

Visual Trends 2023

VISUAL TRENDS REPORT

@solomonaphroditus

Formerly the EyeEm Visual Trends Report, the new annual Talenthouse Visual Trends Report is an amalgamation of visual trends from experts across the Talenthouse group and now goes further than photography. We're encompassing so many more creative mediums, and presenting a robust offering of visuals, artwork and creative opportunities for your business.

The Visual Trends Report elevates topics that are core to societal development and conversation this year, translating the trends through a lens of modernity and empathy. Everything highlighted in this report is what consumers are concerned with right now. Utilizing these trends in your creative materials will ensure your business is staying relevant, leading conversations, and interacting with your customers in a more meaningful way.

The trends we cover will give you new insights and make you reflect on how your brands will tackle and embrace the future. Our expert curation team have aligned to present you with the most dynamic view of what your business needs to visually express this year, and our world class production team are ready to implement these trends into any of your business's creative needs.

Read on to learn about the four trends we see for 2023, along with our pick for the color of the year.

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FREEDOM

Freedom means something different in today's times, and has emerged as a constant need and presence throughout every trend we dissect in this report. In 2023 we're ready to embrace freedom of expression, of identity, of beliefs and of love. Freedom means so much to so many, and to feel free is to feel truly empowered.

We don't feel as though Freedom is a trend per se, but rather the overarching connector between everything that we mention in the report. It is our guiding light, and the core of every trend discussed. At Talenthouse, we pour creative freedom into everything we do. The advances in technology and communication are giving us and our artists more freedom than ever before, and the creative work being produced is truly astonishing.

As customers, consumers and investors on any level, we're now able to enjoy a profound new creative freedom of local, cultural and social expression. Every time we spend money, we're making a statement about how we want the world to be run, and we'll spend with brands and businesses who align with our values. Those who express their support and nurturing of freedom to empower their customers will come out on top. What better way to express this than through beautiful visuals and captivating artwork?

At Talenthouse, we're elevating both brands and creatives who share our passion for creative freedom and pay attention to local values on a global scale.

The way we run our creative briefs means that clients benefit from the beauty of creative freedom from different communities all over the world, while still adhering to brand messages and guidelines.

Participation in a Talenthouse brief and unleashing your brand values into a world of creative freedom enables you to tell your stories alongside stunning visuals that will empower and delight. Freedom works.



@dmitybayer



@thevintagekojoanim

SOLAR PUNK

SOLAR PUNK

As we live among rising temperatures, climate change and anxiety, a Solar Punk future is the optimistic vision being forecast by artists across the globe. Their work points towards a hoped-for era where our economic and technological worlds work in harmony with the natural world. This represents a new kind of freedom.

Solar Punk is a fresh imagining of our future landscapes being greener than they are now, with cities and transportation running on clean energy, and technology built to work with rather than against, nature. It's a vision of a radically different social and economic structure, with local values and an end to capitalism. It's an opportunity for mass collaboration, as global communities join forces to foster positive change.

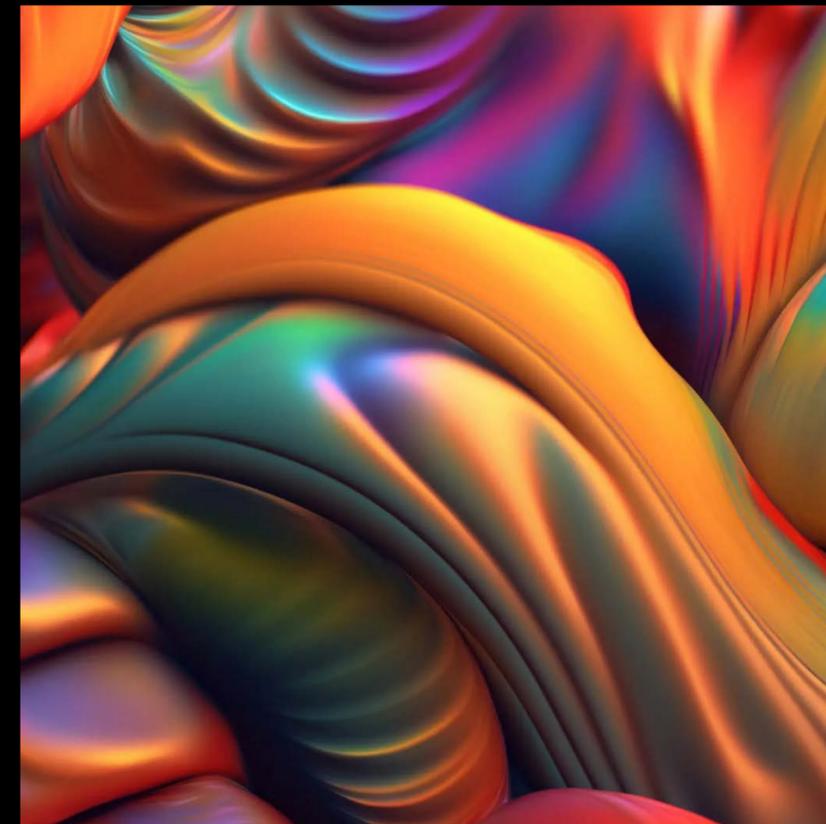
Of course, Solar Punk started as an art movement. **The main ethos of this movement lies in finding solutions to achieve consistent and sustainable progress, as opposed to Cyberpunk which paints dystopian pictures of the future we may inherit.**

This is great, but what does it mean for you?

It's time to channel Solar Punk's energy and optimism from global communities, and harness artists and creatives to bring this positive vision of the future to light, while displaying the role brands are playing in contributing to a brighter, greener future. Art and creativity allow connection between diverse and distant groups to spark inspiration and imagine new, creative solutions for positive change.

In order to ensure that nuances and complexity come into the next phase of climate change, we need diversity of thought, holistic vision and unity.

Embracing Solar Punk's manifestation of a brighter, lighter, and sustainable world will rightly feature heavily in many brands' value proposition. We know consumers will vote with their wallets in favor of brands with purpose, and it's time to make sure you're clear about where your values lie.



@maryfoote22



@soltoyk



@soltoyk



PH

@frickitd

AZARIKH

THE PUNK CREATIVE

Azarikh Amran is a motion designer and 3D artist based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, who creates surreal dreamscapes and mesmerizing motion graphics. His animations explore sci-fi, surreal landscape, and futurism to breath-taking effect.

Working a lot with chrometype and laser effects, Amran's work is truly of the moment and embraces the fever pitch around digital artistic tools. Describing his art as "the connection between humans and the digital world, fascinated by the latter's intricate and delicate aesthetic," Amran is also a Visual Jockey - a VJ - providing loops of engrossing 3D motion graphics to accompany a Disc Jockey's sound choices at big clubs and events. He says that "seeing how an object in motion interacts in perfect synchronicity with sound" gives him the "ultimate satisfaction."

We spoke to Amran about his captivating 3D designs.

Your 3D dreamscape work is so surreal and dynamic. Do you feel as much freedom when you're creating it as we do as viewers consuming it?

Creating artwork really gives me freedom to express myself more. To be creative in what I'm doing and to not be afraid, but most importantly to create something beautiful. My work usually starts with inspiration from sci-fi films, Manga or Pinterest, and from there I'll start to visualize something and begin to make it into artwork. I don't really do a lot of planning, but sometimes I'll sketch the rough outlines and put it straight into the digital software.

Digital software clearly features heavily in your work. Is it fair to say you're a keen adopter of Artificial intelligence software for art?

For me, I really like to explore new tools and various ways to improve my artwork. AI tools really step up the future of creating artwork and [the capabilities] really amaze me. I've been using AI tools for quite some time now for my artwork, and it's incredible. You can also get inspiration from AI tools, or even an idea or concept. Now, there are a few AI platforms that have been around for a while, and they've each established a different type of style. There are differences with Midjourney, Stable Diffusion and Dall-E, but the best way to use them is to write prompts for anything you'd like to create, and wait to be amazed by the outcome.

