



How Not to Waste A Good Crisis

Zeitgeist 2024

One word often springs to mind when summing up the current zeitgeist: crisis. It seems appropriate in every area of society and all these areas seem to be interlinked, like a network of crises. The term crisis (or crises) gets bandied around interchangeably with terms like war, inflation, energy poverty and global warming. All these developments affect, concern, overwhelm and stress us. They even prompt us to take action. But if all these crises are interlinked, then where do you start looking for solutions? While negative sentiment is growing, confidence is waning in politicians and our economic future. Where will all this lead?

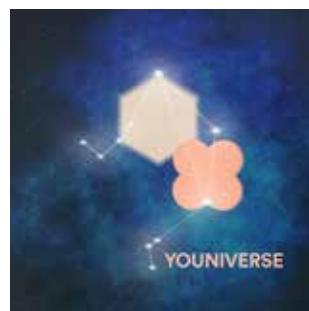
At first glance, the overall picture is far from rosy. This means the future could be viewed as hostile and menacing. People respond differently when faced with hostility. Some fight, while others hide, freeze or even become pioneers. These are the four natural responses to threats. The zeitgeist for 2024, namely 'How Not To Waste A Good Crisis', is all about how we can cope with the crisis. Might we even be able to turn it to our advantage? The four value trends below are linked to the aforementioned human responses and lend form to this zeitgeist.



EQUALIFE



COMFORT ZONE



YOUNIVERSE



ELUSIVE

EQUALIFE

The Equalife value trend suits people who prefer to tackle crises head-on. The name is derived from the word equalise. Balance needs to be injected into the old system, which is rife with poverty, scarcity of raw materials, climate and energy crises, polarisation and emancipation. This will enable us to create a world that is more equal and sustainable not only when it comes to the climate but also in terms of our social environment. In addition, we must all do it together, helping each other as well as ourselves. We are embarrassed about the effects of climate change on other parts of the world. This means we want to do the right thing for the planet. In order to fight this huge imbalance, we will have to harness traditional approaches as well as nature. There is growing awareness that instead of living off nature, we must be part of it. Creative thinking and solution-oriented focus will help us to achieve this new balance.

Examples of Equalife in practice

The owner of Patagonia, an outdoor clothing brand, donated his company to a non-profit organisation to ensure that all

the profits would go towards combating climate change. In Rotterdam, they are investigating whether wool from domestic sheep can be used in industry (for example) so that it no longer has to be incinerated. The municipality of Haarlem has banned meat advertising in public spaces due to the impact that meat has on the climate.

Starting points for the Horticulture sector

Balance is extremely important within this trend. How can the use of greenery create more balance in and around the home? The environmental aspect is an important element in this regard, so this must be clearly mentioned on product packaging. Products that use little energy during the production process now suddenly have a positive selling point. As a business, how can you move from living off nature towards living harmoniously with nature? Balance is important not only in terms of consumers but also within the organisation itself: in what ways is equality and inclusivity being fostered in the workplace? This is also something that consumers will consider in their purchasing behaviour.

COMFORT ZONE

Hiding is another way of coping with crises, and is the idea behind Comfort Zone. We close ourselves off from the big, bad world in a safe and welcoming bubble. That world is full of mistrust, conflict, crises, concern about data privacy, loss of face-to-face service, poor mental health and an increase in anxiety and polarisation. For instance, the war in Ukraine, the lack of trust in politicians and the increasing popularity of conspiracy theories. This results in a sense of threat, sensory overload and suspicion. Do we not want a better system? Of course we do, but we would prefer to get there via evolution rather than revolution. In the meantime, we try to keep the misery at bay by hiding away in small social groups of like-minded individuals.

Examples of Comfort Zone in practice

Like-minded people connect on TikTok based on their hobbies or taste in books, giving rise to new social groups.

YOUNIVERSE

Freezing is another coping mechanism for extreme situations. The Youniverse value trend takes this as its starting point and particularly relates to young people - millennials and generation Z. They have high expectations to meet, partly due to social media, and this is causing stress. At the same time, there is a world of possibilities at their feet due to shortages in the labour market. So there is an extreme contrast.

The COVID-19 crisis is still fresh in our memories. Young people, in particular, suddenly realised that there was not much for them to do, which created a sense of powerlessness. They are now safeguarding their well-being by setting limits and looking for control. There is a need for comfort, luxury and slow living. Ambition is no longer about more, better and faster but about different values, such as feeling good and being mentally and physically healthy. Quiet quitting is an example of this. Many young employees are drawing their own red lines and refuse to work long hours. Youniverse is about looking after yourself properly and constantly setting

ELUSIVE

Pioneering is the essence of the final value trend for 2024. The cogs of our current global system have all ground to a halt. Continuing on this beaten track seems pointless and above all, destructive. That is why we need radical reform, in every area. Daring to experiment and think outside the box, with no limits or taboos. Curiosity, innovation and technology play an important role in this trend. They offer opportunities that we previously could not imagine, and suddenly anything seems possible. The upshot is a need for creativity, freedom and new rules. Examples? Consider the Metaverse, NFTs and crypto, as well as digital art based on AI (artificial intelligence) and ChatGPT. (Incidentally, this text was written by a human being, in the traditional manner.)

Examples of Elusive in practice

Development of The Line Neom, a futuristic city in Saudi Arabia. The city is keen to preserve 95% of its nature, with

Another example is RegioBank positioning itself as your friendly neighbourhood bank by opening local branches again. Nostalgia and the need for security are triggering a resurgence in cassette tapes and photo film.

Starting points for the Horticulture sector

How do you go about creating comfort for consumers? Be transparent about what is being done with their data, e.g. for loyalty cards, newsletters, etc. Facilitate unity among people by organising a plant workshop or a trip where customers get a chance to meet like-minded people. Plants and flowers can really boost happiness in and around the home, so emphasise this. Greenery makes you forget all your concerns. And above all: give consumers clarity and be honest about the product. Dispel mistrust.

boundaries. This has created a need for luxury, comfort and slow living.

Examples of Youniverse in practice

Friesland Campina takes the slow and steady approach by issuing a four-minute commercial. The Feelee app, which you can use to track your emotions. And 450 museums are using MuseumVrij to allow their staff to wander round the museum during working hours in order to find some inner calm.

Starting points for the Horticulture sector

The emergence of slow living has created a need for peace and quiet. We know that flowers and plants help to reduce stress. Even taking care of plants – which is so often cited as the downside of having greenery products – can be a soothing and relaxing activity. Present care tips more like a ritual – one that is important for plant and plant owner alike. Increasing attention is being given to extreme luxury and exceptional plants. A comprehensive care range is therefore essential.

zero cars, zero streets and zero carbon emissions. All essential day-to-day services, such as schools, medical clinics, leisure amenities and green spaces, are within a five-minute walk. The artist Stromae, who has adopted a gender-ambiguous persona, is a completely different example. Or the Metaverse, where sports, living, art and fashion are presented in a new dimension.

Starting points for the Horticulture sector

Try to think outside the box and let go of old ideas. What will the Metaverse mean for the use of flowers and plants? Keep your finger on the pulse. In addition, more and more AI programs like Dal-E will be released, which will make it much easier and cheaper to create new visual material for things like websites or social media.