

The Great *Un*conformity

A Tectonic Shift in
Culture and Aesthetics
predicted for 2025



Introduction

01.

Method

- 1.0 Bad Form
- 1.1 Weird Angles
- 1.2 Lo-fi_hi-brow
- 1.3 Compositionally Challenged

02.

Mood

- 2.0 Down-Key Shift
- 2.1 Warmth
- 2.2 Glow
- 2.3 Softness

03.

Style

- 3.0 Old Soul Energy
- 3.1 Old Money Vibes
- 3.2 Collecting and Curating
- 3.3 The Love of Craft

04.

Economics

- 4.0 Food-onomics
- 4.1 The Lost Art of Entertaining
- 4.2 Will Travel for Food
- 4.3 Food for Fashion

05.

Society

- 5.0 An Imperfect Life
- 5.1 Honest Representations
- 5.2 Scrappy and Happy
- 5.3 Entering the Friendiverse

The Great *Un*conformity

The Great Unconformity—a billion-year gap in Earth’s geologic record—remains a scientific mystery. It’s a dramatic metaphor for the times we live in but we live in dramatic times. AI, climate change, and political instability are like tectonic plates shifting beneath our feet. We’re on the brink of a mad transition, a profound reorganization of reality. For a lot of us, it feels like time has abandoned its uniform linear progression and decided to accelerate. Here we are, though, on the threshold, *like we’re sitting on the edge of a bathtub that’s still filling, confronting Deep Time thoughts and trying to read the tea leaves.*



^ Studio Sincère

This insights report, you might be relieved to know, conspicuously avoids diving into those three overwhelming meta-topics. It isn’t really a trend report in the conventional sense. Instead, it maps markers of change—to chart the emergent themes and sentiments surfacing across diverse markets. In a world of immense upheaval, it’s easy to lose sight of the smaller, quieter shifts: how we create, how we relate, how we express ourselves, regardless of the subject, object or industry. Stocksy’s approach to curating visual media is tailored to help creatives not only stay tuned into these frequencies but also to tell stories that connect on a human level with empathy and intention. Pausing to notice these subtleties might just be an antidote to all this acceleration.

—Genevieve Ross, Creative Director

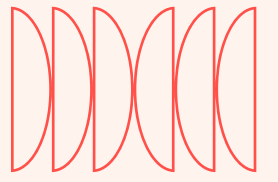


Bad ____ form



While we often think of art and design as free-spirited realms of creativity, they are more so disciplines, full of canons, orthodoxies, poo-pooers and best practices—especially for high-end or industry-standard expectations. Yet we’re now entering an era, or rather, an ethos, that questions these rules, challenging conventional views of quality that have long turned on flawless execution and high production value.

Photographers are leaving their high-res 100MP cameras behind for compact point-and-shoots, designers are finding charm in simplified software, and filmmakers are crafting content directly within social apps instead of turning to complex editing suites, making work that’s so bad it’s really good.



