their followers in detail who is behind the product, where and how the plant was grown, and the product's ingredients. They celebrate the artists responsible for the packaging, such as at the Insta-feeds of @WyldeCBD and @CoyoteRiverHempCo, for example. @Seabedee's social feed reads like a lifestyle blog - including dreamy pictures of holiday escapes and mouthwatering recipes - and has the option of a subscription called the Good Drugs Club. Branded collaborations with other artisanal brands such as Stumptown Coffee roasters, Tea Bar and Woodblock Chocolate can be found here too.

All in all, the entire branch seems to have switched its narrative around. It has gone from dangerous (with

perhaps the darker mystique of rebellion) to a luxurious yet essential self-care product.

USING ALL THE  
CURRENT TOOLS  
IN A MARKETEER'S  
TOOLBOX FOR  
BRAND BUILDING,  
THIS BRANCH PUTS  
THE CONSUMER  
FIRST AND THE  
PRODUCT IN  
CELEBRATORY  
SERVICE OF THEM.

Highlighting the naturalness of its origin, it references the organic, wholesome, even outdoorsy life or the social pampering that is usually associated with vineyards or spa retreats. Putting the experience back into retail in more ways than one, making it awe-inspiring, mouthwatering and enviously well done.











*In today's world, human communication can be increasingly challenging—from digital meet ups to botox-enhanced conversational partners—the further removed we become from each other, the more we realise how vital it is to restore our connections and accurately identify emotion when opportunity allows. While we know that it's not just our words but also our faces that can tell a story, most of us are not so quick to spot the most revealing facial indicators of all.*

**Facial expression, micro expression – what’s the difference?** We asked psychologist and micro expression expert Job Boersma to explain: “Facial expressions are crucial in conveying our emotions. What can make this problematic is our ability to manipulate the facial muscles and thereby what the other person sees. A micro expression, however, is something beyond our control. Lasting only around a quarter of a second, it happens before we can even think about what our face is doing and reveals one of seven universal emotional states, namely anger, contempt, disgust, enjoyment, fear, sadness, or surprise.”

**How can learning to read micro expressions help us make better connections?** Micro expressions are so fleeting that we often miss them. And if we do perceive them, it is usually only on a subconscious level. Learning to detect micro expressions is about doing so with awareness. "Because the next step in the process is interpreting their meaning within the context of the

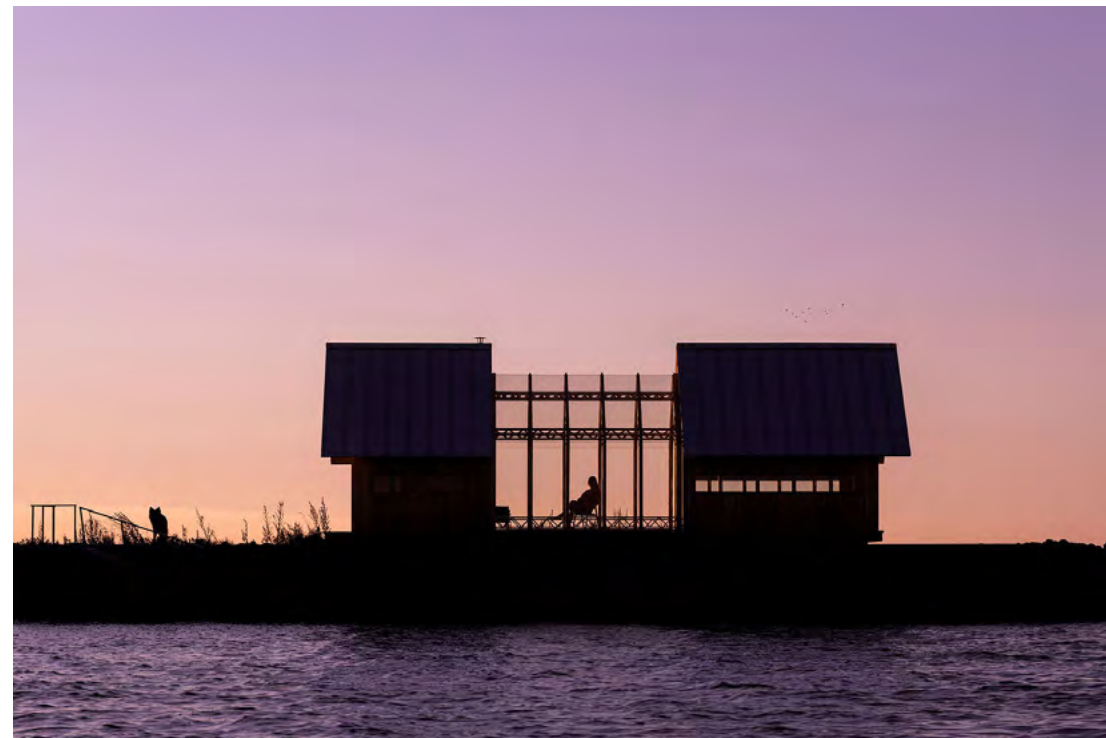
situation,” Job tells us. “For example, an expression of fear —characterised by raised eyebrows, tensed lower eyelids and stretched, open lips— shows us that a person wants to avoid something, while a look of contempt most likely has to do with someone feeling superior to us in some way. Understanding what is at the core of the communication is where the chances lie; once you know what you’re dealing with, you are then able to address it and respond accordingly.”

**So, how to become a micro expression master?** To interpret a micro expression, you first have to know what to look for. The 'dictionary' (imagery) for this is known as the Emotional Facial Action Coding System, which supplies an emotion-specific label for different sets of muscle movement.

Scan QR code  
to test your own  
reading skills







INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Design**

READING TIME  
**1:36**

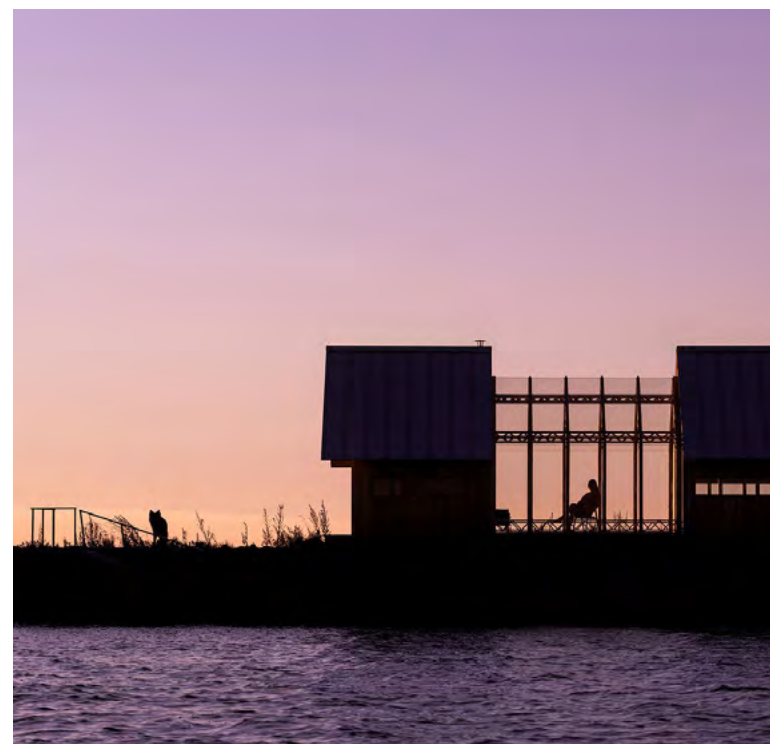
KEYWORDS  
**#CabinANNA**  
**#CasparSchols**  
**#OpenAirExperience**  
**#OffTheGrid**

# cabin anna

Some people want  
to live a different life,  
others create ways to  
make that happen.







Amidst the hustle and bustle of a present-day 24-hour existence, it isn't strange to desire a life completely off the grid. For some it may sound a bit extreme but opting for such a lifestyle —and being surrounded by nature only— can result in finding freedom and tranquility as well as adventure. For those vowing to get out and experience nature —but who can only imagine a quirky cabin or glamping space— let Cabin ANNA and the view of trees and open skies leave you breathless.

The concept sprang from a vision of designer and architect Caspar Schols, and his deep passion for basic living spaces —work or recreational— in the beautiful outdoors. By developing a cabin that makes dwelling between birches and oaks as comfortable as nestling at home, he planted the seed of experiencing the freedom of the open air whilst inside. ANNA has rocketed as a lifestyle brand because of its amazing biophilic design that seamlessly invites in an epic dose of natural surroundings.

This is shown by its adjustability for the outdoor experience. 'Simply' by sliding the metal roof and the outer wooden walls (set on runners) apart from the framework, it allows for a great open-air experience. When the walls and roof are slid 'out' the inner beam-and-glass layer is visible,

allowing people inside complete immersion in the outdoor setting. The layers of the house can be played with as the base and the elements are all dynamic. "Just like the way you dress yourself to suit different weather conditions, occasions and moods", Schols would say.

Cabin ANNA can be used as a lodging, an office and is even suitable for meetings. Whether these are gatherings with friends, work-related brainstorming or yoga classes, the open ambience of the cabin is an ultimate spot to host people and unleash creativity. ANNA plans to reach beautiful locations around the world, but you can already find their cabins in the picturesque scenery of Dutch nature reserves.

Out of over 5000 contestants worldwide, award winning Cabin ANNA has been named Project of the Year 2021 by A+Architizer.

