

PARA*f*AITH

THE FUTURE OF YOUTH CULTURE
REPORT PREVIEW

AN EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW

METHODOLOGY

Survey
2000+ Gen Z

1-1
Interviews

Expert
Interviews

Desk
Research

Contributor
Ideas

4x Focus
Groups

Intuitive
Readings

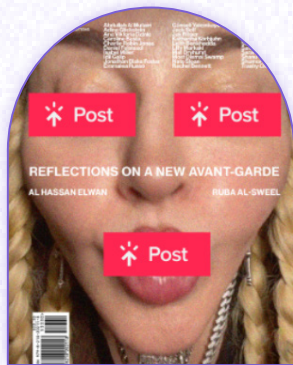
AI LLMS For
Data Analysis
Support



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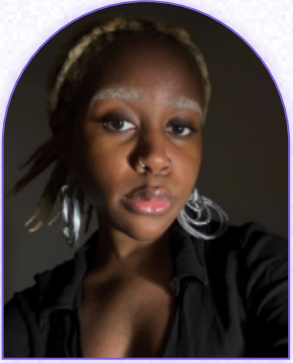
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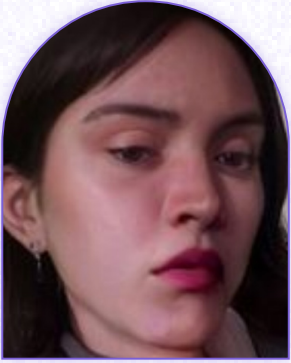
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We're living in the era of the immersive internet. Heightened uncertainty. It's harder to understand the now, let alone the next.

“THE LIFE CYCLES OF EVENTS AND TRENDS ARE GETTING SHORTER, MORE VOLATILE, AND INCREASINGLY UNPREDICTABLE.”

- CHRIS DORLAND, ARTIST
(DAZED'S A FUTURE WORLD REPORT)

THE YOUTH OF TODAY BECOME THE POWER BROKERS OF TOMORROW

Projected to command \$12
trillion in global spending
power by 2030. (NIQ,
World Data Lab)



Expected to account for
30% of the global
workforce by 2030. (NIQ,
World Data Lab)

“[Brands must] listen to young people and include them. They are smart and want change, so don’t leave them in the dark and think they will believe all your ‘advertisements’ and ‘visions for change’ without action.”

– JOHANNE JACOBSEN, MANAGING DIRECTOR, INTER.AGCY

THE FUTURE OF YOUTH CULTURE :

THE ERA OF
MONOMASS

DAZED
MEDIA

DAZED STUDIO

CTRL SHIFT

THE FUTURE OF YOUTH CULTURE REPORT

2023

2031:
A FUTURE
WORLD

THE
REPORT



THE BEYOND
BEAUTY REPORT

REDEFINING

SNB

CULTURES:
THE REPORT

STEP INSIDE THE
MOST INFLUENTIAL
GLOBAL MINDS.

INFLUENCE IN 2026 5 CHAPTERS

(FRAGMENTED) IDENTITY

1. Subcultural Selfhood
2. Soft Hedonism
3. End of the Sell Out
4. Intimacy Rewired

FAITH IN
BECOMING

(PROXI) MEDIA

1. Fidelity Shift
2. Lore Literacy
3. Companionship Media

FAITH IN
SMALL WORLDS

(MICRO) SOCIETY

1. Re-Rooting
2. Meta-Mythologies
3. Quiet Rebellion

FAITH IN
PLACE

(BRANDED) CULTURE

1. Cultured Brands
2. New Histories
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FAITH IN
INTEGRITY

(ANTI) HEROES

1. Clandoms
2. Freaks & Geeks
3. Allogods

FAITH IN
SENSEMAKERS

INTRODUCTION

The State of Now



THE STAKES ARE HIGHER AS YOUTH BATTLE;

“My concerns are the economy, affordable housing availability, and getting onto the property ladder”

- GEN Z RESPONDENT, DAZED
FUTURE LORES SURVEY 2026



There is an **80%** chance that global temperatures will break at least one annual heat record in the next five years, raising the risk of extreme droughts, floods and forest fires, according to a new report by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

A TOTAL COLLAPSE OF REALITY



“It’s impossible to
know what’s true.”