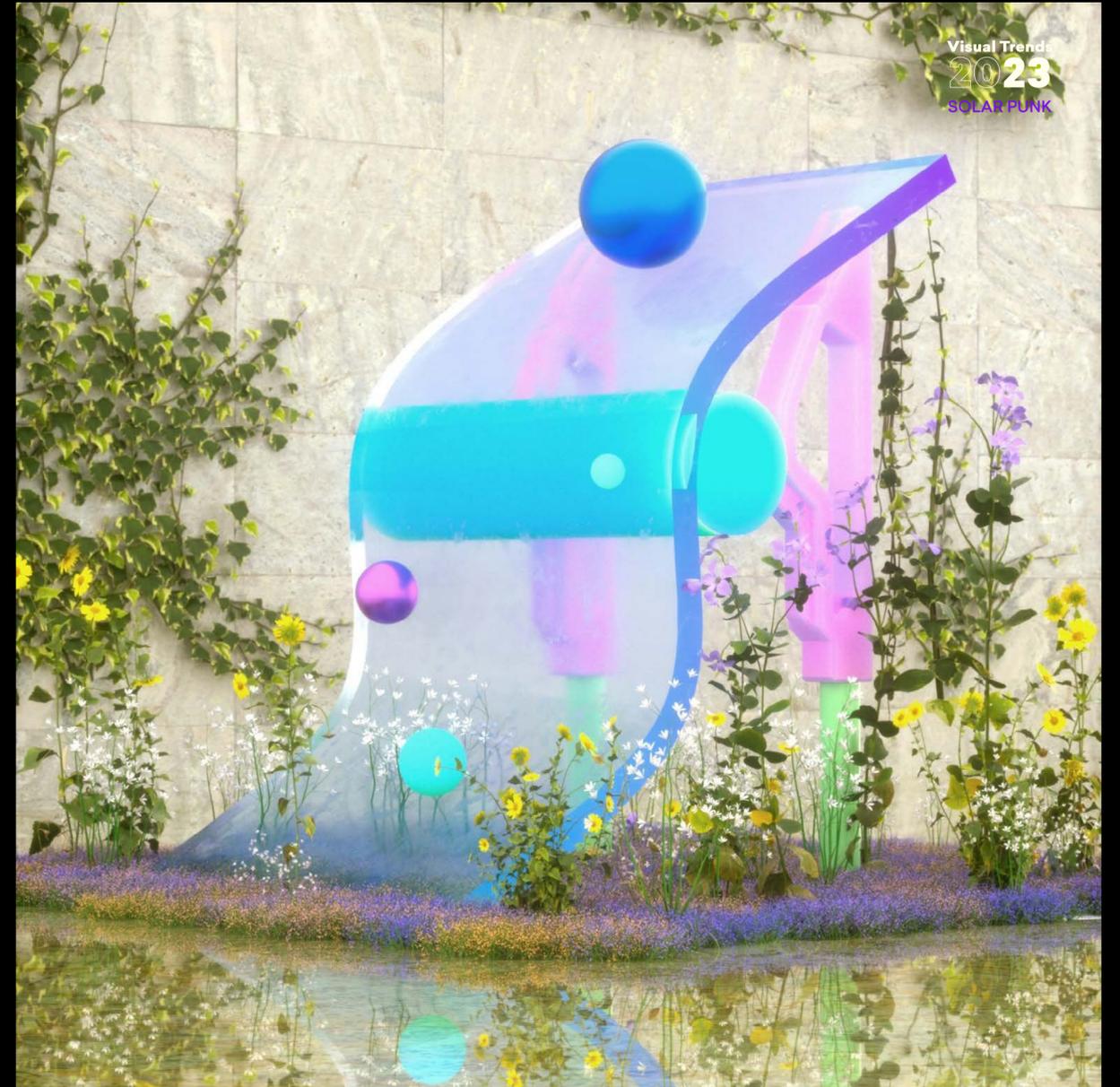
How do you use the internet and digital platforms to foster community in your niche?

Community is what drives me to keep going in the creative industry. There's a collective here in Malaysia called Filamen which is great for events and exposure. We also do a lot of creative events such as performance art, media art installation and music performance. Online creative platforms really help me connect to more people overseas, and of course to know what's new in our art community.

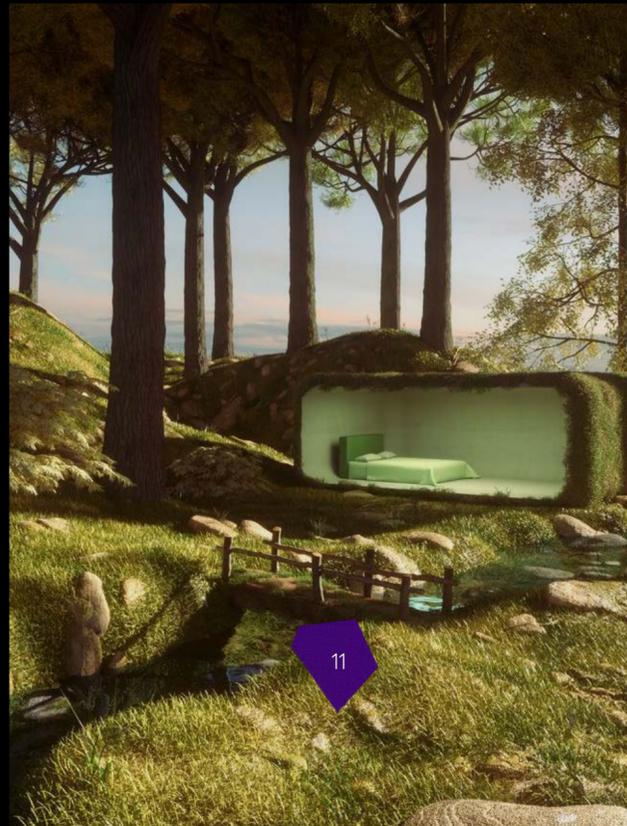
What do you think the future holds for artists like yourself?

I think there will be lots more opportunity to stand out, as tech is growing and a lot of people are able to create digital art. Everything can be art now - don't think of art from a limited perspective. Creating something beautiful can change everything.

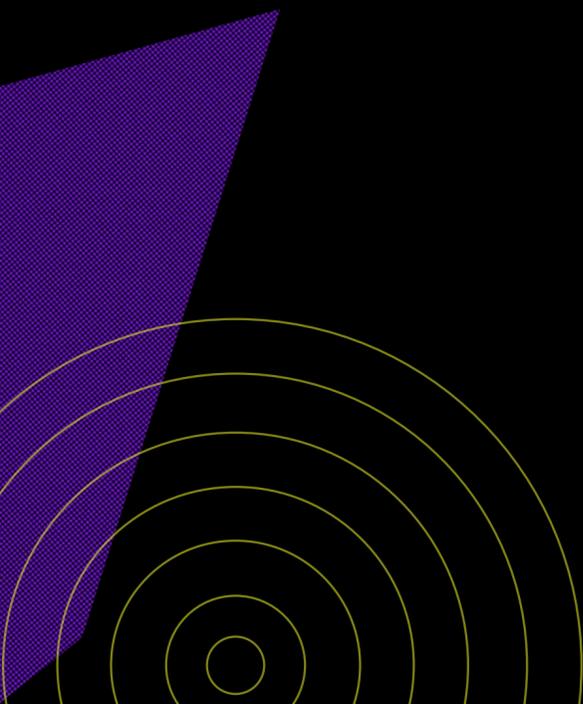
Find Akarikh Amran on Ello by Talenthouse @hxg



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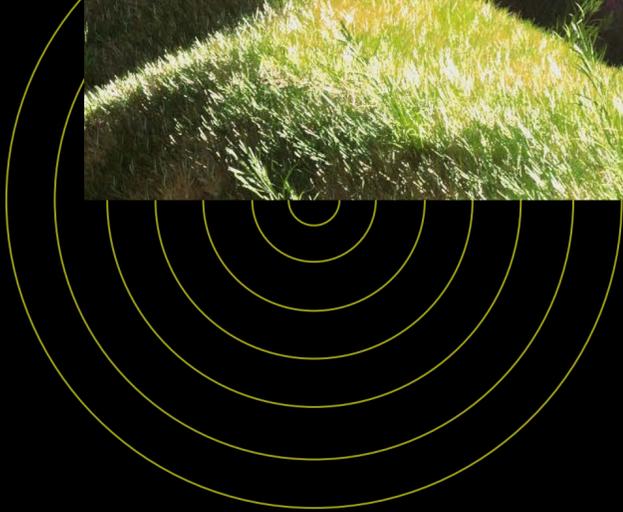


@hxg



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Visual Trends
2023
SOLAR PUNK



JULIA FULLERTON-BATTEN

THE CREATOR OF WORLDS

Julia Fullerton-Batten is a dynamic fine art photographer from Germany, who's known for her striking, cinematic work. The tensions she creates in her work allows for so many interpretations, and the combination of expression, location and position is truly unlike any other artist's work we've seen.

Julia's work is centered around drawing attention to social issues, and uses surreal, unexpected imagery to shine new light on subjects that many find difficult to talk about. Her work has been shown in the National Portrait Gallery and in the Pompidou, and we were lucky enough to share some time with Julia to learn more about her practice and creative process.



@julia_fullertonbatten

@ julia_fullertonbatten



“Every minute detail in the image counts.”

Both your fine art and more personal work is so striking and unexpected. How much planning goes into your creative process versus freedom to change the narrative on the day of shoot?

I am a visual storyteller, and my images are much like chapters as I unroll my story to the title of a book. I start a project with the idea for a story that I work on and refine over a period of time, frequently breaking the story idea down into discrete images. I ensure that authenticity is at the core of every image which means that I carry out extensive background research on every aspect of each story – the time-frame, customs, manner and behavior prevalent at that time. I then consider wardrobe, hair style, furniture and props.

