

Culture Pop

More **is more**

Exploring the cultural drivers
behind the aesthetic shift from
minimalism to maximalism.

the**lab**

The rise of maximalism

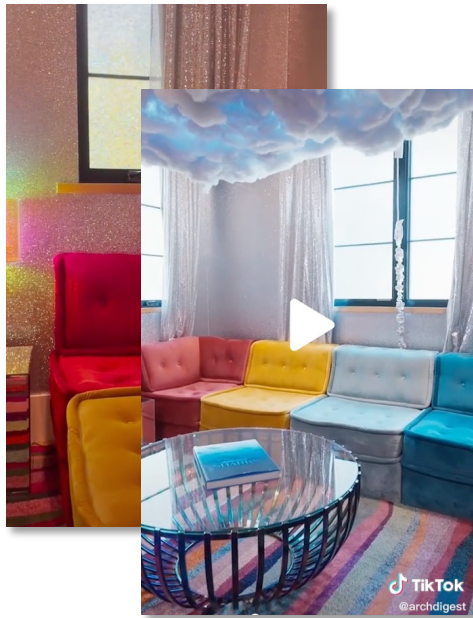
You might have noticed a new aesthetic creeping in and dominating your social feeds over the last few months.

Never-ending shades of neutrals and perfectly organised pantries have given way to maximalism, clutter-core and dopamine dressing.

Where minimalism was about simplicity and function – the new aesthetic is about abundance, joy, creativity and unapologetic kookiness.



Cultural artefacts



Interiors

Demi Lovato's 'Shroom Room' as seen in Architectural Digest encapsulates pure maximalist joy and excess.

Queen of clean Marie Kondo says she has 'kind of given up' on tidying at home

Marie Kondo

The original guru of minimalism called quits on tidying up.

Decluttering guru reveals birth of third child has changed priorities



Marie Kondo told the Washington Post: 'My home is messy, but the way I am spending my time is the right way for me at this time.' Photograph: Aleksandra Raluca Drăgoi/The Guardian

Mainstreaming

Evidence the trend is going mainstream with Kmart's latest homewares drops leveraging the maximalism aesthetic.

Kmart's New Homewares Range Has That Luxe Wavy Maximalist Vibe Without The Exxy Pricetag



these older aesthetics



Burberry

Uses their past to move forward with an "archive-inspired" brand identity update that says no to #blanding and yes to aesthetic abundance.



A person with blue hair is sitting on a blue couch in a room filled with sneakers and plants. The person is wearing a white shirt and blue jeans. They are surrounded by various sneakers, some on shelves and some on the floor. There are also plants, including a potted plant on a stand and a terrarium on a shelf. The room has a white wall and a lamp. The text "So, what might be the cultural forces driving the rise of **maximalism**?" is overlaid on the image.

So, what might be the cultural forces driving the rise of **maximalism**?



1. The failings of **minimalism**

Minimalism was born as a subserve counter trend to mass consumerism – a way of living designed to free us of from the mental and financial burden of ‘stuff’ – and importantly, reduce our climate impact.



But as minimalism moved mainstream, this original ethos was lost. We started collecting more things – vital accessories to our minimalist aspirations.

The result was a sea-of-sameness and an explosion of consumerism – the very thing it was meant to save us from.



2. Embracing the chaos

During the pandemic years we retreated from the chaos of outside world by seeking to establish order and control in our personal environments.



But in our pursuit for control and order – did we also strip out the joy and humanness?