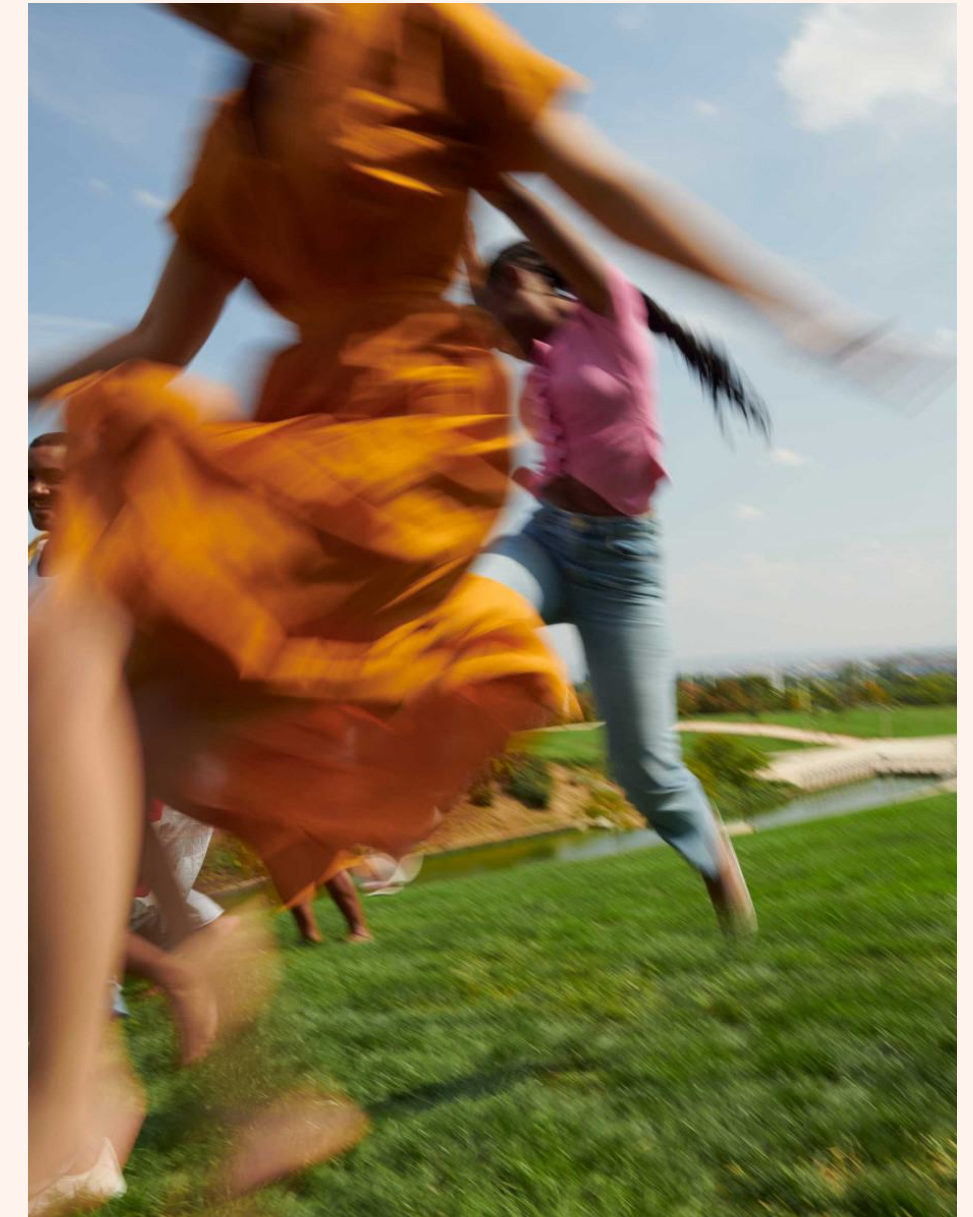
1.1

Weird — Angles

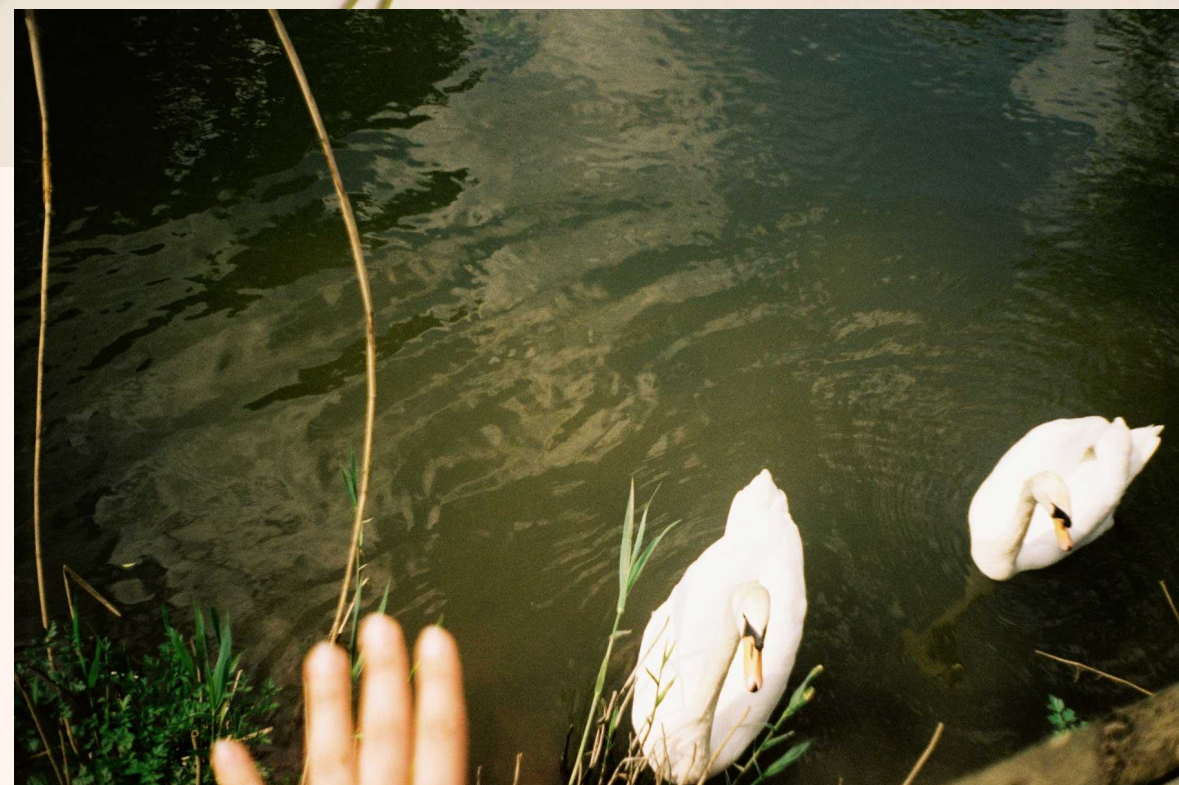
Many wonderful weird angles are born from techniques that were once seen as uncomfortably unconventional or even incorrect.

Think:

- wide angles on close subjects
- tilted horizons
- distorted perspectives



^ Leire Cavia



^ Andreea Fernandez

v valbor STUDIO



Unusual viewpoints and jarring or exaggerated elements, can introduce tension and drama that breaks away from tradition. It's a deliberate embrace of the awkward and unexpected for something more dynamic and strange.

< DZ FILM



^ Chris Zielecki

1.2

Lo-fi ____ hi-brow

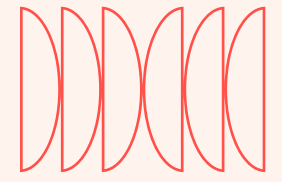
In the spirit of raw authenticity, lo-fi modes of production embrace the imperfect look that comes from accessible tools like point-and-shoot cameras and mobile devices. The outcome is a raw, almost DIY quality that adds charm and relatability, making imagery feel spontaneous and honest. Reminiscent of the unrefined look of early digital and analog—it's like your family photo albums developed at the local drug store.



