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2025 TRENDS

5 CULTURAL TRUTHS



CULTURE CULTURE CULTURE

We are living in the Experience Age. The lines that divide digital, physical, social, PR, live, OOH, virtual, stunts, brand acts—they're all overlapping now. And it's complex. But it doesn't have to be complicated.

How can marketers be successful in the Experience Age?



IN A WORD, CULTURE.



What is culture?

It's a magical emergence that arises when people come together.

The cultures people belong to empower them, define them, comfort them, and energize them.

Black. Healthcare worker. American. Sneakerhead. Proud member of the Beyhive.

These cultures are the most powerful forces in any person's life.

For marketers to be successful in the future, they must manifest that power.

Instead of focusing on creating physical experiences, focus on creating culture.

**MANIFEST CULTURE,
NOT (JUST) EXPERIENCES.**

Here are 5 cultural truths that we're seeing reshape the possibilities of what brand experience can be.

01 AI CAN'T

02 THE INFLUENCER IS DEAD

03 CULTURE = REACH, REACH ≠ CULTURE

04 WE'VE TRANSCENDED THE PHYSICAL

05 BIG, SILLY SPECTACLES RULE



WELCOME TO THE EXPERIENCE AGE



AI CAN'T...

TRUTH 01

AI CAN'T...

AI CAN'T ...

AI can't dunk. It can't swing. It can't sing.

Well, technically it can. But does anyone want to watch that? AI is a powerful tool for enriching human culture, but it can't replace it. AI comes with increased risk – from bias, since AI is trained on historical data, it can inherit and amplify past inequalities.

It homogenizes culture because dominant cultural narratives are prioritized without context or understanding. AI should be guided by human understanding and a diversity of thought and experience to deliver faster, better and more intelligent outcomes.

AI enhances culture but doesn't define it.



To celebrate AAPI Month, our Jack ERG used generative AI to reimagine iconic American lunch products inspired by AAPI home-cooked meals, aiming to combat the stigma AAPI children face when bringing their culture to school in the U.S. The result? A lot of work. AI didn't always know what we were creating so the outcome was perfectly imperfect.



"AI might be a game-changer, but it's not the heart of culture. Machines can mimic, but they lack the creativity, diversity, and human insight that give actions meaning. Without us, AI risks flattening culture, not elevating it. We need to use AI to amplify what makes us human—not erase it."

Damian Ferrar

EVP, Global Innovation Director



Magnum: Pleasure Express, Beyond Worlds



AI AND BRANDS CAN CREATE CULTURE TOGETHER. BUT IT MUST BE HUMAN-LED.



We created an AI intern. Its job is to help create content, bounce ideas off, and analyze data. Although AI will have a place on teams in the future, we believe the activity of those teams must always be human-led.

We leveraged human curiosity and trepidation with AI to create a choose your own adventure all hands global learning experience for our employees. Real life, in some cases even personal use cases were used to educate and inspire employees to embrace AI.

THE INFLUENCER

A woman with blonde hair in a bun, wearing a black top and gold jewelry, is smiling and taking a selfie with a smartphone. She is at a crowded party with colorful lights and other people in the background.

TRUTH 02

IS DEAD

OK, SO INFLUENCERS ARE STILL A THING. BUT WHAT AN INFLUENCER IS, AND HOW THEY INTERACT WITH BRANDS, IS CHANGING.

With brand stories, consumers used to be just consumers. Now, consumers are co-authors. Instead of Insta-famous mouthpieces amplifying brand stories, content creators and “micro-influencers” are shaping brand stories and culture based on shared passion and authentic connection.



"In the creator economy, it's not about follower counts—it's about talent that co-creates your brand story with a genuine affinity for your products and services. Choose content creators who don't just reflect your brand, but shape culture with honest connection."

