Visual Trends Report 2020

EyeEm

Welcome to EyeEm's Visual Trend Report for 2020.

Over the past 12 months, our expert visual and marketing teams have taken a closer look at the millions of image search queries our customers input daily into our global image library. This photographic analysis has helped us observe the unmistakable trending themes we believe are predicted to have the greatest impact on the wider creative scene in 2020.

We also took a fresh look at the incredible visuals created by our professional **Collective** to get a better fix on where the most influential commercial changes are coming from, and we reached out to our passionate creative community for regular visual inspiration. We have designed this guide to be an educational visual resource that can reinvigorate your next brand campaign and assist you in reaching more customers in 2020.

At EyeEm, we are passionate about photography and video. With an image library comprising of over **120 million photographs** from a community of **25+ million creators**, we are confident in our community's predictive ability to forecast the most prominent visual and creative impacts in 2020. That's because we're less worried about using tired marketing buzzwords and instead, more invested in exploring authentic visual and creative concepts your team can use right now to gain a competitive brand edge.

We invite you to share in our creative vision.

EyeEm.

x

All trends and subchapters in this visual guide are clickable and willl guide you directly to that section.

Alina Potapenko

All images in this visual guide are clickable
and can help you source the right images
for your next creative brand campaign.
Consider a **Custom Production** for images
that speak directly to your brand.

Lorella Furleo Semeraro

VISUAL TREND 01

PRODUCED REALISM

Produced Realism

Commercial photography as believable and relatable in an era of socially-aware advertising

STAGED REALITY

As we welcome the start of the new decade, we predict "Produced Realism" to peak as a major visual trend in 2020. More campaigns will focus on telling real stories in a global marketplace that demands genuine customer interaction. We now live in an environment where a lack of authenticity counts against businesses. Campaign creatives are eagerly connecting the dots with street-art techniques and borrowing photojournalistic aesthetics that break convention with traditional big-stage glossy production visuals. Produced realism feels more intimate and raw as an advertising medium by breaking down traditional commercial barriers.

The trend is a celebration of the "less is more" visual principle and a departure from previous year's glamour styles: think less styling and lavish art direction and a renewed dedication to visuals that celebrate all-things amauter and a rise of 'authentic' brand stories.

DISPOSABLE & INSTANT

For fresh visual ideas, brands should be prepared to take retrospective cues for inspiration. We expect to see more brands experimenting with intentional overexposure in their shots, bright (and purposeful) flashes and a classic retro-tone that feels like it could have been shot on a budget 1980s Kodak instant camera. The produced realism trend encourages brands to mimic the spontaneous storytelling energy of a 'candid' snapshot, a genuine story moment which gives the subject an opportunity to reveal truth without unnecessary props, artificial lighting or excessive digital retouching. For businesses, it's about telling simple product stories that elevate the human side of capitalism.

Nadi Yaroshevich

Linas Vaitonis

Linas Vaitonis

REAL PEOPLE &
REAL STORIES

As a visual framing device, the choice to present 'real people' telling 'real stories' is a technique brands can use to visualize complex socially-aware journalistic perspectives through compelling visual narratives. One of the advantages of appearing to create non-perfect images and videos that look like they were shot by accident, is that brands are increasingly able to achieve a more relatable, trustworthy tone than if they had tried to control all the visual elements on a shoot.

This choice of brand visual is both highly-constructed and deliberately composed in such a way that it's often indistinguishable from the non-professional creations they seek to reproduce.

YOUTH NARRATIVES: CANDID PHOTOGRAPHY

Got a sneaker to sell? Tell it with a street motif.

Street/Candid photography is now considered one of the most affordable and accessible artforms and used by many young creatives as a vehicle for social-ly-aware and diverse storytelling forms that routinely push boundaries, explore themes such as gender and diversity and are particularly effective on social media.

In fact, the evolution of candid-based photography has come a long way since its first early historical moments when Louis Daguerre practically started the medium when he took the first street photograph of Paris way back in 1839. From a contemporary perspective, the storytelling style is now favoured by large modern brands as a way of paying homage to the popular grit-ty underground art movements of the late twentieth century. As a way to engage younger consumers, we predict more brands to target this visual style in their advertising campaigns in 2020 to tell more engaging stories.

Have you ever tried to sell to Gen Z and millenni-als? Brands are quietly tapping into this trend as one of the key sales techniques used to build trust with youth consumer markets. Beyond the obvious visual distractions, brands need to rethink the creative brief from this audience's perspective: they consume con-tent that is mobile-first, that content is likely to be mainly user-generated by people their own age and they are **twice as likely** to get their news from social media and messaging apps than any other audience.

Check out our Street Photographer Award Winner

Johan Jehlbo

Johan Jehlbo

Cem Guenes

EXPERT CORNER

"We need to shift the brand conversation. Even if it's commercial, it has to look like it's not staged. It has to be about real and authentic people, so don't be afraid to tell the truth in advertising.

Cem Guenes is a Photo Designer based in Germany. He has worked with some of the world's top brands including Coca Cola, Vodafone, EasyJet, Heinz, Nike, Bayer and BMW, to name just a few.

CREATOR INSIGHT

Cem's Photography Advice for
Top Campaign Visuals:

01

Flexible sketches: Be flexible with early brand sketches. Try not to get stuck on early visualizsations and give your brand room to move creatively in later discussions.

02

Stay open-minded: At the brief stage, it's fine to have one set of ideas, but be prepared to offer more freedom to the photographer at later stages by staying open to new creative moods and ideas.

03

Allow trust: Clients usually love to book a photographer who already has the image they think they need for their campaign before they even start. But creativity flows best when brands offer more autonomy to the photographer to help guide the conversation.

04

Portfolio: A photographer's portfolio only tells part of the story. Brands should look to the best ideas, rather than seek pre-made visual templates for more effective campaigns. Find your own voice: A photographer who tries to shoot every style is often a master of none.

Cem Guenres

HEX

+ 165%

Johan Jehlbo

Search requests on EyeEm for **candid** have increased 165% in 2019 and we predict it to grow strongly in 2020, along with **documentary** (up 140%) and **street photography** (up 110%).

Cozens-McNeelance

Wangslok

EyeEm continues to lead with its innovative visuals in the area of custom brand photography. As we' have seen in our global community of 25 million creators, we expect to see an increase in urban commercial street photography styles emerge as a key visual winner in 2020 and as a leading design inspiration for 'produced realism'.

Emrah Uygun

Aiyush Pachnanda

E   🔍 DOCUMENTARY

+ 140%

Johan Jehlbo

Brand Tips:
Why this trend matters

01   **Platform suitability:** Brands need to tailor their message to match the platform. With Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok actively pursuing Gen Z demos, companies should look to adopt the kind of photographic styles that look like they were produced on those same platforms. Think vertical layouts, tight close-ups and subject-as-the-story POV.

02   **Experiment:** Don't be afraid to get edgy by dropping risk-averse attitudes. Brands should refrain from clean and stocky images and look to experiment with different visual ideas that reflect the themes and concerns of today. Think less consumerism and more compelling social and environmental commentary at the campaign level.

03   **Stay fresh:** Look to avoid boring campaign visuals by stale compositions. Ensure your brief relates to the subject organically by getting close on the action.

CLICK ON THE IMAGE TO PURCHASE

Linas Vaitonis

VISUAL TREND 02

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

REFRAMING
MENTAL HEALTH
AWARENESS

HOW BRANDS CAN VISUALISE MENTAL HEALTH IN 2020 AND BEYOND

"The need to reopen the conversation around mental health comes as no real surprise, given that most of us now live, work, and consume in an era heavily guided by social media and advertising. Consumers are sold false ideals enveloped within false need. When the reality does not match these fairytale standards, many of us are left feeling underwhelmed, unsatisfied, andmore worryingly, disconnected.

Brands are at the forefront of this crisis, and can help by opening a conversation through transparency and credibility. This could lead to furthering education around mental health and thus hopefully an end to the social taboo that it's been in association with for far too long. The only thing that should be considered unnatural about various mental and emotional dispositions is the shame in talking about them."