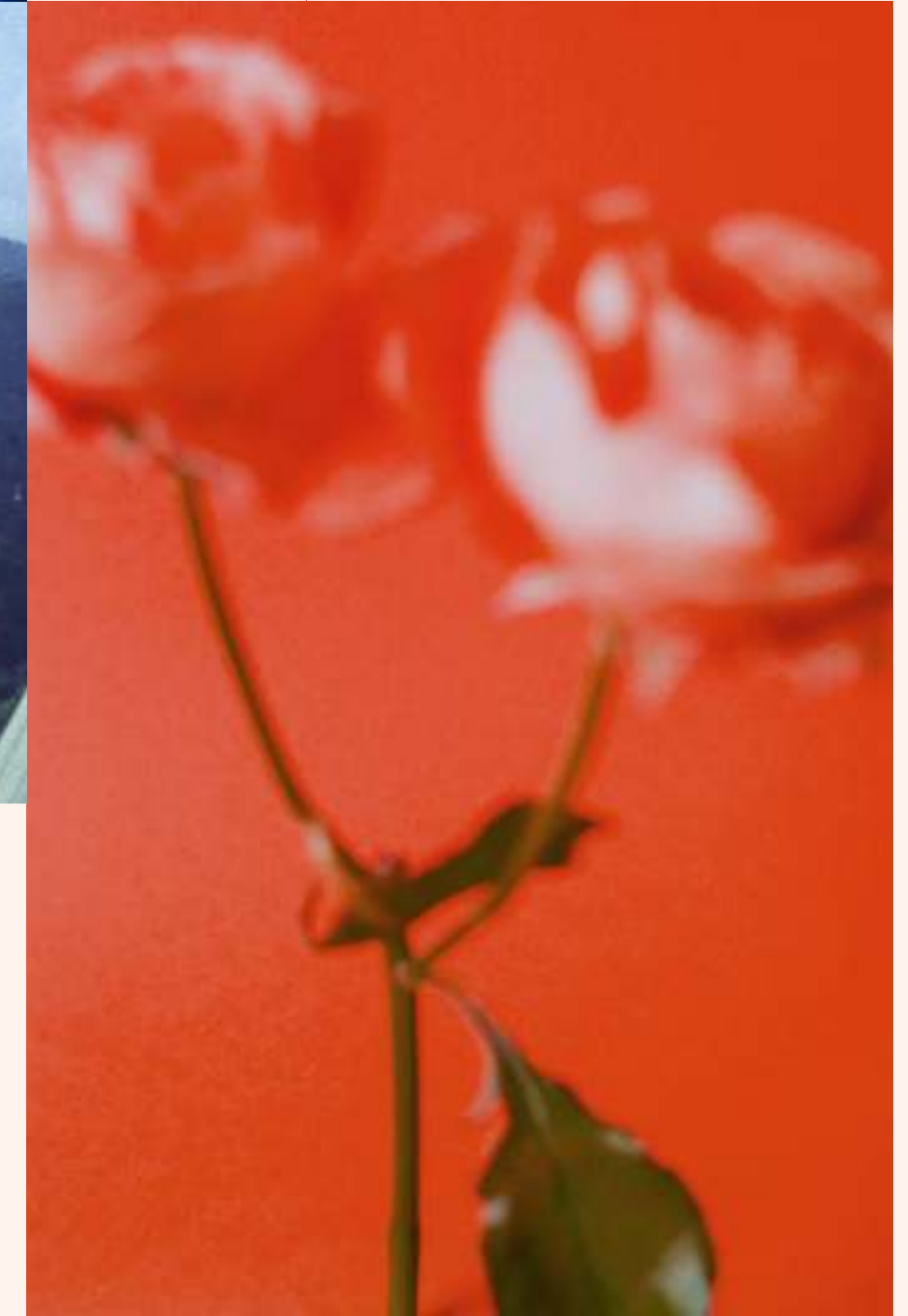
^ Iso Duo



^ Jimena Roquero



^ Anastasia Golovina



Compositionally — Challenged

This aesthetic focuses on storytelling and atmosphere rather than meticulously staged and framed scenes. Each element adds a sense of spontaneity and presence.

Think:

- subjects slightly out of frame
- unexpected crops
- motion blur

^ tessy morelli



^ Irina Bo



Christine La ^

Unusual and off-beat compositions make for visuals that read more like a vibe or theme, inviting a layered, almost uncomfortably intimate, and story-driven experience. In stark contrast to the influencer aesthetic, people are seen in their truest form—unfiltered and unaffected, with no embellishments or performance.

Down-Key Shift

Diverging from crisp, high-key visuals, “Down Key Shift” favors a softer, more introspective style that emphasizes warmth, radiance, and cinematic depth. Rooted in a desire for a gentler, more authentic look, visuals feel more textural and intimate without the immediacy and frenetic energy of common advertisements.



^ Souls Of The Road



^ Melissa Mills Photography



2.1 Warmth



^ Maria Sher

is all about light and atmosphere —

warm tones, moments, and environments that evoke the feeling of “golden hour” lighting—the soft, amber hues of sunrise and sunset when colors lean into warm yellows, oranges, and reds. Not to be confused with sepia tone, which flattens brightness and reduces vivid colors, this aesthetic centers around naturally sunlit environments that feel alive.



↳ Nsikan Effiong

2.2

Glow is kind of an illusive quality of luminosity and subtle radiance.



“Lit from within.” With an understated incandescence, this look emphasizes natural highlights and creates vibrancy without the harshness of direct light. Think of an effortless liveliness that still maintains depth and a gentle, inviting tone.