Image: Trumps Twitter ↑
Image: @Red.ey.world →

“I feel like life isn’t
real half the time.”

“I don’t know
who to trust
anymore.”



“Nothing feels real.
Everything’s edited
or fake.”



Image: Tiktok @Longliveal

“We don’t have a shared
reality anymore.”

GEOFFREY HINTON, COMPUTER
SCIENTIST, COGNITIVE SCIENTIST
& COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGIST

80%

of youth constantly or often
question the sources or truth
of what they see online.

(DAZED FUTURE LORES SURVEY, 2026)

THE CONTRADICTIONS OF YOUTH CULTURE ARE INTENSIFIED BUT THEY REVEAL WHAT'S COMING...



Image: epicwubbox64

TECH

URL Behaviours



IRL Desires



Image: (Source Unknown)

WELLNESS

Extreme Wellness



Bed-rotting



Image: @patheticfashion

COMMERCE

Anti-capitalists



Shopping addict

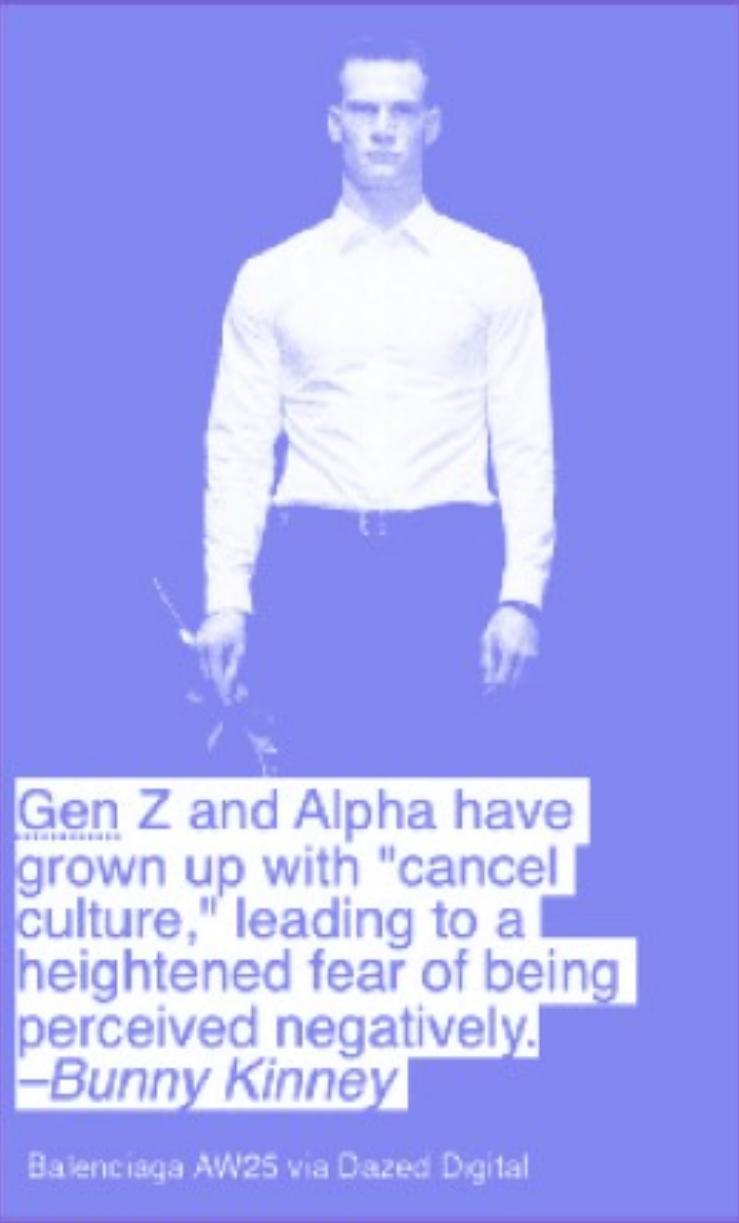


Image: Cortesy Balenciaga

WORK

Corp-core



The big quit

IDENTITY

Fearful

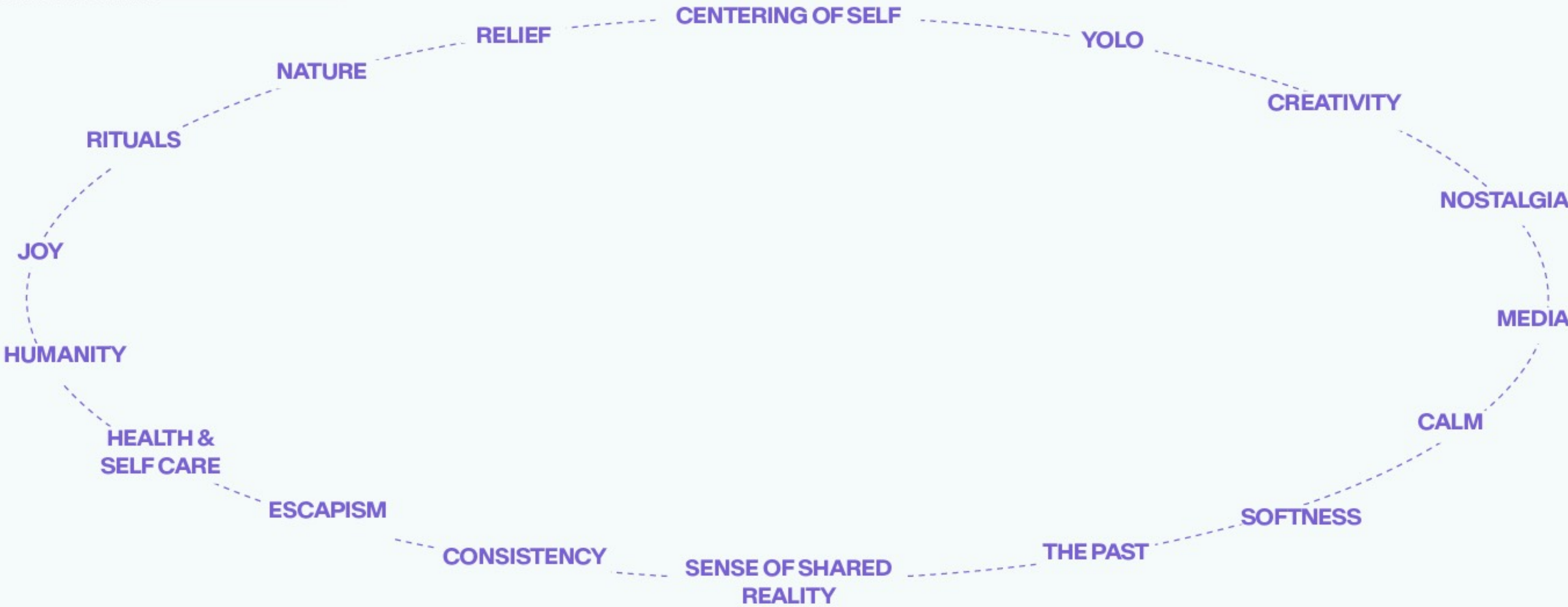


Fearless

IN MOMENTS OF GREAT INSTABILITY

Youth seek new forms of meaning,
faith & guidance

FINANCIAL STABILITY
Career is prioritised over
romantic relationships and
physical health



“I want more control over my
life, not more options.”

DAZED BEAUTY 2026

“Regulating your nervous
system is so hot right now.”

-DAZED BEAUTY 2026

THE NEW SYSTEMS OF MEANING. THE CHANGE OF GUARD.