Interested in going completely off grid? You can buy or rent a Cabin Anna via this QR, and you can also discover their mind-blowing Instagram page: @cabin\_anna







INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Connection**

READING TIME  
**3:52**

KEYWORDS  
**#BrainMapping**  
**#Synapses**  
**#Aurora21**  
**#BrainBootcamp**

Star-  
struck  
by our  
Brain





#### Mind-blowing

Maybe you've heard the fun fact that Carl Sagan, an American astronomer, astrophysicist and cosmologist, shared with the world: there are more stars in the observable universe than there are grains of sand on earth. Knowing the far reaching beaches of our planet, that's a pretty dazzling thought. It helps us understand the magnitude of our endlessly expansive universe.

But allow us to blow your mind a little further. Were you aware that there are more synapses in our tiny human brains than there are galaxies in the universe? Neither were we. Let's explore.

#### Mapping it out

Humans are pretty nifty at mapping. Since the first cave paintings, we've been drawing our lives and the sequences of the events we observed. We've mapped out our planet and have started on the universe.

We don't only look outwards. Looking inwards quite literally, we've also started outlining our beloved grey matter. The aim is to shed some light on how neurons behave in the brain. However, coming to a complete connectome (that's the insider's word for a comprehensive map of neural connections within the human brain) is extremely difficult. First of all,

There  
are more  
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in the  
universe

because of the sheer amount of synapses in the human brain. Secondly, the human brain deteriorates fast after death, too quickly to preserve all its neural connections. To this day, we don't have the ability to map a living one.

#### AI to the rescue

As with many other things, we invite computers to take us the extra mile when our human capabilities seem

to reach their limits. In 2021, the supercomputer Aurora 21 is set to do what we cannot. How? By piecing together millions of 2-dimensional images to make a 3-dimensional picture of the brain's white matter (a tissue in the brain composed of nerve fibres).

To be clear: a supercomputer is not simply super. It's exceptionally brilliant. The Aurora 21, for example, can run a quintillion operations at once. For a context that we might understand: the Aurora 21 will cost hundreds of millions of dollars, will require a quarter acre of land, thousands of miles of wires, and will consume enough power to light a midsize city.

#### But...why?

You may wonder: why spend all that money and energy on a big computer to understand the human brain? Well, because we have come to think of it as the most essential part of ourselves. It's the organ that defines us and whether or not we are alive. It's where we store our memories, our personality and our knowledge. It's the filter through which we process the unique experiences of our life. Learning more about it will help us understand human psychology better, and treat various disorders such as autism, schizophrenia and blindness.


#### Brain plasticity

Some might feel the stress of fatalism at this point. We don't choose the inside of our skulls; it comes with the body we're born in. Does this mean that who we are and what we can accomplish is set in stone? Nope! Because our connectome is not a static thing. It changes and grows over time. As we learn and experience new things, our brain makes new neurological synapses. And when new synapses form and strengthen, others nearby weaken. Look at kids. Their super elastic brains can generally pick up anything you present to them: from languages to music to sports.

However, the older we get, the harder it becomes to learn new things—with good reason. If our brains stayed as malleable as when we were kids, they would 'become inefficient as a processing device. The brain cherishes stability and works hard to inhibit pliability. At the same time, it never stops making new synapses—just not as many, not as quickly. The fact that it stays somewhat flexible opens the door to bringing back that baby brain.

Some pills show positive results in elevating our ability to learn new things, like those used to treat schizophrenia. While the perfect genius pill is still to hit the market, there are other things we can do to prolong the flexibility of our beautiful brains.





#### Brain Bootcamp

The brain may savour stability, but our society demands that we are always quick to adapt. Technology is developing more rapidly than ever. People (are forced to) change jobs more often than their hairstyles. All of this requires us to keep a flexible mindset and the ability to learn new things. The most accessible way to keep the brain supple is through exercise. According to psychiatrist and neuroscientist Javanbakht, working out regularly actually changes the brain's biology and will help your mental health. It provides higher levels of our favorite mood-boosters dopamine and endorphins, fights inflammation in the body, and lowers stress levels, amongst other things. But there are more ways to promote neurogenesis, a.k.a. generating new brain cells; intermittent fasting is good, as is travelling.

Another way to go about it is learning to play a new instrument. This offers an intense multi-sensory motor experience, which builds new neural networks. But if you're more a fan of quiet activities, you need not fret. Studies show that reading novels and shifting your mental state by being transported into a different world or character also keeps those neural connections healthy.

## We see a starring role for brands in this new era of brain development

#### Connecting your customer

With our passion for brands, we see a starring role for them in this new era of brain development. People differ vastly, but they do all constantly interact with brands. Perhaps brands could cater more deeply towards brain plasticity, for instance, by offering customers new experiences and immersing them in stories that fill them with wonder and the excitement of something new. Brands could enrich our lives beyond the product or service they offer. Maybe even add new synapses, creating that ultimate connection that still leaves us starstruck.





INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Branding**  
READING TIME  
**1:35**  
KEYWORDS  
**#GenZ**  
**#Ethical**  
**#Sustainable**  
**#Fair**  
**#Authentic**  
**#DailyPaper**

# Power to CONTRA future







**From Boomers to X, Y, Z and Alpha —it's good to know your Gens. Because understanding who they are and what they want is the only way to get them connected to your brand.**

GenZ, the upcoming leading buying force, has seen the economic struggles of their parents and will have witnessed the most crises (economic, environmental, social) of all generations by the time they start spending their money. It's no wonder their list of requirements is the highest of all the Gens. Fashion brand Daily Paper understands GenZs, and their mantras, to a T. By channeling their own outlandish approach, they show they really 'get' this group of youngsters...

#### HOW TO SPEAK 'GENZ'

GenZ holds an inclusive attitude towards life; they are more ethnically and racially diverse and accept differences more easily. They are more progressive, more vocal about their activism and more outspoken against rigid systems that prefer the status quo. And, they choose brands that support and mirror their values.

Is a brand less than ethical, contributing towards climate change or not paying living wages? It may expect no brand loyalty from GenZ. The ticket to their heart is only through

fair, authentic brands... by being true to a brand's values and having them reflect GenZs.

#### THE KIDS THAT DO IT DAILY

Since 2008, Daily Paper has grown from an online streetwear blog into an internationally recognised clothing label. Abderrahmane, Hussein and Jefferson, the trio behind the brand, are all third culture kids: individuals raised in a culture other than their parents. In this sense, first culture refers to the culture of their parents country, second culture to the one they reside in now, and third to the combination of these two. They are, as they say, part of a global movement of underrepresented individuals that try to break stereotypes, especially those assigned to black and African people. Daily Paper checks all the GenZ boxes. They embrace their African heritage as an intrinsic part of their design language, produce sustainable clothing, found charitable initiatives in Africa, and hold yearly pop-up shops in Johannesburg and Accra to sell deadstock to local youth at affordable prices. On top of that, they manage to create very desirable designs.

As a result, GenZ may not be familiar with the notion of a 'daily paper', but they will definitely deck out in Daily Paper.





WHAT

NOW

WHAT

WHAT

INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Future**

READING TIME  
**6:48**

KEYWORDS

**#WhatNowNowWhat**  
**#PastToFuture**  
**#GroupDiscussion**  
**#Retail**  
**#Sustainability**  
**#Brands**  
**#Connection**

WHAT  
NOW  
NOW  
WHAT



Every major event in human history ignites reflection. We are pretty sure COVID-19 qualifies as a major event. The pandemic inspired us at Tchai to organise our own ‘facing the past, shaping the future’ event. We invited 22 people of all ages and from a wide range of backgrounds for a group dialogue\*.

An inspiring set of reflections in times of now what?!

\*Obviously, we cannot share a full transcript of all the insightful things that were said, but we can give you a wonderful collection of quotes and sound bites.

## WE DERIVED THE FOUR DISCUSSION THEMES FROM THE TCHI MAGAZINES WE HAVE ISSUED SO FAR.

### 1. RETAIL

TCHI #1 was our declaration of love for the city of Rotterdam, focusing on retail in particular. When we asked the group what shopping in 2050 will look like, the youngsters were by far the most open-minded and futuristic. 3D printing of clothing, AR, VR, and robotics will be standard, as well as paying with implanted chips. Nearly everyone agreed physical shopping will still exist, but it will be much more about brand experience, social connection, truly unique concepts and trying and tasting stuff that you cannot sample online.

### Who's talking?

Primary school students (**Livy** and **Woed**), high school students (**Thieu**, **Mees**, **Darius**, **Zeferino** and **Shasta**), Tchai intern (**Iza**), photographer (**Veronique**), student creative concepting (**Noah**), army logistics corporal (**Jason**), philosopher (**Tom**), entrepreneur (**Tjimme**), co-worker at Zalando (**Yohanna**), VP Capgemini (**Katja**) owner Seamore (**Willem**), owner Hypotheker (**Cees**), homemaker (**Olga**), copywriter (**Jacques**), people of Tchai (**Vera**, **Allardt** and **Kim**).

#### **Tom** — philosopher

“Despite current views, I actually see a bright future for small retailers. In 2050 they are no longer competing with the big retail chains. These big brands will have online platforms and huge concept stores in major cities, allowing small shops to offer local experience, a sense of community, quality and personal attention to enable to thrive.”



