

Construct

This month we're thinking about
temporariness

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affluence in the west. But beyond a certain
point, less becomes more, and the affluent
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look for other things.

This month's Editor is Kristina Dryza, trend
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OWNERSHIP MENTALITY

money greed services

Ownership has always been a symbol of affluence in the west. But beyond a certain point, less becomes more, and the affluent want to go beyond the material. They begin to look for other things.

9/11 began to change people's mindset (as did the .com bust and Asian financial crisis) and we've begun to understand that material things are not as valuable and important as we think they are. Many people tried to make the transition to live more purposeful and meaningful lives and asked if there is no need of material things in the hereafter, why do we place such importance on them today?

Ownership is all about attachment, dependency and possession. The impulse to possess leads us to develop habits of being attached to both people and things. By trying to possess, by mentally holding on, we live in fear. The temporary induces detachment, while ownership sustains attachment. It's about mentally letting go - defining a new relationship with your external objects that will set you free.

Ownership is no longer the only way to experience - you can now rent handbags, borrow jewellery, lease art and fractionally own aircrafts or vacation homes. We're seeing the rejection of the accumulation society. We do not want to be obligated by the 'having of things.' A recent survey stated most Americans only use 20% of the things they own. We should enjoy objects for purposeful use . . . but not for holding on to, and letting them control us. Care for them, respect them, but don't become too attached to them.

Therefore, the usage of products, not their possession, is becoming increasingly more important. Owning objects binds us to the past and the future, while the joy of temporary is in the here and now, this moment.

OWNERSHIP MENTALITY
money greed services



Closing ceremony of Buddhist monks dismantling the sand mandala at Asia House, London, to symbolise the impermanence of all that exists.



ANTI COMMITMENT

fun carefree possibilities

In big cities there are so many choices – who to go out with, where to eat, what to see. We don't commit to anything – whether it's our mobile phone plan or our bank. We know there's more than one way of doing something and we want to explore all the possible options. We don't want to feel trapped, or stuck. People are finally beginning to recognise there's a freedom in not owning.

Permanency breeds a state of fear. If you own something, there's always the potential to lose it, while if you own next to nothing, you won't worry about ending up with nothing. Many people are beginning to reject permanent ownership for temporary ownership i.e. through leasing as a means of bringing more pleasure, fun and play in their lives. They believe if you own less, you will value it more. By only committing to the moment, you can just be and enjoy.

Ownership implies commitment. A mortgage means you have to 'show up.' You have to make those monthly payments. There's less stress when there's no commitment. You can change your mind, and it's much easier to live according to your mood and feelings. What would I feel like doing today if I was free?

Why do some people prefer to live in hotels around the world rather than get caught up in the ownership and maintenance of multiple homes? Why are so many people forgoing permanent jobs for freelancing or working on temporary projects? Freedom. This detached way of being allows them to live more in the moment with no commitments that bind their happiness.

We're beginning to rebel against investment, futurist thinking. We're scared of saving for a pension as it implies a permanent state of being. One that's devoid from today's reality. We are seeking out the most ephemeral of experiences as they almost prove we're alive. They are the badges that show us we are living. Though they may be temporary in duration, their impact on many occasions can be permanent.

ANTI COMMITMENT
fun carefree possibilities



Every day has the potential to be a day in the sun.

Chinese New Year Fireworks in Hong Kong: all you can do is grasp the moment.



THE BEAUTY OF THE TEMPORARY

fluid flexible nature

The senses are an integral part of the temporary. For example, the different touch sensations used in Aveda facials like ice on the eyes, firm pulling of your hair, essential oils held under your nose to mark the next stage of the treatment – all work to stimulate the senses to transport you to a temporary place of being.

Nature is the best deliverer of temporary – the first leaves of autumn, the beginnings of cherry blossom season in Japan (which Kit Kat commemorates with its Sakura flavour), or the first nectarines off the tree that can be used for homemade jam.

The problem is that the temporary has become permanent. Cadbury's Crème Easter eggs are available all year round, as are strawberries and asparagus, retail stores have permanent sales and Christmas starts earlier and earlier every year. We want to be wowed by the novelty factor, have our desire for spectacle fulfilled, but when these pleasures stop being temporary, and in fact become drawn out and routine, the fun quickly stops.

Temporary means flexible, adjustable - non static. It's about agility, fluidity, awareness and being open. It's about being situationally relevant and contextually based. For example, the Tawaraya Ryokan in Kyoto serves each dish on different plates according to the day's weather.

Temporariness can also lead to greater enjoyment. For example, when you lease a car, you can just enjoy the car, rather than worry that an errant supermarket trolley will scratch the paintwork. When you hug tight corners you can lose yourself in moments of pure driving pleasure, rather than listening out for any tinkering noise that may mean an expensive servicing. There are no consequences as temporary means no maintenance, no ongoing involvement, no stress.

Maintaining a yacht, luxury car, jewellery or art takes time and money. While the time and money factor is irrelevant for the super rich, affluent consumers still want new products, but are now prepared to pay to have them when they want, and how they want, and then out of their life and home as soon as they are not being useful. If the stars can have clothes and art on loan, why can't you?

As Daniel Nissanoff illustrates in his book 'Futureshop: How the New Auction Culture Will Revolutionize the Way We Buy, Sell and Get the Things We Really Want,' eBay is entrenched into the general population's values, habits and economic choices. It's helping to evolve us into a temporary ownership society due to an online secondary market that is becoming increasingly more accessible. Slowly consumers are shedding their accumulation culture mind-set and are moving toward an auction culture mind-set.

