



ISSUE 68

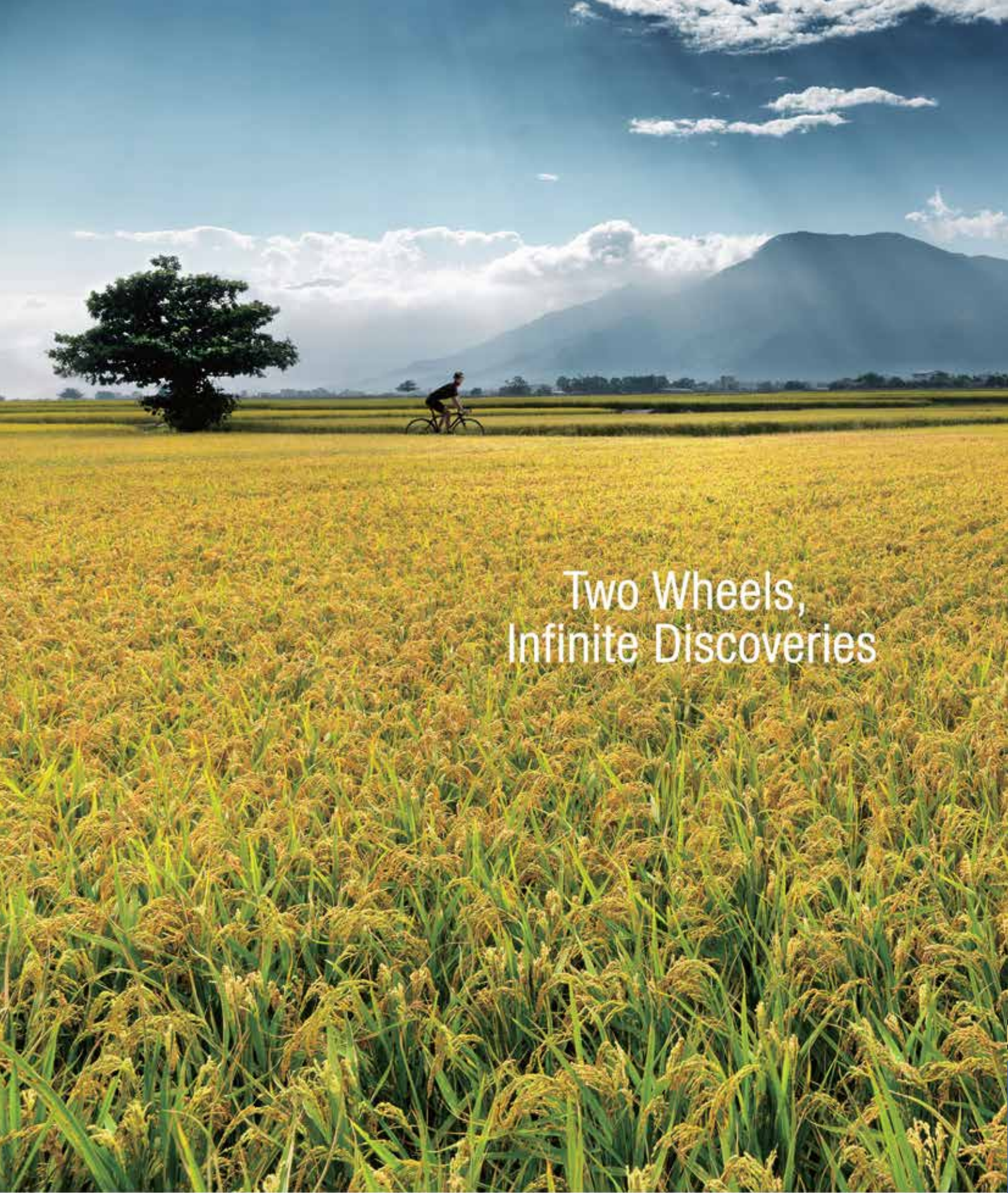
CAMPUS

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Two Wheels, Infinite Discoveries

How far can two wheels take me?
How many valleys passed, how many kilometers traveled,
How many friendly smiles met...how many memories made?
From coastline to tree line...surf to snow...wetlands to highlands...
So much inspiring beauty and challenging terrain.
I found it all...cycling in Taiwan!

Stunning Beauty at Every Turn

Taiwan
THE HEART OF ASIA

LARGE AND IN CHARGE

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Student contributors always welcome!

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BY LYDIA TAN

EAT WHAT YOU WATCH

YOUTUBERS BRINGING FICTIONAL DISHES TO LIFE

If there's one common element that makes any movie, TV show or video game extra iconic, it would have to be the food. They might be the wacky food creations that probably would give you an upset stomach or lavish meals that we can only dream of getting close to savouring. These YouTube channels attempt to recreate those iconic meals so that you can literally eat your way through your favourite shows and games.