**Katja** — *VP Capgemini*

"I agree. Research shows that buying locally and shopping more consciously are really important trends. Not just in 2050 but today as well; in the slipstream of Covid-stress we are looking for healthy and safe options."

**Darius** — *high school student*

"The question isn't so much how we would like to spend our money, but how would we like to spend our time? If automation leads to more free time, what will we do with it? Shopping should be fun, that's for sure."

**Woed** — *primary school student*

"Yeah, like playing robot ball to test your new shoes."

**Vera** — *Tchai*

"Spending your time well, could also mean taking the time to source good food and being creative with it. Learning how to cook, how to grow your own food, taking your time to visit local food markets and really feel connected to what you eat. I truly believe there will be slow, low-tech trends as a contrast to holograms and algorithms."

## 2. SUSTAINABILITY

TCHI #2 had a green theme. Everyone on the panel agreed on the major importance of sustainability. All the practical stuff was elaborately discussed. In a nutshell less: packaging, meat, flying and fast fashion. More: alternative foods, electronic transport, local and circular focus. There were a handful of more radical ideas, such as the reduction of world population, artificial sharks devouring the ocean's plastic soup and recycling our own waste with a 3D printer. When asked who's primarily responsible for a more sustainable future, the group looked towards government and business. Many feel it isn't enough to simply rely on the motivation of the masses to do what needs to be done. Good old reward and punishment? Yes, but alongside better education and information to ultimately create a global state of mind about the world and our place in it.

**Zeferino** — *high school student*

"I think we need to think freely and creatively in order to really change things. In the future there will definitely be space agriculture and large-scale production of meat. This allows for larger parts of the earth to remain natural environments; for scientific research and recreation alike."

**Veronique** — *photographer*

"Regardless of what it looks like, my ideal future world is 'sustainably inclusive'. The smarter options should be available and affordable to all. Today, many of the conscious brands are still extremely expensive. As long as sustainability is the new luxury, we cannot really scale up a greener way of life."

**Tjimme** — *entrepreneur*

"I agree, but there's a lot we can do already at the far end of the spectrum. Stop buying extremely cheap clothes. Among the environmental impacts of fast fashion are the depletion of non-renewable resources, emission of greenhouse gases and the use of massive amounts of water and energy. The big brands have to lead the way for the smaller ones to follow."

**Yohanna** — *Zalando*

"As a consumer you have to inform yourself about the brands that make ethical choices. That can be pretty

demanding, when you also want to eat the right things, use cosmetics without microplastics etc. etc."

**Olga** — *homemaker*

"The very definition of a sustainable lifestyle is making it last. Practice making decisions you can keep, by making small ones. Stop using plastic bags, plan an extra meat-free day a week, and try to buy more second-hand fashion. Every little step helps, but only if you continue to make them."



### 3. BRANDS

TCHI #3 was our take on brand authenticity. We traced back our company roots, explored China and re-connected with our Tchi. The question we asked our panel is: what brands truly inspire you and why? The younger panel members mainly mentioned 'cool' brands, worn by popular athletes, artists and influencers. The adults have brand preferences that go well beyond the product. Mentality, esthetics, authenticity, sustainability and innovation all proved to be building blocks of brand loyalty. The senior panel members have the weakest brand connections. They basically choose quality products from brands they feel familiar with.

**Willem** — owner *Seamore*

"I love Oatly, because this brand has a purposeful story, and they tell it in their own unique way. It has a bit of an activist feel to it, but in a positive way. With humor."

**Jacques** — copywriter

"Purpose branding is obviously very hot. What I find most interesting are the companies that are doing the right thing without trumpeting about it. Like Toyota. For decades, they have been doing all sorts of things for society and sustainability and hardly anybody knows about this. To accelerate the global hydrogen revolution, they have recently made thousands of their patents royalty free and accessible to all car manufacturers and industries around the world. That's an amazing thing to do!"

**Tom** — philosopher

"The only brands that I find truly inspiring are the ones that aspire to change the world for the better. Although I have to admit I still resonate with Vans from back when I was a skater myself. Identification is a very powerful aspect of branding."

**Allardt** — *Tchai*

"I can relate to that. When you embrace an active lifestyle, you instantly feel a stronger connection to brands like Garmin and Nike."

**Kim** — *Tchai*

"You can relate to Nike on so many levels. I love the way they focus on product innovation and have the guts to address social issues as well. It's a great example of a brand that makes a difference on both; personal and social level."

**Noah** — student creative conceiving

"I feel a growing connection to small business owners. The small shops that have the unique stuff that you do not find in the big stores. Some vintage shops create their own little brand vibe. It makes you bond much easier with them than with a multinational corporation."

**Jason** — army logistics corporal

"I don't know about you guys, but I love the brands that have the smoothest buying process, like Coolblue."

**Vera** — *Tchai*

"That's mostly enjoying operational excellence. As a brand, anyone can copy what you do, no-one can copy who you are. Storytelling and brand experience will become ever more important, regardless of the line of business you're in."

### 4. CONNECTION

TCHI #4 was all about connecting. At the time, we did not foresee a global pandemic making us fundamentally reconsider the way we meet other people. We asked the panel how Covid-19 changed the way they connect with others. On this point, there seemed to be less consensus than on the other themes. Some noticed more individualism, loneliness and polarisation, others see more bonding and increased appreciation, especially of those who are closest. More peace and quiet is something most panel members appreciate to some extent. Many see the upside of occasionally working from home and hope to maintain a hybrid solution, resulting in a better work-life balance than before Covid-19.



**Iza** — *Tchai intern*

"I saw my friends much less and, to my own surprise, started sharing less with them online as well. I've learned to entertain myself better, but at times I was overwhelmed by a sense of loneliness. Despite the lessons I've learned, I expect my life will quickly go back to the way it was."

**Darius** — *high school student*

"Although, at first we will appreciate the hell out of things we used to take for granted. Most things will go straight back to normal."

**Veronique** — *photographer*

"Covid-19 made me realise just how important it is where you are born. I was in an international school when the borders closed and immediately felt so privileged to have a Dutch passport. In a way Covid-19 united the world in its battle against an indiscriminatory threat. I just hope, in the end, it doesn't increase global economic inequality even further."

**Willem** — *owner Seamore*

"I feel Covid-19 has sparked a sense of global connection. At least for a while we all shared a common concern about the future of the planet. Hopefully, the worry and the fear will lead to positive reactions. There wasn't so much we could do to actively fight the virus, but there are other global challenges we can co-operatively address. I hope a lot of people will reconnect with nature and find a sense of urgency to better protect our natural surroundings."

**Kim** — *Tchai*

"Well said Willem... I agree with your words. And besides reconnecting to nature, I'd like to add creating a better connection with the people closest to us —and of course— ourselves. Wouldn't it be amazing if that was the outcome of locking ourselves up for such a long time?"









We find ourselves in an era that has a mission when it comes to hygiene. Hence, a boom in the use of home care products that help us safeguard health and cleanliness. Major hygiene obsessions have diminished somewhat, but the habit has become a bigger part of our daily lives. The typical scents recalling citrus blends or pine trees have long been a trusted feature under our sinks. However, these days people expect more from the products that protect us against germs; they should not only be sanitising but also give synergy to our homes.

Consumers are increasingly seeking 'professional' as well as 'gentle' cleaning, which is what shaped a new vision of Tristar, a well-established brand for professional cleaning supplies. With their expertise and scientific reputation, they discovered a new consumer demand for proven hygiene products. With a completely new brand name 'Estelle', they branched out and tapped into

a new market, one that desires to create harmony in the home. They really put the perception we had previously about cleaning products to the test, and ultimately repositioned the product into a more luxurious one for domestic well-being. A product made for the here and now, without compromising on cleanliness or relaxing spaces.

Aside from the products, Estelle's retail space design doesn't have an everyday look either. Instead, each and every corner breathes the brand's heritage; lab, science and expertise. It will also remind customers of a life-style boutique. Experiencing the elemental nature with their products —the soft, clear and yet distinct colours— is central here, which is why the stunning centre piece of the store is a beautifully designed counter where everyone is free to experiment, test and even make personal blends with various scents... just like in a scientific laboratory.

**Learn more about it here:**



*Estelle is a new brand for home goods such as premium multi-purpose cleaners and accessories. Their very first store opened its doors to consumers in the summer of 2021 at Korte Brugstraat 2 in Breda, the Netherlands. Tchai has played a significant role in the entire process; from discovering the moving consumer market, to developing the branding for their core product and to the designing, producing and delivering of a retail store that connects it all together.*



# Sustainable Paradigm Shift

INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Sustainability**

READING TIME  
**4:24**

KEYWORDS

**#GreenStateOfMind**  
**#PurposefulOrganisation**  
**#MaterialsPassport**  
**#SustainabilityLabel**  
**#QuestForPositiveImpact**

from doing  
less damage  
to doing  
more good



So much has happened since the release of 'Green'. In our second Tchi Magazine we focused on doing business with a green state of mind. The underlying principle was: striving to do as little environmental damage as possible. That's still hugely important, but the perspective is too negative and the scope too limited. Four years later, we want to use our business as a force for good. And yes, that makes a world of difference. Please read about our sustainable challenges and find inspiration for your own.