Once I have firmed things to a certain stage, I occupy myself next with setting, location, studio, backdrop, etc. and begin to think of lighting the set. By now, I've already got pretty firm plans for my talent, who I always choose very carefully, having built up an idea of how they should look and how I want them to appear and behave on set.

My aim is to have everything meticulously planned for the day of the shoot so that I can concentrate fully on achieving the ideal shot.



@ julia_fullertonbatten

How much do you embrace technology in your work, or combine it with more traditional methods?

I'm a bit 'old school' and a purist. It took me a long time to change from analogue to digital. Inevitably though, when the quality of digital photography approached and even exceeded that of film, I converted to digital and now benefit from the workflow. Now I shoot on a Hasselblad with a high end digital back, and approach my shoots in the same way. Instead of pulling polaroids and examining them under my loop, I shoot tethered, with a laptop attached to camera, and project the image onto an Eizo screen and view the image really large. This is essential for me as every minute detail in the image counts.

I shoot on camera and you'll never find an image of mine that has been cropped. I ask professionals to do any minor retouching and the odd comping. I have been forced on occasion to work with CGI, that otherwise would be impossible to reproduce.

AI technology is such a hot topic among artists and creatives. How do you feel about the use of it in the art world?

I haven't used AI myself but can fully understand that there could be a place for AI in photography. Just as synthesizers haven't made orchestras redundant and sometimes are featured in orchestral pieces to great effect, photographers will learn to live side by side with AI.

Some photographers are already using AI - perhaps unknowingly - in their point and shoot cameras. Using these, AI facial recognition can scan the scene in real time and then identify that there are faces present in the image and set the camera to prioritize the focus on the faces.



@julia_fullertonbatten



@julia_fullertonbatten

SOFT
FASCINATION
/ ACTIVE
OPTIMISM

SOFT FASCINATION / ACTIVE OPTIMISM

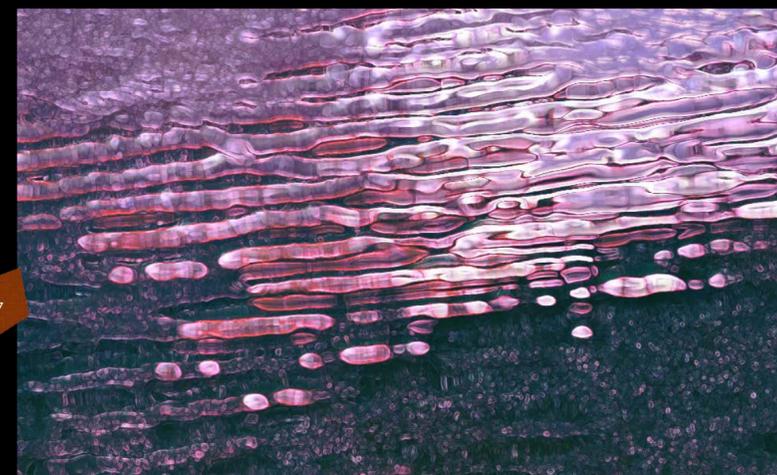
Active Optimism means working to embrace an intention to foster positivity and build resilience. It's about stepping back from hopelessness and moving towards the freedom to imagine joy, before taking actions to achieve this. We can encourage and support ideas in our communities, and embrace new ways of operating in order to enact real change.

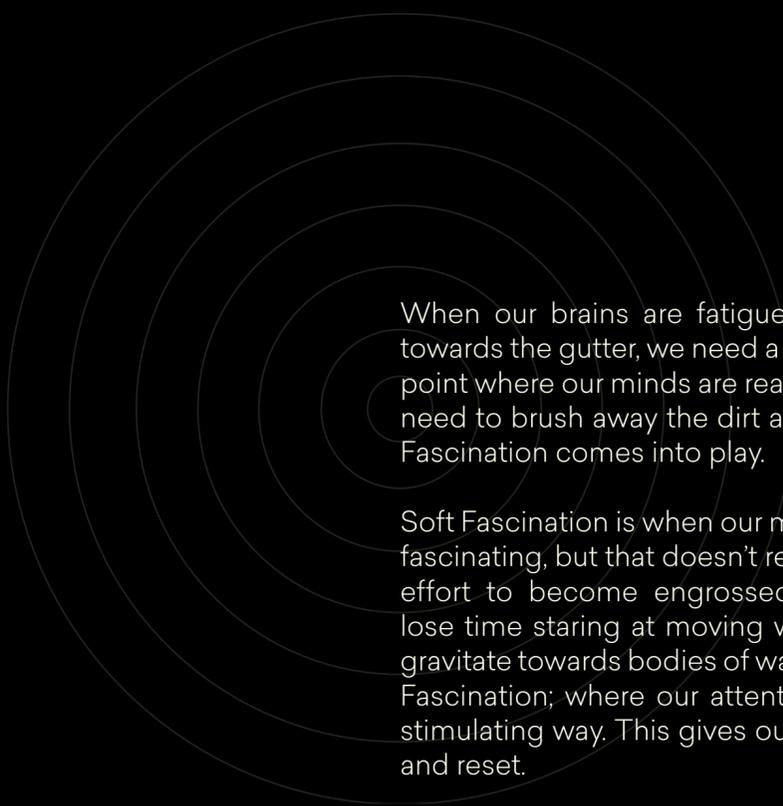
We can hope and believe that things will turn out well, or we can take affirmative action to ensure that they will. We can sit and hope and dream passively, or we can listen and speak with intention, harnessing Active Optimism and using our creativity, freedom, healthy imagination and values to channel positive change.

We're living in a time where societies and communities are divided. When facts can be false, where humanity is devalued, and science is distrusted. Active Optimism through meaningful art is the tonic. Physical representation of brighter times shown through diverse, global lenses, could be the antidote to division that we need.

Rather than denying the presence of anything unpleasant or saddening, Active Optimism takes stances of "we can fix this" and "things will get better if we act now". Art has always been a driving force for change, and shows that no matter how bleak a time may seem, there's always dreaming, debating, and inspiration for a better reality.

But how do we get there while we're surrounded by so much despair, so much doom-forecasting and so much emotional stress? We're glad you asked...





When our brains are fatigued and our wellbeing is heading towards the gutter, we need a cognitive reset. In order to reach a point where our minds are ready to accept Active Optimism, we need to brush away the dirt and start afresh. This is where Soft Fascination comes into play.

Soft Fascination is when our minds are taken over by something fascinating, but that doesn't require a huge amount of cognitive effort to become engrossed in. Ever wonder how you can lose time staring at moving water? Or why humans in general gravitate towards bodies of water and reflection? This is our Soft Fascination; where our attention is held but not in an entirely stimulating way. This gives our brains a rest, allows us to reflect and reset.

In the virtual age, the lines between our virtual and physical identities are being explored further, and artificial intelligence is being proven to be a wonderful tool to create areas and elements of fascination. As an antidote to the virtual and emotional labor, of influencer generated burn out and the impact of the digital on our mental health, virtual influencers in social media, gaming, art and music have been bringing about a revolution in creator identity.

By utilizing fictional software generated machine landscapes, which feel very real, teams of creators behind them are finding new freedom and pushing boundaries, while retaining artistic integrity. Now we can create our own Soft Fascination, and use digital tools to combine all the most appealing elements that can give our minds a break and soothe us.

The ebb of a tide and slow movements of change create assuring pulses and heartbeats that we're drawn to. At Talenhouse, we see this within our community as they embrace their creative freedom, allowing brands and audiences to remain fascinated as we work towards something bigger and better, together.



EVERETTE TAYLOR

THE ALWAYS ACTIVE OPTIMIST

Everette Taylor is a creative force and business mastermind who has helped build multi-billion dollar companies while always keeping his philanthropic efforts at the forefront. After a hugely successful period as the CMO of Artsy - the world's leading marketplace for buying and selling fine art - Everette is now the CEO of Kickstarter, which sees him working on democratizing opportunity just like we are at Talenthouse.

“More than anything, the questions are how do we bring people together and how do we make them feel like they want to support each other.”



You’ve spent your entire career providing opportunity in the creative space. How do freedom and creativity intersect for you?

Freedom means not being bound to what society tells you that you’re supposed to do. Freedom is not listening to the naysayers and the people that try to keep you in boxes. Freedom is doing the things that you’re passionate about, good at, that genuinely make you happy. If you’re able to live off of that, then that, to me, is true freedom.

I think a lot of times we’re imprisoned by other people’s expectations of us, and imprisoned by what society tells us we should or should not be doing. So we play it safe. I think true freedom is just really living in your truth, being true to who you are, and doing the things that genuinely make you happy and can also help provide beautiful experiences to others.



@oumaima_beloual24



@myphotoshootteam

As Artsy CMO you spent three years being the voice of the customer and enabling people to get their hands on brilliant artwork. How important are engaging visuals when you’re community building?

Our attention spans as humans are shorter than ever. If you can’t be visually appealing or engaging, you’re dead as a brand. Being able to tap into creative talent that can really make your brand stand out and really bring you assets that are visually appealing will make a difference.