BWB

BABISH CULINARY UNIVERSE

Babish (named after the character from *The West Wing*) aka Andrew Rea covers dishes from a wide variety of fictional sources spanning across different time periods. No matter how ridiculous the recipe sounds, he always finds a way to make it delectable in the end. For example, after creating Rachel's "English Trifle" from *Friends* to clearly revolting results, he reinterpreted the dish into a savoury casserole with the same basic ingredients prepared differently.

His primary concept is purely focused on the cooking process, with his face out of the shot and just his voiceover as accompaniment. Apart from his regular cooking content, Andrew has other series on his channel, like *Basics* with Babish which teaches basic cooking tips on how to master specific categories of food.



CHEFPK

PK is a chef who also makes classic meals from anime and video games. He has a running series called *Chef Reacts* where he reacts to episodes of the well-loved anime series *Food Wars* on camera, which is where most of the dishes he makes on his channel come from. Since most food featured in anime is usually traditional Japanese cuisine, his videos can come in handy if you love Japanese food in general or just have a special craving for a certain dish.



FEAST OF FICTION

Hosted by Jimmy Wong and Ashley Adams, this channel is also about making fictional meals a reality. What sets their channel apart is their focus on meals from cartoons, video games, and anime. You can expect a lot more fantastical yet delicious food creations that are just as fun to make, like their Kelp Shake recipe that even teaches you how to make the iconic bottle it's served in. It's a family-friendly channel that is great for when you need ideas for eye-catching meals for a party or whenever you have friends over.



HOW TO DRINK

This is a channel for anyone who loves all things boozy. Greg Tifan mixes up his versions of famous drinks from TV and film for you to DIY at home. He also imparts some basic drink tips to give you the lowdown of how to mix your own drinks or how to differentiate different types of alcohol.



For those looking for a way to spice up your next party or love experimenting with new concoctions, try making one of Greg's mixes! For starters, you can try his Klingon Bloodwine from *Star Trek*, which he described as a nice balance of bitter, dry and tart notes all in one drink.



GAMETIM

Remember the Nintendo DS game *Cooking Mama*? Personally, *Cooking Mama* was the main reason I wanted a DS when I was younger (although I eventually never got one). Tim is an engineer by trade who loves cooking and games. You can follow Tim as he goes through the steps exactly as the game directs, usually getting *Mama*'s gold medal of approval after each round. It's a fun video format that will definitely bring back nostalgic memories for those who played the original game growing up.

Whether you realise it or not, food actually plays a big part in making fictional stories more memorable. These YouTubers are using that iconic element and turning it into a tasty dish IRL. So next time you watch a show or play a game, pay attention to the foods featured and try cooking up your own version of it - the results might surprise you!

by Nina Chan

IF THE SHOE FITS

Music Icons With Sneaker Collabs

Sneakers have become a new symbol of pop culture, thanks to its evolution from practical sports shoes to collectors' items. While many collabs feature street artists and streetwear brands, more musicians have also jumped on the bandwagon. Some collabs are limited edition and are likely to sell out the moment they're released, while others are more long-term collaborations that feature a collection of designs.

Kanye West, aka Yeezy, is a prolific sneaker collaborator, having teamed up with Adidas and Nike to create the "Yeezy" line and "Air Yeezy I & II" respectively. He's also teamed up with Louis Vuitton to create three models for the brand. Here are other performers with sneaker collabs.

CARDI B X REEBOK | CLUB C

Cardi B teased a limited-edition of a pair of Reeboks on her birthday in October, revealing that she'll be dropping her first-ever collection of Reebok x Cardi Footwear Collection, dubbed Club C real soon. In her Instagram pic, she wore a pair of white Club C "Cardi" sneakers which featured an elevated, semi-transparent midsole and elongated tongue. Her collection drops on November 13, and a limited-edition pre-release for women's and girls' editions are sold out.



G-DRAGON X NIKE | AIR FORCE 1 LOW "PARA-NOISE 2.0"

In August, K-pop icon G-Dragon revealed a new sneaker collab between Nike and his clothing line, PEACEMINUSONE. Featuring his signature logo - a daisy with a missing petal - the design of the new Air Force 1 Low "Para-Noise 2.0" features a white/black colourway with black laces, which is a reversed version of his previous Nike collab, the "Para-Noise". "Para-Noise 2.0" is rumoured to drop on November 25, and like last year's version, it'll likely be a sell-out.



DRAKE X NIKE | AIR JORDAN OVO

When Drake signed with Jordan Brand, a subsidiary of Nike, in 2013 the partnership served up plenty of limited edition Air Jordans, although many of the designs were never released to the public. The collab line was labelled OVOs (October's Very Own) bearing Drake's owl logo, and many pieces paid homage to the NBA. It was recently announced that a Drake and Nike sneaker collab is scheduled to launch in 2021, along with an apparel line.