Jonathon Davison, Visual Editor, EyeEm

To Nabergoj

Jonas Hafner

Megan Rogers

GENERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

As one of the wider themes of this generation and as a goal to strive for in 2020, the way we reframe mental health from a visual perspective is just as important as engaging in the conversation itself.

THE INVISIBLE TABOO

Under immense pressure from social media, work stress, and entrenched inequality, mental health has become one of the most significant issues facing young people in western OECD nations today. More troubling, the discussion around mental health has been largely absent in the wider advertising landscape and as a result, brands have traditionally struggled to have a consistent visual conversation around this 'invisible' topic, because of the intense societal stigma.

UNSATISFIED
UNDERWHELMED
DISCONNECTED

IT'S BEEN DONE BEFORE

THE VOICELESS

Reframing new visual perspectives for hot-button topics isn't novel for the industry. We've done it before. Marketing and advertising professionals have often found themselves on the right side of history, campaigning for issues that defend against the invisible, and provide a voice to the voiceless. If we take LGBTQ rights for example, brand creatives succeeded in changing organizational and commercial approaches to the issue, both visually and creatively. We can do the same for mental health too.

A host of innovative campaigns have recently succeeded in approaching the health and disability cautiously, albeit respectfully. Maltesers **"New Boyfriend"** video spot was lauded for its treatment of the subject using humor to break the ice, while Marks and Spencer (M&S) and Tommy Hilfiger have both created **campaigns** that invite healthy discussion of people living with disability.

Carina König

Junhan Foong

THE BRAND RESPONSE

As part of the way we reframe the visual conversation around mental health through our photographic community and professional collective, brands also have a corporate and social responsibility to ensure mental health issues are destigmatized and revisualized in a way that is both artistically 'beautiful' and conceptually, socially aware. This starts with the way we think about the issue and whether we choose quality stock images or produce custom visual content in unison with campaigns.

Dina Isaam

Riccardo Nosvelli

VISUAL EMPOWERMENT

If we can destigmatize an issue such as disability and visualize it in such a way that it empowers each of us to act more positive - then brands can design their campaigns around real people suffering from mental illness as well.

Instead, companies should seek to campaign openly around the normalcy of mental health by not keeping sufferers locked in silence or hidden from our screens and ensure we approach the issue with the same level of respect and dignity we succeeded in bringing to previous social issues.

Céline Figuiere

SELLING ASPIRATION RESPONSIBLY

Is it any wonder that so many of us are caught up in a spiral of "must-have" consumerism, when mental health diagnosis is sky-rocketing in young people today?

Advertising agencies and creatives all have a role to ensure their audience is respected, especially given the pressure on younger consumers who are constantly absorbing aspirational advertising tropes via social media platforms.

Jemimah Hope

EyeEm

In the last 3 years at EyeEm, search terms around **mental health** have quietly gone up more than 170% and the growth in these search requests points to a growing awareness in our community on this very important topic.
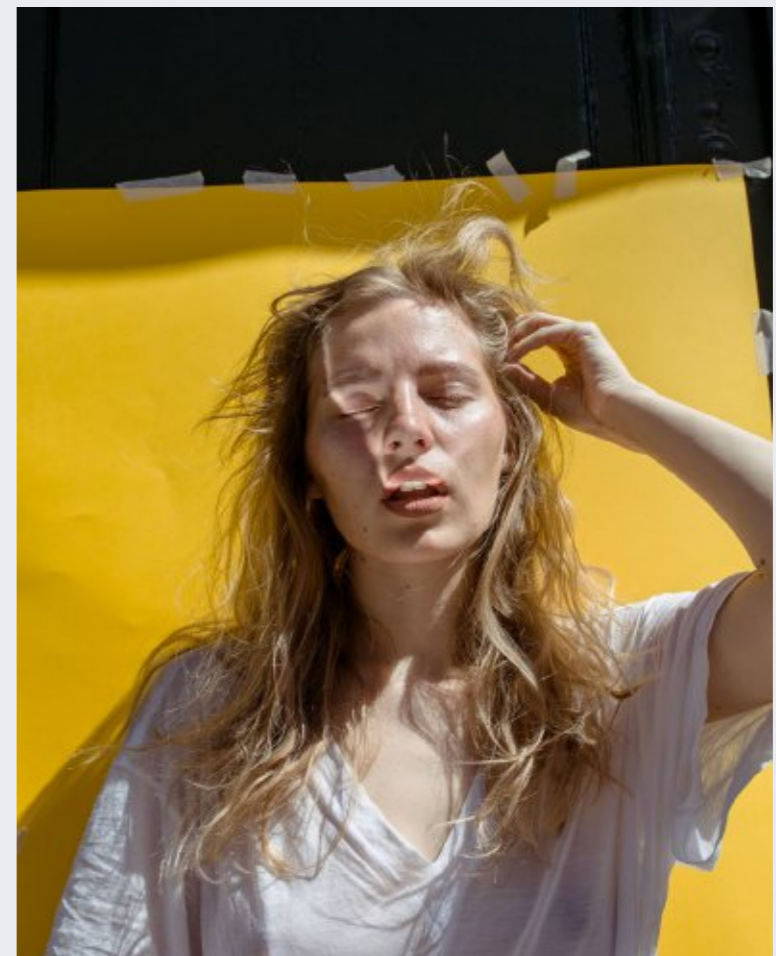
+ 170%

Audrey Kwok

Sarah Köster

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE NARRATIVE

Audrey Kwok

Sotiris Bougas

A number of large businesses have already begun the conversation to improve mental health awareness. In May 2019, Burger King positioned their '**Real Meals**' video spot to normalize the issue as part of **Mental Health Awareness Week**. Advocates drew praise for raising the issue in a major public campaign, but some detractors saw it as commercialization of a serious issue.

That same year, global bank HSBC **partnered** with United for Global Mental Health's (UGMH) '**Speak Your Mind**' campaign, which helps to provide mental health support to the people who need it most. The bank is also a significant supporter of **World Mental Health Day,** with bank employees encouraged to actively share their own experiences and also set up events. Campaign visuals used by HSBC are actively selected to ensure the mental health conversation is consistent, relevant and respectful.
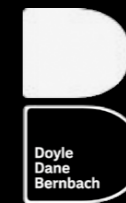
CLICK ON THE IMAGE TO PURCHASE

Evgeniy Kleymenov

AUTHENTICALLY RELEVANT

EXPERT CORNER

Doyle
Dane
Bernbach

"Inspiration is hidden everywhere - you just need to go through life with open eyes. The best inspiration comes through the briefings themselves, deeply understanding the product, people and reasons, the usage and the why's behind the product. In the end, inspiration is one thing; the result of creative hard work."

**Dennis May, Chief Creative Officer,
DDB Group Germany.**

Brand Tips:
Why this trend matters

01 **Start the conversation:** It's up to creatives to find the delicate balance between images that can be both beautiful and aesthetically attractive, while successfully initiating a conversation around mental health issues.

02 **Be truthful:** There is a need to create visuals that actually portray mental health accurately. It might go without saying, but businesses need to move away from stocky cliched visualizations of mental health - you've likely seen the stressed out office worker pulling his or her hair out at some point online.

03 **Brand-normalization:** In 2020, we need to ask ourselves what it means to normalize mental health? Think about how we view the expression of faces through human emotion. Brands have the opportunity to redefine the conversation with images that add relevant meaning and respect to campaigns.

Akiomi Kuroda

Maria Maglionico

Dmitry Bayer

Xiaomeng Wang

EyeEm

VISUAL TREND 03

CITIZEN ACTIVISM

The Tool of Change

How do we tell a compelling visual story without expensive tools? And how can brands use this trend to increase the engagement and effectiveness of their own campaigns?

In 2020, change will be increasingly seized through the lens of our smartphones, providing social media platforms with compelling eyewitness video and photography, direct from the source. We call this visual trend 'Citizen Activism', where the smartphone is used as a tool to communicate the major social and political events of the day.

We see this as a prominent visual trend that fits in with a broader visual evolution of how the smartphone is used as a photojournalist tool that enables revolution and disseminates truth and knowledge to the world.

Although this has been a trend for a while now, we predict it's only going to contiue to grow in 2020, as phones get cheaper, phone cameras become more advanced and sharing platforms encourage a vigorous 24-hour content cycle.

