

2022

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QUICK PREDICTIONS
[REVIEW]

2022 DEEPER TRENDS



2022 Trends Report

INTRO

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When we wrote our 2022 trends report, we focused on areas that were already slightly in play as opposed to pure hypothetical future-gazing. So, it felt appropriate to check in six months into the year to see how they've progressed. Six months can be a long time for fast-moving trends (particularly this year). What follows is a snapshot of some of the most interesting and relevant trend developments for marketers.



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MAXIMALISM

There have been some great examples of this trend. In fact, we were inspired by it when we created our interactive stage for Pinterest at Cannes in Cairns.

PURPOSE MARKETING

As predicted, purpose-washing has been under the microscope but through a lens that we didn't anticipate in January - war and a cost-of-living crisis. Lacoste has recently been criticised for an ad campaign celebrating the diversity and creativity of different people coming together while remaining one of the few western brands still operating in Russia.

And when it comes to the cost-of-living crisis, there is an opportunity for brands to help people with the services and entertainment they can't justify spending money on. Providing free brand experiences can give people free entertainment and respite from day-to-day challenges.

METaverse & GAMING

As predicted, many questions remain about what shape the metaverse will take and whether it will ever exist as a holistic entity or many disparate manifestations- such as gaming, social media, and communication. May's TGI research showed that 73% of British people don't know anything about the metaverse, and 79% have no interest in using it. 15-24-year-olds are around twice as likely as other age groups to have a desire to use it, showing that it is still a relatively niche and youth-focused concept. In April, Lego formed a strategic partnership with Epic Games to develop a child-friendly metaverse offering, which is further evidence of the current youth-focused opportunity.

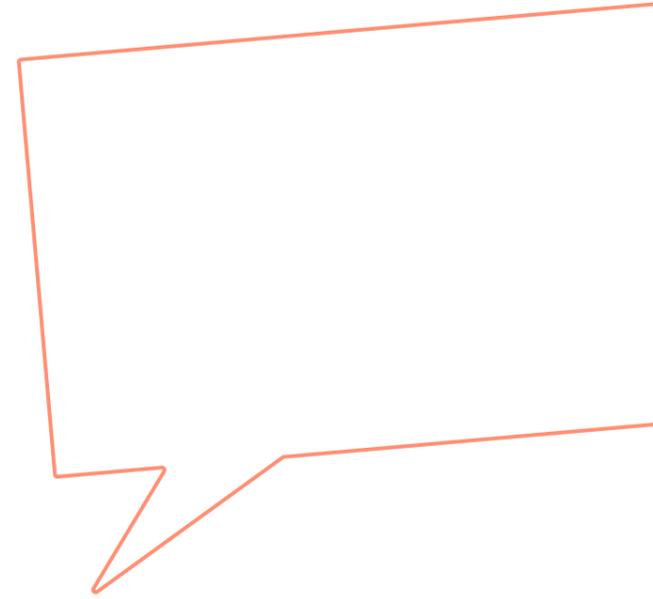
There remains a lot of sense in focusing on the opportunities available here and now. Snap Inc's founder, Evan Spiegel, announced a range of new Snapchat products that do exactly that and went on to describe the metaverse as hypothetical and ambiguous. Of immediate interest from a brand experience point-of-view are Snapchat's Pixy, Dress Up, and custom lenses at music festivals. Even Meta, slightly curiously considering their rebrand, recently said, "The metaverse is not a single product or an operating system. It isn't a single piece of cloth but a patchwork quilt. There won't be a Meta-run metaverse"

On the theme of opportunities in the here and now, gaming continues to be the closest manifestation of a self-contained virtual world. This is also the best opportunity for brands to create metaverse-type experiences for younger audiences. Doing so in places like Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite allows for powerful ideas like co-creation, permanent presences, and physical/virtual world integration. In the first half of this year, we've seen Samsung put on Charlie XCX concerts, UEFA create a Women's Euro 2022 game, and Gucci launch a permanent Gucci Town, all in Roblox. What's interesting about all of these is that they are part of a trend towards longer-lasting experiences versus campaigns.