PHARRELL WILLIAMS X ADIDAS | HU & SUPERSTAR

Pharrell, aka Skateboard P, first collaborated with Adidas on the 50-shoe Superstar "Supercolor" collection. The collection was revisited earlier this year with two new colourways. Pharrell's most popular line is undoubtedly the "Hu" collection, anchored by Hu NMD sneakers which come in various colourways like the popular BBC and Solar Pack. In October, Adidas dropped two colourways exclusive to Asia-Pacific, with "人類" and "인종" (human race) embroidered on the upper mesh.



SELENA GOMEZ X PUMA | CALI SUEDE



While a large proportion of sneaker collabs comprise hip hop/rap artists like Kendrick Lamar, Big Sean, and Travis Scott, pop artists have also dipped their toes into the phenomenon. They include:

- > **Selena Gomez** recently collaborated with Puma to add her designs - featuring the numbers 92, 48, and her semicolon tattoo - to the iconic Puma Cali Suede.
- > **Justin Timberlake** and Nike's second collab was the Air Jordan III JTH (2018) which featured the word "higher" on its upper, inspired by JT's song "Higher Higher".
- > In 2018, K-pop icons **BTS** worked with Puma for the BTS Basket, customised to include their logo of a hand holding a flower featured on the tongue, footbed, and bottom of the shoe.
- > Fellow K-pop star **Kang Daniel** recently collaborated with Puma to release the RS-X3 (white colourway with blue accents) and the RS 2.0 which is imprinted with his birthday and solo debut date.



THE FUTURE OF K-ENTERTAINMENT

BY LINDSAY WONG

ONLINE K-POP CONCERTS AND VIDEO CALL FANSIGNS

The onset of COVID-19 has pressed pause on all world tours, concerts, and fanmeets in the K-pop world. To make up for this, entertainment companies have been hosting online concerts and events instead. This brand new format could be the future of entertainment – it's much more affordable than a concert, easy to access and artists can meet fans around the world at the same time. As long as you have an Internet connection and a credit/debit card, you can "attend".

VIDEO CALL FANSIGNS

Fansigns are an integral part of K-pop fan culture. Fans who want to meet and interact with their idol and have them sign their albums buy lots of albums to increase their chances of getting in. Fansign attendees (only a limited number get to attend) are chosen via lucky draw based on how many albums they buy (one album = one chance).

Recently, fansigns have gone digital. Every artist does video call fansigns where the winners are chosen in the same manner. Each winner gets at least one minute to talk to their idol via KakaoTalk (Face Talk), LINE, Skype or Zoom. The signed album is later shipped right to their doorstep. The price to attend a video call fansign does not change, but the online format makes it more easily accessible, as anyone in the world can apply.



ACCESSING IDOLS VIA APPS

Online video-streaming platform VLive has long been used by K-pop idols to interact with their fans. Big Hit Entertainment uses their company-specific app Weverse so that BTS can interact with their fans and sell merch.

Fans and artists interact via live broadcasts and media content that are posted by the artists, ranging from high-production reality shows to exclusive behind-the-scenes content. Live streaming is particularly popular, where fans get to see their idols online in real-time usually for up to an hour.

But these apps are more than just for short interactions – they're also platforms for online concerts, which are getting more and more prevalent in 2020.

TAKING K-POP CONCERTS ONLINE

While the rest of the world's big-name live concerts are suspended this year due to Covid-19, the K-pop industry is still busy with performances – except they've taken them online. A number of apps, mostly based in Korea, now cater to this booming industry. How it works is that after purchasing concert tickets, audience members are sent the livestream link – they can also re-watch it as VOD.

The K-pop industry has anticipated online concerts for a while – the performances and quality of production are far from your average Zoom meetings. Rivaling live concerts, these concerts are designed to make it seem like you're right there, albeit watching from your screen.

SM Entertainment, South Korea's largest entertainment company, used VLive to hold 'Beyond Live' online concerts for NCT 127, NCT Dream, WayV and SuperM, incorporating AR technology and real time 3D graphics to put on a spectacular show for online audiences. For example, there were AR elements like a golden dragon flying across the screen for NCT 127, matching their performance of 'Kick It'.

BTS live-streamed their latest concert, 'Map of the Soul ON:E' in October on Weverse, making it their second online concert this year (their anniversary concert 'FESTA' was streamed as 'Bang Bang Con the Live' earlier in June). Viewers of 'Map of the Soul ON:E' were treated to a concert that incorporated augmented reality (AR) and extended reality (XR) technologies, which came in 4K or HD. The 'Multiview Live Streaming'

also allowed viewers to choose from 6 angles on one screen.

The technology on Weverse and VLive allows the bands on the stage to interact with some members of their virtual audience through a video wall. The audience can also wave their digital lightsticks – paired to the app via Bluetooth – to the livestream to enhance the concert experience. Lightsticks are specific to each artist and are used as cheering devices as they light up to match the music of the concert.