#### **FOCUS ON PURPOSE AND SELF-CULTIVATION**

Communicating about sustainability can be tricky. Four years ago, we were quite hesitant, because of our deeply rooted fear of greenwashing. So, we promoted a green focus and the embracement of baby steps. However, what we failed to see was the bigger picture: that we were actually doing a lot to create a purposeful organisation. Which in itself is the very basis of a truly sustainable operation throughout our company. These past years we've been breaking down hierarchy and old structures; empowering people on all levels to thrive in equality and a sense of community. We are really proud of the value-driven company Tchai has become. It allows our people to grow by doing the things they really want to do. When it comes to sustainability, most of our people and partners feel a natural drive to do the right thing, but there's a catch: without any guidance, it's very hard

to collectively get ahead. We realised we simply need a few of the structures we had let go off.

#### **STRUCTURE FEEDS SPONTANEITY**

Becoming more sustainable demands a strategic framework —including targets and measurements— without limiting the spontaneity and creativity of your people. The key is to formulate positive goals and focus on the good things you can achieve. The great thing at Tchai is that now we have started working on that basic framework of quantification and accountability, communication no longer holds us back, but propels us forward. Fear of greenwashing is replaced by an inspiring sense of collective focus. That being said: there are still some serious pitfalls in communicating goals and demonstrating progress. We would love to share some of them with you and for transparency's sake, illustrate them with real-life examples at Tchai and our quest for positive impact.

#### **1. Get your baseline straight**

In order to demonstrate successes, challenges and the journey you still need to take, record a baseline. You have to know your starting position. Without it your claims will not be taken seriously. Have you already started and failed to calculate the baseline? Simply reclaim the paperwork for that start date.

#### **What's happening at Tchai**

*At Tchai we are currently mapping our main processes. How does design and engineering work at Tchai? What about packaging and production? By analysing the whole supply chain we identify quick wins and bigger challenges, but more importantly: it allows us to quantify the current situation and future targets. What does it actually mean to do things more sustainably than yesterday?*

#### **2. Clear targets, clear focus**

Waving KPI's around the office will not address your people's natural drive to make the world a better place. Formulate real-life goals people can identify with and inspire and motivate them professionally. How will we actually achieve our sustainability targets and what roll can everybody play?

#### **What's happening at Tchai**

*The very core of our business is creating brand experiences that*

*are temporary by definition. This provides us with a lot of challenges and opportunities to be more sustainable across our entire workflow. Among other things, we are currently focusing on:*

*Construction – how can we make presentations, and elements of presentations, that can be disassembled, exchanged or re-used completely?*

*Packaging – how can we protect our goods sufficiently with a minimum of packaging materials. The materials we use need to be fully recyclable.*

*Transportation – how can we combine transport and make every mile count?*

#### **3. Make it tangible**

Yes, you should have the inspiring examples and the facts to demonstrate change, but listing them for their own sake only tells one side of the story. You need to provide proof of every claim you make. Make it tangible, noticeable in everyday business.

#### **What's happening at Tchai**

*From big to small we're starting up and implementing initiatives such as:*

*Materials passports – developing materials passports, containing information about the quality and origins of*



*the materials used. This makes it easier to recover and reuse valuable materials.*

*Annual reports – starting in 2022 we will be reporting annually about our sustainability goals and achievements.*

*Sustainability label – in an international context we're developing a sustainability label for the point of purchase business as a whole. As an active member of the global trade association SHOP! we are part of a focus group that is currently setting up such a label.*

#### **4. Keep looking inward**

With so much focus on the world around you, it's important to not lose sight of employees and teams. How do you keep them happy or better yet: create even more happiness with sustainable and purposeful initiatives and projects. Allow room for new ideas to well-up and open up to feedback as well.

#### **What's happening at Tchai**

*We're looking for ways to increase employee satisfaction, while avoiding a top-down approach. We are building a feedback culture by using specific feedback software tools. Different types of team training should optimise team work even further.*

#### **5. The money issue**

Ideas and inspiration are great, but there's always the money issue. Who's going to pay extra for a more sustainable solution? This is especially challenging in the point of purchase business where investments are made for in-store presentations with a relatively short lifecycle. The answer could lie in joint initiatives and co-creation. Syncing sustainable ambitions with clients that are on-par with yours.

#### **What's happening at Tchai**

*We believe storytelling and communication in general are of major importance to create a paradigm shift in the point of purchase industry. We need engaging stories in order to stimulate clients to do positive things together. We are still very modest about the steps we have taken as a company so far, but we do feel we are coming closer to a long-term positive framework to work with. Once we see the launch of a sustainability label there will be objective guidelines for the entire industry as well. Meanwhile we are opening up, in all vulnerability, by showing our own goals and achievements in articles such as this. We invite you to do the same!*





INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Connection**

READING TIME  
**0:12**

KEYWORDS  
#Pandemic  
#PointOfView  
#SmallButCunning

[illegible]





### The Germ

A mighty creature is the germ,  
Though smaller than the pachyderm.  
His customary dwelling place  
Is deep within the human race.  
His childish pride he often pleases  
By giving people strange diseases.  
Do you, my poppet, feel infirm?  
You probably contain a germ.

© Ogden Nash  
03/19/2017





THE



OF SUCCESS

Collaborations seem an indicator of success in brand-land. But to claim the fame of an X sandwiched between your brand names takes more than simply working together. Here's how the X-pro's created real buzz.

INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Branding**  
READING TIME  
**1:40**  
KEYWORDS  
**#Collabs**  
**#GloryTakesGuts**  
**#Uber**  
**#Spotify**  
**#Gucci**  
**#Balenciaga**  
**#Kith**





#### UBER X SPOTIFY—EASY JOY

The collaboration that felt like it existed before it did—that's how much sense it made. This collaboration highlighted how perfectly each brand understood their customer and simultaneously met their brand's specific needs. Uber wanted to offer travellers a highly involved in-car experience, and Spotify looked for new ways—or better said; 'moments'—to be enjoyed by their users. The kind of collaboration that just makes your brand that much more enjoyable, and twice as much a personalised experience. A stroller with a built-in phone holder and charging dock? A coffee bar with a postal service? We're here to brainstorm!

#### GUCCI X BALENCIAGA—GLORY TAKES GUTS

The keep-your-friends-close-but-your-enemies-closer collaboration between Gucci and Balenciaga set the fashion world ablaze. During their runway show Aria, Gucci hacked Balenciaga by stealing their iconic staples, from typical silhouettes to eventually slapping both brand names all over a garment. Later Balenciaga hacked back by stealing the classic Gucci bag and replacing the signature GG monogram with reprinted BB's as part of the accessories line titled 'This Is Not

A Gucci Bag'.

This blurring of the lines between real and fake, stealing and inspiration, allowed both brands to strengthen their narrative as they told it together. It takes guts, but if done well, the glory is boundless.

#### KITH X LUCKY CHARMS—HYPED NOSTALGIA

General Mills blasted out of a cereal rut' by collaborating with Kith Treats, a Gen-Z favourite, for their holiday season campaign: Lucky Kithmas. Genius: mixing 90's nostalgia with Kith's pure hype. Kith is a streetwear label and store, selling the hottest kicks, clothing and, oh yea, snacks in their in-store Kith Treats bars. This X-mas collaboration brought a collection of unisex apparel and accessories adorned with the famous cereal brand's mark through the Kith lens. Naturally, all Kith Treats flagships turned into Lucky Kithmas bars, featuring ice-cream treats decorated with cereal of the Lucky Charms family. The cereal box plus the leprechaun mascot on it were dressed in custom, limited edition Kith design.

Looking to draw some serious attention next Christmas? We suggest you follow this playbook and mix hype and nostalgia in a flurry of that Gen-Z celebration.








INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Connection**  
READING TIME  
**5:54**  
KEYWORDS  
**#Tchai**  
**#Tchi**  
**#WaterDragon**  
**#PeopleOfTchai**  
**#GenuineConnections**  
**#Flow**

# TCHAI AND THE WATER DRAGON





Far, far away on the Yangtze River, the Jade Lotus from the people of Tchai was slowly moving down-river. Despite the scorching heat, the ship's deck was buzzing, adjusting lines to catch what little wind there was, hoisting large, heavy barrels from below decks and navigating the ever-shallower river-bed. "Captain, look!" came a shout from the crow's nest. "The river runs dry there!" Quickly, the anchor was dropped and with a growl, the ship came to a standstill. The sudden silence shimmered through the dry sky. "It's her!" Another crewman gestured frantically. "She's not moving!" An 'Oh my God' fluttered from Captain Kim's lips.

ON THE RIVERBED  
A LONG, CURVED  
BODY LAY ON ITS  
BACK, UNMOVING,  
EXPOSING A WHITE  
UNDERBELLY TO  
THE SUN'S SIZZLING  
INTENSITY

Paws hung limp from its spiralling frame, and its blue head drooped backwards, mouth wide open, tongue hung out to dry. A hush fell. The captain was the first to come to her senses: "We're going down there. I know it doesn't look good... but let's keep hope. And bring some of those water barrels too." Small boats were lowered, and the ships' company rowed ashore. As they furtively came closer, the captain gestured to hang back.

