

Visual Trends 2018: This years must-know colour, design, branding & photography trends

2017 may have been the year of adopting new visual trends – greenery, authenticity, Hygge for example – but our increased desire to seek solitude, surrealism and travel in remote places are all part of what's expected in design, photography, fashion and homeware trends in 2018. And a heads up – shades of purple are in. Move over Millennial Pink.

Last year we were a society with a deep need to return to life in its simplest, organic forms after the shock of fake news, Brexit and Trump. This was manifested through adoption of indoor greenery, ethical threads and authentic branding and photography trends. We also saw a surge in bold and brave colours – and luckily, that's here to stay.

Deposit Photos

As the world digests recent waves of high-profile sexual allegations, Trump's nuclear rhetoric with North Korea and Australia's decision to make same-sex marriage legal (finally) among other political landmarks, our value of experience over possessions, and the surreal over reality seems to be continuing.

Looking down the barrel of a new year, we've scoured leading design publications to see what visual trends are anticipated in the areas of colour, branding, photography, fashion, homeware and technology and UX design.

Visual Trends

Our new world for 2018 is predicted to examine gender fluidity, surreal scenes, travel photography, Ultra-Violet over Millennial Pink, transparency in fashion, mixed metals within the home and continued speech recognition and progress on AI-based creative tools.

We continue to refine what modern femininity and gender roles look like and mean.

“There are endless permutations of individual identity. A few years ago, people were talking about race or ethnicity, then body type, abilities, and age. Now we’re looking at the fluid self-identity as a vast and ever-changing range of ideas that should all be celebrated,” says principal of creative services and visual Trends at Adobe Brenda Milis.

Brenda also expects to see lush, tropical and utopic-based alternate worlds – but with an intensity, an almost psychedelic twist. Our need for hyper-sensorial experiences blended with nature and the human imagination will permeate into artists’ work. The presence of plants continues to be hugely present among illustrators recent work, including Andres Lozano, Biff and Charlotte Day.



One of illustrator Andres Lozano’s favourite thing to draw is plants and people

Travel photography, and subsequent ‘wanderlust’ based typography and graphic design emerged throughout 2017 but we definitely see it continuing into 2018. The need for silence and solitude is dominating wellness and visual trends for 2018, which ties in with the modern emphasis on travelling to remote places (and yet the ironic excessive sharing of this on social media).



Deposit Photos

It's expected 2018 will see a continuation of bold and brave colours to match bold and brave photography subjects and political activism in graphic design, such as the work of Edel Rodriguez.



Deposit Photos

Colour

Pantone's colour of the year for 2018 is Ultra-Violet; a "blue-based purple that takes our awareness and potential to a higher level", drawing on the exploration of new technologies, the galaxy, artistic expression and spiritual reflection.



Pantone's Ultra-Violet

It's a colour that represents the unknown, of what is yet to come, and it's intriguing. It's also been a hero colour among celebrities such as Prince, David Bowie and Jimi Hendrix.



Pantone's Ultra-Violet

All shades of lavender and other purples are already anticipated as popular among homewares and fashion too.



Pantone's Ultra-Violet

Pantone released its top 16 colours for Spring 2018 expected to be seen used by fashion designers in London in men's and women's collections. It includes bold colours such as Cherry Tomato, Meadowlark and Palace Blue alongside wardrobe staples such as Warm Sand and Harbor Mist. See the full list [here](#). Ultra-Violet is of course in the list too, as well as Pink Lavender.



Pantone's top colours for Spring 2018

Designers in both the UK and US recognise the need to show

more colour in their collections,” says Pantone executive director Leatrice Eiseman. People are wanting flexibility, expression, and “a vibrant breath of fresh air”.

“After so long investing in neutral colours, comforting hygge-like trends, and minimalistic designs, we’re seeing a resurgence in bright colours, illustrations and personality in all forms of design,” says design expert and EIC of DesignRush Stephanie Sharlow.

“Pantone proactively reinforced this idea by not just naming any purple, but by naming Ultra-Violet as the colour of the year for 2018. This bright hue takes on a larger stance, which will be reflected in all forms of website design and advertising in the months and years to come.”

Graphic Design & Branding

Echoing Adobe’s predictions, Connie Birdsall from creative consultant company Lippincott, who’s worked with Delta, Samsung and Starbucks says the “fantasy theme” will continue to be seen in branding choices, including the use of vivid colours, creating a sense of escapism from reality, as well as expressive and bespoke hand lettering and typography to match.



Charlotte Day’s hand lettering for Lush

In terms of logo design and redesign, simple line work and slick vector shapes continue to be popular – most recently seen with Weiden+Kennedy London’s redesign for Formula 1 and Kickstarter’s new wordmark.



Formula 1’s new logo

Take Brandless, an online concept store for example, covered in *Wallpaper* magazine. Created in Silicon Valley by Tina Sharkey and Ido Leffler, the store offers household, cosmetic and food items that are essentially brandless – all for only

US\$3 – highlighting what could be done without ‘Brand Tax’ – a phrase summarising all of the hidden costs behind owning a strong brand identity.