We live in sensory overload today, and it’s not the norm for something to really stand out and catch your attention. To me, I think great visuals are more important than ever. Brands need to really think about how they’re visually engaging, from copy to video to creative. Having diverse photography and diversity in all the elements that you’re showing and the people that you’re showing your audience - all of those things really mean something. When you have an ad or creative where you have people that are diverse, it catches the attention of so many people who may not have been aware of you before. Brands need to be very intentional about that and importantly, make sure that they’re working with a very high bar for creative visuals.

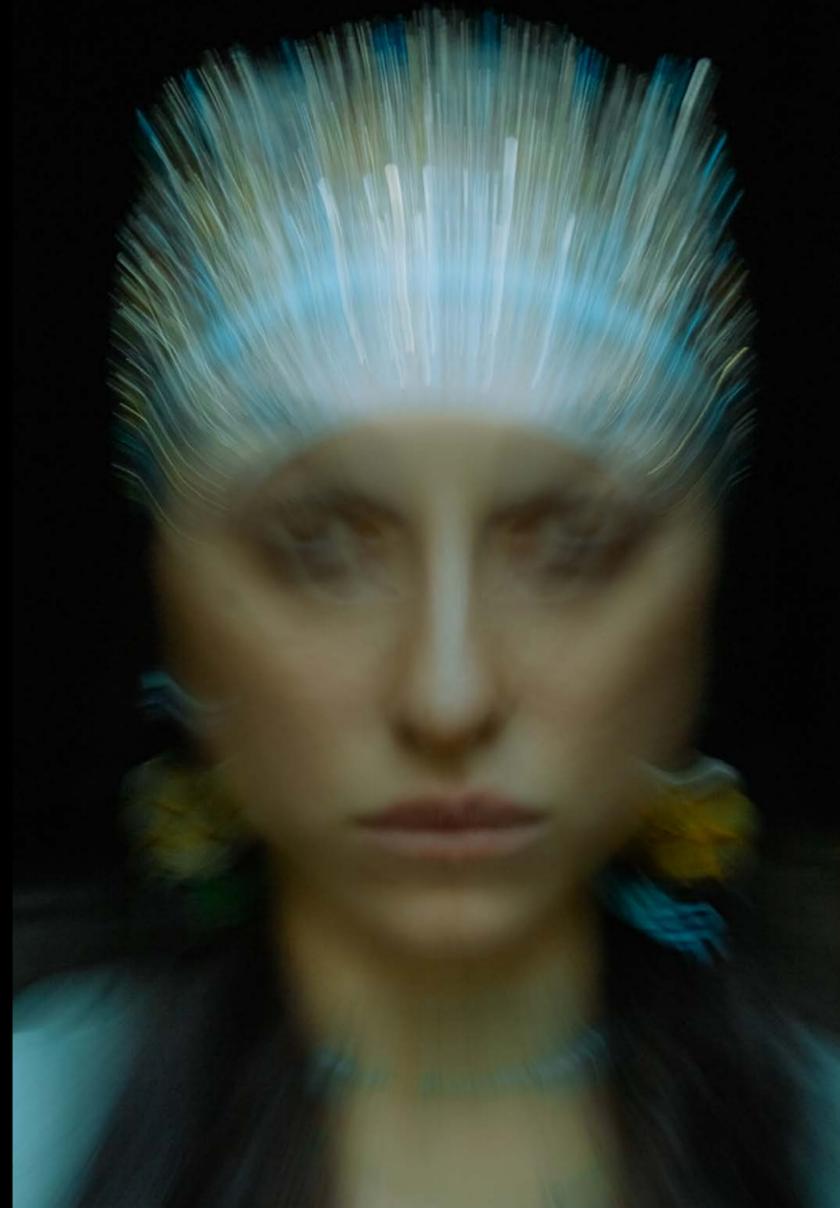
What are you looking forward to bringing to the CEO position that can uniquely come from a former CMO?

More than anything, CMOs care about who the user and the customer might be. They care more than anybody and obsess about it constantly. So for me, I'm bringing a very customer-centric strategy to Kickstarter. It's not about what we think is best, it's about what the data is showing us and what the users are telling us. As a CMO you're constantly thinking about how you can better engage, catch attention, retain and bring back customers. There's an obsessive, user and human-centric mentality, which is what I think I'm bringing to the CEO role.

Kickstarter has always been a champion of diversity and creativity, and has been the launchpad for businesses like Oculus and Peloton. What is it about Kickstarter projects that more traditional investors or VC funds aren't attracted to?

I think it's two things; the first is that VCs will typically want a huge return. If they're investing \$10m, they want you to be a \$400m company. The truth is that most companies and ideas are not that size. Kickstarter provides a platform for companies of any size, whether it's a side hustle or something that someone wants to turn into a multibillion dollar company like Peloton. This is essentially the pre-sale, where a company builds its first audience. A lot of VCs won't be attracted to something if they can't immediately see how it will scale.

Secondly, this platform enables people to keep their whole companies. If they raise a certain amount of money or make a certain amount of presales, they don't have to give any part of their business to someone else.



@DaMianel

During pandemic lockdowns a lot of us questioned our motivations, passions and dreams. Some say we are in The Great Resignation, and a lot of us are changing our lives. How do you think the years of confinement affected creativity and our definitions of freedom?

Those years allowed a lot of people to think about what they want to do with their lives and what they want to do in the world. It was The Great Awakening. People either lost their jobs or realized they weren't enjoying them, and got more creative in finding a way to do what they wanted. People have a different outlook on life now.

When everyone was at home and online, there were a lot of companies that had "the Covid bump". People are back to being offline and enjoying their lives, which is beautiful, but you don't have that audience attention as much anymore.

So with this divided attention, how can brands foster community growth in 2023 - especially when thinking about Gen Z?

More than anything, the questions are how do we bring people together and how do we make them feel like they want to support each other, and how do we bring them excitement.

The difference with Gen Z is that they're more empowered than other generations, with technology and social media. But ultimately, community building is about understanding people. If you can do that, you can be empathetic toward people. Gen Z aren't intimidating, they're just people like we all are, and we all want to feel like people care about the same things we care about.

@LeeRicketts



@wanderwithzoe

NILO_HEALTH

THE ATTENTIVE CARER

Creativity can only exist when we are able to thrive, and we're in the midst of a mental health crisis. Depression and anxiety have skyrocketed since the start of the pandemic, and while the conversation about mental health has opened up somewhat, there's still a fear of talking about it in the workplace. Creatives are constantly under pressure to perform, and to have an output, and since creativity is our business, we wanted to ensure our team was supported.

Rather than send out Slack messages encouraging our team members to go for a walk outside, we at Talenthouse opted for providing our colleagues with some real support. Partnering with Nilo was a no-brainer, and we've since been able to offer every single employee counseling with a Nilo Health employee, on our time and on our dollar.

A business is only as good as its employees, and we want to take care of ours.

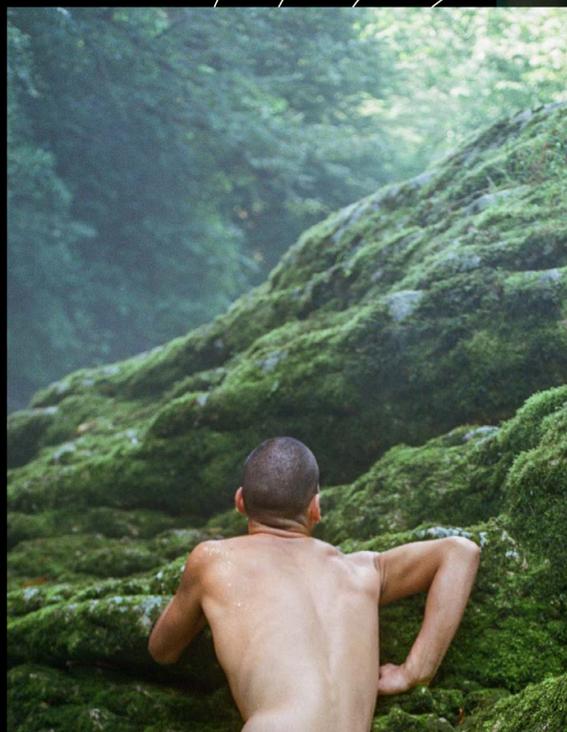


Image provided by Nilo Health Team

“There are two huge mental health challenges: the stigma surrounding it and access to the right support. We normalize mental health discussions and give employees direct access to the right tools.”