Ashley Brantman

SVP, General Manager, Co-head, Jack 39



Sephoria: SEPHORiA, Immersive Beauty Experience





TIAA's groundbreaking campaign #retireinequality continues to tackle the Black Retirement Gap by partnering with hip-hop icons to share stories. For this year's campaign several artists like Wyclef Jean collaborated to release a song that directed sales to First Generation Investors (FGI).

BRANDS ARE GIVING CONTENT CREATORS THE KEYS TO HELP SHAPE CULTURAL MOMENTS.

Why? The new age of consumers don't trust brands due to a lack of authenticity. So, brands are creating more authentic, relevant experiences by involving consumers and content creators—in decisions, marketing campaigns, and innovation.



Xbox and Bromley FC give top players of Football Manager 24, the video game, a shot at a real-life manager job. Many applied. One got the job. Fans and followers can be SMEs too.

SUBMIT IDEA
Become a LEGO designer



Lego has a history of asking fans to submit their own designs on LEGO IDEAS for a chance to have them made and sold by the company. Followers even get to upvote their favorites. The designs are hotly anticipated like this year's Botanical Gardens winner.

Photo credit: LEGO

FANS ARE BEING SOLICITED FOR DIRECT INPUT ON PRODUCT DESIGNS.

Fans have always “spoken” with their wallets on products and services. But bringing them in during the planning and design phases not only moves products, but builds community, too (and that’s good for the entire sales funnel).



CULTURE = REACH

REACH ≠ CULTURE

TRUTH 03

TRUE REACH, TRUE CULTURAL POWER, ISN'T JUST ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA, VIDEO, OR EVENTS.

It's about understanding the complex web of your audience's identities and engaging with them on a deeply personal level. And that's what we love about brand experiences. What better way to create once-in-a-lifetime cultural moments that intersect with who people are and what they love?



Brands can authentically engage existing cultures and win fans. Cadillac teamed up with SURGEON to design an exclusive collection of limited-edition sneakers inspired by Cadillac's innovative EV portfolio. The line was on display at the cultural event of the year, the US Open where fans had a chance to win their own custom 1-of-1 kicks.

Photo credit: Matt Genders



"True cultural power comes from connecting with audiences beyond platforms—it's about creating bold moments that evoke emotion and resonate with who they are and what they love."