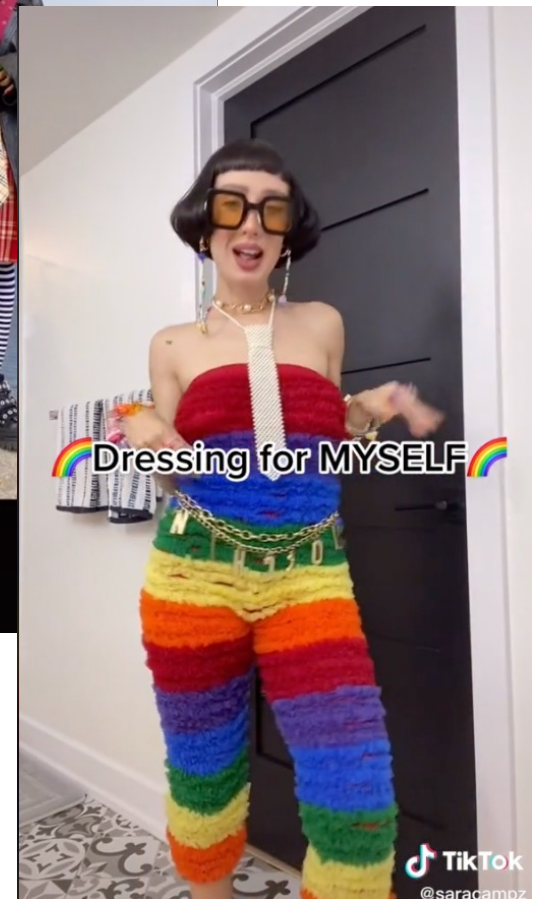
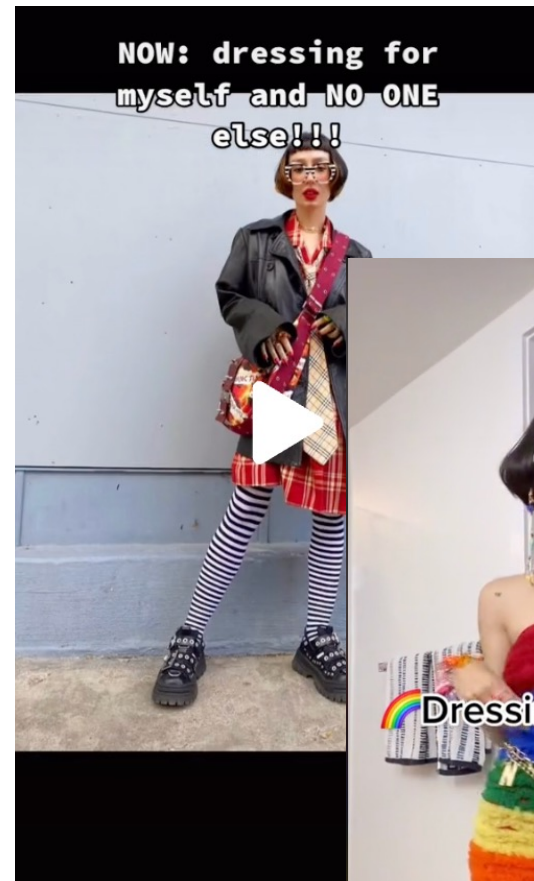
In an uncertain world where anything can and does happen – we've realised our search for control is futile and are now seeking to create optimism, joy and escapism.



3. A celebration of self-identity and values.

We're living in the era of the individual – where there's never been more permission or social cachet in being your authentic self. Maximalism provides an outlet for expressing personal identity, interests, creativity and values.

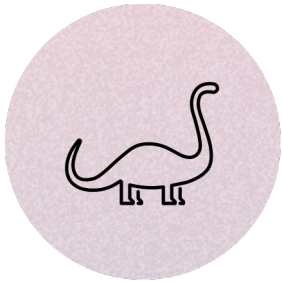
Somewhat counterintuitively–maximalist proponents are generally anti-consumerism and sustainability driven – with vintage shopping and supporting grassroots designers core tenets of the movement.



"Always always dress for you and only YOU ❤️" – SaraCampz

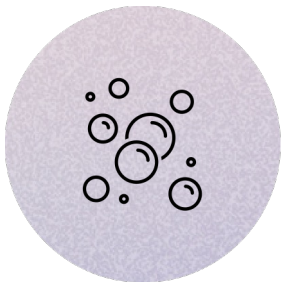


Thought-starters for brands seeking to embrace maximalism



It's time to unleash the design team:

Walk away from a restrained colour pallet and let your brand's personality come the fore with playful, bold and joyfully over-the-top designs.



Embrace mess, reject perfection:

We've realised that the pursuit of perfection is unrealistic and bland. Mess and chaos are core components of the human experience and where interest and curiosity live.



The new sustainability is colorful:

As we recognize the failings of minimalism, the codes of sustainability are evolving – from soft naturals to mis-matched eclecticism.

Thank **you** ♀

the**lab**