↳ Ulas&Merve



↳ Maria Sher



↳ Aurora Derrico Pratt

2.3



Alvaro Lavín



Nsikan Effiong



Aidana K



Softness

uses diffused light and subtle textures, lending an ethereal, film-like quality. With an emphasis on grain and depth, “Softness” creates visuals that feel close, authentic, and anchored in human nature. The softened edges and muted tones set a cinematic atmosphere, for a more introspective and intimate perspective.

OLD SOUL ENERGY

At its heart, this aesthetic attitude channels a lost premium on connoisseurship, understatement, and appreciation of craft. The ethos: you don't have to have money to have taste.

Rather than signaling wealth, it's about expressing depth and quality character through curated choices, ethical provenance, and original pieces. This aesthetic reimagines old-fashioned symbols and spaces with a modern, inclusive twist, emphasizing essence over excess.

Image credits (from left to right)
Karyna Bartashevich Christian Gideon Serge Fillimonov





▼ Adrian Rodd

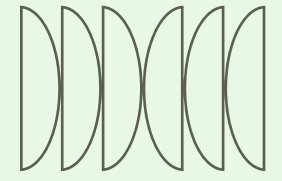
3.1

OLD MONEY VIBES

We weren't sure what to call this one. We're certainly not venerating classical ideals or inherited wealth. And actually, the spirit of this insight is an antithetical paradigm to either: a knowing appropriation of the signs and signifiers of Old Money and entitlement. Sports like golf, tennis, and polo—once symbols of exclusivity—are being resuscitated by younger, diverse audiences. In interior design, there's a renaissance of club house motifs like wood paneling and a focus on the cozy, internal spaces that encourage gathering and dialogue. Color palettes blend the natural tones of light-filled modernism with the understated elegance of darker, moodier settings.