Julie Levinthal

SVP, Group Account Director, Cadillac



Cadillac x SURGEON at the US Open



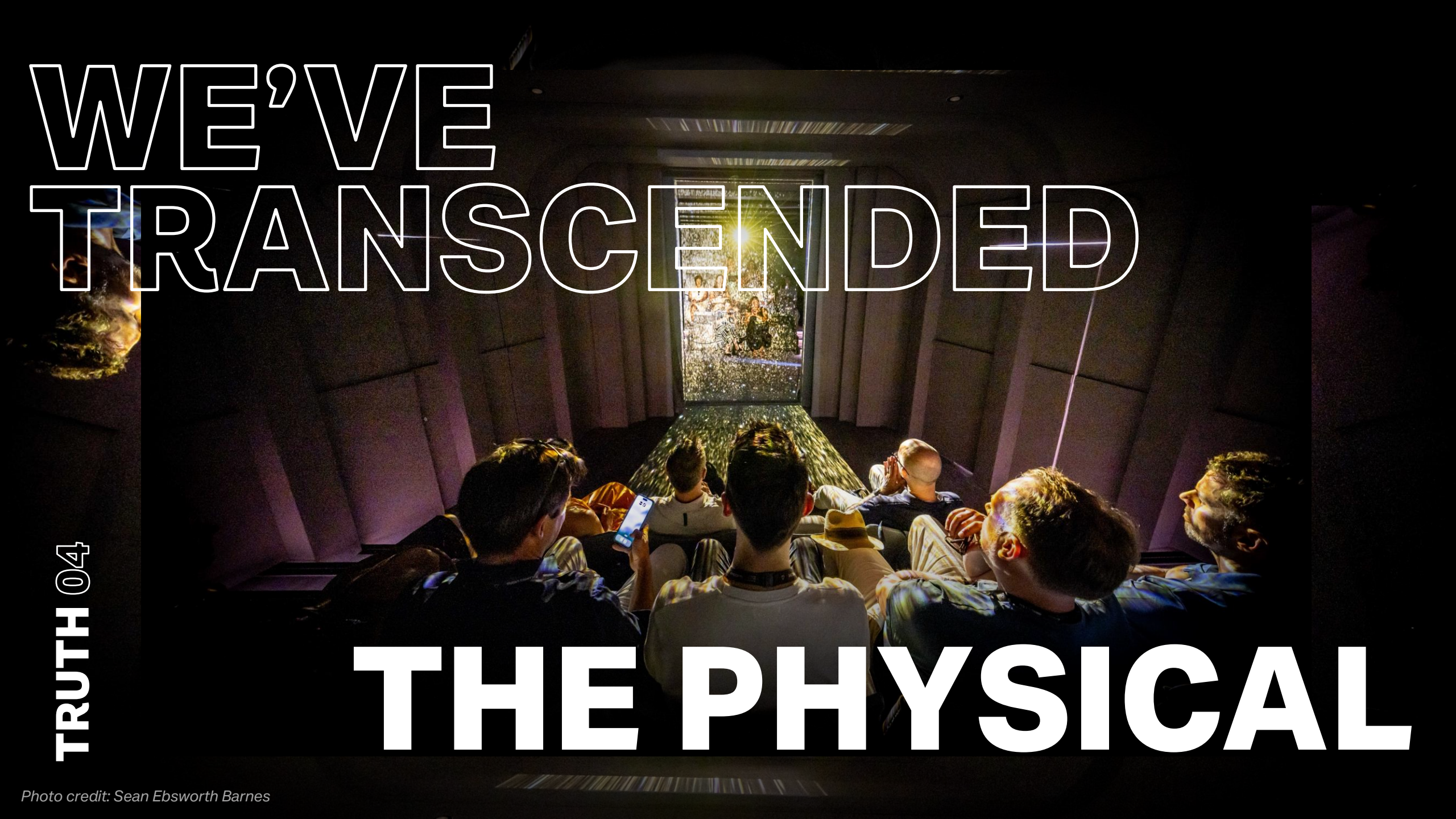
EXPERIENCES BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER. AND WHEREVER THAT HAPPENS, CULTURE HAPPENS.



Magnum is one of Singapore's favorite ice creams. 81% of Singaporeans also identified gaming, as a way to experience community, have fun, relive nostalgia, and compete. We remixed two iconic arcade games and made them playable on mobile and created an IRL Magnum-themed arcade – bringing together ice cream culture and gaming culture into one experience that was a hit.



To promote the first-ever NBA In-Season Tournament, we embraced a simple trend: viral pre-game tunnel walks are a new runway in the fashion world. We created a red carpet tunnel runway at the Tournament for players and celebrities to walk and a social style challenge; winning fans got the chance to walk the runway along with their heroes.



WE'VE TRANSCENDED

TRUTH 04

THE PHYSICAL

THE EXPERIENCE ISN'T PHYSICAL, IT'S EVERYWHERE, NOW.

It's easy to associate brand experiences with a live moment in a defined space. But the experience is everywhere, now. You no longer have to be there, to be there. The biggest cultural shifts are abstract. We may not always see them, but we feel them as communities, as cultures.



Photo credit: Sean Ebsworth Barnes



"The brand experience is now fluid—shifting between digital and physical seamlessly with social as the glue bringing them together. This allows audiences to feel connected everywhere, even without being there, and own what's next."