HONG KONG IS THE FRONTLINE OF LIBERTIES DEFEND IT

E

🔍 ACTIVISM

+ 120%

Max Gor

Max Gor

THE TOOL OF RESISTANCE

In a world of 24 hour surveillance, the smartphone has been turned into a tool of resistance by populations across the globe, mixing live vertical video streaming with high-quality photography that can be easily edited and uploaded to the world to see in a matter of seconds.

Over the past 12 months, there has been a meteoric rise in 'citizen activism' events captured on our phones, whether it be the Hong Kong protest movement, broader climate change activism (i.e. Extinction Rebellion) or political and social protest across the globe pushing for gender and income equality, diversity, etc.

Search queries for **activism** and **protest** have skyrocketed in the previous 12 months by more than 120% and 95% respectively.

Paul Wong

E 🔍 PROTEST

+ 95%

MAGNUM COLLABORATION

This year, EyeEm **collaborated** with the legendary photo agency Magnum on multiple projects to focus on delivering strong photojournalism to our community. Their history of capturing incredible moments and telling a broader story of who we are today is a big reason why we think the mobile phone is such an essential visual tool for the world's untold stories.

Joey Reginaldo

VIDEO MATTERS: THE PORTABLE STUDIO

The phone isn't just a brilliant photographic tool. Most modern phones now shoot Full HD video and some are already churning out unrivaled 4K video. There has never been a time in history where the tools to capture incredible video moments have been both affordable and accessible to more people in the world. The smartphone can double as a portable video studio or newsroom by encouraging more creative use wherever we travel.

EyeEm's recent partnership with stock-video company **Pond5** is an exciting example of what's possible with a phone, and brands should look to mobile video as the next big source of story inspiration. It might not look as slick as a big studio campaign, but the Cinéma vérité emphasis on 'in your face' reality is how most audiences under 30 now consume video across Instagram, You-Tube, Twitter and Facebook.

Brand Tips:
Why this trend matters

01 **Mimic the style:** The techniques and devices of the citizen activist movement are also a chance for brands to mimic the storytelling models of photojournaists and activists. This includes using vertical video tecniques, plenty of handheld movements, powerful close-ups and from a photographic POV, an emphasis on the subject as the story.

02 **Target audience:** Brands should be open to producing content for social media apps and platforms that support and encourage younger audiences to view these types of stories.

03 **Choose video:** Mobile video will continue to grow as a popular format to tell unique stories (think Instagram or TikTok) with unique audience perspectives. Brands should look to younger creators for ideas around the most dynamic and clever visual use of the medium to get the most out of their own campaigns.

Max Gor

VISUAL TREND 04

THE NEW SELF

THE NEW SELF

In 2020, portraiture is the new selfie. Take advantage of this technique to connect with more consumers.

In 2020, the selfie is dead. As a symbol of the Internet's early pioneering spirit, aided by self discovery and lo-fi accessibility, we predict its days are shortly numbered. From the early 2000s as an art-form that celebrated all things immediate, raw and intimate, to its slow demise as a one-trick celebrity pony that brought us the selfie-stick, the 'usie' group shot and the inevitable 'selfie-pose'. It was perhaps only rivalled by the fish-gape for its visual impact on a generation of social media consumers perplexed by the release of Kim Kardashian's revelatory book **"Selfish"**.

Instead, what's old is new again and creatives are actively welcoming back the ever-reliable portrait as the selfie's promising replacement. Minus the **face-altering apps**, modern portraiture has quickly grown into an art space that reflects each creator's fragile ego; their hopes and fears and their own attempts to turn every visual emotion into a tightly scripted brand spot.
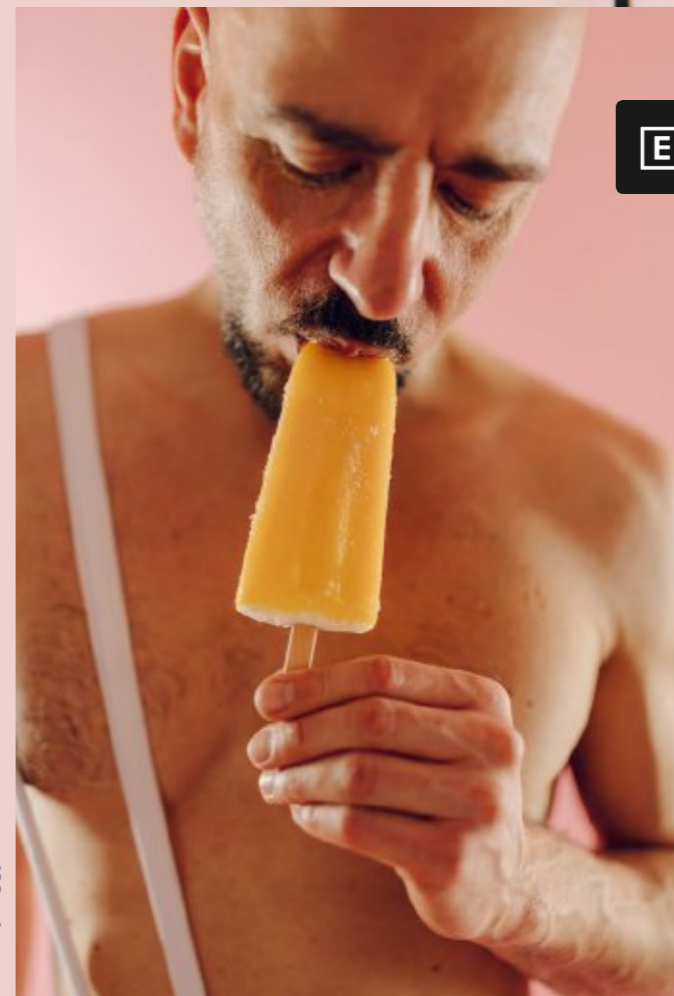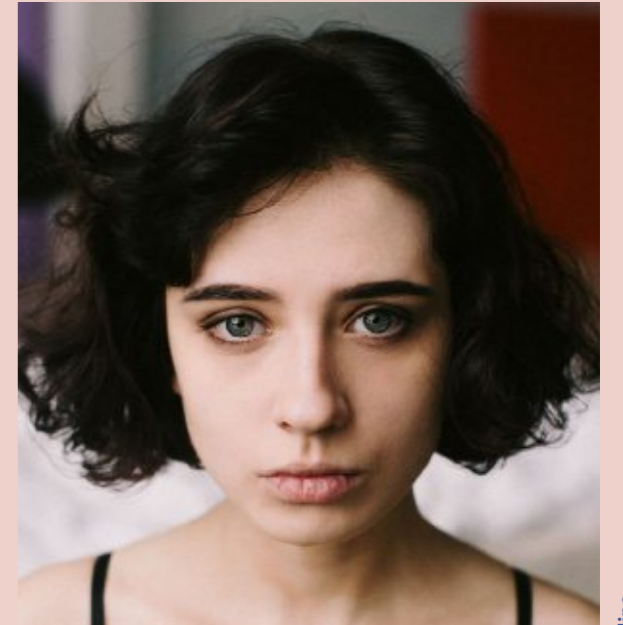

Search queries for **portrait** have continued to grow on our platform for the past number of years, but 2019 has seen some of the biggest search increases from our community, jumping by almost 220% year on year and we expect the search term to reach new heights in 2020.

Alen Danilina

+ 220%

E 🔍 PORTRAIT

Oliver Byunggyu Woo

Where the selfie failed miserably, today's portraits are a sophisticated social media Frankenstein that can help communicate simple and precise messages to the world.

As a trend to watch in 2020, we take a closer look at how the portrait is shaking up the brand world.

Denise Kwong

"Modern portraiture has quickly grown into a space that reflects each creator's ego."

Katerina Mavrodi

Ansgar Schwarz

Jan Tong

Carina König

clearer visual messaging

As a digital art form, the selfie has evolved as a spontaneous visualization of ourselves maturing under the ever shifting amplification of social media. As more creators seek to redesign the best versions of themselves online, the familiar selfie is slowly being reworked and phased out by ever-changing sensibilities, particularly in the way we protect the best vision of ourselves online.