A quiet anticipation fell over them as she slowly, step by step, made her way to the animal. She laid her hand on its scales. The dragon moved. "HMMMMM..." murmured the beast. One eyelid slit open. It closed again. A long, rumbling yawn shook the ground. Kim took her chance. "I'm sorry to wake you, oh great dragon. We are the people of Tchai. Our guardian Feng Huang sent us, to help the companies from villages in need." "Ah," the gigantic dragon seemed to smile a little. "Did nobody ever tell you it is unwise to wake a dragon when she's sunbathing?" A sigh of relief washed over them. Muffled laughs escaped the crowd. "Our apologies, oh great Di Long. We thought you were..." Ignoring the assertion, the dragon mused: "Good old Feng, hah? All right. If you are her


people, tell me about your struggles." "Well..." The captain looked around. "The river is drying up. The villages are disconnected. Their crops are hurting, businesses have stopped flowing. That means their life force, their Tchi... we are very worried. They are..." Kim found the right words. "...drying out. They are fantastic people, with great enterprises. We want to help rebuild their connections. That's why we came. To see if we can get the river to flow again."

A LONG SILENCE  
FOLLOWED. THE  
PEOPLE OF TCHAI  
HELD THEIR  
BREATH FOR THE  
GREAT KNOWLEDGE  
THEY EXPECTED TO  
FILL THE VOID

The beasts' lips smacked. That supposedly wise mouth muttered: "I'm parched." The one eyelid closed again casually. Full sunbathing mode restored. "Got any water?" The group exchanged puzzled looks with each other. One of the barrels, filled to the brim with water, was dragged towards the dragon. Di Long opened her eyes, stirred, rolled over onto her paws, and gulped the liquid down. "Ahhhh... better." She gave a shake and said: "You've come to me... but my people of Tchai, I do not make the water. I can move it, control it, even draw it near." Her eyes shone, reflecting, as if they were the rays of the sun hitting the surface of the deepest waters of the greatest ocean imaginable. "Yet, I do not create it." The people of Tchai looked at each other and smiled. Like a bird ready to fly, they were

ready to spring into action. In no time the barrels were carried over. The crowd looked at the dragon, arms folded as if to say, 'Your move now'. The creature's gaze hinted at appreciation. She rose. "Good... Now. Water does not only flow outside." Sun-sparkles flew from her scales. "Do you know The Swimming Dragon?" They knew that old Tai Chi tradition. They formed a circle around the beast and started to perform the flowing twists and movements belonging to the martial art that stimulates the flow of Tchi. Before long, they were flowing in unison. Barely noticeable, the air filled with a slight mist above the water barrels. The sun's rays reached the tiny drops, creating hazy rainbows with vibrant colours dancing to the rhythm of the crowd. It was incredibly beautiful. So beautiful in fact, they





could feel their eyes fill up. "Yes..." the dragon whispered. "Let it flow from the inside..." She started to move with the group. "Tell me, my children of Feng Huang, what is it that shapes wood? Accelerates fire? Hardens steel? And makes flowers bloom? What connects all?" The great blue-white scaled beast roared, breast forward. "It is water." Di Long gazed towards the sun. "I worship the sun for its energy. But without water, the seed will not grow." As the dewdrops grew heavier, the air became denser with wisdom.

"WHEN ONE SEEKS  
TO CONNECT,  
ONE MUST ALWAYS  
BE FLUID"

With a whirl the magnificent animal sprang into the air, spiralling up through the dampness, gathering and spinning together a gush of water. "Your eyes have water to better see. Sound is carried by water to make you hear. Touch is flow by nature." The small trickle of water in the riverbed grew quickly into a gushing stream. "All senses are fluid. And there is no greater taste and smell than that of fresh, free flowing water!" Her voice boomed. "You have come far, my people of Tchai. But to restore the Tchi of these villages and their enterprises..." The beast bellowed. "We must FLOW!" With a loud snap, the dragon whipped the water into a swirling cone amidst the dancing people of Tchai. Then she glided around the growing plume of water in a wide circle, allowing it to amass even higher.

The deep rumble of a flood filled the sky. And with one final, blisteringly fast pass, she forced the aquatic volcano to burst. It poured all over them. In a flood of emotion, the people of Tchai roared, drinking the rain, crying happiness and splashing in the puddles. The river flowed as far as the eye could see. Softly, the water dragon landed. "My children of Feng Huang, this is my old wisdom for this new age of Aquarius; If you wish to build even more genuine connections, remember what we did today. Moving water never stagnates." And the people of Tchai knew. They had reached flow. In fact, they were now drenched in it.





PLEASE DO  
NOT TOUCH

INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Sociology**

READING TIME  
**1:31**

KEYWORDS  
**#CommunityGardens**  
**#LocalSliceOfParadise**  
**#Biodiversity**  
**#GreenGoldDiggers**

## GOLD DIGGERS ON GREEN PLOTS





PLEASE DO  
NOT TOUCH

Allotments —they're really something to dig into. We seem to grow closer when we, eh, grow close together. And to borrow from Gandhi: 'to forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves.' But getting an allotment has become nearly impossible. Why?

Allotments are vital to communities, especially in urban areas where families often can't afford a house with any outdoor space. Renting an allotment used to be cheap, allowing a diverse group of people to 'own' a plot. Well-kept allotments result in a wealth of biodiversity that urban areas desperately need. They offer food security, an outlet for stress and anxiety —common problems in cities— and keep people happy, busy and healthy.

### ALLOTMENTS AS SECLUDED SANCTUARIES, YOUR LOCAL SLICE OF PARADISE TO UNWIND AFTER THE CRAZE OF A MODERN-DAY DAY

But many municipalities are wanting a piece of the pie. Forget the previous everyday sociability allotments offered. Imagine instead: twinkling lights, a hammock, a small crackling

fire, and a crisp glass of rose —allotments as secluded sanctuaries, your local slice of paradise to unwind after the craze of a modern-day day. As cities overcrowd, people are willing to pay a pretty penny to have this type of pied-a-terre. No wonder waiting lists cover years now and prices have gone up around 800%: little green spaces have become goldmines for municipalities.

Allotments for the people may be harder and harder to come by, but we can take the shovel into our own hands. Globally, urban gardens and pockets of green are sprouting as people reclaim their right to grow in cities. From sustainable urban farming in Portland Oregon, USA, to project Cultivation Street in the UK or, in the Netherlands, with 'tegeltje wippen' (taking out tiles from the pavement in front of your house to use as a strip for planting). Plenty of patches of struggling grass and graffitied benches could instead be decked out with raised garden beds. We could plant fruit trees in our streets and hang planter bags from lamp posts. We could guerrilla garden the heck out of our cities. It just requires us to think outside the box (or planter), perhaps unionising willing gardeners instead of having gold diggers.





INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Architecture**

READING TIME  
**1:15**

KEYWORDS  
**#InsideEgg**  
**#TIJ**  
**#Nest**  
**#CircularDesign**  
**#BirdObservatorium**

**eggciting design**





**'Het Ei van de Stern', at Stellendam in the Netherlands, is designed in the shape of an eleven metre tern egg, made of reeds, tree branches and sand and aims to bring humans and nature closer together.**

It functions as an observatory where people can explore the changes, developments and increase in the health of the ecosystem in the Haringvliet over the coming years. A group of dam-like constructions have been opened in the nature reserve to improve water quality and biodiversity, making it an attractive area for birds such as the Sandwich tern —a type of gull— which is the star of this breathtaking, natural area.

Many waterbirds forage and nest on the small islands that surround the observatory. These can be marvelled at through a 360° view that the gigantic artwork offers when inside. From within you can see that it has a parametric design allowing a feast for the eye, both when gazing inside-egg or when peeking outside-egg!

'T IJ was produced in Finland from durable materials and was delivered in 400 pieces by boat. It was built on location using the Zollinger technique. As the building is intended to

## the tern's egg

be temporary, it is possible to disassemble it, something Thomas Rau and RO&AD architects had in mind when creating their circular design. This minimises the impact on the environment and the ecosystem on site, now and in the future.

In order not to disturb the birds, it is essential to move stealthily. Therefore, the inside is insulated with a hybrid wooden-concrete floor. The construction of the frame is from timber, the lower part, which can be submerged, is made of sustainable Accoya, while the top is constructed from tree branches. The 'shell' is made of reeds —locally harvested from the dike— and stops just above the highest possible high waterline. Sand martins are encouraged to nest in the artificial nesting holes around the entry tunnel.

Twitcher or not... a truly inspiring place to visit.





# A FUT URE WITH PLAS TIC

INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Sustainability**

READING TIME  
**1:42**

KEYWORDS  
**#Unwasted**  
**#Gorrie**  
**#Canada**  
**#LeadByExample**  
**#NewPlasticsEconomy**





Ever since Ashley Gorrie —CEO of Gorrie, Canada’s oldest advertising and marketing services company— went scuba-diving with her parents at the age of 15, she’s felt a deep love for the ocean. Observing the underwater world impacted her profoundly and made her realise that we should be respectful of our time on earth. Many moons later, after the pandemic reminded her again of our human impact on our blue planet, she felt called to pursue a life-long dream of doing her bit for the oceans. The result is UNWASTED.

**FANTASTIC PLASTIC PROBLEM**  
Leading a successful 135-old business confronts Ashley Gorrie with plastics daily. Like many others, her company needs it. Plastic use has increased twentyfold in the past 50 years, and production will probably double by 2050. But each year, 8 million tonnes of plastic enter the ocean, equal to a garbage truck dumping a load of garbage on your lawn every minute of every day for a year. It’s one of the astonishing facts that propelled Ashley into action to use her talents to help divert plastic from the oceans and think of a new plastics economy. Her approach is two-fold: to lead by example and to educate the industry. Ashley: “We want to educate and empower everyone so that individually we can make the change. For the love of our future, let’s create the world we need”.