With the success of these apps for live-streaming concerts, it's no surprise that you'll find newcomers to the market. Six-member boy band Astro's online concert was streamed on the start-up concert and sports streaming app, Kiswe Mobile, while Monsta X held their first online concert via US-based streaming app, LiveXLive.

Online concerts are pay-per-view and costs vary depending on the concert; they can start from SGD30. The cost of an average live K-pop concert ticket can range from SGD100-500, so online concerts are much more affordable – and you don't even have to leave your room and you can replay the concert for free!

The K-pop industry has also been known to put on free concerts, and with Covid-19, these have gone online as well. Some major brands are taking advantage of the allure of K-pop worldwide, so by organising free concerts, they're able to reach out to a massive audience.



CORPORATE-SPONSORED CONCERTS

Not all concerts are pay-per-view. Korean corporations are increasingly tied to K-pop as a means of marketing. Lotte recently staged their 2020 edition of their Lotte Duty Free Family Concert – their first one held online due to Covid-19 – which was streamed for free on their website. This year's lineup featured BTS, TXT, GFriend and more.

Hyundai Card (a credit card subsidiary of the automobile company) has taken to K-pop as part of a marketing campaign. It has organised both fan-driven and artist-focused online concerts for free live-streaming across social media platforms like YouTube and Instagram. It also organised the Supermarket Concerts, where artists staged surprise concerts at venues across Seoul, as well as Fan-made Live, in which fans made their requests for not only the artists, but also their songs and even the artist's choice of clothes.

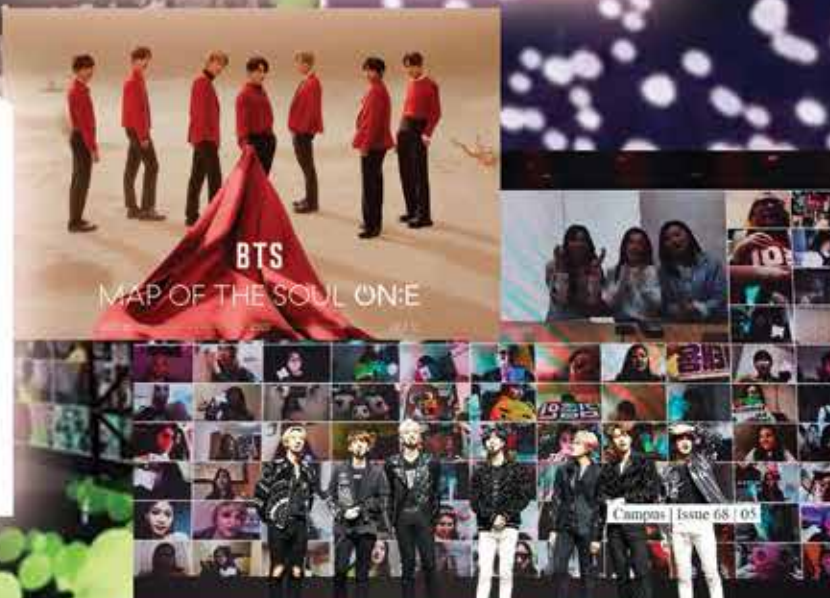
Virtual performances that incorporate fan requests are an evolved aspect of the interaction between fan and artists that is the hallmark of K-pop.

THE FUTURE IS ONLINE

The future of entertainment could very well be virtual. BTS' latest concert 'Map of the Soul ON:E' broke its previous online record for 'Bang Bang Con', and saw almost a million viewers logging on from 191 countries during their 2.5 hour livestream. With tickets costing from 49,500 won (SGD60) to 101,000 won (SGD120), the concert raked in a whopping average of 75 billion won (SGD89 million) across the 2 days in October!

By comparison, their entire sold-out Love Yourself World Tour in 2019, which lasted 8 months, drew just over 2 million fans, with a revenue of about SGD100 million.

With its flexibility, easy accessibility, and profitability for entertainment companies, online concerts and video call fansigns could continue well after the pandemic calms down.



THE K-POP

ON AIR LIVE STREAMING

THE DARK SIDE OF K-POP BY YUKI KOH

EXPLORING THE PROBLEMS OF THE INDUSTRY

K-Pop is bright, preppy and fun; just listening to the happy songs from good looking idols can put one in a good mood. But such an image is only an illusion: to cultivate such a brand image, great sacrifices are often made, and the other side of K-Pop often has an ugly face.

It's no surprise that K-Pop is full of problems. Apart from the internalised abuse within the industry and system, even the fandoms and communities themselves frequently wage war with one another.