The Brandless online concept store, as featured in *Wallpaper* In Deposit Photos’ annual Visual Trends 2018 list, it mentions a growing popularity of creative collages in graphic design, linking this to the search for new ways of self expression and to communicate messages in a more unusual way.

“Cropping images, combining them in unexpected ways and playing around with different mediums and effects introduces something a little more unexpected from visual content,” the post reads.



Deposit Photos

This also ties in with the continued popularity of moving graphics – GIFs are a prime example – of successful branding across all social media channels. As we become more awash with static imagery everyday, something like a GIF, collage, 360 video and immersive technologies are quenching our thirst for vibrant visuals that little bit more. See how Starbucks is using GIFs on social media.

Double mocha yum dotted with silky chocolaty confetti. ? Here through January 8th! #BlackAndWhiteMochaFrappuccino pic.twitter.com/2I0AFVtV7C

– Starbucks Coffee (@Starbucks) January 3, 2018

Brands continue to strive to be as ethical and honest as possible amidst our demands for transparency. As creative director of Possible Pablo Marques puts it: “Being good is good business right now.”

One way to prove this is by launching a product which builds consumer choice. Social media influencers continue to be a

popular source of coverage for brands, slowly pushing out the role of journalists to share information. This also leads into a need to publicly back diversity and equality – graphic designer Timothy Goodman’s latest People of Craft project with Amelie Lamont is just that.



People of Craft is an online directory highlight “creatives of colour”

Photography

Deposit Photos 10 trends shaping visual communication in 2018 includes these predictions for photography.

Street photography – picking ‘perfect strangers’ and ordinary people as subjects. Now that everyone has a smartphone, photographers can pick their subjects from crowds, and ‘ordinary people’ are more relatable, and fascinating, than models.



Deposit Photos

Artistic expression through travel – photos of people in context with nature rather than images shot in a closed studio space are preferred, and remain the bestsellers on stock photography websites. It also reflects society’s growing prioritization of exploring remote places, showcasing a carefree lifestyle – ‘van life’ anyone? – over continuous weeks, months of travel. People become “the main heroes of their visual storytelling”, says Deposit Photos.



Deposit Photos

Unfiltered images – a style described as Dead Pan, and popular in the 50s, this new wave of photography involves subjects represented as they are – raw and ready. We’re guessing this has natural become more popular with social media and live

videos.



Deposit Photos

Accept me for who I am – This visual trend is about challenging stereotypes. Expect to see a continuation of women and men captured as ‘their true selves’ and the interchanging roles of both genders.



Deposit Photos

Fashion

Among benign fashion trends like oversized earrings and scrunchies, Vogue UK’s 2018 predictions include transparency – see-through clothing and handbags through use of plastics, are making a come-back (we’re sure David Attenborough wouldn’t be happy about that).



Transparent (Left) and plastic (Right) designs as featured in *Vogue UK*

Checks will remain prevalent too, with new attention to biker shorts and cropped denim.



Burberry Check design, as featured in *Vogue UK*

As with homeware, Millennial Pink is out and Lavender is in, alongside other pastel shades.

And there’s hope for the working woman – here are three brands making ‘business-casual’ actually enjoyable and somewhat comfy for women, as covered by *Cool Hunting*.



Some of Argent’s range as featured in *Cool Hunting*

Homeware

Lilac, lavender, all shades of purple are in, keeping in line with Pantone's Colour of the Year; Ultra-Violet. Millennial pink is out, according to fashion publications. Here's some advice on how to add Ultra-Violet into your existing home decor.



Supplied Image

"I love purple in the home, especially as accent pops throughout my design space," says creative director of Studio NYC Design, Design Works International and HGTV Home, Nancy Fire.

"Blending purple with grey, green and other neutrals is a very updated yet commercial way to enjoy this majestic colour. Think about curb appeal and how a purple inspired door can add that pop of colour that your home has been lacking."

The use of mixed metals, especially gold, is back in. Elle Decor says Pins for 'Mixed metals' were up 423 percent in the last year.



Pinterest example of mixed metals

And patterned flooring material Terrazzo, a style popular in the 70s, is back. It consists of chips of marble or granite set in concrete and polished.



Pinterest example of Terrazzo

Patterned plants and wall art, are some of the searches that massively increased on Pinterest, and are part of its top trends to try in 2018 – a list 100 long.

Technology

Although technology may not seem to influence visual trends directly, it's important to keep in mind how technology advancement is influencing what we expect to see, how brands are interacting with customers and how creative tools are changing what is possible.

Augmented reality has recently superseded virtual reality in terms of reaching the masses, and voice controlled home devices have boomed, such as Amazon's Alexa and Google's Home – paving the way for exchange of information via speech recognition to become commonplace. Design is becoming invisible, and more personalised with a surge in chatbots.



Google Home

Simple UX design is crucial in order for any brand to survive. Less bells and whistles, and more of give-the-person-what-they're-looking-for-ASAP. Some parts of the UX design industry is looking to improve its usability for all people – including those with disabilities or struggling with mental health, explored by UX architect Francis Rowland at Sigma.

<https://www.digitalartsonline.co.uk/features/graphic-design/visual-trends-2018-this-years-must-know-colour-design-branding-photography-trend/>