Nobody wants to be seen in an awkward selfie shot taken in poor light on a drunken Friday night out with workmates. It hardly screams 'confidence' to depict yourself awkwardly positioned in a selfie pic against your professional social media networks.

artistic narcis- sism

Mira Rahneva

If the modern selfie was designed to feel spontaneous, fresh and authentic, then the next generation of portraiture updates the artform by extending an immediate, intimate connection with the viewer.

Behind the scenes, things are not quite as transparent. As an evolving art form, modern portraiture is partly a celebration of our desire to always look beautiful, and as a way of expressing our deepest insecurities about what it is to be powerless in a social media vacuum that values aesthetics more than genuine connections.

Avel Shah

WHO ARE YOU?
WHO ARE YOU?
WHO ARE YOU?

Over the past few years, we've also seen a trend toward the way employees wish to represent themselves online. Corporate headshots have gradually changed styles over the past two decades from basic black and white composites on stale plain backgrounds to funky, energetic portraits beaming with color, light and often humor.

The growth of LinkedIn profiles has encouraged a new creative vision toward corporate portraiture, particularly as more employees and freelancers look to represent themselves online as brands in their own right.

Altan Can

Zanetta Mungro

CLICK ON AN IMAGE TO PURCHASE

Oliver Byunggyu Woo

"The portrait is part of a wider communication strategy by some creatives to slow down and focus on simple visual elements that cut through."

Seeing is not always believing

Under the load of relentless social media feeds, where an endless conveyor belt of mass-produced visuals compete for our attention, the portrait is part of a wider communication strategy to slow down and focus on simple visual elements.

However, behind every great portrait is an equally determined group of creators, influencers and brands whom are silently tapping into a well-executed campaign to ensure each portrait comes across as sincere and above all, credible.

Caterina Theoharidou

Selfie 2.0
Brand Evolution

The visual evolution of the selfie has also enabled brands and creators to come together in a bid to negotiate the importance of closer personal connections. If we take today's ecosystem of influencers for example, there's evidence to suggest we are becoming more aware of the power of a carefully planned self-portrait and its marketing potential on social platforms.

As part of a push to drive authenticity and trust back to their social media personas, growing numbers of influencers and content creators are inviting greater transparency into their lives through visuals. There is now a more explicit conversation around the construction of images that replicate the part of ourselves we're most willing (are not willing) to share online. This desire is deliberately born out of commercial attempts to appear 'real' with their audience. In 2020, the pressure is now on each of us to appear more creative and curated than ever before. For brands, this is both an opportunity and a warning beacon around our broader use of the self-image.

E | PORTRAITURE

Searches for **portraiture** continue to rise year on year and have increased 280% since 2018. Today it is one of the most popular search terms on our platform.

+ 280%

Kate Phellini

SELF-AWARE
THE PRESSURE IS NOW ON EACH OF US TO APPEAR MORE CREATIVE AND CURATED THAN EVER BEFORE

Kate Phellini

Hot off the success of being selected as EyeEm's 2019 'Photographer Of The Year', Kate Phellini has made portraiture the signature creative style of her widely respected **portfolio**. As an artist, Kate's playful use of light and shadow positions each one of her portraits as an intimate dialogue with her audience and a natural successor to the raw, but chaotic energy of the selfie.

If art is to imitate life, then Phellini's work is increasingly triggered by what is still yet to come: a growth in **DeepFake imagery** that will potentially have each of us questioning the authenticity and veracity of every image online. Along with the relentless expansion of technology that tracks, conceals and deceives each one us online, Kate is hoping that her work can offer respite through digital detox in a world of big data and social.

As we offer up more and more of our lives across social channels and apps, we are increasingly starting to question what is and what isn't real.

"Humans are naturally suspicious. We do not want to be tricked and mis-led," she says. "We are afraid." Instead, the lack of trust is leading to what she sees as major growth in our offline personas, with each of us striving for authenticity in how we project ourselves. "We want to see real people, real skin and real emotions so that we train ourselves to spot the authentic-ity. The selfie is taken in interaction with technology. A (portrait-style) pho-tograph is taken by a human in interaction with another human."

"Underestimation of one's self is a common problem. You might not see yourself as a powerful, beautiful, attractive, interesting human-being, but what if others do? A portrait taken by another person adds a new, previ-ously obscure perspective. That's what we all need to build our worlds and opinions on: Perspective. The broader your spectrum, the more precise your judgement is likely to be. You can't be an expert on a given topic af-ter reading a single book. The same principle applies through self-assess-ment."

"You might not see yourself as a powerful, beautiful, attractive, interesting human being, but what if others do? A portrait taken by another person adds a new, previously obscure perspective. That's what we all need to build our worlds and opinions on: Perspective."
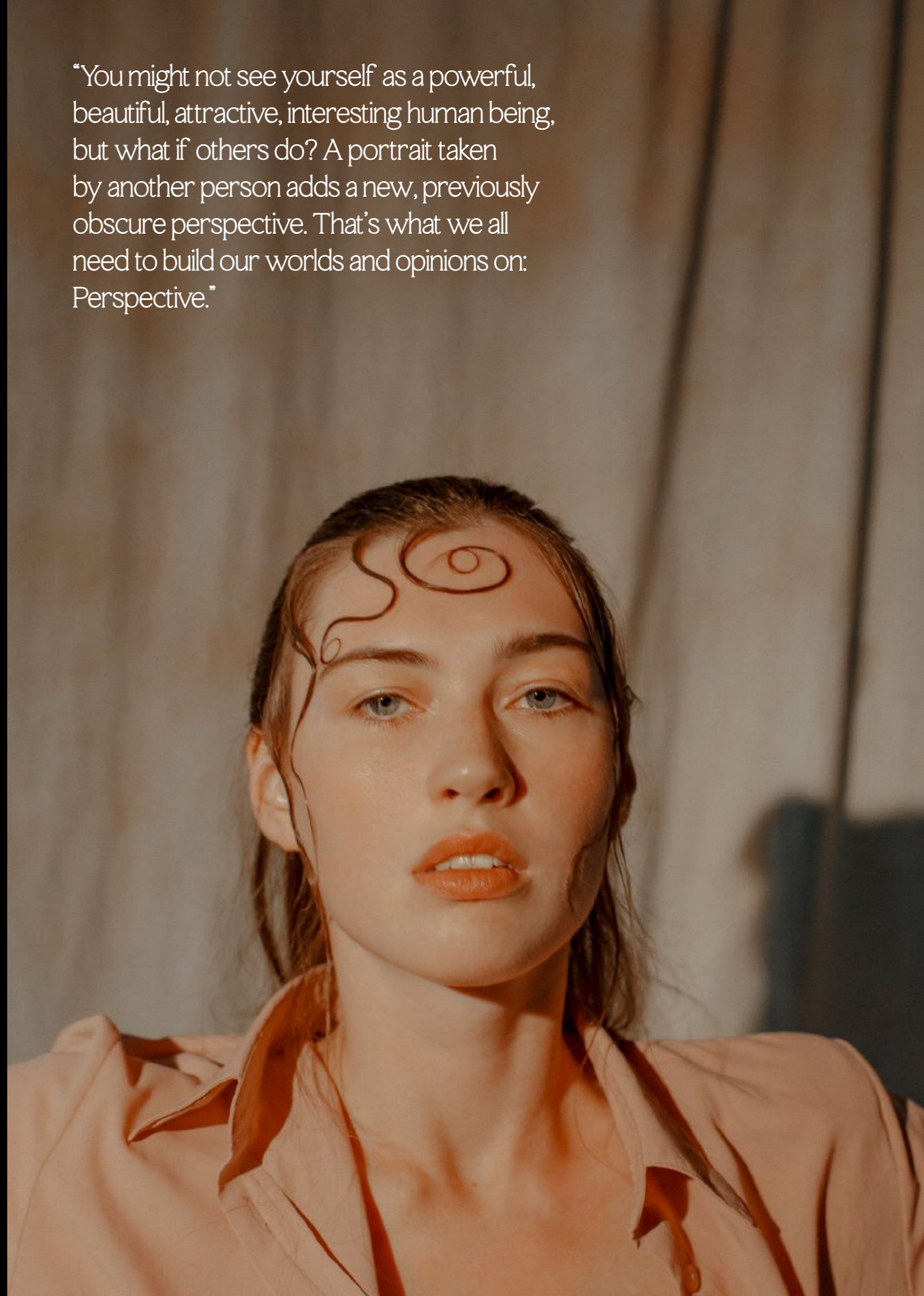
Kate Phellini

3 Photography tips for Brands

01

Be genuine: Find a person who has something to say, who is on the same wavelength as you. This way a photo session may even offer a therapeutic effect.