THE TOXIC INDUSTRY

Korean idols are like products that need to appeal to the market – both in and out of Korea. As a result, Korean idols are often pressured by their companies into conforming to an ideal body image, which entails a skinny face, skinny legs, skinny arms and skinny everything. Companies take excessive measures to achieve such standards, which brings us to the most infamous issue: dieting.



Idols have taken upon themselves to go on strict diets; for one, solo artist IU sports an insane diet that includes an apple for breakfast, two sweet potatoes for lunch, and a protein shake for dinner. Dasom, a former member of the disbanded group SISTAR, ate only cucumbers for three weeks as part of her 'one food diet' scheme. ZPM's Junho ate once a day, and his meal comprised steamed cabbage, sweet potato and one tiny chicken breast.

Even though such diets can achieve results within short periods of time, they can be damaging to the mind, body, and soul in the long run. It can also result in eating disorders or yo-yo dieting, aka weight cycling. This oscillation is deadly, as it not only makes it hard to break out of, but can also take a toll on the physique of the human body.

Sadly, as K-Pop idols are targets of Korea's unrealistic ideal body image, they may be susceptible to fan hate and toxic comments on their body. This presents a dilemma – either forgo their own well-being through company standards or through the fans' hate. Considering Korea's rigid beauty standards, it does seem like it'll be a long time before we can even think of changing these norms.



BREEDING HATRED AND SOWING DISCORD: THE K-POP FANDOM

The fandom has its fair share of problems as well, as stans (fans) and antis ('anti-fans') are constantly at war with each other. On forum sites or YouTube comments, fans tend to spout hate or get defensive when their idols are insulted.

In particular, the declining trend of 'Unpopular K-Pop Opinions' has spawned great wars among fandoms, where many try to debate on whether BLACKPINK's Lisa has earned her spot as K-Pop's best female dancer, or whether BTS (Beyond the Scene) has rightfully earned their name.

Fans also hurl vulgarities and abusive words at idols – often in the form of piercing insults on their body and behaviour. Such keyboard-warrior behaviour is commonly seen in online communities.

Comments can go as far as telling someone to 'go and die'. Sadly, this has led to the tragic suicides of Kim Jong-hyun, Goo Hara, Choi Jin-ri (Sulli), and more. Remember that these idols are human, and that they are as susceptible to bullying and hurt as much as we are.



K-POP: THE UGLY AND THE BEAUTIFUL

K-Pop is as ugly as it is beautiful, yet we cannot acknowledge one without the other. The real dilemma is that fans often have no choice but to support these idols because they want to ensure they can succeed, yet at the same time, by supporting these idols, such systemic problems are perpetuated.

Pop and Circumstance

How Pop Artists Reacted to the Coronavirus

BY DARRYL GOH

2020 was supposed to be a wonderful year for pop music: A-list artists such as Lady Gaga and Katy Perry were expected to drop new albums, complete with rollouts optimised for commercial success – tours, live performances, and more. However, when COVID-19 threw a spanner in the works, the music industry became temporarily paralysed and had to adapt to the new normal. Here are some of the ways pop artists reacted to the pandemic.



Charli XCX and Taylor Swift Quarantine Busy Bees

Charli and Swift, who last toured together on the latter's Reputation tour, spent quarantine writing and releasing full-length albums. Both albums were critically and commercially successful – Charli's *how i'm feeling now* scored a Mercury Prize nomination while Swift's *folklore* topped the US Billboard 200.

The creation of *how i'm feeling now* reflected Charli's risk-taking personality. She challenged herself – and made a public announcement as well – to release an album within a month. She also wanted to co-create the album with her fans, and did so by asking them to vote on instrumental tracks during Instagram live sessions. The album was exactly what the title was – an attempt at making sense of a world suffering from a pandemic.

Having conquered the pop world in her last three albums, Taylor Swift spent her quarantine days crafting an indie folk record. The surprise release sent the Internet into a frenzy, and fans applauded her songwriting for reaching a new high. Her team even shot a music video to promote her lead single, *Cardigan*, with a disclaimer which said that everyone was socially distanced.



Dua Lipa vs Lady Gaga

When is the right time to release new music?

While Lady Gaga and many other artists decided to delay their album releases, Dua Lipa brought her album release date forward for *Future Nostalgia*. The gamble paid off handsomely as her sophomore album became a chart-topper in her native UK. Fans saw her album as an antidote to quarantine boredom and misery, while music critics praised her team's improvisation in virtual performances. Lipa, her dancers, and instrumentalists recorded their parts in their own homes, which were pieced together to make the video look more like a stylistic choice rather than a compromise.

While Gaga's March announcement to delay *Chromatica*'s release to an unspecified date was initially met with criticism, it was clear that she had humanitarian reasons for doing so. Gaga worked with advocacy group Global Citizen to put together a virtual fundraising concert to support COVID-19 relief efforts. The five-hour long show featured performances from the likes of Usher and Billie Eilish, plus appearances from celebrities all around the world, including Awkwafina and Idris Elba.