A further appeal of contained gaming environments is brand, and user, safety. Broader VR social environments such as VRChat have been plagued by user safety issues with reports of sexual assault, racism, and child grooming. So, for now, safe and secure gaming environments are the way to go to scratch a brand's metaverse itch. They also have established payment systems that don't rely on cryptocurrencies, which have faced their own challenges with crashes and the Bank of England's recent announcement of stepping in to save certain "stablecoins".



EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE



When we wrote the original 2022 trends report, we were still amid COVID restrictions, and as they've lifted, the return to the office has gathered pace. Not fast enough for some, as Jacob Rees-Mogg's passive-aggressive note showed, but too fast for those that feel the future is fully remote, such as Airbnb. Somewhere between these extremes is the acceptance that offices are good for certain things (the Three Cs of collaboration, creativity, and culture) and WFH is best for others (the Three Fs of focus, flexibility, and family), hence why many businesses now have a hybrid approach.

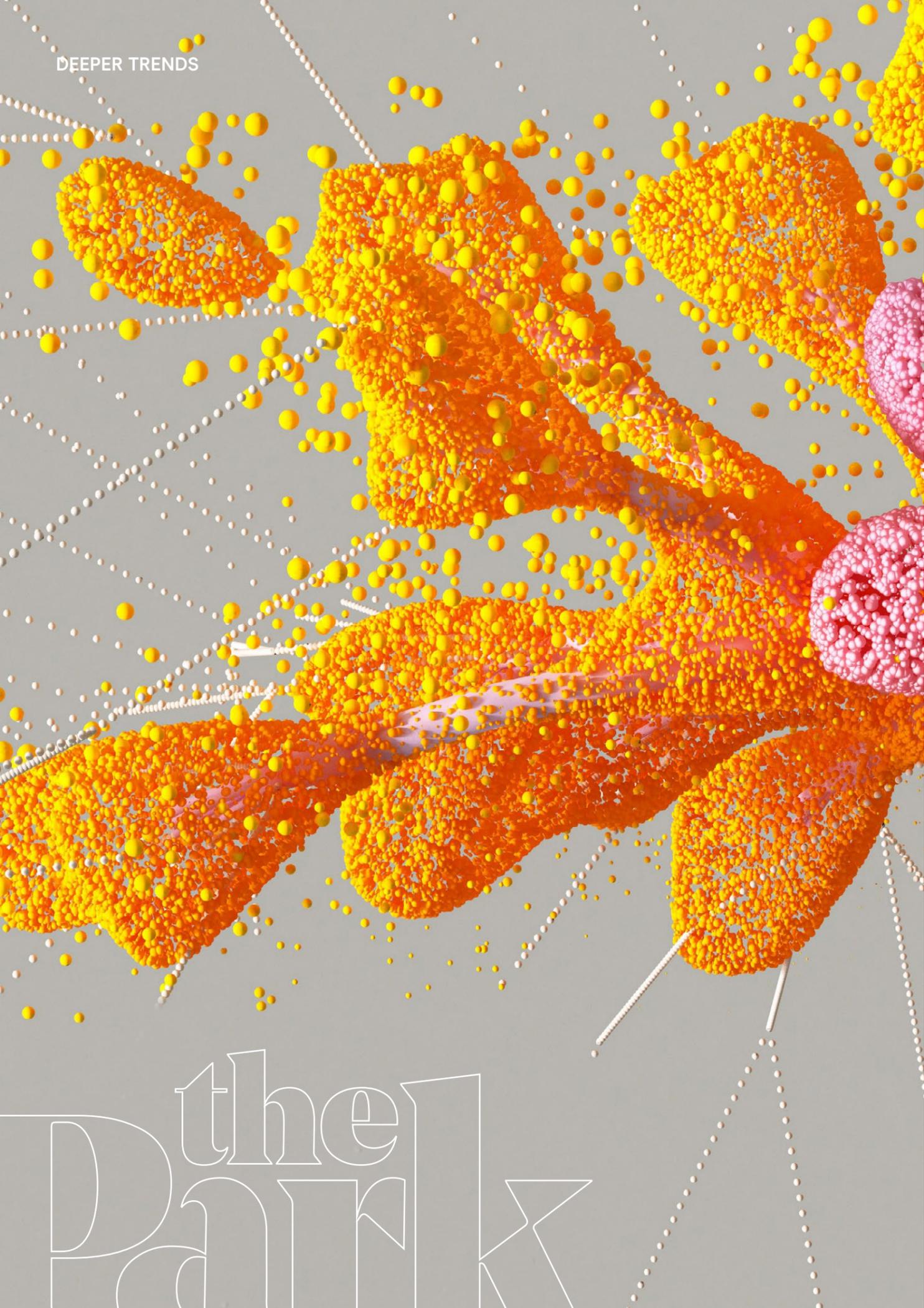
What is true of every business is the need to focus on creating engaging employee experiences when people are together. For some organisations, that is once a quarter; for others, it's every day. As a result, impactful tent pole experiences like all company off-