Beside; adjacent to

Hope & guidance

PARA*f*AI*TH*

PARAFaITH: Youth are searching for more than aesthetics or trends, they're seeking a deeper sense of self, authenticity, and guidance. Belief systems are decentralised, and built through culture rather than doctrine. This is not about religion, but about a philosophical need for the divine: a framework that offers new ways of meaning-making in an unstable world.



We've all felt it. The ground is unstable. The systems that organised our lives, media, politics, education, and work are fragmenting in real time.

Culture has accelerated past coherence.
Trends collapse before they mature.
Attention burns fast and disappears.
Technology promised connection. It delivered saturation.

AI now writes, edits, predicts, comforts.
Young people are outsourcing intimacy to code, not because they want to, but because the human world feels harder to navigate.

This is the metacrisis.
Not one collapse, many, at once.
And in the cracks, something unexpected is emerging.

Parafaith.
A rebuilding of belief outside institutions.
A return to ritual. For history.
A hunger for texture. For brutal honesty and radical fantasy.
A refusal to live only through the screen.

“There’s a slight rise in religious interest, but the bigger story is that young people are searching for new forms of meaning, ethics, and community. They don’t believe the old systems can guide them – they’re looking for alternatives.”

- GREG EPSTEIN, HARVARD CHAPLAIN & AUTHOR OF TECH AGNOSTIC

“I don’t believe in religion, but I do believe in something. I’m still trying to work out what that is.”

- GEN Z, MALE, UK

“I feel like there has to be something bigger. I just don’t think it’s God in the traditional sense.”

GEN Z, FEMALE, AUSTRALIA

“I want a belief system that actually helps me live my life.”

- GEN Z, MALE, US

“I don’t trust institutions, but I still want meaning.”

- GEN Z, FEMALE, BRAZIL

“I think everyone my age is looking for a guide.”

- GEN Z, NON-BINARY, US

YOUTH LORES

X

PARAFaITH

YOUTH ARE IN A STATE OF:

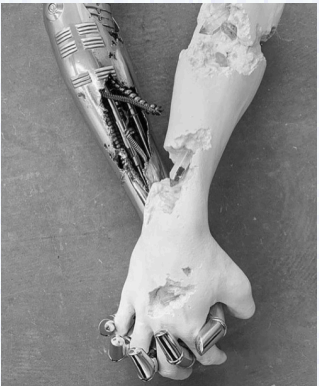
FIGHT



Photo: Prada Cortesy

REBELLION

FLIGHT



DISSOCIATION

FAITH



ENLIGHTENMENT

“Gen z grew up with this world already broken...
They’re taking matters into their own hands.”

- NIHALELAASAR

“Amongst all this chaos, traditions and mysticism, tying back to age-old gods, lores and behaviours may act as a central grounding point.”

- PHIL BIRCHAM, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, COPA90



Image: Kapwing.com



Image: marleclair.com.au

1 in 3 of Gen Z and Alpha consider themselves spiritual and 13% consider themselves religious.

