

COLUMNS

Has creative's well of originality dried up?

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With the past ever present in what is currently in fashion, is our generation falling behind in originality, or is something else driving the constant re-imagining of our most recent aesthetic history?

Originality, albeit a somewhat over-used term, is the ultimate prize in creative industries.

Creative ideas live and die on how new, fresh and one-of-a-kind they are.

From advertising campaigns, to fashion collections, novels and gallery shows, each creative professional is on a mission to develop his or her own original work.

As a member of said creative industry, I share that ambition. Yet looking back on autumn 2017's various fashion weeks, design and art festivals, as well as May's annual Cannes Lions festival, a concerning question comes to mind:

Are we Generation Un-original?

The real thing

Technology aside, has the well of originality dried up, making reinvention, remixing, redesign, rebirth and revamping the new norm? And if so, what is behind this trend?

From Donatella Versace's tribute to Gianni at Milan Fashion Week followed up by a Farfetch limited-edition [Gianni Originals Collection](#) to Off-White's [Princess Diana-inspired catwalk](#) in Paris Fashion Week, or Kartell teaming up with British designers to revamp the classic [Combonibili storage unit](#) at London's Design Festival, as well as Freize Master's increasing popularity and even the strong presence of secondary works at the recent FIAC, when it comes to creativity, today the past plays a central role in what is now and new.

Further examples include Cartier's September release of a reinvented [Tank watch collection](#), the return of the [Tamagotchi digital pet](#), [Airbnb's Van Gogh Bedroom](#) listing in Chicago last winter, not to mention Nokia and Motorola's reissuing of [non-smart phones](#).

Adidas' 2017 advertising campaign "[Originals is Never Finished](#)" addresses the question of originality in

contemporary times head-on.

As Alegra O'Hare, the brand's vice president of global communications, said: "For the first time ever, we decided to point the attention in, and challenge the very ethos of our brand and the notion of what it means to be a true original."

The adidas global campaign argues that it does not matter if today's creative experiences are born out of the past originality has many layers.

The point is made beautifully, with artist, musician and celebrity collaborations galore, set to a remixed Frank Sinatra track and iconic historical visuals, such as Leonardo da Vinci's body meeting Kendall Jenner in an incubator.

Adidas' argument is compelling and strong.

Throughout the span of our time, humans have done a fair share of inventing, so what is the harm in using today's creative juices to re-invent?

Cycling through possibilities

With the rise of new technologies, the opportunities for recycling are endless. Yet should not technology and its rapid proliferation be leading to more drastic changes in style, trends and popular taste, therefore providing more means for originality?

Considering how people dress, from runway to reality, 2017 looks pretty similar to 1997. See [Gwyneth Paltrow](#) 20 years ago versus [Martin Grant](#) this fall, or Nike's Air Max 1997 [Silver Bullet](#), back for a limited time.

Although fashion technology is moving fast think 3D printing, color-changing fabrics, wearable tech the uptake has been slow.

So here is another thought: What if this generation is not un-original we are just over change and drawn to more recognizable aesthetics?

Technology forces change onto its users on a daily basis.

Communication behavior is forced to adapt with each software and application update. At times, such changes can be exciting for example, WhatsApp photo doodling but sometimes they can be scary or unsettling. Remember [this four-year-old's breakdown](#) following an iPhone software update?

Conjointly today's geopolitical atmosphere is in constant flux with added uncertainties raised by faster and more unreliable news.

Perhaps, technology's endless progression coupled with the unpredictability of current affairs and politics is driving a desire for the familiar.

Seeing Cindy, Naomi, Carla, Helena and Claudia strutting arm-in-arm in Milan to their Freedom anthem was a comforting moment in a week of horrific news from North Korea to Las Vegas. The top models were back together and as splendid as ever.

In fact, the social sphere went into a frenzy, with the reunion surging as the second-most talked-about show of Milan Fashion Week.

As a self-proclaimed 1990s Herb Ritts-Cindy Crawford-Liv Tyler (circa *Stealing Beauty*) style fanatic, the current fashion climate is absolutely my cup of favorite tea.

But the comeback is also exemplary of how today's creative industry leaders are choosing familiarity and reinvention over pure originality and it is a welcome antidote to an everchanging world.

GENERATION UN-ORIGINAL? Not at all.

There has never been a generation dealing with as much fast-paced innovation as us, so let us allow ourselves the luxury of enjoying familiar aesthetics and styles, from Velvet suits to Cartier Tanks and adidas gazelles. I am game.

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