Temporary means learning to care for things (and people) that are precious, and when it's time, to freely let them go. As Gary Thorp says in his book *Sweeping Changes*: "the joy comes not from trying to keep things forever, but from keeping them well."

THE BEAUTY OF TRANSPARENCY
fluid flexible nature



Cherry blossoms highlight the fragility and temporariness of nature and give us a sense of rebirth. Meet, Notting Hill.

Why own when you can lease?
Max Mara Private View, Bond St.
Etro, Bond Street.



FLEETING EXPERIENCES

pleasure indulgence luxury

Trying new things is the decadent alternative to ownership and permanency. Nothing is stopping you. Experiment. We're obsessed with new experiences, especially those 'first time' ones. Our senses have been dulled – things have become too easy and boring. We're always asking, 'What's new?' 'What's fresh?'

First experiences often have self-transformation elements – try truffles for the first time and experience a new taste sensation; try the first truffles of the season and have the connoisseur experience. Firsts are the highest of experiential highs whether it's the first croissants out of the oven at Maison Bertraux, your son's first day at school, or your first thought of the morning. You need to protect them with all your might.

Food has become the social currency of contemporary urban living and is one of the largest experiential spending categories. It is a way of showing your wealth and knowledge, and a path to enlivening your senses. Food is one of the most enjoyable temporary pleasures as a moment only exists in a bite. After only a few bites, taste will neither increase nor decrease, so we really need to enjoy those first few bites. They are the experience. It means slowing down to truly enjoy and to savour the first taste of cheesecake you've been craving all day. In Tokyo, sushi freshness and use by date notifications are in hours, not days, typifying a fleeting way of living. There is only a specific time window for maximum enjoyment.

The process of change is also fleetingly beautiful. Watch the diners mesmerised in London's Ping Pong restaurant by the leaves of their jasmine tea unfurling – art in motion; or the weary travellers in Singapore's Changi airport having foot soaks where the consistency of the crystal infused water turns hard as concrete before becoming soft like water again. The enormous success of detox foot pads can be credited to the 'before and after' visual transformation of the pads displaying the removed toxins from the body. We engage in process and feel progress. Like the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into the butterfly, we love witnessing change and transformation. Witness the family photos in front of the same tree in the backyard as a marker of change.

So much of life is transitory – from the clink of crystal glasses to toast exciting news to moments of eye contact. Candles can be seen as burning money, flowers as watching money wilt and die; but it's the momentary and temporary pleasure they give in which their value lies. Temporary moments of quietness and being surrounded by silence - like walking down Old Compton St in Soho, London, early on a Sunday morning – become luxuries to us yet again.

FLEETING EXPERIENCES
pleasure indulgence luxury



The food at Ottolenghi in Notting Hill is all hand crafted with extreme care: you are what you eat.

Flowers though temporary, lift the soul permanently.



Fine green tea from Yunnan unfolding.

MAGICAL MOMENTS

dreamy ethereal slow

Catching moments become preoccupations as their beauty lies in their ability to vanish. If a sunset only lasts a finite time, you have to be in the moment to enjoy it. If you're not one with the moment, it disappears. Street art is becoming so appreciated as by its very nature it will pass out of existence.

When things (and people) are permanent, it's easier to take them for granted. We don't appreciate them until we lose them, they're taken away from us, or are damaged. When the Hong Kong Mandarin Oriental shut down for refurbishment it brought fear into the hearts of regulars who were bereft without their rose petal jam. Newspaper reports spoke of bankers stockpiling the jam as they couldn't be without it for eight months.

Our preoccupation with making things last – whether it's bricks and mortar, or a holiday, can lead us to being trapped. It's difficult to permanently capture a living thing. Not all things are meant to last. They become all the sweeter for being temporary. Moments which you really enjoyed and lived in do become eternal – as cherished memories, always available to be drawn on.

Between March and October each year, when conditions are just right, visitors to Broome, Australia are treated to a natural spectacle – the Staircase to the Moon. The natural phenomenon occurs when the full moon rises over the exposed mudflats of Roebuck Bay at extremely low tide creating the optical illusion of a staircase reaching for the moon. The staircase occurs three nights each month from March to October. A rare natural occurrence like this stops you dead in your tracks – it stops the chattering of the mind and forces you to focus. You have to be in the moment otherwise you've lost it.

Walking into your flat and enjoying the sight after the cleaner's been, or that wonderful feeling after housekeeping has brought order to your hotel room. It's so important to get sucked into moments – bakery smells, a newspaper headline that catches your eye, a whiff of perfume you briefly catch, the smile of a stranger, the view from the restaurant's balcony.

If we know objects, people, places and nature are only temporary and 'on loan', it makes us take greater care so when we lose them, break them, misplace them, or they just end, we know we really enjoyed them while we had them. To enjoy temporary delights means being, rather than having.

MAGICAL MOMENTS
dreamy ethereal slow



Notting Hill based chocolatier Melt: fresh chocolates are made on site and are best eaten on sight.

When the Hong Kong Mandarin Oriental shut down for refurbishment it brought fear into the hearts of regulars who were bereft without their rose petal jam.



View from Intercontinental and Felix at The Peninsula, Hong Kong: views by their definition are temporary and individual to each of us.

Construct

Read . . .

'No 1: First Works by 362 Artists'

Editors Francesca Richer and Matthew Rosenzweig

Artists choose their 'number one' and give a personal interpretation of their first work, the marker of a turning point that affected subsequent work

www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/0500512671/qid=1148286040/sr=8-1/ref=sr_8_xs_ap_i1_xgl/202-1386934-5411844

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www.sumuraeikou.com

Watch . . .

The movie Le Temps Qui Reste (Time to Leave) by François Ozon to be reminded of the temporariness of life.