▼ Ulss&Merve



▼ Serge Filimonov

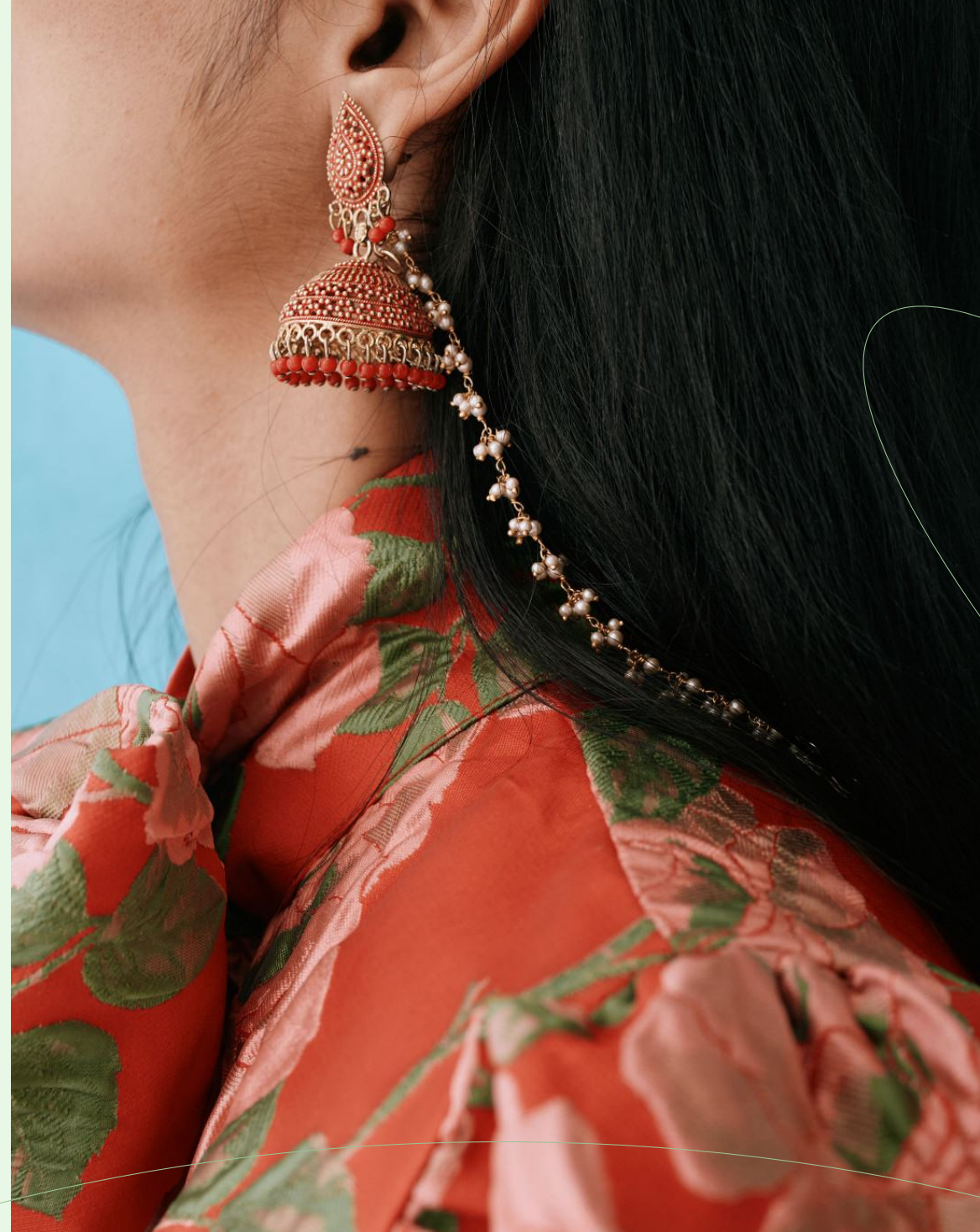


↳ Vera Lair

The aesthetic puts a premium on quality, care, and particularity—in fashion, interiors, and even food. It's about an interest in provenance, materiality, and timeless pieces, favoring character over flashiness. Interiors are unfussy, but curated to focus on objects that add intentionality and sophistication. The overall attitude is a refined yet eclectic style that embodies quiet confidence, valuing essence, depth, and attention to detail over ostentation.

COLLECTING AND CURATING

3.2



↳ Serge Filimonov



↳ Andrew Cebulka



↳ Minette Hand



▼ Duet Postscriptum

3.3

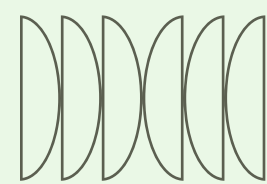
THE LOVE OF CRAFT

There's a renewed appreciation for tailor-made pieces, hand-crafted goods, and traditional techniques that honor time-tested materials. In a world of mass production, these artisanal creations offer unmatched quality and a personal touch, connecting us to heritage, sustainability, and the timeless value of skillful craftsmanship.



▼ B Krokodil

▼ Radhika Penagonda





Stocksy

THE GREAT UNCONFORMITY

20

25

ECONOMICS

Food-economics



Food is the most primitive form of comfort, yet the most sophisticated form of art. In today's economic reality, it indeed embodies both, transcending its role as a staple commodity to become a luxury symbol, an art object, and a powerful social binder.



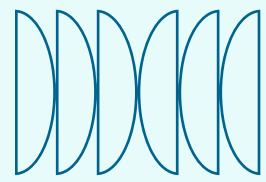
^ Karyna Bartashevich



^ Darina Belonogova

4.1

Like golf and martinis, the act of throwing dinner parties has felt like a fossil record of a bygone era, like something out of a Tom Wolfe novel. The renaissance of the dinner party, however, is symbolic of a new cultural wave. With a 6000% surge in Pinterest dinner party searches, Gen Z has brought back the dinner party, albeit with a new emphasis on creativity and thoughtful socializing.



The Lost Art of Entertaining



^ BONNINSTUDIO



Mal de Ojo Studio

Sophia Juliette

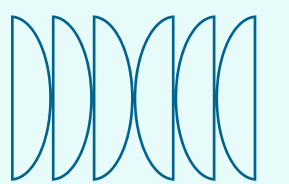


Carmen Palma

4.2

Did it seem like everyone was posting about their trip to Japan or Italy this past year while you were at home eating Momofuku noodle packs? Destinations celebrated for their rich culinary culture and cuisine offerings are seeing a huge surge in tourism, fueled by a craving for exceptional, diverse food experiences. Either downstream or upstream of the internet's explosion of international food content, authentic local cuisine and destination dining have surged as leading motivators for travel.