Jonas Keil, Co-Founder & CEO of nilo.health

@mancho_o



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@Tegukilina

@constantinschiller



@avifien



@thomaslim24



NASA/Space for Art Foundation

Visual Trends
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SOFT
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NICOLE STOTT

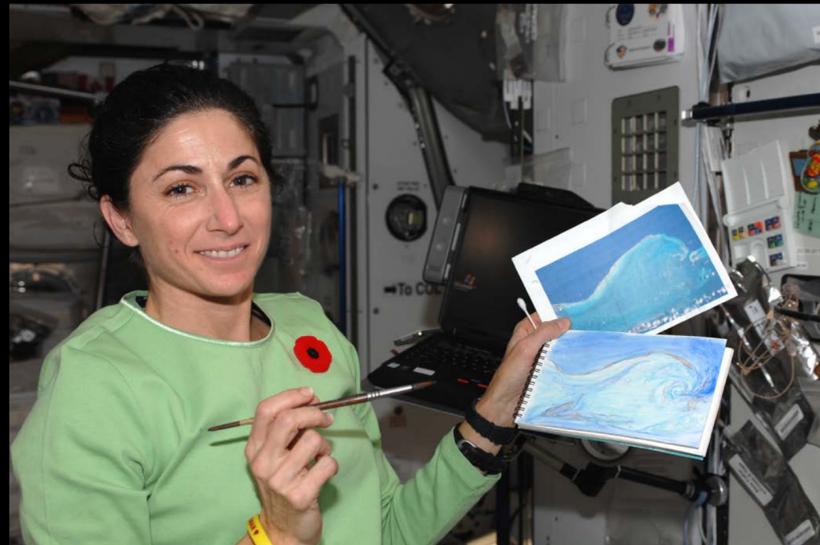
OUR CREATIVE ASTRONAUT

Nicole Stott is an astronaut as well as an artist, mom, and author of book *Back to Earth - What Life In Space Taught Me About Our Home Planet - And Our Mission To Protect It*. Now retired from NASA, Stott is the Founding Director of the Space For Art Foundation, which raises the connection between personal and planetary health by allowing children to create freely and express their interpretations of space. These interpretations are then sewn and embedded into space suits of astronauts set to make the journey into the galaxy.

We talked to Nicole about her work to create a new freedom for children who are unwell, and instill in them the active optimism for a brighter future, thanks to the developments being made by space exploration, which are teaching everyone about planet Earth.

The mixture of creativity and space feels really unique. Innovation is at the backbone of every space adventure, and is particularly relevant to your work. Where did that journey start for you?

Curiosity can come into any aspect of your life. For me, my curiosity was piqued when I wanted to discover how things fly. How does an airplane fly? Why would you not want to know how a rocket ship flies? There's a technical side to it all, of course, but oh my gosh there's certainly an elegance and a design aspect to it too, right? Keep being curious about things and keep pushing that curiosity further.



NASA/Space for Art Foundation



@hxxg

For so many of us, that curiosity bleeds into so many aspects of the world. Curiosity is fluid, which we know is something that you believe to be true.

Exactly. Curiosity should somehow underly everything we do. We should be encouraging people, especially our kids, to leverage their curiosity and to use their whole brains, not just their right or left or art or science sides. When kids show a talent for something they're often pushed down that one path, and that's just so limiting to our children's full potential.

Science and art can and should mingle together just fine. Pretty much everyone I've met in the astronaut world, from mission control to the engineers to the people training us, everyone has a beautiful blend of technology and creativity inside them. Space travel is such a brilliant mix of science and technology blending with creativity and curiosity. Everything we do in space is creatively considering how we bring it all back to Earth to solve our greatest planetary challenges.

Each of us as individuals have many different interests that are spurred on by our curiosity, and if encouraged, will bring to life our talents. We can really flourish when we're not being labeled, but are free to explore our curiosity. We can even pursue and find joy from something we might not be the best at.

Completely. Those feelings of freedom and optimism can be so rare these days that it's essential to keep encouraging them if you've found a way.

Absolutely. My personal artwork has a very transcendent feel to it for me, and honestly, whether somebody likes my work or not, that's not really the significant part of it. What's significant to me is the opportunity to create my artwork based on my spaceflight experience and then share the backstory of its inspiration with others.

The end results aren't about beautiful paintings, but about enabling people to engage in a conversation they otherwise wouldn't have. It's about utilizing my own creativity to inspire new perspectives for the people who experience my art.

We see this all the time at the Foundation with the children's art, where the children are never told "you have to draw a star and it has to have five points" or anything spacey for that matter. We describe a space-inspired theme to the kids, and then it's incredible to see the different artwork they create.



@metd_19_



@GiulioBardelli11

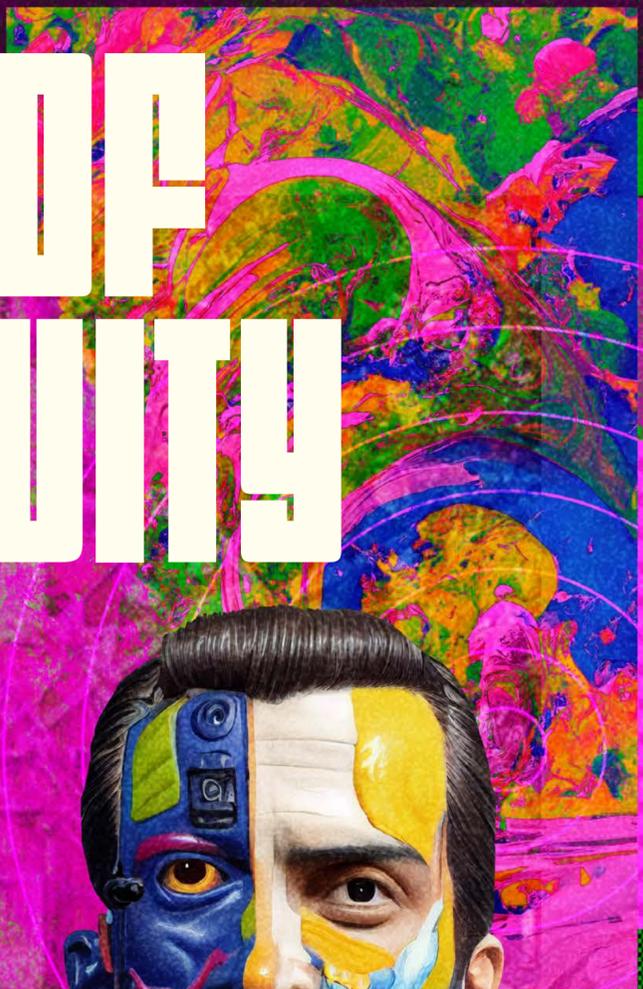
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The way you've woven space exploration and artistic curiosity together through your Foundation is truly beautiful. Where did the desire to create that come from?

It started with wanting to share the excitement of space exploration with everyone through my own artwork, but then grew into what our Foundation's motto says which is "to unite a planetary community of children through the awe and wonder of space exploration and the healing power of art". Ever since I had the chance to paint in space, I knew that I wanted to use art as a way to share the story of how all we're doing in space is ultimately all about improving life on Earth. It became clear to me that I went to space so I could come back to Earth and dream even bigger through the work with the Space for Art Foundation and these incredible kids around the world.

There's no denying the complexity and enormous scientific side to space exploration, but there's also the "human in human spaceflight" that's always looking for the connection back to Earth. Through the window of a spacecraft you are faced with the reality that we live on a planet! That we are all Earthlings! And that the only border that matters is the thin blue line of the atmosphere. That by behaving like crewmates, not passengers, we have the power to create a future for all life on Earth that's as beautiful as it looks from space. How was I supposed to share that with as many people as possible? Art made the most sense to me. It's a universal communicator.

CHAOS OF CREATIVITY



CHAOS OF CREATIVITY

Artificial intelligence in art is about to reach fever pitch, and will undoubtedly encourage many to ask if the use of AI can really be considered “art” - but at Talenhouse we recognize it for what it is; a new tool for creativity to allow imaginations, interpretations and visions to be expressed more deeply than ever before.

As with most large technological developments, the explosion of AI is generating a buzz of concern among some who believe the technology could eventually completely replace more traditional methods of creating art. At Talenhouse, we lean in to new technologies and always are eager to explore how they can support creatives and not hinder them. AI tools can add a wealth of value to the creation of artwork, and rather than replace artists or jobs, it's set to add new ways of creating and collaborating.



@paulamorales

Early adopters of AI (both as creatives and as brands who welcome the work generated by AI) will influence the future iterations of the technology and its expressive ability. As the technology advances, it provides random chaos of creativity with a bigger canvas and more freedom to flourish. With AI, creation of new Active Optimism themed works finds a new freedom.

The increased accessibility of AI art tools has allowed artists to create visions of an imagined future that's brighter and more positively connected, but also to more accurately map out the future of a world besieged by climate change if no action is taken now. The importance of this art cannot be stressed enough; words can do so much, but it's art that can change minds, unite divisions, and be a real catalyst for change. A visual representation of the future can create urgency in a way that words cannot.

They say chaos precedes creativity, but with the integration of AI into artistic practice, the chaos and the creativity can become more married than ever. Who wants a life destined for predictability?



@zerebnadar

ALAMY

OUR PARTNER IN RANDOMNESS

2022 saw us creating new ways to add value to our partners through our community of fantastic talent. We launched a new content form on the EyeEm Marketplace, Illustrations, which enabled us and our clients to access whole new ways to tell stories.