- DAZED FUTURE OF YOUTH CULTURE SURVEY 2026

THE AGE OF RE-ENCHANTMENT

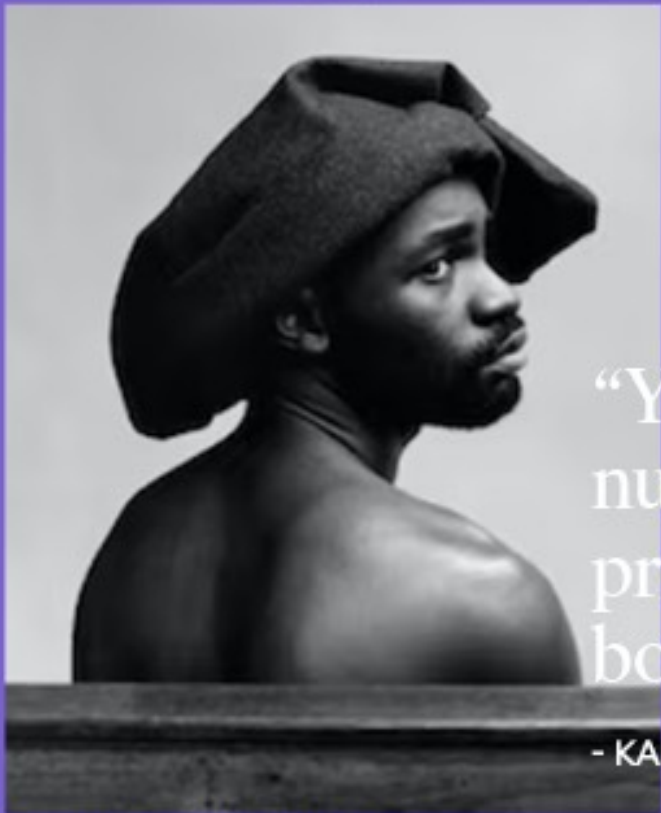


Image: Grace Wales Bonner X Dave

“Young people were dying to be a nun for a summer at this monastery programme in France - it was fully booked out for the first time.”

- KARA, GEN Z SENSEMAKER FOCUS GROUP



Image: Chenwei Chang

Taiwanese spiritual temple raves.

- DAZED DIGITAL

A GUIDE FOR BRANDS

WHAT'S INSIDE?

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FAITH IN
SENSEMAKERS

LORE 02

Health Is The New
Luxury, Wellness Is
The Ultimate High

For brands: The focus is not on the end-benefit, but on the sensory experience of the ritual itself. It's the quiet moment of making the tea, the mindful application of the skincare, the focus of a workout. Your brand's role is to provide the tools and the permission for these micro-indulgences of peace and healing.

SIGNAL 03

III. The End
Of The
Sell Out

For Gen Z, work is life. Not through choice but through necessity. The anti-capitalist generation is oscillating between building something new and just trying to survive.

"We're seeing all of these memes and jokes and videos about Gen Z in the workplace doing the realising, standing up for their rights, not being too scared of authority."
- NIHAL ELAASAR, ACTIVIST, WRITER & DJ

"I want to learn how to navigate work life without being devoured and still have financial security, job security, food, housing, etc."
- GEN Z, DAZED FUTURE LORES SURVEY 2026

"I have doubts about the longevity of a traditional 9-5 job, and wish to build up a public portfolio for a digital nomad or remote working creative career."
- GEN Z, DAZED FUTURE LORES SURVEY 2026

SOCIAL MEDIA IS JUST MEDIA

"I'm cutting my scrolling time"

"I deleted my YouTube app, so now I spend significantly less time watching videos or shorts"

"Less social media"

"Reading more, staying in the know of culture"

QUOTES FROM GEN Z RESPONDENTS, DAZED FUTURE OF YOUTH CULTURE SURVEY 2025-26

Image: Solange By Clement Pascal For Saint Heron

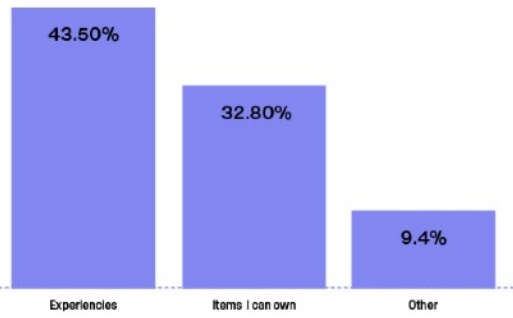
PRIVACY IS BACK

Only ~10% said they use social media to "meet new people," indicating a shift away from performative or open networks.

"In private channels, in Dark Forests, you see different behaviour. You see contributions and explorations not for personal gain, but because they're fun, they're weird, and it's interesting to make up things and see how far they will fly. Subculture hasn't gone away, you're just not being invited to it."

- YANCEY STRICKLER, FOUNDER METALABEL, KICKSTARTER, CREATIVE ENTREPRENEUR

Where would you say you spend most of your money?