02

Trust: As the saying goes, mirrors reflect our world and often the truth of who we are. A professional photographer would look to identify the right angles and the correct lighting for a subject's facial and body structure, skin color and hair texture, reflecting their personality and experimenting with styling, including what clothes and makeup look best in the frame.

03

Stand out: When it comes to fashion brands, campaigns needs to build on clear and characteristic images to stand out from the crowd online. A photographer who is able to understand a brand's needs and goals is also the person who can bring out the best characteristics of that brand by adding a new perspective to highlight the essence of who they are.

Kate Phellini

CLICK ON AN IMAGE TO PURCHASE

Celin May

Stefania Boka

Hanna Postova

EyeEm

Brand Tips:
Why this trend matters

01 **Consider Perspective:** Brands should consider very clear messaging when it comes to utilizing portraiture. Think about what you are trying to communicate through facial expressions and how this supports your overall campaign elements.

02 **Choose diversity:** Your consumers don't always look like you, so don't expect a lack of diversity to be engaging online either.

03 **Find the right faces:** Although the selfie was once the calling card of millions of amauter photographers looking for a fast and effective way to introduce their own narrative, savvy brand campaigns can utilize social media as a tool to frame faces in campaigns as visual cues for consumer engagement.

04 **Vision:** Brands now need to ask themselves: "What's the bigger story you want to tell and present to the world?" and present that version of their product or service in a way that still feels authentic and real to consumers.

Kate Phellini

VISUAL TREND 05

THE COMMERCIAL CREATIVE

There is a necessity to look back to move forward

Over the past 12 months, we've seen more ad campaigns emerge that are increasingly devoted to the non-conformist art styles of the past, signalling a creative split between two opposing schools of advertising in 2020: produced commercial realism and a contemporary twist on the abstract styles celebrated by the Avant-Garde and Ettore Sottsass' **Memphis Group** that we like to call the Commercial Creative.

The Commercial Creative blends postmodernist design elements with multiple references to art movements, including pop art and still life. This visual style is commonly layered with the defining idiosyncratic aesthetics found in abstract expressionism.

The most obvious visual connection to note is the prominent **design cues** inspired by the 1980s **Memphis Group**, an Italian design and architecture style known for its child-like use of asymmetrical shapes, flamboyant playfulness and radical color palettes. There's also a hint of **Wolfe Von Lenkiewicz's** mythical cultural ambiguity at play in many of these campaigns.
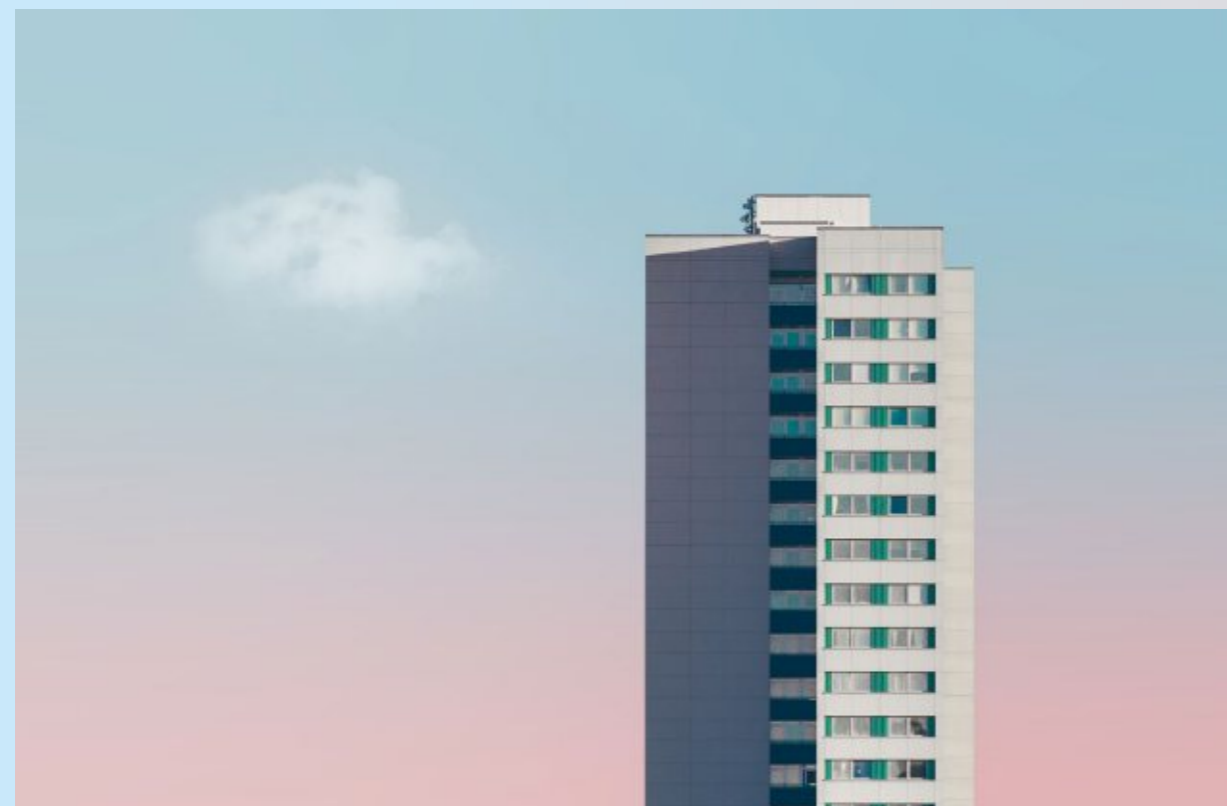
Search queries for **retro** have rocketed in 2019 by more than 210%.

+ 210%

E RETRO

Marco Di Stefano

Holger Kilumets

Copy Creative

Holger Kilumets

Equally important is this trend's smart emphasis on punchy and sometimes satirical copywriting that helps elevate the image beyond the core visual. The symbiotic relationship between clever copy and bold images work in unison together across the commercial creative spectrum.

Businesses that learn to pair stronger visual elements with the right text are more likely to get the most value out of their campaigns.

Memphis Group
& Pop Art Reinvented

While **Warhol** experimented with early celebrity memes, chromatics and repetition, the commercial creative isn't afraid to mix up its artistic homages.

As a featured technique of the popular Memphis Group, the adventurous juxtaposition of uncanny subject selections are paired against **Miami Pastel** inspired backgrounds and somehow it all just works. Above all, ads of this nature signal that they are playing with the audience's traditional visual reference points, banking on the interplay of edgy artwork and millennial meme culture.

**Richard Song**

Changing Audience Expectations

Given that seemingly everyone is a content creator today, brands are looking to social platforms and content creators more than ever for their visual direction. When it comes to visual cut-through, there is a lot on the line for brands trying to break into the all-important Gen Z and Millennial consumer markets.

Brands need to visually **differentiate themselves** to crash through the noise online and have an impact. That's why brands such as N26, Klarna and **HP** are being lauded for their work in the commercial creative.

When finance company ad campaigns (and let's face it, an industry hardly known for their iconic visual work) have more in common with the playful fantasy elements and the appropriation of mythical cultural ambiguity of work that could be inspired by Warhol or **Wolfe Von Lenkiewicz's**, then you know something very special is happening in the ad scene in 2020 and one that we think is certainly worth your attention.