The show ended with Gaga and John Legend joining Celine Dion and Andrea Bocelli for a heartfelt rendition of *The Prayer*. The special raised US\$127 million in donations to WHO's COVID-19 fight around the globe. When *Chromatica* was released in late May, critics said it was worth the wait.

Ariana Grande and Justin Bieber, JJ Lin Songs of the Season

Pop royals Ariana Grande and Justin Bieber released a charity single, *Stuck With U* in May. The feel-good song's sale proceeds went to the First Responders Children's Foundation, which provides grants for children of essential workers.

Closer to home, JJ Lin released the song *Stay With You* in January to honour the work of essential workers. It was voted as the best Mandopop song of the year by local radio station UFM listeners, beating 2,000 other contenders. For National Day, he debuted an English version of the song with Stephanie Sun.



Lana Del Rey What Virus?

Amid recurring waves of COVID-19 cases, mask-wearing became a politicised issue in America. Last month, Lana Del Rey was called a 'Karen' for wearing a glittery mesh face cover during an in-person fan meet and didn't maintain a social distance while interacting with fans. In an ironic move, she even removed the mesh accessory when she read from her poetry book. Del Rey didn't respond to the Internet backlash, but released a new single off her upcoming album instead.

No matter how they go their music out, we have to thank them for getting us through the lockdown and pandemic.



BY TARTAN OW



WAIT, THE WU TANG CLAN ISN'T ACTUALLY ASIAN? AND OTHER INTERESTING TRIVIA.

You'd be forgiven if you thought the Wu Tang Clan was a Singaporean clan association. Debuted in 1993, Wu Tang's made up of its 9 original members: RZA, GZA, Ol' Dirty Bastard (deceased), Inspectah Deck, Raekwon the Chef, U-God, the Masta Killa, Ghostface Killah and Method Man, as well as a wide range of associates, loosely known as the Killer Bees.

They've gone on to become arguably the most influential group in hip hop history. Some would say they're the Beatles of the hip hop world. Others might argue they're the hip hop equivalent of Man U - they have fans around the world (called Wu disciples), sell tons of merchandise, and nobody's really sure if their winningest days are already behind them.

Wu-Tang made headlines not so long ago when one copy of their album *Once Upon a Time in Shaolin*, was bought by Martin Shkreli (aka "Pharma Bro") for US\$2 million in 2015, making it the world's most expensive piece of music ever produced.



WHERE DID THE CLAN GET ITS NAME?

Growing up in New York, several members became huge fans of classic kung fu movies. Their name comes from the 1983 cult-classic film, *Shaolin and Wu Tang*. They added "Clan", as an homage to the various "clans" that are ubiquitous in the kung fu movie genre.

They also constantly quote from or sample from many of the most famous kung fu films, including *5 Deadly Venoms*, *Master of the Flying Guillotine*, and of course *The 36th Chamber*, which they named their first album after.

When they became successful, the Rza started collecting the original film reels of his favourite kung fu movies, and today he's widely acknowledged as owner of the world's largest, remaining collection of original, rare kung fu films. He's also regarded to be the world's foremost expert on the classic kung fu film genre.

WHY IS WU TANG FOREVER?

After bursting on the scene in 1993, there hasn't been a single year since that either the Clan, or one of its members hasn't released an album, and they were constantly getting radio airplay.

By the time their long-awaited second studio album, *Wu Tang Forever* (1997) released, they were already the best-known rap group in the world, and the first single, *Triumph* charted continuously for 4 straight months. Wu Tang Forever became one of the best-known and most important rap albums in history, making the phrase "Wu Tang Forever" as iconic to hip hop fans as "Wakanda Forever" is to the MCU. The line is so iconic that even the WHO referenced it to help fight Covid-19.

HOW IS WU TANG FOR THE CHILDREN?

It all started during the 1998 Grammy Awards, when Wu Tang didn't win "Album of the Year". That night, their now-deceased member ODB (aka Old Dirty Bastard) ran on stage and stole the microphone to give an intoxicated non-acceptance speech:

"I don't know how you all see it, but when it comes to the children, Wu-Tang is for the children... We teach the children. Puffy is good, but Wu-Tang is the best. I want you all to know that this is ODB, and I love you all, peace."

Nestled within that crazy act is a nugget of truth. Having spanned more than a generation of hip hop fans, many Wu Tang fans are now having families of their own - and even UNIQLO has a line of Wu Tang-themed baby onesies.

DOES CASH RULE EVERYTHING AROUND ME?

Wu Tang's 1993 song *CREAM* famously coined the acronym "Cash Rules Everything Around Me", a name which has since become interchangeable with the word "money" in hip hop culture. It also implies a deeper notion of "no money, no honey" as well as "money is the root of all evil".