**RETHINK, REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE**  
Most of us feel pretty good about recycling. Because, as it turns out: plastic recycling is smoke and mirrors, an idea brought to us by Big Oil itself when plastic pollution became undeniable. Only 9% of what we recycle gets recycled. Why? Because plastic recycling is complex and, more importantly for the industry, uneconomical. But if we rethink and reduce plastic, a New Plastics Economy is possible. We would have to eliminate all problematic and unnecessary plastics, innovate to ensure that the plastics we do need are reusable, recyclable, or compostable, and circulate the plastic items we use to keep them in the economy and out of the environment.

**LET’S GET UNWASTED**  
UNWASTED follows this vision of a new plastics economy by creating beautiful, functional garden furniture from recycled materials and encourages the industry to accept and respect recycled materials like any other. A single UNWASTED chair recycles 60 lbs of plastic waste. This year’s goal for UNWASTED is to keep up to 60,000 lbs of plastic from getting into the ocean. It’s very inspirational, in fact we should all get more unwasted!







INSPIRATIONAL THEME  
**Future**

READING TIME  
**4:03**

KEYWORDS  
**#NowWhat**  
**#FutureVision**  
**#IndividualTruths**  
**#GroupPower**  
**#Now**

We've pondered the quickly changing current events while revisiting insights from our previous four magazines. We wondered what remained true and what has changed in the meantime. Which leaves us with one question:

# NOW WHAT?





## THAT WHICH WE THOUGHT ONLY EXISTED IN FICTION, HAS BECOME OUR REALITY.

### STAYING CHANGED

Digitalisation, spurred on by the pandemic, has forever changed and expanded the ways we live, work, collaborate, research and connect. Yes; there are downsides to the digital revolution and there should be checks and balances to keep us safe. But at the same time, it's here, and its presence will continue to grow. Therefore, we want to look on the bright side and focus on the positives of our increasing digitalisation. Think of the free flow of information, more transparency and a better distribution of knowledge. Consumers are more informed and digitally connected than ever before. Digital communities form more easily and aren't bothered by physical limitations such as human boundaries or time zones (Consumer God, page 11).

Computers also allow us to research a level of detail that we've never seen before. They push the boundaries of our knowledge time and again. Teaching us about the intricate workings of our universe and, even more impressively, our human brain, and perhaps helping us overcome disabilities and disease (Starstruck by Our Brain, page 23).

### PRESERVING OUR PLANET

Cities become greener and city dwellers line up for their own pockets of green at communal gardening sites (Gold Diggers on Green Plots, page 51). Simultaneously, nature becomes more inhabited, opening up to small living spaces that immerse you in nature for some much-needed forest bathing and relaxation. For example, by booking a night away in the biophilic design of Cabin ANNA, which has the unique ability to open its roof to really experience the open air and nature (Cabin ANNA, page 21).

And as we yearn for nature, we are also confronted with the fact that it's not a given. Access and time to enjoy it are a luxury and a privilege and something we need to protect and grow. From cutting back on plastic (A Future With Plastic, page 55) to moving towards other more sustainable practices. Whether it concerns us as individuals or as companies, we

must all make continued, incremental steps towards setting sustainable goals (Sustainable Paradigm Shift, page 39). We need to care more for our people and our planet.

As usual, a thing like that boils down to money. How can we afford to do it? Although the real question is: how can we afford not to? Perhaps we have to find creative ways to fund sustainability. One of the ways could be through NFTs. Their future is still uncertain, and despite criticism, we'd also like to think in terms of their possibilities. We could see them as an alternative currency or 'Non-Forgettable Trading' (NFTs, page 13).

### FLOWING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

It's not a stretch to say, that what we thought only existed in fiction, has become our reality. Let it motivate us to face the future with an open mind. To trust what comes our way, to surrender to the flow of the now. Surrendering in this sense doesn't mean giving up, and it doesn't mean fighting either. It's committing to your truest self by committing to what works best for you. It's up to us to discover our purpose in life and take our rightful place in the world. Ask yourself, as a person and a brand: who do you want to be, how do you relate to others, and how do you wish to evolve?

Following the tale of the Water Dragon (page 47), we learn that genuine connections between people allow everything to flow and nothing becomes stagnant. From there, we can move together towards the future. Of course, the beauty is that this is true... not only for the people of Tchai. It's true for all of us.

### STRONG CONNECTIONS

After finding your purpose and place in the world, you can work on your life mission from a place of strength. That is when you are best connecting to those who stand for their own individual truths and power. Strong, clear communities are a result.

## WE FORESEE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR A BRIGHTER, GENUINELY CONNECTED FUTURE.





## NOW IS POWERFUL. AND THE RIGHT PLACE TO BE.

Brands can build bridges between these communities by showcasing and initiating collaborations (The X of Success, page 45).

During a panel discussion about the future of retail, nearly everyone agreed that physical shopping will still exist in the future. But these physical interactions with brands will be much more about brand experience, social connection, unique concepts, and having the opportunity of a real sensory experience. After all, our bodies will still have those lovely capabilities of touch, smell, and the more subtle senses which we are unable to engage with online. We need physical human interaction for real connections, and brands might be the perfect facilitators for real human encounters offline (What Now — Now What, page 29). These types of interconnections are becoming more and more valued. Because, despite apparent digital

individualism and a pandemic which has kept us physically distancing, there is a stronger urge than ever to connect and to be part of something positive. Thanks to the incredible abilities of brands to join communities together, we foresee the possibilities for a brighter, genuinely connected future.

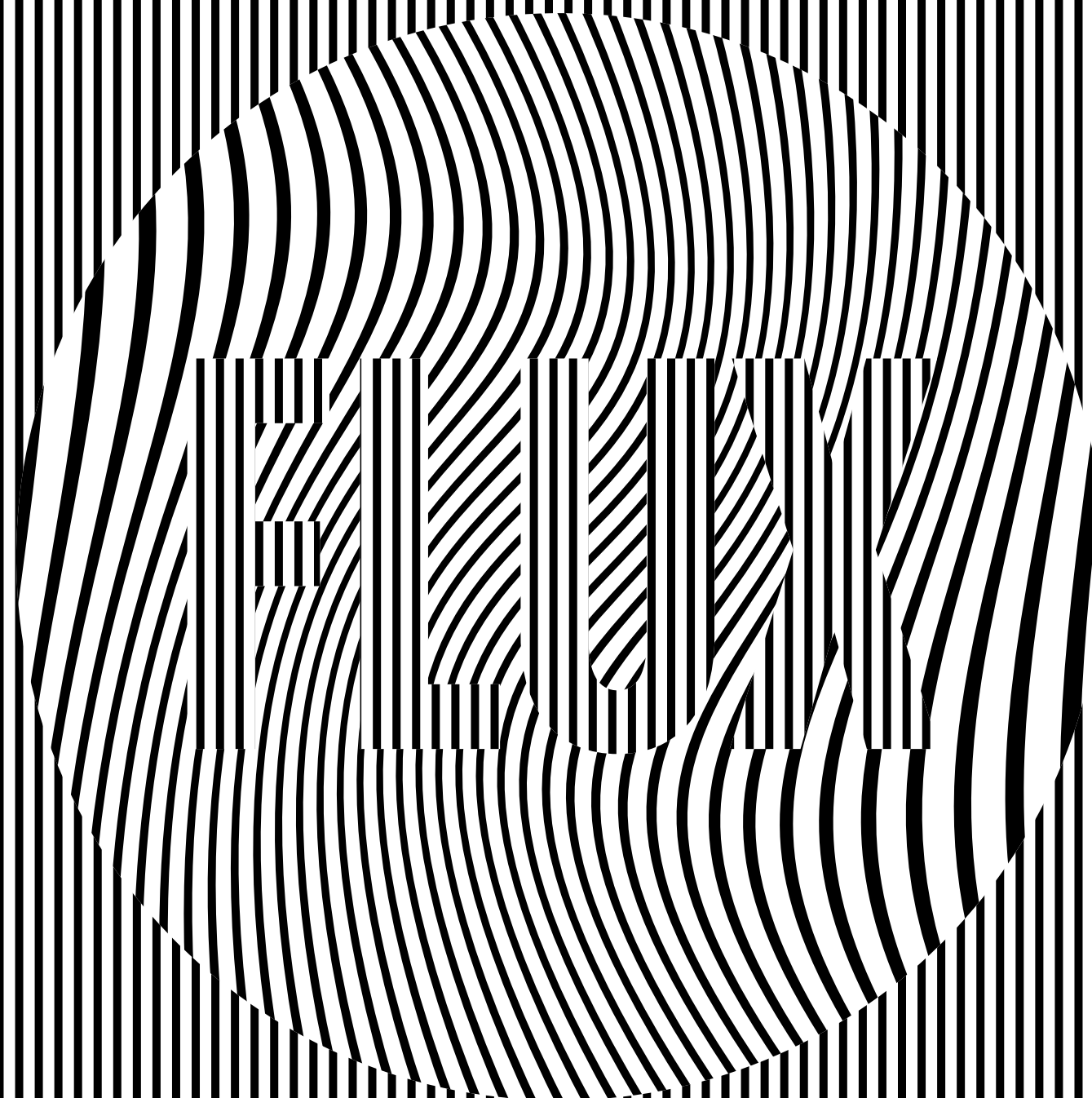
### TOGETHER NOW

*'No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main'.*

Current events and world threats have made it crystal clear that we are nowhere if we do not collaborate. We must trust our choices and trust each other to be able to surrender and commit to what we want for the future. Because we're all part of humanity, and if one person hurts, we all hurt. Together, we can thrive. Together we can work on a healthy, durable, connected future. Together, we can make real change. How? Well, by starting small, of course. By starting with ourselves. In the now.