Hendrik Sulaiman
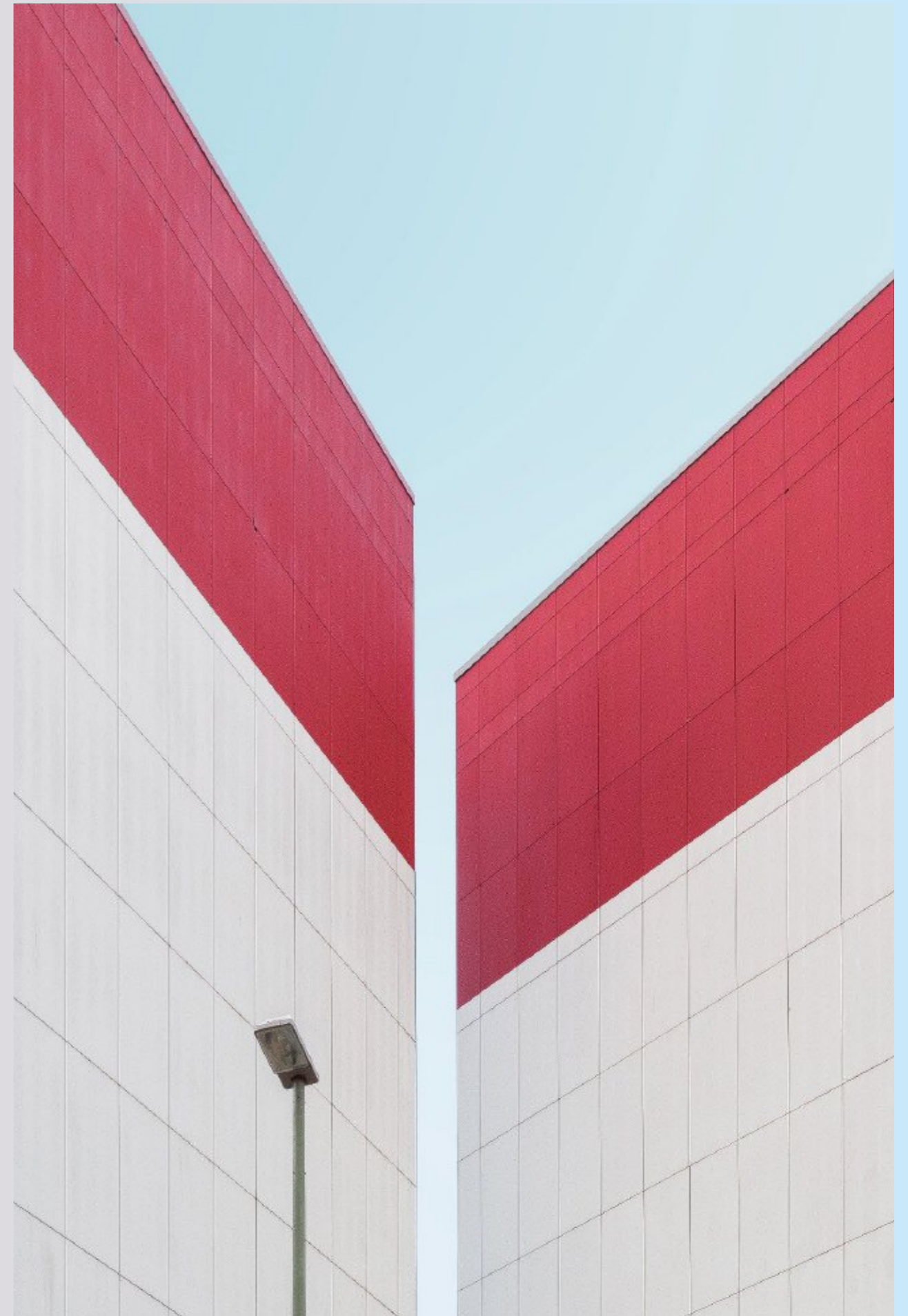
Marco Di Stefano

Color Psychology

One of the defining characteristics of this trend is the use of bright pastel color palettes. Today, the overwhelming choice for many stylists and art directors is a poppy dual-color tone palette, made famous by **Leonard Horowitz's** Miami Pastel work. Horowitz's colorful architectural style helped restore life back to many of Miami's dilapidated. Art-Deco buildings in the early 80s. Some of the most popular color schemes we use today in advertising (have a look at Pantone's Color list over the years to see what we mean) owe much of their success to the **Miami Pastel look**.

Think **Living Coral**, a splash of generous **Greenery** and a lively team-up of **Radiant Orchid** and **Emerald** to give you some ideas. In some of the campaign examples we've seen, the colors are teamed up with non-traditional still life elements such as cheese boards, dead fish and surrealist inspired cartons of milk.

Nick Turner

Holger Kilumets

EyeEm x N̄26
Case Study

From an engagement perspective, online bank **N26** found recent campaign success with a storytelling format that deliberately paired bright and playful colors with strong copy. Inspired by **Memphis Group design** cues and a mix of expressionist art elements, the overall creative look evokes an abstract **sense of fun** for the intended **millennial audience**.

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for your brand today**

With our help, N26 eschewed traditional finance industry norms to adopt a visually-energised campaign style. Because of their design flexibility, N26 was able to draw upon smaller traditional design cues in its brand design, allowing the company to stay relevant and innovative at the same time. "A larger color palette can speak to different people in different ways," says Senior Brand Designer Todd Wilson:

Brand Tips:
Why this trend matters

01 **Go custom:** Our custom production studio can help brands choose the right images when they need them. Get inspired and don't be afraid to borrow from the most influential art movements of the 20th century. Our professional collective is ready to help!

02 **Competitive analysis:** Some of the world's most innovative fintech brands are already defining this trend as their own. Companies such as Klarna, HP and N26 have defined the Commercial Creative look to appeal to younger audiences. As a result, their ads stand out and draw your attention.

03 **Get Creative:** Brands need to get creative in their visual marketing and campaign elements. Online audiences will no longer buy safe and sterile characters in branding anymore. Likewise, younger audiences do not welcome unrealistic depictions of friendship and expect campaigns to feature more diversity and gender equality as standard.

Sarah Köster

Behind The Scenes at one of EyeEm's custom production shoots for N26

VISUAL TREND 06

GENERATION BLUE

GENERATION **BLUE**

Return to calm with this color trend that celebrates minimalism and millennial culture in 2020

What do you get when you combine millennial culture with photographic minimalism? We call it Generation Blue. As we try to process the seemingly endless negative news headlines that bombard us on a daily basis, the colors we choose in our brand campaigns offer a subtle, yet gentle reminder of the healing and emotional properties that color can help bring.