sites and weekly meetings have taken on greater importance, as have the more day-to-day areas of culture such as benefits, recruitment, and communication.

The need for stand-out internal brand experiences has also been exacerbated by the stretched labour market, meaning companies need to compete for talent.

There is a similarly competitive arena for retail brands needing to create physical experiences beyond pure sales to get their point of difference and company culture across. Our work with H&M on H1 store openings embraced this trend with community engagement and a showcase of local talent in-store. Ultimately, extending their company culture to their members.





AI & TECHNOLOGY

The development and progress of AI has continued apace in the first half of 2022, and there are increasingly tangible use cases for it. Our original report talked about OpenAI and programmes like Davinci & DALL -E 2. Since then, we have had access to DALL -E 2 (which totally blew our minds) and seen the programme used to create the first-ever AI magazine cover for Cosmopolitan.

As well as publishing, we're seeing AI integration across retail and employee experience, with innovative retail recommendation platform, The Yes, recently acquired by Pinterest, showing how vital intelligent and relevant recommendations will be in the future of retail. Attuned is also working with companies to integrate AI into their employee management practices.

Potentially the most exciting role for AI in terms of experiential marketing is in creativity

and collaboration. The creation, visualisation and presentation of ideas is time-consuming, labour intensive and expensive. The potential to integrate AI into these processes is very interesting.

There are a few ways this “man and machine” collaboration could happen. Copilot from github and OpenAI is a fascinating idea where coders are given an AI coding buddy to suggest lines of code - ultimately, coding together. Natural language processing platforms (like the aforementioned DALL -E 2) mean you can say what you want to create and the AI programme will create it for you. This could (eventually) transform the creation of floorplans, idea mock-ups, and even artwork. Even ideas themselves, as they are ultimately just novel combinations, can be improved through AI as inspiration platforms like Seenapse show.