Martyn Clarkson
EVP, Global Head of Strategy



Meta at Cannes

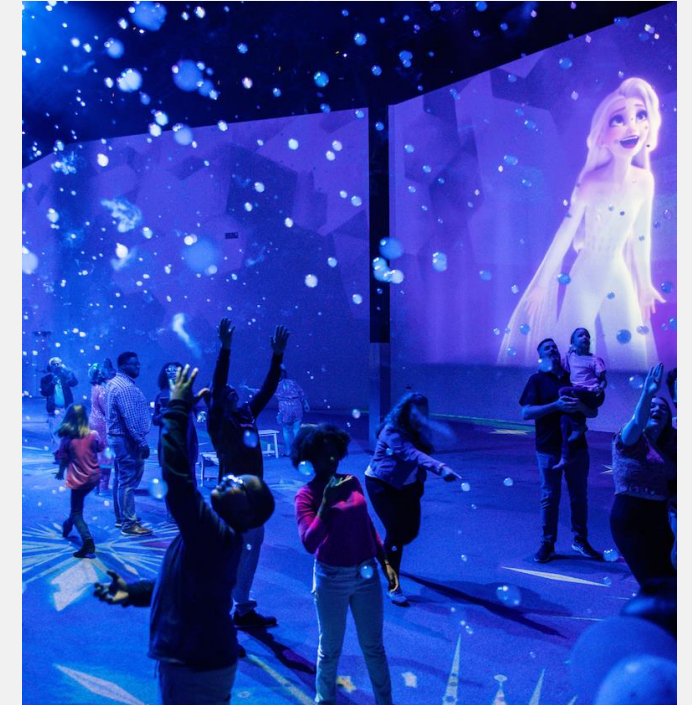


WE'RE FREEING OURSELVES FROM THE CONFINES OF A SPACE AND EXPERIENCING CULTURE IN A WHOLE NEW WAY IN THIS DIGITAL, HYBRID ERA.

We're pushing the possibilities of immersiveness, enabling us to create culture in deeper, more emotional ways.



COSM LA splits the difference between watching something and living it. This “3rd space” opens new possibilities for engagement, giving fans the immutable feeling of being part of the crowd while “watching” content. Live content no longer has to be in-person. Screen content no longer has to be at-home. The in-between spaces of these categories are the future of content.



Disney Theaters enable you to be a part of the world you're seeing onscreen - content that inhabits more physical space than just a screen is bringing people together.

BIG, SILLY SPECTACLES

TRUTH 05



RULE

BIG, GOOFY SPECTACLES CREATE CULTURAL MOMENTS THAT LIVE ON LONG AFTER THE LIGHTS GO DOWN.

Even with the fluidity and ethereality (and, often in the case of AI, unreality) of it all, humans still rally around big, bold, sometimes silly, spectacles.



“Brands that dare to play big don’t just cut through the noise; they leave a mark. Bold, quirky spectacles are the spark that keep culture alive—unforgettable moments that fuse creativity with the power to captivate.”

Patrick Bennett,
Global Chief Creative Officer



Coach: Tabby Bag Pop-up Experience

BRANDS THAT EXPERIMENT WITH THESE SPECTACLES HAVE FOUND IT SUCCESSFUL IN CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE.



To reposition Pop-Tarts from breakfast to snack, this campaign centered on college football, debuted the world's first edible larger than life mascot at the Pop-Tarts Bowl. This unique sponsorship became a viral sensation sparking more conversations than any other bowl game, and a sales lift post-game, marking the brand's highest market share of the year.



In a crowded media landscape, Jacquemus stands out with surreal marketing. Highlights include a 500-meter pink runway in a Provence lavender field, an all-white runway in Camargue's salt mounds, giant handbags on wheels in Paris, and a handbag-shaped pop-up in Seoul. Promotions should reflect and enhance the brand's unique energy.

THE TAKEAWAYS

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**ALL MARKETERS ARE
BRAND EXPERIENCE
MARKETERS.**

CREATING CULTURE IS THE MOST
POWERFUL FORCE A BRAND HAS.



☹️😊😊 JACK MORTON



Do you want to discover innovative, disruptive, and compelling ways to manifest culture through the power of experience?

Reach out to us to arrange a workshop to dive into the latest trends shaping your industry and explore fresh, actionable ways to bring your brand to life.

Email us at experience@jackmorton.com