We partnered with Alamy in order to use our community to blend photography and illustration in order to create icon images for their new collections. It was about embracing the uniqueness of our approach, looking with excitement at the unexpectedness of the results and being pleasantly surprised and challenged by the outcome.



@CeciliaTriana1



@moonmambo

"Collaboration is often at the heart of creativity. By being able to work closely with the Talenthouse community, we were able to draw upon a deep talent pool who took our brief and made it their own in the pursuit of creativity."

James Allsworth, Co-Founder & CEO of Alamy





@santasombra



@robian1



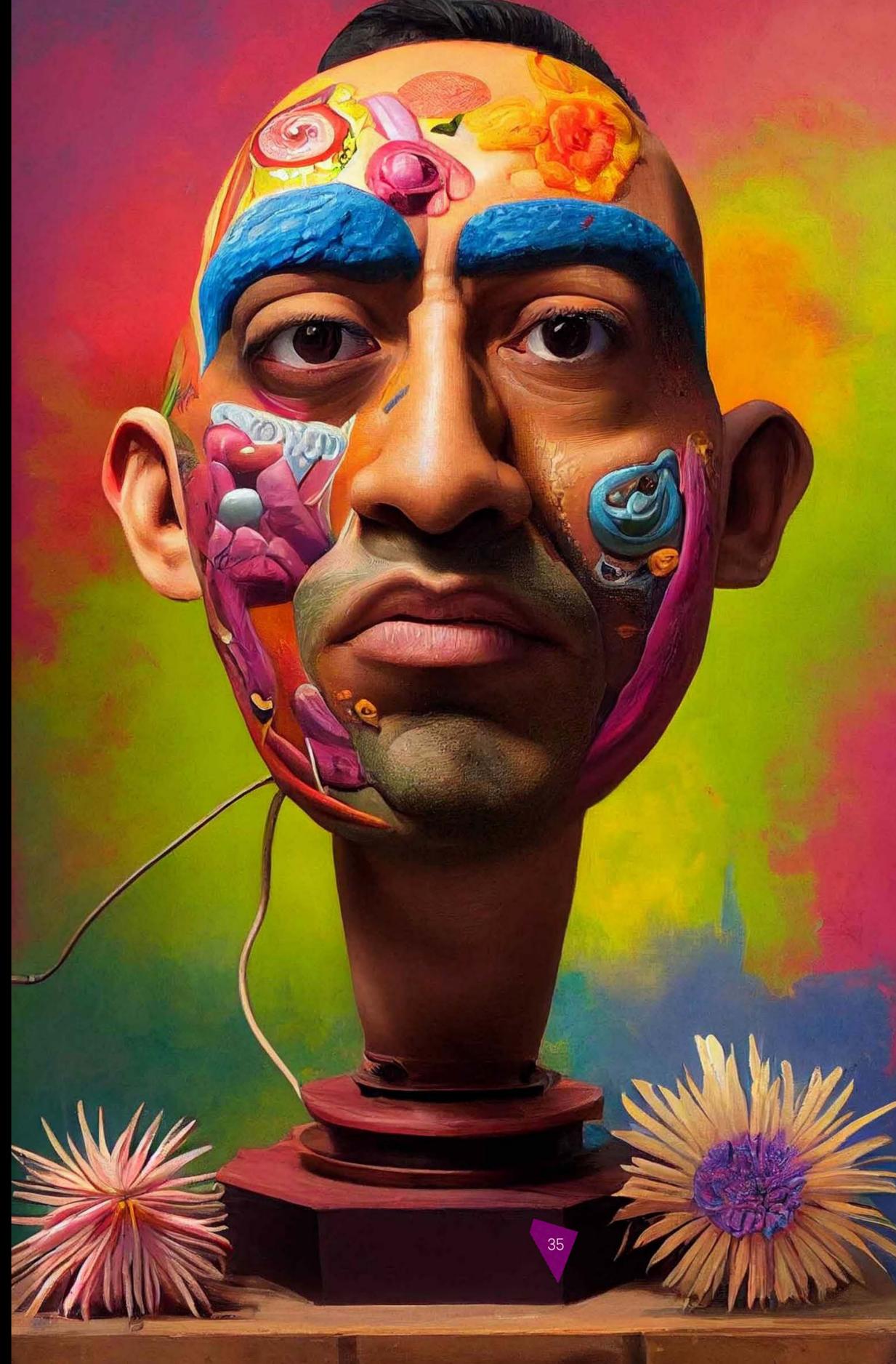
@santasombra



@santasombra



@santasombra



35

"Creative Commission has allowed us the privilege to watch up close as creatives leverage their ideas and talent to connect with paid work which genuinely inspires them."

Nick Clark, Co-Founder & CEO of Creative Commission

Creative Commission is a Talenthouse portfolio company

@santasombra

@scott_balmer

SCOTT BALMER

OUR GREAT MAXIMALIST

Scott Balmer is a digital illustrator based in Scotland. His bright, colorful work has nostalgic nods while embracing modern and futuristic elements. Balmer doesn't categorize his work, but when pushed he considers "maybe Retro Futurism", and could absolutely be considered a form of Active Optimism. The kaleidoscopic color palette and surprising distribution of geometric shapes alongside forms that are more fluid certainly connotes the feeling of freedom; of an artist creating freely and without restriction.

We spoke to Balmer about his work.



@scott_balmer



@scott_balmer

Your work portrays very fluid freedom of expression, is this something you feel while creating your pieces?

I tend to see if I can get as much artistic freedom as I can into my work, even with client work. Some of the subjects that I have worked on can be more abstract, due to the subject matter talking about things that don't visually exist in any shape or form in the real world. This can be due to it being based on what is usually a thing made up of ones and zeros to the point that they don't have any visual representation in the first place.

Illustrating something that doesn't physically exist is great for me. It gives me a level of freedom to push what the visual representation of the subject matter can be, in a surreal and wonderful way. I also feel freedom in the way I can focus on the general concept, the way things look and feel, my color choices and how they connect in unison to create an art piece which conveys the subject matter visually.

Do you do much planning with your personal projects, or do you go with a flow as you work?

No matter how big or small a project is, you have to plan things at some point. When it comes to producing my work, I tend to draw small thumbnails in which the main goal is to get as many ideas down as possible before moving on to selecting the ones that have potential. Then I'll flesh them out roughly, which is then followed by picking one and taking it to the final piece.



@scott_balmer



@scott_balmer

Artificial intelligence and new digital tools have radically transformed the way artwork can be created. As an artist, what's your stance on digital integration?

AI art is in an interesting place right now - there are folks who think that it will eventually replace them at some point. Thing is, I don't think that will happen. AI art still heavily relies on a large database of original artwork to pull from, it does not seem to be able to make something on its own right now, although this might change in the future.

AI is good at seeing patterns in art and figuring out things like composition and the general structure of the artwork, but it can fumble in the details. Take a busy street scene, for example; it may look impressive at first glance, but once you have a closer look you see someone with three legs and some figures that aren't properly defined. Hands also seem to be an issue with AI art, as it hasn't figured out how they work and fit in the context of the image.

All in all, using AI is just another tool. It's one that could help generate ideas and concepts that an artist wouldn't even consider. It's going to be interesting to see how far AI art develops.

Where do you get your inspiration from?

I am quite partial to looking at old sci-fi book covers and stuff like that, as they kind of mirror the type of work I do now. Particularly with their old school visuals that feel futuristic and interesting, while also offering some sort of familiarity in their design.

Find Scott on Ello by Talenhouse @scott_balmer

COOLABI

OUR STORY WARRIORS

Coolabi is the leading global creator of children's fiction, and storytelling is at the heart of everything the business does.

You'll probably recognize Warrior Cats, Clangers, Beast Quest and Purple Ronnie, to name just a few of Coolabi's creations.

The Coolabi team shows that to be able to produce such engaging and loved characters and stories is to know that great ideas can come from anywhere. Creativity is free to flow limitlessly through their staff and business, and every idea is aired and considered. Freedom is fully felt, letting the most powerful stories rise to the top.

In 2022, Talenhouse was delighted to welcome Coolabi into its family via partial acquisition, as Coolabi and Talenhouse's visions of championing creativity, diversity and curiosity are so closely aligned.

Here, Coolabi's Director of IP Creation, Chris Snowdon, tells us how Coolabi channels the creativity and vision of their team into profitable and loved IP.

Scream Street © 2016 Coolabi Productions Limited.
Based on the Scream Street series of books by Tommy Donbavand.



Scream Street © 2016 Coolabi Productions Limited.
Based on the Scream Street series of books by Tommy Donbavand.



Poppy Cat © 2010 Coolabi Productions Limited.
Based on the Poppy Cat books by Lara Jones

coolabi.

Coolabi is a Talenhouse portfolio company

Coolabi has produced some of the most-cherished children's fiction in the world. What does the creative process look like?