Will Travel for Food





^ ohlamour studio

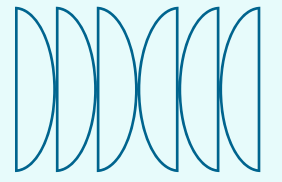


^ Ulas&Merve

4.3

Food for Fashion

Food has transformed into an emblem of understated luxury, merging with art and media to project culture, craftsmanship, and authenticity. Luxury consumers—particularly younger generations—are more interested in the esoteric symbolism of experiential commodities over overt displays of wealth. Food brands collaborating with fashion labels and celebrity chefs signal a shift in status symbols, where value centers on stories of conscious consumption and immersive aesthetics.



^ AROSHALINY GODFREY

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THE GREAT UNCONFORMITY

20

25

SOCIETY

An Imperfect Life

In a global financial climate that has increasingly put traditional milestones like homeownership and retirement out of reach, audiences are growing alienated by consumer media narratives continuing to polish that turd. Climate anxiety and the disintegration of long-standing social safety nets, like affordable education and healthcare, have further contributed to a growing rejection of traditional markers of success. We're experiencing a macro social

shift toward prioritizing a different set of values centered on communality and clear-sighted, enlightened mindsets. Simultaneously, the loneliness epidemic has emerged, revealing the flaws of individualistic and isolationist social structures. This uncertainty is catalyzing new and progressive ideas about what life stages might look like. It fosters a growing focus on friendships and communal living as alternatives to the nuclear family model and material markers of success.

Image credits (from left to right)
Anna Artemenko Boris Jovanovic Luciano Spinelli



^ DZ FILM

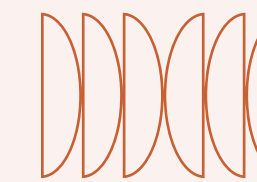
5.1



v Yuan Lei

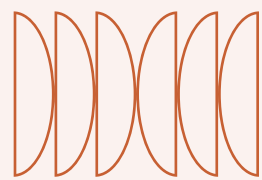
Honest Representations

Honest, warts-and-all, unfiltered glimpses into life's unglamorous moments with stories that feel true to real people and experiences — the moments that aren't necessarily a bummer; they're just part of life, and we're okay with that. It's all about authentic storytelling, celebrating diverse lifestyles, and showcasing raw, genuine humanity in everyday settings.



v Basil Pind





^ Luis Velasco



^ Julia Isovya



^ Milles Studio

Scrappy and Happy

5.2

Instead of just the expected, linear achievements, we're celebrating life's candid, scrappy moments—prioritizing connection and highlighting the little joys that are often passed by. It's the montage in the movie that shows how good things are when nothing is really happening. It's the broader awareness of life's simple pleasures and space for spontaneity.

5.3

Entering the Friendiverse

Security today is found more in relationships—friendships, chosen families, and emotional bonds—than in traditional markers like marriage or property ownership. Our media is reflecting this shift by highlighting human connection, community, and shared support systems over isolated family structures. Friendships and collective experiences are the new sources of comfort and stability.

Studio Firma



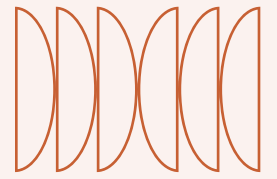
Studio Firma



Jirreana Roquero



Aidana K





Artist-led creative media. *Curated with intention.*

Stocksy is more than a stock media agency—we're a cooperative of curators and artists redefining how brands and creatives work with visual media. With a global roster of 2000 artists in 90 countries, we prioritize fair pay, originality, creativity, and the fresh ideas that enrich our collection.

Whether you're navigating emerging trends or crafting bold campaigns, our tailored approach ensures you'll find visuals that are as impactful as your ideas.

Ready to bring your vision to life? From custom-curated collections to scalable licensing options, we can make it happen. Get started with Stocksy today at [*stocksy.com/business*](https://stocksy.com/business)

Galleries

01. Method

Bad Form ↗

Weird Angle

Lo-fi_hi-brow

Compositionally Challenged

02. Mood

Down-Key Shift ↗

Warmth

Glow

Softness

03. Style

Old Soul Energy ↗

Old Money Vibes

Collectors and Curators

The Love of Craft

04. Economics

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The Art of Entertaining

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