At the same time, a demographic upheaval is taking place, with millennials set to become the **largest demographic** in the US (and soon, the world).
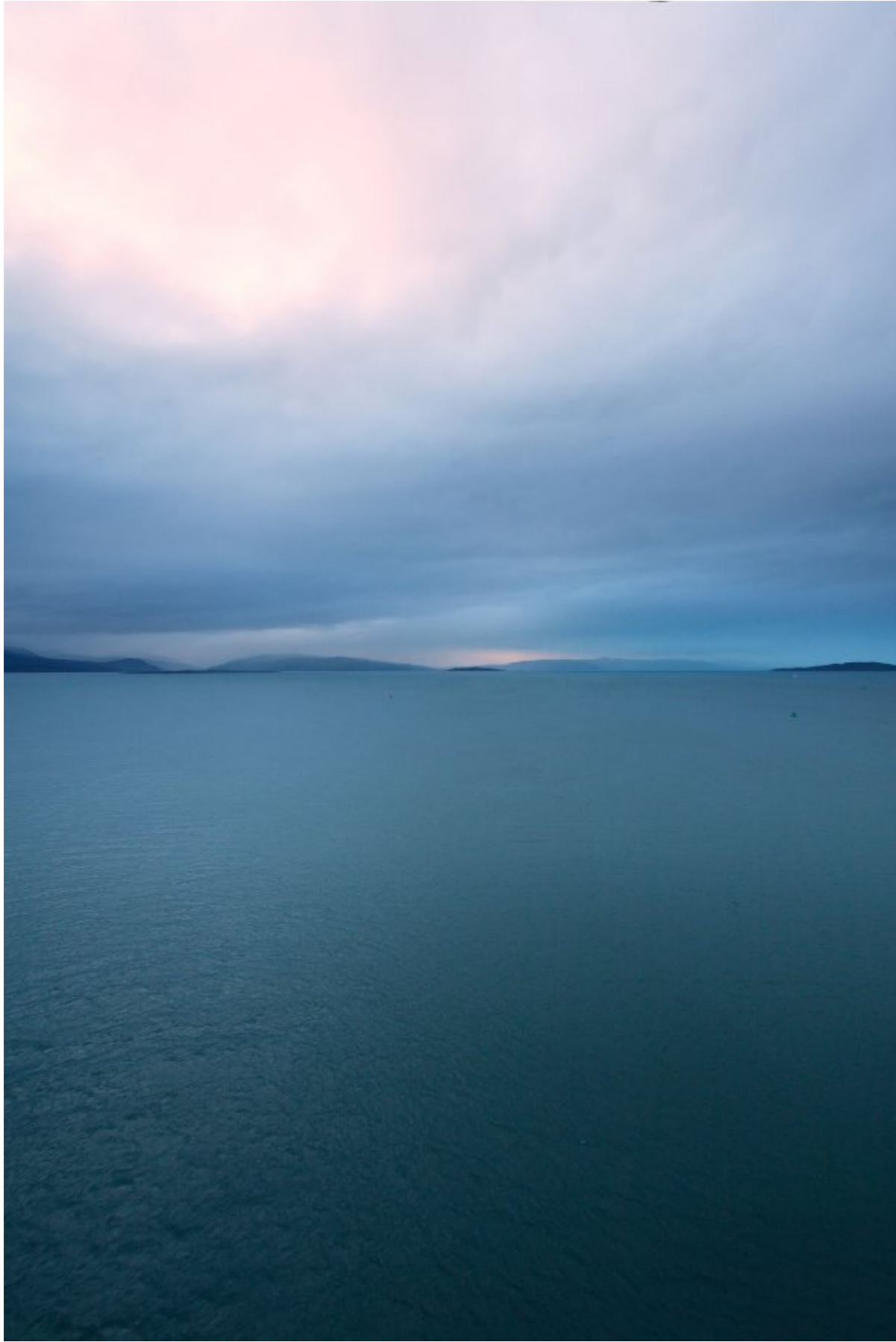
As the world's climate changes, and inequality grows, millennials face unique generational pressures. A movement dedicated to decluttering and minimalist lifestyles has become synonymous with millenials searching for more affordable and more holistic ways of living.
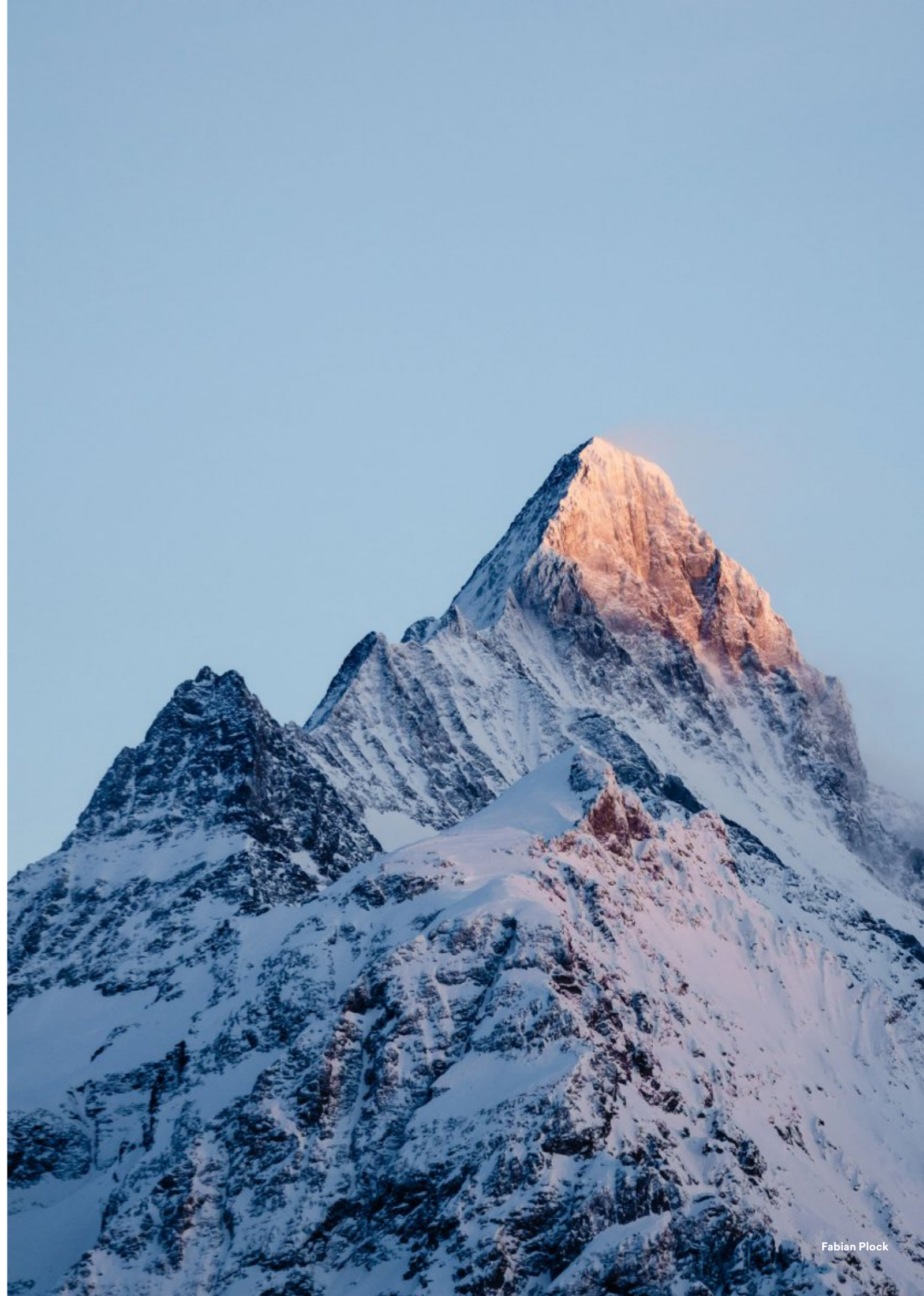
Agustin Farias