We have a number of ways in which we create, and only three rules. Rule number one, if you're submitting an idea for a character or a storyline, don't make it more than a paragraph. Rule number two, we always have group brainstorms in which nobody is allowed to say no to anything. Ideas can come from anywhere and anyone, and we don't want to limit or inhibit them. We can redirect rather than refuse, and move an idea forward to see how far it can go. Rule number three is that these brainstorms can't be longer than an hour because after an hour people start to undo the good things they have agreed in the hour.

Why are ideas limited to one paragraph?

Because our aim is to create collegiately. So by just having the starting point, we can all contribute and own the idea together.

We also have an Editorial Bible that's been honed over the years, detailing ideal chapter counts for differing lengths of books and things like that. So we foster complete creative freedom, but within a context that we've created and refined.

What comes first, a story or message that you want to convey, or a character idea?

Twice a year our commercial team will update us with market context. They'll walk us through what's selling, what's missing, and what editors and publishing houses are really looking for. We'll all put together a tonne of ideas based on that information, and then we'll riff off of those.



How do you decide where ideas and characters will live? For example, what would make a brilliant TV show or what would be ideal as a book series?

The truth is that everything starts with a story. You have to have a story to have a successful book, just as much as you have to have a story to have a successful virtual world. Ideally, you want to develop characters that are so loved that they're wanted on every platform.

We're currently working on a Warrior Cats Web3 experience that was essentially started by fans. We found so many fan accounts online which had created animations, graphics, and even Roblox games. We invited the creators to work with us in a partnership, and formed the official connections to be able to move these ideas forward.

It's a great place to be in. Years ago, fans making content from our copyrighted IP might have resulted in a Cease & Desist order, but now it can end up with an invitation to collaborate. That's creative freedom.

How can this motivation from a story work for different industries? How can FMCG businesses or product or service-led businesses work with a story?

Look at Compare The Meerkat, those meerkats are part of a story and play interesting protagonists. We know these characters as they've been built up over the years, and now they have engaging commercials as opposed to those American adverts that explain to you exactly what a product does over a few very dull minutes.



Beast Quest © 2014 Beast Quest Limited.
"Beast Quest" is a registered trade mark of Beast Quest Limited.

Creative freedom for idea generation for a youth market must get really fun. How much do you have to pull ideas back, if it turns out a concept might not be sending the desired message out to a young audience?

Now, this is interesting, because it's a question of how limitations of responsibility fit into freedom, and what constitutes freedom. The most important thing for us is that kids are engaged and entertained. The parents are actually a secondary thought, if that, because we're working for the kids.

Children have just been through the horror of a pandemic, and we want to give them some fun. We can create a land where every day is a party full of sparkles, and by reading and being engaged the children will pick up language and other literacy skills as they go. Reading is brilliant soft learning.

Our aim is always to create something that results in reading for pleasure, and learning with ease.

COLOR OF THE YEAR

RED

As we soldier on through yet more difficult times and enter 2023 bolder, braver and with passion fuelled by these past years of uncertainty, what better color to have alongside us than red. Red is primal, it's urgent, and it's the color of survival.

Red can represent danger as much as it stands for power. Red can connote love, confidence and passion but also anger or rage. It symbolizes the complexity and -sometimes- ambivalence of human emotions.

True red, although interpreted in many ways, remains un-mixed or diluted, as a pure primary color. Red is the first color babies can see after they stop seeing only black and white, and human eyes will naturally gravitate towards it.

This is one of the most primal and powerful colors in the spectrum. It's the color of both Cupid and the Devil, and it holds a wide variety of emotional meanings for cultures worldwide. Red means good luck in China, where bridal gowns are red. Hinduism elevates red as a symbol of love, commitment, strength and bravery, whereas it's the color of mourning in parts of Africa, and the bright light of sex in central Amsterdam.

@u33482049



@jennirenarvaez

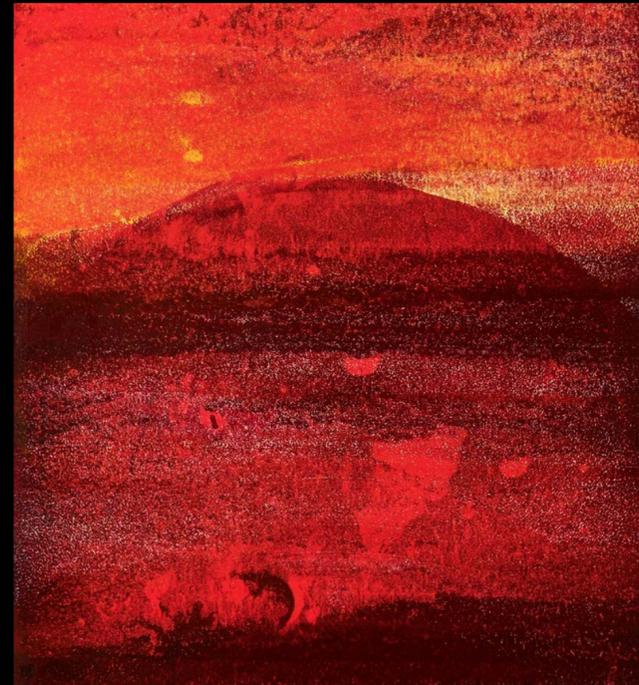
No matter what context in which you hold red, it isn't taken lightly. Red isn't used to blend into the background - red exists to be noticed. As the last few years have played havoc with the climate, global politics and economies, our mental and physical health and thus, our creativity, splashings of red tell the world to sit up and take notice.

Gen-Z are our most vocal generation yet, growing up in chaos and with their futures hanging in uncertainty. Red is lacquered across their protest signs and used to grab our attention. Red tells us to pay attention, to be warned, and that this message is coming from passion - whether it be fuelled by love, rage or desire.

As we strive to build active optimism around a future that swings in the balance, we have red working for us to stop decimation in its tracks, and to scream boldly at decision makers whose priorities perhaps need to shift. As we dust ourselves off and navigate the new year, red comes alongside us for power and confidence, whether individual or community.

Red is vibrant, red is a siren, red is telling you something. It's hard to imagine being bored by the color red. Red works to stop us in our tracks and open our eyes, and in 2023, they need to be open more than ever.

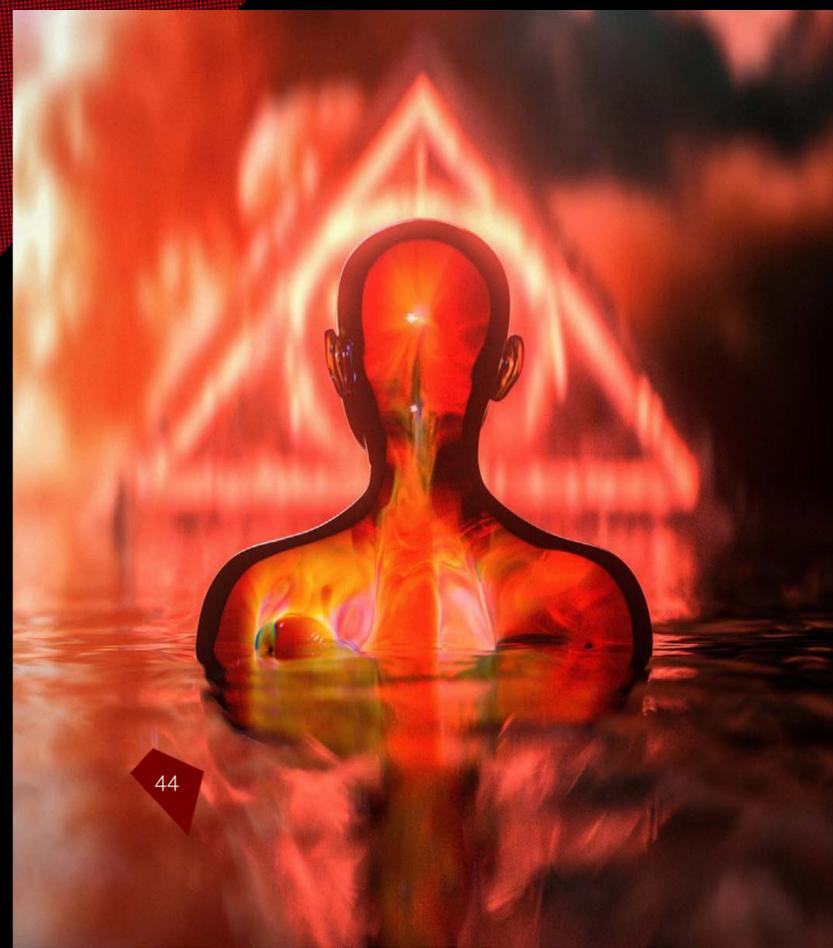
Red, we're ready for you.



@yvan-hydar



@carlabatley



44

@yxgisingh

THRED

OUR BEACON OF HOPE

Thred Media is a social enterprise focused on publishing, media, consulting and production aimed at Gen-Z, and the team is Gen-Z to boot; from the Founder, to the editors, writers, researchers, graphic designers and production team. The democratization of social change education and activism is at the heart of Thred Media's mission, which beautifully complements Talenthouse's mission to democratize creativity.