Because there is nothing else. There is no one else to change but you. And there is no other moment than now. Now is powerful. And the right place to be. The only time to be happy, and alive, and active. What a thrill to be living now.

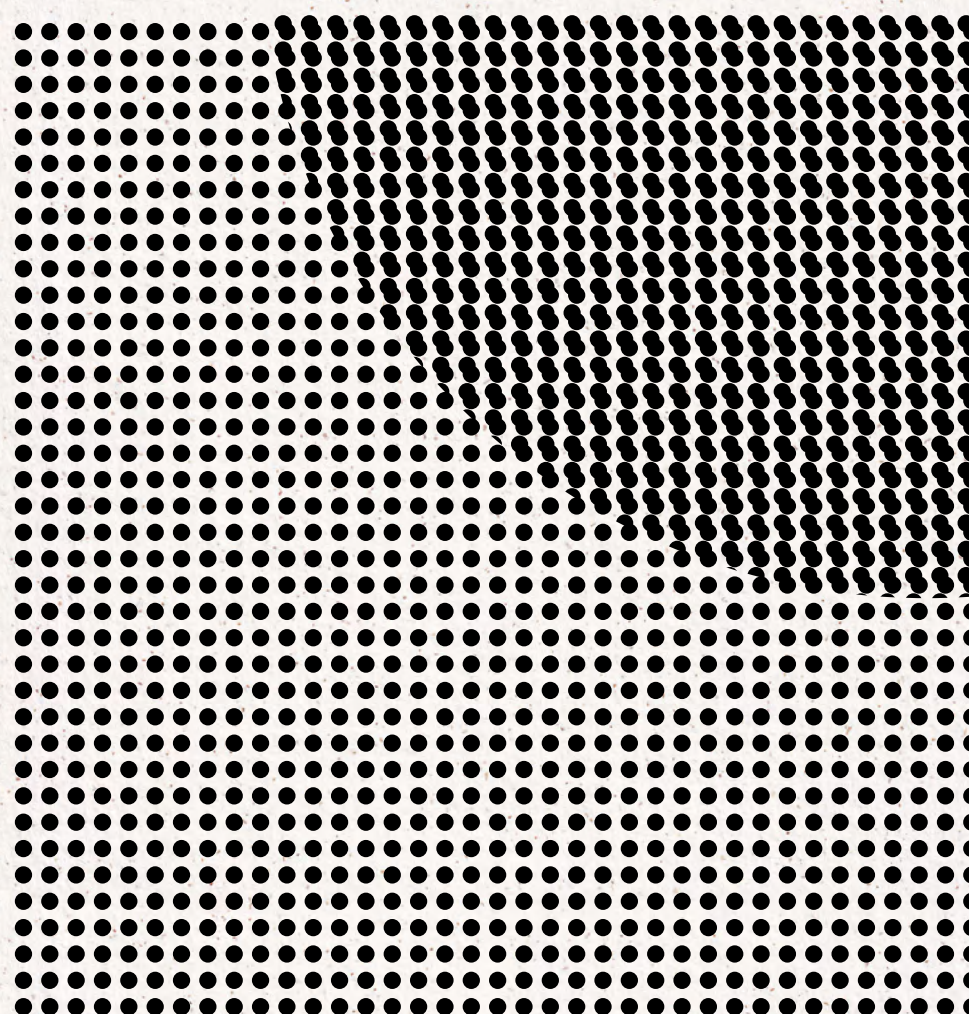




Everything is in a state of flux

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**Reflection**  
READING TIME  
**0:07**  
KEYWORDS  
**#Flux**  
**#Moiré**

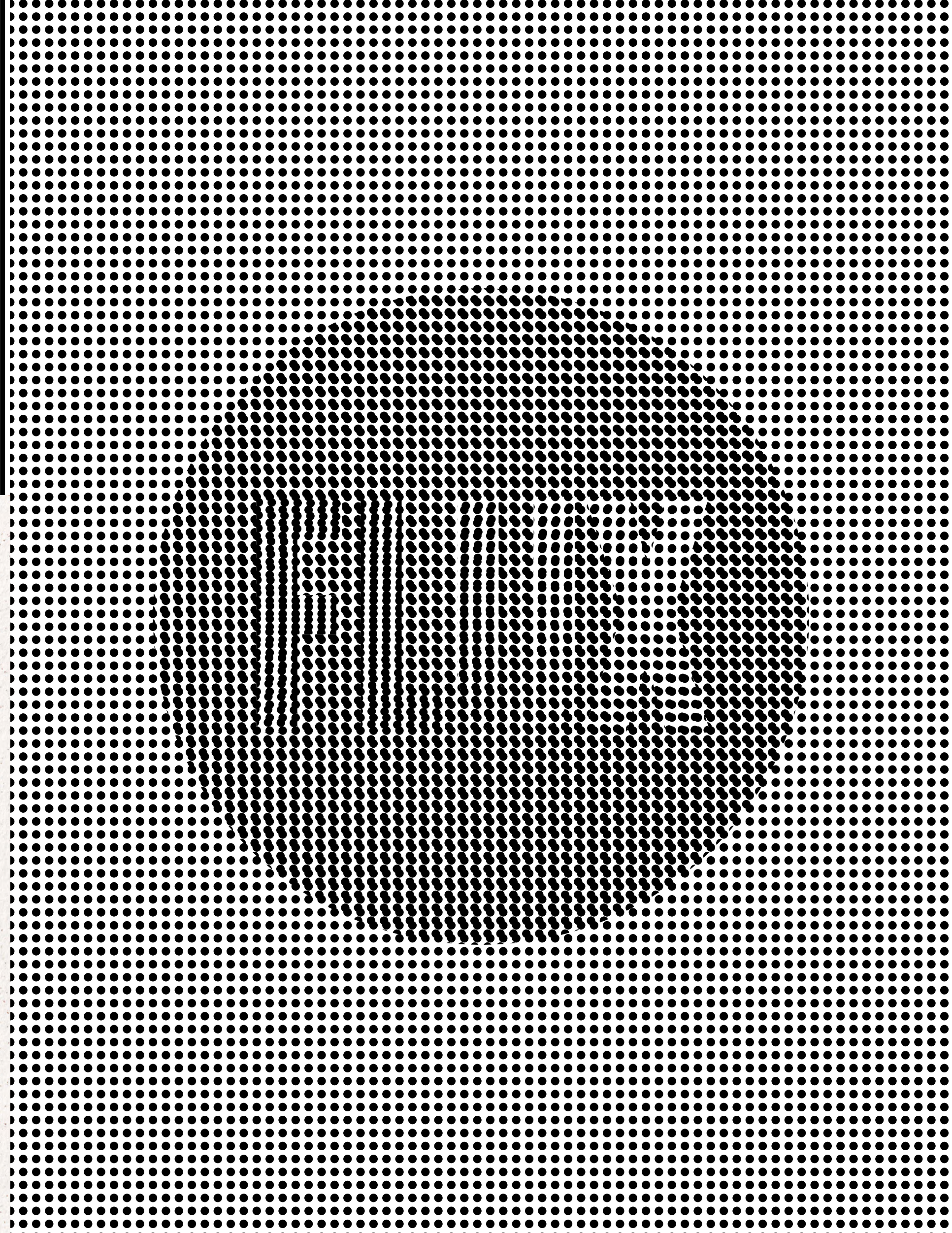
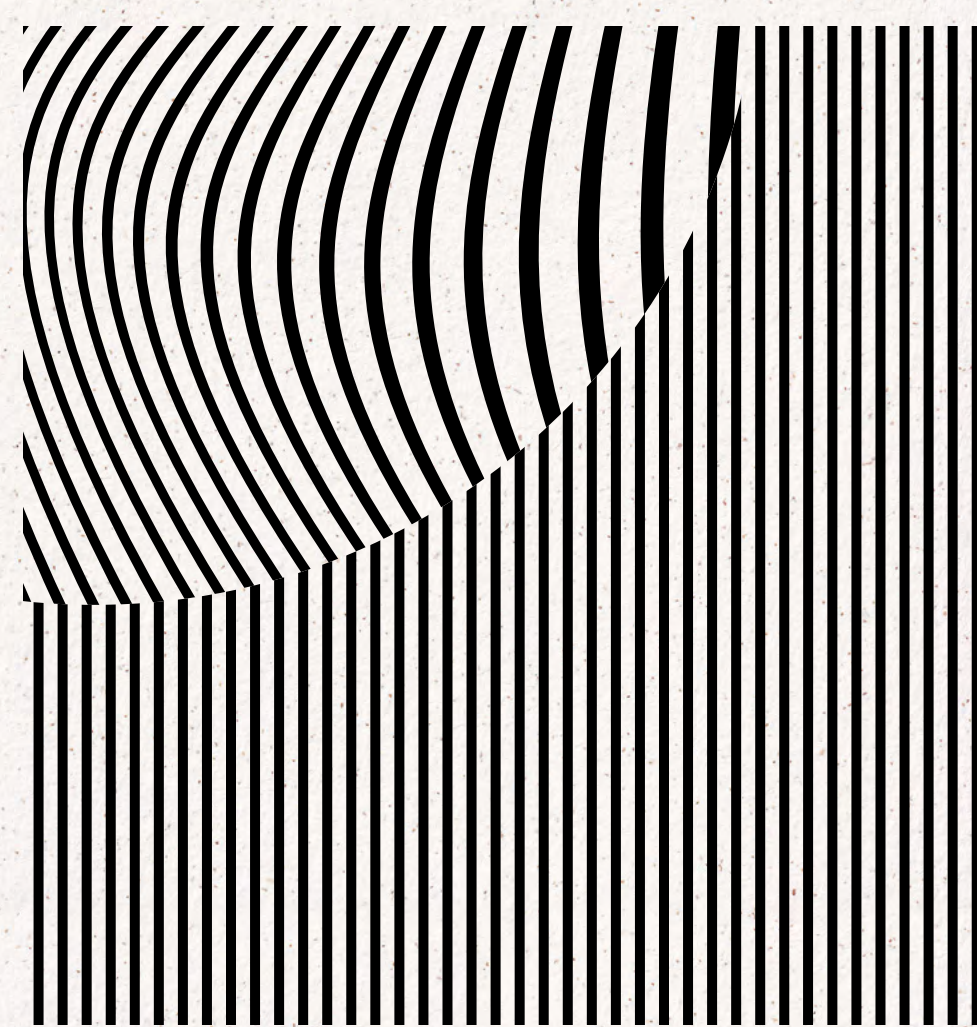