For Gen Z, a career is no longer a passion project; it's a defence mechanism against a world of economic instability. This is the Career Squeeze, a generational feeling of being caught between two eras of opportunity. According to the Deloitte's 2025 gen z & millennial survey, 89% of gen Z workers and 92% of millennials consider a sense of purpose to be "very" or "somewhat" important for their career satisfaction. This pressure is fuelling a powerful re-evaluation of the very purpose of work.

WORK IS LIFE, BUT THE
SYSTEM IS BROKEN.
THERE'S A YEARNING
FOR CHANGE

"Gen Z sentiment is like, We're not lazy. We don't want to be working all the time. Hustle culture is a millennial thing. We don't subscribe to it." ...They care about their health, their mental well-being, their relationships. And, on the other side, the emerging sentiment among the more reactionary conservatives is a return of that same hustle culture, in the sense of where it's just like me in terms of making things better – like 16 year olds are planning retiring at 20 because they're going to have made a lot of money from their crypto meme coins."

CHAPTER 02

Proxi
Media

A high fidelity renaissance. Creators become myth makers. Micro communities reign. Exclusivity and privacy are back.

"People trust brands that feel like they're in the world with them, not above it."

- EMILY SEGAL

GADGETS
BECOME THE
NEW LUXURY
HANDBAGS

Function as aspirational



"Music hardware is a fashion accessory."

- NICK SUBI, STRATEGY EXECUTIVE



Image: Meshable



Image: Wired Earbuds and Chams



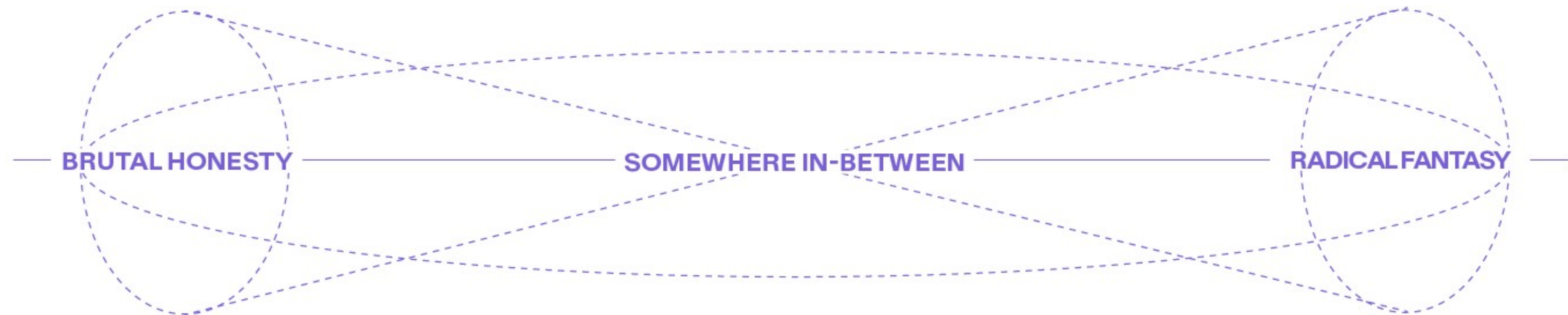
Image: capital.de

STORYTELLING IS THE NEW LITERACY

Young people aren't just consuming stories, they're building them. From AI-generated worlds to fan-made mythologies, and from online confessional writing to pagan revival, narratives have become the emotional infrastructure for this generation. Because when reality feels unstable, stories become survival tools.

"Platforms are our new myth-making systems."