Gen-Z is now the largest, most diverse, and geographically untethered cohort in history, and they make up 40% of all global consumers. Their representation is mission critical. We spoke to Thred about how they and other brands should be approaching this in 2023.



@Dimaberlin

How does your work communicate with and galvanize Gen-Z consumers?

Young audiences will resonate with a company's mission, if its purpose is well articulated, their moral compasses are aligned, and they have a shared purpose.

We begin by making diverse youth representation the top priority both internally and externally. This begins with hiring practices that promote youth employment, continuous upskilling programs, and flexible work-life balance. We then extend our youth and social change-focused practice outward with the goal of sharing Gen-Z beliefs, behaviours and culture-shifting moments with our partners and clients. We strongly believe Gen-Z want to be involved in the ideation and curation of culture-led participatory moments with the brands and people they care about.



@elinaast

Gen-Z is growing up in a climate, health and financial crisis, and is known for actively pushing for change. How can you see art and creativity more closely intersecting with the world of activism?

Gen-Z artists have changed our perception of art and the purpose it serves. We no longer create to attain escapism, where art belongs to its own separate universe with no connection and nothing to say about our world. Instead, we create to expand our world, to raise awareness of the multitude of truths and realities in the world. In this space, art can act as activism and activism can become an art.

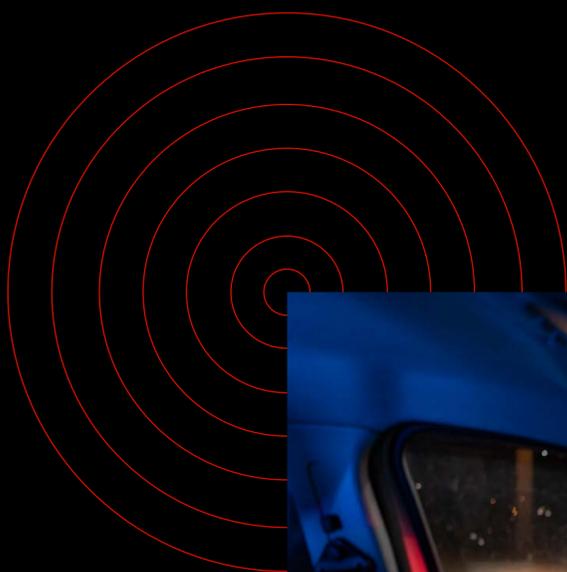
Art and graphic design have become a more essential, integrated, and emotive ingredient in conveying passion and eliciting reactions across the ubiquitous use of social media. Therefore, it is no longer as much a matter of intersection, but of an evolving and necessary integration between the two fields.

With the rise of metaverses and VR with their potential to actively build virtual and alternative societies, we believe creativity and art will come to play an even more integral part in building bridges between these different worlds within our society and reimagining our future.

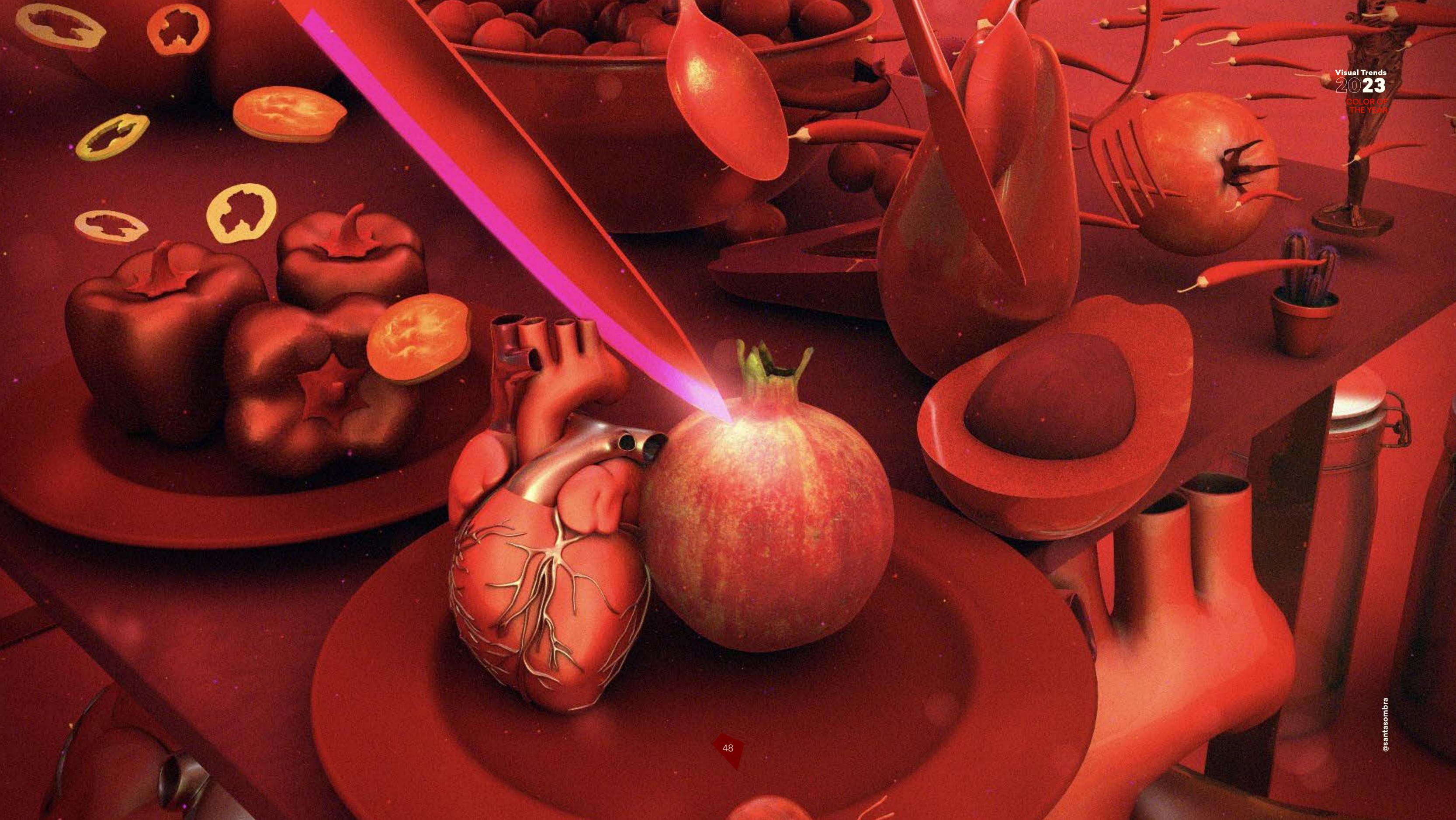
@addictive_stock



@LukasPalatinus



@Dimaberlin





“At Talenthouse we are unlocking the potential for brands and a global network of creatives to collaborate, innovate and grow their businesses together, democratizing creativity each step of the way.”

Clare McKeeve, CEO, Talenthouse



We are Talenthouse

Talenthouse AG is the technology platform and services company that brings brands and a global network of creatives together to make innovative content that engages, inspires, and drives action.

Global content 24/7

We know that marketers' global content creation needs are always on, multi-persona, multi-platform. Creatives and brand marketers need to drive visibility and relevance to the right audiences at the right time. In-house and agency teams need to do all of this with speed and authenticity, cost-effectively and fitting for each market locally.

It's a lot to ask. So that's where we come in

Talenthouse is your nimble content ideation and execution partner. We leverage our global community of over 20 million creators – the true magic of the Creator Economy – designers, videographers, illustrators, photographers, game developers, AR, VR and Web3 artists, and more. We act as the thought partner and project management glue to deliver the most innovative and effective high-quality content that meets your needs.

TALENTHOUSE CREATIVE SOLUTIONS



TALENTHOUSE STUDIO

We lead and staff full-scale productions with hand-selected professionals from our creative community, for photo and video shoots anywhere in the world



OPEN CREATIVE BRIEFS

Craft a call to creative action via open briefs that leverage hundreds of creators and their social networks through our [Talenthouse](#) platform



INNOVATION AND BRANDING

Leverage a selection of the best creative talent to quickly innovate brand and product design to meet your business challenges with [jovoto by Talenthouse](#)



IMAGE LICENSING

Premium stock photography and illustration that's anything but basic, through [EyeEm by Talenthouse](#)



STORYTELLING

Driving long-term value from existing assets and developing new lines of business through story creation and development with the award-winning team at [Coolabi](#)



GAMING

Game development from the team members that helped build Epic Games and one of the founding members of Xbox at Microsoft via Talenthouse [Media Foundry](#)



1:1 COMMISSIONING

Empowering the music industry and beyond to directly and efficiently commission experienced freelance creatives through [Creative Commission](#)



FIND FREELANCERS

For SMBs, a self-service platform to build and manage creative teams via [ElloWorks](#)

Contact sales@talenthouse.com to learn more about how Talenthouse can help you meet your creative content development needs.

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