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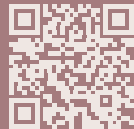




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**We are Tchai.** While creating eye-catching product presentations and remarkable brand experiences for retail and hospitality, we naturally explore what happens in the world and share these insights with you through this magazine. We believe that making experiences in the physical ignites deep and genuine connections. Hence, we hope you will treasure this issue of TCHI in your hands or let it shine on your coffee table or bookshelf.

Did the articles in this magazine reflect your inner thoughts or trigger your curiosity?



Scan the QR or check [www.tchai.nl](http://www.tchai.nl) for follow-ups on these subjects and for more insights.

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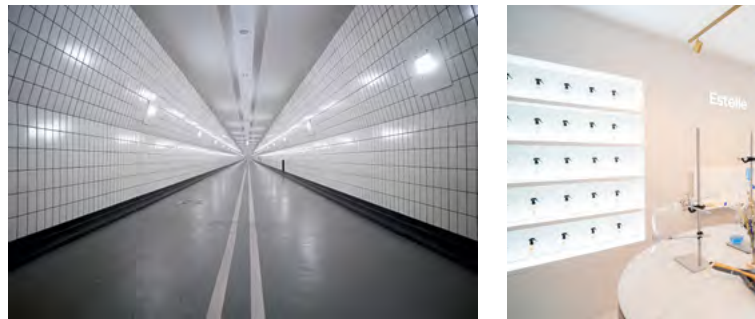
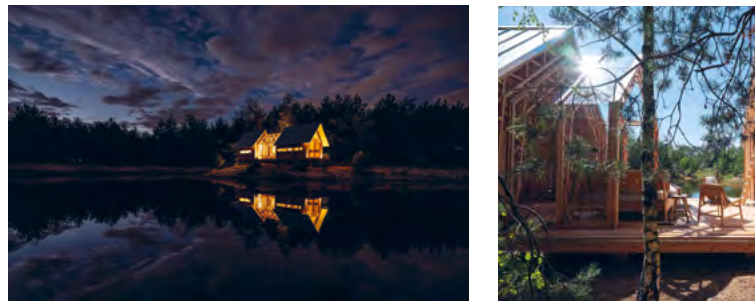
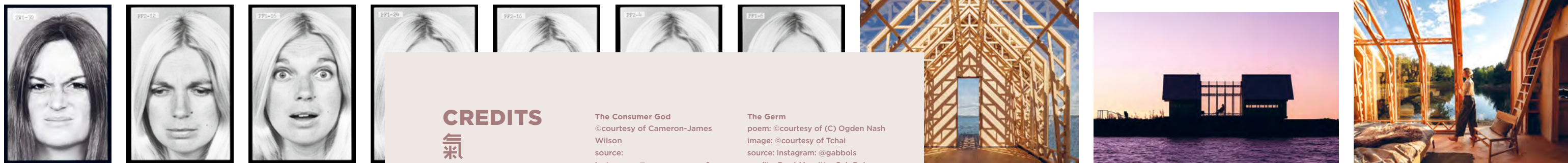
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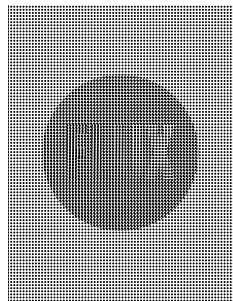
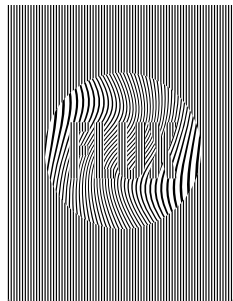
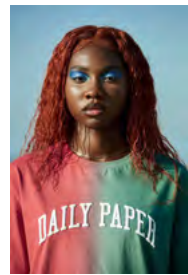
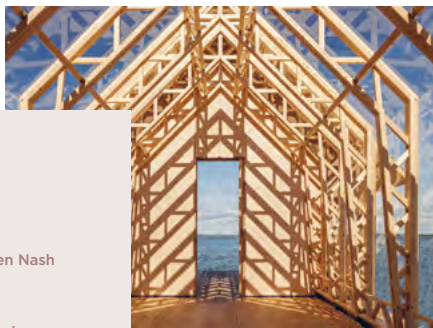
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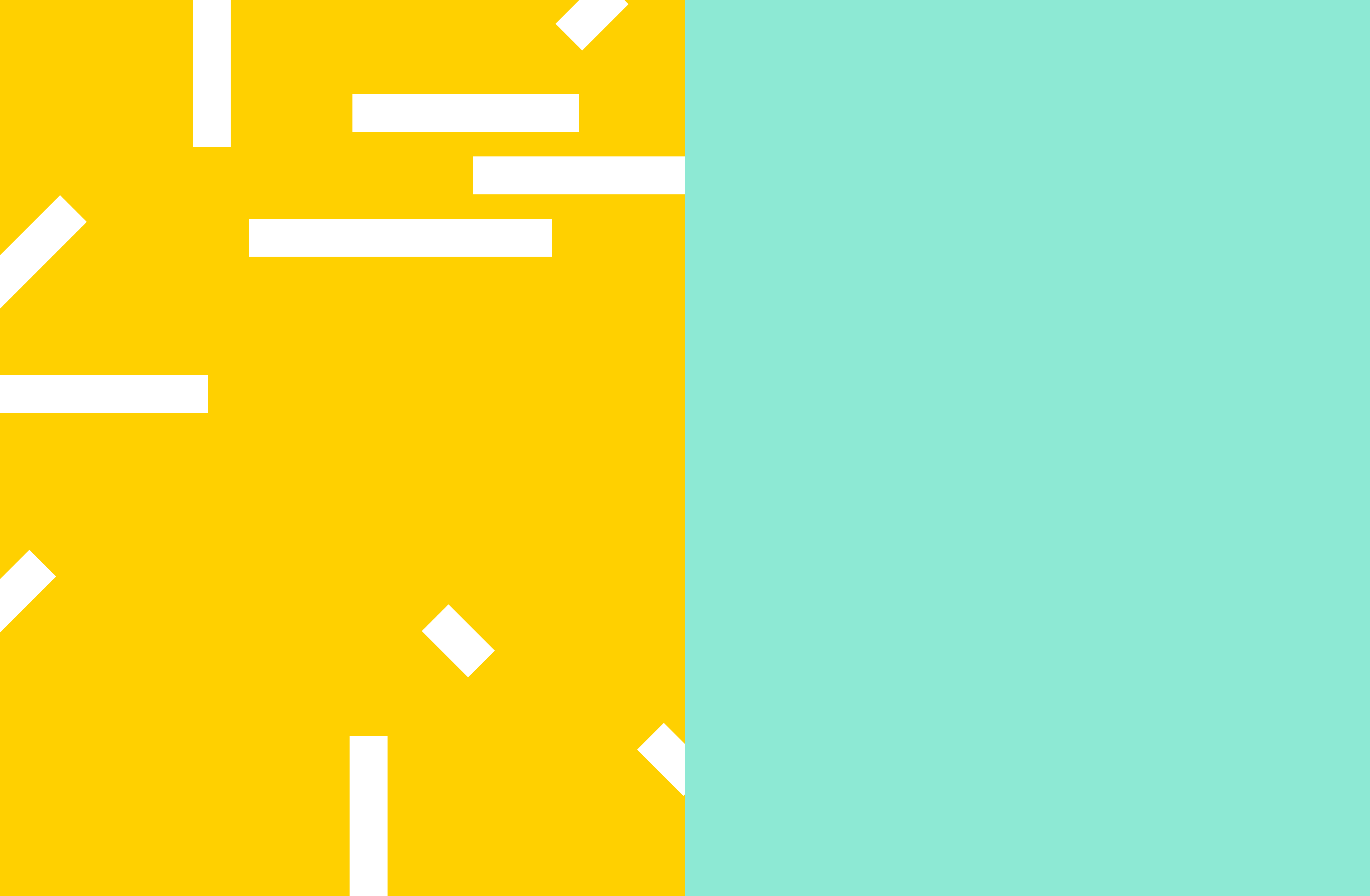
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