

# The Futures Less Traveled: Dentsu Creative's 2024 Trends Report

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Drawing on the collective research and insights of strategists, futurists and innovators from across its global network, Dentsu Creative's 2024 Trends Report explores the power of hope in a volatile world. At a time where the future has perhaps never felt so uncertain, "The Futures Less Traveled" urges brands and business to seize the moment to design, innovate and strive for the future they want to see.



**Yasuharu Sasaki, global creative office, Dentsu** says: "Against the backdrop of this uncertain world our report turns to hope as a deliberate choice, to empower us to take control and design our own futures. Through creativity, armed with the powers of technology and storytelling, we hold potential to pave ways for many exciting 'Futures Less Traveled', borne of core principles of optimism and ambition".

The report unpacks five macro trends for 2024 and beyond, each with a number of sub trends to explore. Each trend uncovers unexpected possibilities, such as the power of joy in the face of anxiety, the potency of storytelling as a force for change or the potential of deep local insight to connect diverse communities around the world.

**Pats McDonald, chief strategy officer, EMEA, Dentsu Creative** says: "Hope is not a strategy but it is a choice. At a time of exponential change, no one can predict with certainty what the future will bring. But we can design for the future we want to see. We see consumers around the world taking control of a chaotic world through small but powerful acts of connection and self-care."

Highlighting innovation in action from around the world, the report aims to arm brands, businesses and individuals with the insights needed to navigate 2024 and beyond. [DOWNLOAD LINK](#).

## The five key trends:

### 1. Ode to joy



In a world where joy can seem in short supply, it becomes more important than ever. As we look around at the close of 2023, we see joy, softness and play emerging as protection against a chaotic and volatile world.

### **i Joyful resistance**

Moments of joyful surrealism emerge in response to a world in chaos, while advertising rediscovers the transformative power of humour.

### **ii Self-care as subversion**

Be it the refuge of an “Everything Shower”, or the rise of the “soft life” and “lazy girl jobs” in rejection of hustle culture, a quiet rebellion against the fast-paced, high pressure, lifestyle is underway.

### **iii Unadulterated play**

Adult responsibilities are unattainable or being deferred in favour of play, as seen in the boom in “Kidult” toys, the popularity of a basic #GirlDinner or a new wave of experiences that merge art galleries and soft play.

## **2. The memes of production**



In a related trend, we see creators reclaiming genres and formats easily underestimated as soft, superficial or trivial as forces for change.

### **i From world-building to building better worlds**

A generation raised on world-building and co-creation are taking those skills and expectations with them into adulthood, with heightened expectations of agency and empowerment.

### **ii Change the story, change the future**

Broadcasters and curators are embracing storytelling over factual content to help audiences digest the complexity of our times, recognising the power of new narratives to unlock new possibilities.

### **iii The meme-ing of life**

Like parables or cartoons before them, memes and reels have emerged as a way of distilling complex ideas or scathing commentary into brilliantly bite-sized, shareable and endlessly repeatable formats. Be it #Fintok, #Cleantok or social justice, no topic is too complex to go viral.

## **3. Here we are now**



Perhaps in response to a world that can feel overwhelming, perhaps in response to a cost of living crisis, we see a powerful engagement with all things local and homegrown

### **i Empathy in action**

Personal truth is a new imperative, seen in the rising popularity of neighbourhood media and the growing importance of indigenous populations in shaping a new and more equitable travel industry.

### **ii Local luxury**

The post-pandemic world relies less on international networks, with an increased appreciation for goods and services closer to home that draw on local traditions and iconography.

### **iii The cosy web**

A desire for a more rooted sense of place in the world is also being reinforced in the digital space. The idea of the 'cozy web' is replacing vast social platforms as a safe space for more intimate online conversations.

#### **4. The magic in the machine**



As AI both impresses and perturbs, perhaps in equal measure, we ask ourselves, what is the role of technology in augmenting our humanity? How can technology unlock imagination and shape new experiences that bridge physical and virtual world?

##### **i Almagination**

With ChatGPT emerging as the fastest growing app in history, we will see not only unfettered imagination but more practical and scalable use cases designed to enhance the customer experience.

##### **ii In touch with humanity**

Despite exponential leaps forward in artificial intelligence, we see enduring power in experiences that connect technology and humanity through touch, haptics, voice, gesture and beyond.

##### **iii Borderless commerce**

Technologies such as Augmented Reality, Image Recognition and virtual worlds are blurring the boundaries between online and offline commerce beyond all recognition.

#### **5. Me, myself and us**





Changing demographics prompt us to re-evaluate our relationship with the communities and collectives that define us, while the emergence of “digital twins” poses fascinating questions about identity and autonomy.

### i The “I” in collective

Traditionally individualist Western culture is opening up to a more collective existence, while in contrast, traditionally more collective cultures are exploring a new sense of individuality.

### ii My (onter)generations

An increase in intergenerational living is giving rise to a reappraisal and appreciation of the older generation, demonstrated through an increase in fashion brands engaging mature ambassadors and the enduring popularity of the #grandmillennial trend.

### iii Digital doppelgangers

The rise and rise of AI also prompts us to explore the nature of our own identity, as artists, gamers and time poor individuals explore the potential of digital doppelgangers to act on their behalf.

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