Sarah Köster

EyeEm

CLICK ON THE IMAGE TO PURCHASE

Jonas Hafner
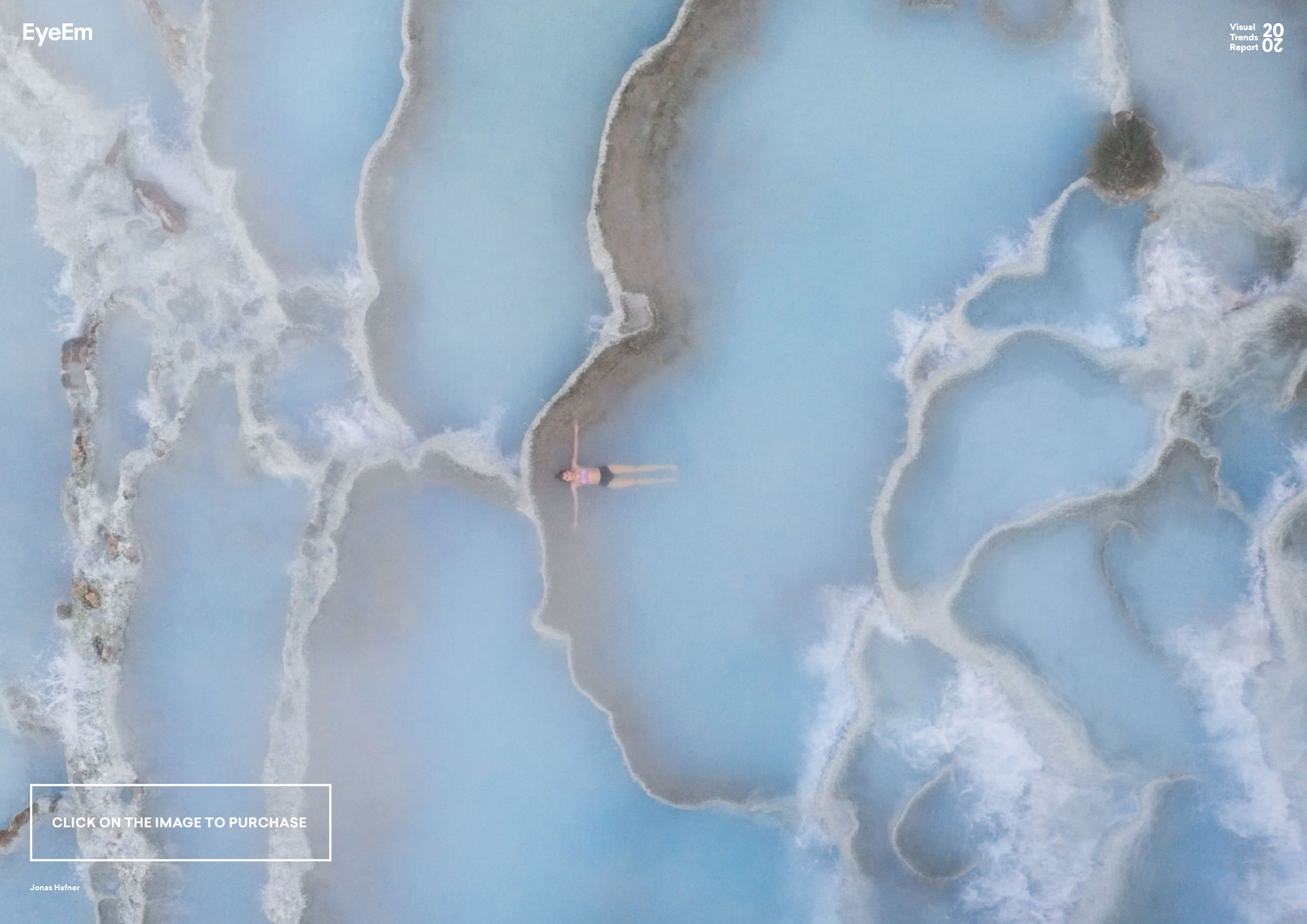
Maurizio Grasso

Fabian Plock

Mindful

One of the big visual trends of 2019 was mindfulness. This is not going away in 2020. Blue tones are naturally calm and depending on the context and the subject, routinely feature as part of the wider mindful trend in many photographs.

Lasha Tsertsvadze

Dina Isaam

Jonas Hafner

The New Minimalist

In these uncertain times, we predict this colour palette choice will become a popular expression of how we re-frame the visual conversation from over-saturated visual clatter to a cen-tred, calming campaign choice in 2020. Creative professionals can harness the calming elements of blue to function as a peaceful circuit-breaker in the new decade and encourage brands to look toward the color as a symbol of hope for a more centered and mindful de-cade to come.

Generation Blue is a creative strategy to balance the visual noise in our lives by offering a clean and minimalist color pa-lette. As a cooler color on the spectrum, it can help each of us connect with our emotions and enable us to process dai-ly global uncertainty. 2020's blue adds contrast, by pairing back busier ele-ments. It redefines how we view nature and our climate at a time when such values are universal.

Millennial Minimalism

In recent years, there has been a stronger interest in adopting **minimalist culture**. Celebrity minimalists such as **Marie Kondo** now drive encourage big social movements online, energizing open-minded millennial audiences with a creative, minimalist message.

The product of an anti-consumerist backlash against a culture of excess, a growing number of millennials are actively choosing a minimalist lifestyle; de-cluttering and downsizing each of the functions of their lives to fit a daily minimalist aesthetic.

Nongnuch Leelaphasuk

Angelina Golt

Chill

As more of us look to de-stress from our busy lives, photographers are looking to explore color palettes that can project a serene calm energy and induce relaxed vibes. We predict to see colder blues used, as the tone is particularly useful at offering a visual sense of reconnection with nature.

Riccardo Nosvelli

Skibin Sergey

Dream

These images have a dreamy qual-
ity attached to many of them. The
choice of blue is a big part of how
to achieve this ephemeral photo-
graphic quality.

Fabio Piccioni
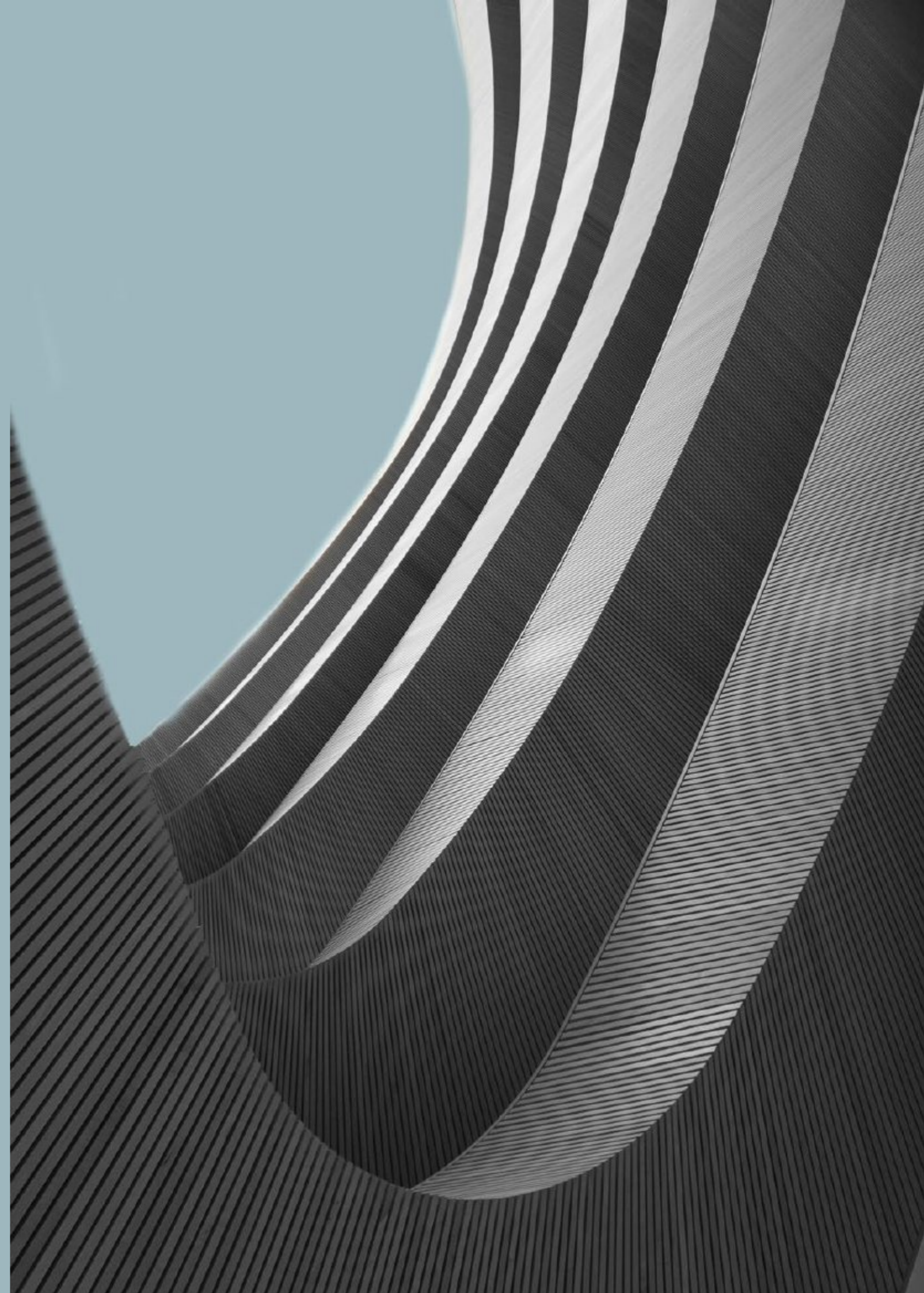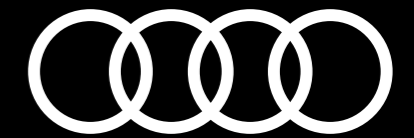
Leonardo Esprigman

Sasha Dudkina

Maxx Horton

Brand Tips:
Why this trend matters

01   **Color discussion:** Think about the way your brand campaign defines its colors. The mood you seek to convey will also be carefully influenced by the colors tones you choose.

02   **Understand symbolism:** In 2020, there is a stronger emphasis on meditative techniques to de-stress. Consider cooler blues as part of this color choice.

03   **Pair colors:** Consider pairing your colors for maximum visual value. For example, blue tones can work well with green and pink in unison.

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