WU TANG IN POP CULTURE

Cameos: The Clan has appeared in many movies, including cameos in *Iron Man*, *American Gangster*, and the indie classic, *Coffee and Cigarettes*. Quentin Tarantino hired Rza to create the soundtracks for *Kill Bill 1 & 2*, and even helped Rza produce his own big-budget kung fu movie, *Man with the Iron Fists* (2012), starring Russell Crowe and Lucy Liu.

Sneaker Collab: In addition to their own line of clothing, Wu Wear, the Clan has dozens of sneaker collabs, including the famous Wu Tang Dunks. Only 36 pieces were made by Nike - an homage to Wu Tang's 36th Chamber album.



BY LINDSAY WONG

BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS BTS' STRUGGLE TO SUCCESS

Many K-pop groups these days became popular almost immediately because of pre-debut exposure, whether it be through a survival show, reality show, or the group's management company uploading their content. Some groups immediately generate a fanbase, especially if their company is already well-established and home to popular groups - like SM Entertainment with SuperM and NCT.

This was not the case for BTS ("Bangtan Sonyeondan" in Korean), who climbed up the ladder to success after starting off as a small group. They may be global K-pop superstars now, but they struggled to get their name out there and faced many obstacles in the beginning, literally going through "Blood, Sweat & Tears" (one of their most popular singles) to get to where they are.

PRE-DEBUT BTS

The pre-debut lives of BTS members - Jin, V, Jungkook, Jimin, Suga, RM, and J-Hope - were far from luxurious, as they were part of Big Hit Entertainment, a small and unknown entertainment company that almost went bankrupt before they debuted.

All seven members shared one dorm and some of the older members had to take on part-time jobs to make money. Each member had also gone through their own personal struggles in deciding if they wanted to debut or not. J-Hope actually left the group at one point. Jimin used to practice dancing for hours until he couldn't move anymore; he also struggled with his weight. Jin had to learn singing and dancing from square one.

RM had to convince his parents to allow him to follow his passion of being a rapper instead of enrolling in university with his good grades. The youngest member, Jungkook - then only 15 years old - found it hard to adjust to life as a trainee. Both V and Suga came from poor families and had to adapt to city life.

Suga struggled a lot before their debut - he's always been open about his battles with depression, which he expresses through his songs under his alter ego Agust D. Because of his body insecurities, he worked out a lot, but a shoulder injury put an end to this and still affects his dance abilities to this day.

DEBUT HARDSHIPS

Their hardships did not end when BTS debuted in 2013. Coming from a small company meant that their promotions were limited. A year after their debut, they almost disbanded because there wasn't enough revenue to support them. BTS was initially criticised by other artists, mocked for their looks and accused of plagiarism. Underground rappers criticised BTS'

rapline members - RM, Suga, and J-Hope allude to this in songs like "Cypher Part 4" (2016).

In the early days, their TV show appearances were shortened and they were subjected to mistreatment on set. In an episode of "Weekly Idol" (2015), the hosts rudely shot down the song Suga wrote for them. While on the variety show "Flower Crew" (2016), Jungkook kindly bought hamburgers for cast members, but was rudely turned down. Since then, BTS rarely appeared on variety shows.

ANTIS AND HATE

Fanbase rivalries are no secret in K-pop, and with BTS rising in the ranks, they were targeted by antis (anti-fans). When BTS staged their first major concert in Korea in 2015, they were plagued with antis labelling them as "plagiarismboys", which ruined a night with their fans.

Antis went a step further in 2016 with the "Break Wings Project" - a collaborative effort among other K-pop fandoms to sabotage BTS' release of their new album, *Wings*. Ironically, *Wings* became the album that launched BTS' fame internationally, growing their ARMY (the name of BTS' fans) base exponentially. It was a stellar year for BTS: they won their first Melon Music Awards daesang (album of the year) and became Artist of the Year at the 2016 Mnet Asian Music Awards.

WINGS TAKE FLIGHT

The band hasn't looked back since, and have continued to make waves in the music industry. Since 2017, BTS kept hitting records and winning awards both in South Korea and worldwide.

Despite BTS' many hardships they faced pre-debut, they've achieved success those in the K-pop industry dream of. They also have a good relationship with Big Hit; each member holds shares in the company, making them multi-millionaires and part owners.

BTS proved to be a unique, all-rounded group that consistently releases good music, appealing to millions of fans around the world with their unique personalities. Of course, just like all popular celebrities, BTS still encounters haters, but now they have a large, loyal group of ARMYs to defend them. They have truly come a long way since 2013.



Anyone who calls themselves a pop culture consumer shouldn't confuse Star Wars with Star Trek - both are set in space, but their premises are totally different. While the Star Wars universe centres around concepts of The Force and the Dark and Light sides, Star Trek was less of a space opera and more of a sci-fi series centred around space exploration and science.