- MINDY SEU, DESIGNER AND RESEARCHER

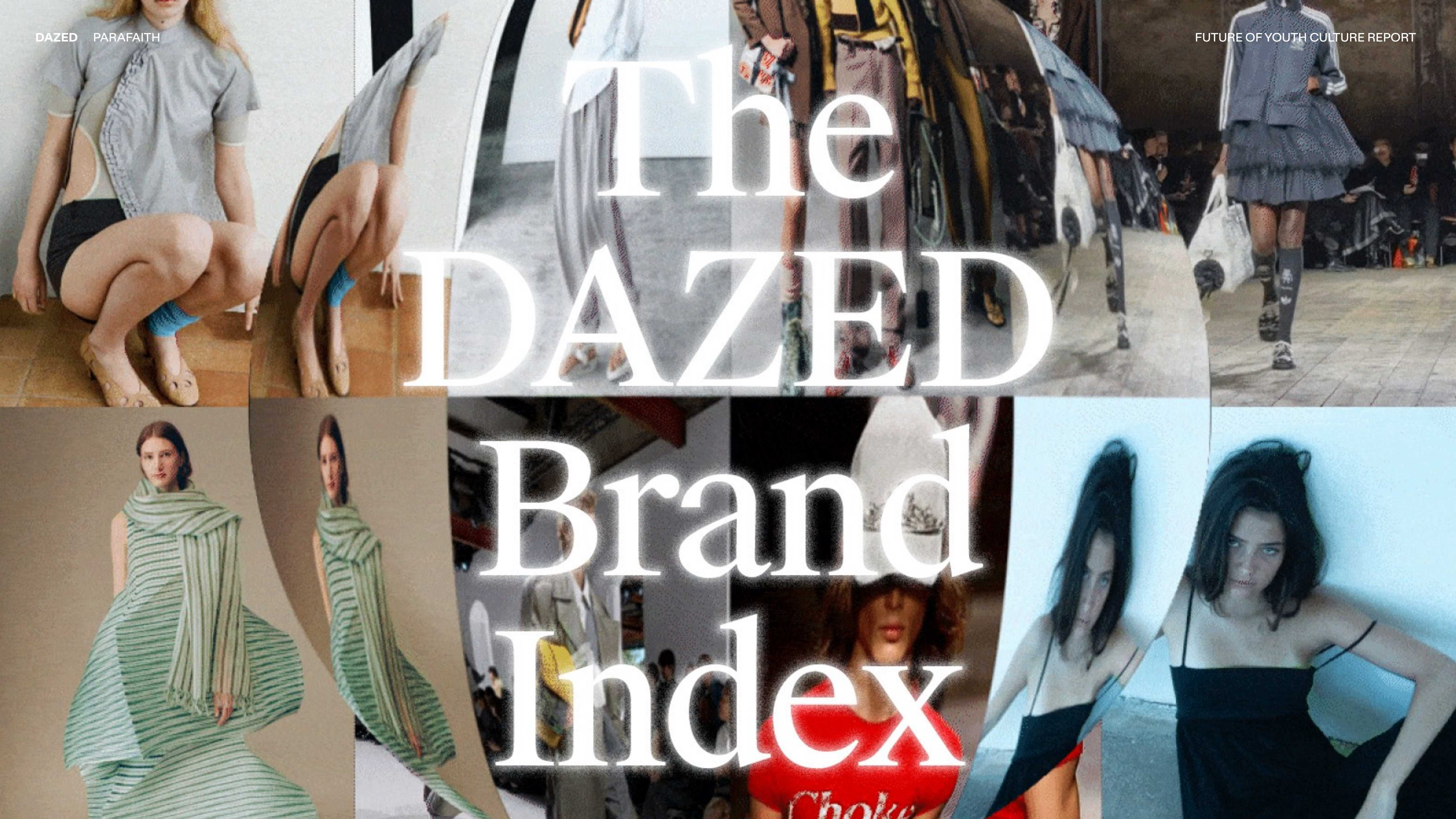


→ lo-fi realism, raw copywriting, visual casualness
→ confessionals, vulnerability, authenticity
→ emotional accuracy

→ worldbuilding, escapism, richness, symbolism
→ gaming cosmologies, magical thinking, immersive entertainment
→ meta-mythologies (conspiracies, pagan revival, DIY belief systems)

Together, both modes show how youth use stories to cope, connect, dream, and decode reality.

The DAZED Brand Index



THE FUTURE WILL NOT
BE DEFINED BY WHO
CONTROLS PLATFORMS.

IT WILL BE DEFINED BY
WHO EARNS BELIEF.

PARA*f*AITH

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