CLIMATE CRISIS

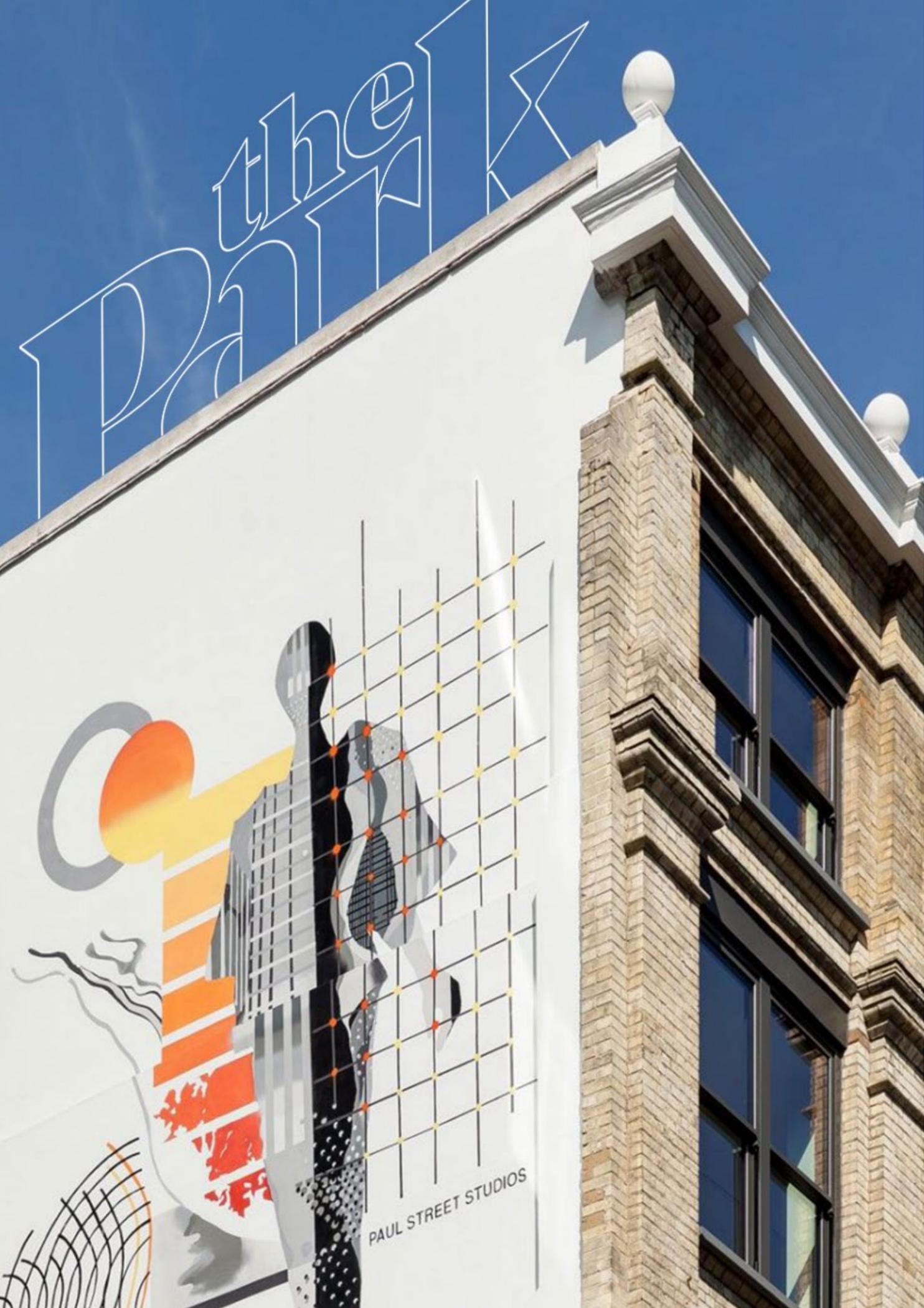
As the need becomes ever more urgent, but institutional action seems just as slow, the energy from our industry in this area has grown this year.

The wonderful [isla](#), of which we're proud to be members, has rolled out their TRACE measurement tool meaning all agencies can report thoroughly on the carbon cost of individual events allowing targets and reduction goals to be set. As the saying goes, "What gets measured, gets done".

At the recent Podcast Show, we constructed a stand for Acast using sustainable materials and it was pleasing to see many other brands following suit. It's clear the message on sustainable production is getting through, however, brands are sadly still producing and giving out unnecessary "merch". This landfill needs to stop.

Our focus now is moving sustainability further up the process to the very beginning of a project. The industry needs to create ideas that are sustainable by nature as opposed to trying to make environmentally costly ideas a little more sustainable.

The broader view of sustainability and climate cost is apparent in many areas. There is a fascinating move towards "video-off Friday", highlighting the energy cost of video calls and a similar argument can be made for unnecessary email. Because they're digital actions the climate cost is hidden. This is a fascinating behavioural science challenge. A final, positive, approach to digital climate cost is Cardiocoin- a crypto currency that can only be mined through physical activity (as opposed to carbon-intensive computer mining).



We expect an equally active second half of the year for these trends and will be keeping a close eye on their evolution, as well as keeping an eye out for new and emerging areas. We'll be back at the start of 2023 to explore those.

In the meant time, to find out more about the trends mentioned in this report and how we can help you apply them to create successful brand experiences for your customers and or employees (or both!), [please get in touch](#) with New Business Director Emma@thepark.london or MD Jack@thepark.london.

ABOUT THE PARK

The Park is an award-winning independent experiential agency that makes brands memorable through our unique creative approach of creating Brand Proof. This has led to sales increases, improved employee engagement, and brand perception growth for brands like H&M, Acast, NBC, Red Bull, Amazon Prime and Dreamworks.

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