THE PREMISE

A few centuries in the future, Earth evolves politically beyond the need for individual nations, and the planet unites. As humans acquire the ability to travel quickly through space (ie. Warp), they encounter other alien races.

Together they form an intergalactic government called the Federation, which the different space ships and crews in the Star Trek franchise belong to. Generally their mission is peaceful exploration, but they're inevitably pulled into conflicts (and wars) with competing alien powers, like the Klingons, Romulans, and Borgs.

STAR TREK TIMELINE

Star Trek isn't just one series or storyline. Similar to the MCU, there are 9 different, interconnected TV series and 12 movies to date, the most-popular of which include the original Star Trek (3 seasons), The Next Generation (7 seasons), and Deep Space Nine (7 seasons). The stories are set in Earth's future, covering a period of some 200 years from the 22nd - 24th centuries.

While the shows operate on different timelines, the majority of the series and movies are directly linked to the original Star Trek series, either as prequels (ie. Discovery and Enterprise series), or sequels, including The Next Generation series and 6 of the feature films.



GROUND BREAKING SOCIAL STATEMENTS

In 1968, Star Trek showed the first interracial kiss in mainstream television history in the episode Plato's Stepchildren. It seems mundane now, but at the time it was groundbreaking. It was also arguably the first show in western TV history to give prominent roles to minorities, including "Uncle George" Takei. To put that in context, the legendary civil rights icon Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famously stated, Star Trek was the only TV show he would let his 3 young children watch.

Cheat Sheet

#68 Star Trek 101



A PRODUCT OF ITS TIME

While fans universally agree the original Star Trek (1966-69) was the best series, watching it today can be cringe-inducing at times. For all the series' forward-thinking ideas, Captain Kirk's aggressively incessant womanising and everyone else's "boys will be boys" acceptance of it wouldn't fly in a show today, but then Star Trek isn't a new show - it captures a unique microcosm of what 1960s workplace sexism looked like.

The series aired at the height of the Cold War, which also helps explain its painfully blunt symbolism, from comic book villain Space Nazis to the over-the-top menacing Klingons, who were cast as the unapologetically obvious stand-ins for the "evil" Soviet Union.

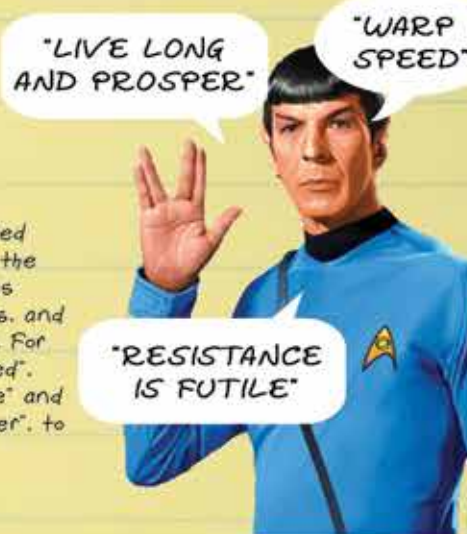


A VISION OF THE FUTURE

Star Trek's vision of future tech also influenced the inventors of GPS, mobile phones, and personal computers. Star Trek is also responsible for helping the broader, pre-internet public understand what were, at the time, extremely obscure scientific principles, including blackholes, the idea of space-time, and the theoretical existence of wormholes.

FAMOUS PHRASES YOU PROBABLY KNOW

You've probably quoted Star Trek some of the most famous phrases coined in the series, and didn't even know it. For example, "warp speed", "resistance is futile" and "live long and prosper", to name a few.



"I AM YOUR FATHER"

KNOW YOUR STAR WARS QUOTES

There's no arguing with the fact that Star Wars has become a bigger part of global pop culture than any other movie franchise in history. The franchise has spawned many quotable lines which have been used, parodied, and meme'd since before you were born. Here's a quick user's guide for non-fans to some of Star Wars' most iconic quotes:

1 "NO. I AM YOUR FATHER."

- Darth Vader

WHERE: Episode VI: Return of the Jedi

CONTEXT: After a climactic lightsaber battle between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader which results in Luke's arm being chopped off, Luke climbs onto a metal structure to get away from Vader. When Luke accuses Vader of killing his father, Vader responds with the iconic "No. I am your father."

The line is often misquoted as: "Luke, I am your father." Interestingly it's one of the most misquoted lines in all movie history, thanks to the Mandela Effect.

One of the most hilarious pop-culture references is Toy Story 2, when Buzz Lightyear battles the villain Zurg, who tells him "I am your father."

2 "I KNOW."

- Han Solo

WHERE: Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back

CONTEXT: Han Solo is the archetype rogue who owes people money. He's also roguishly charming, and by this point in the franchise he and Princess Leia have gotten close.

In this episode, he's captured by an interstellar bounty hunter named Boba Fett, Jabba the Hutt's henchman. Just before Fett freezes Solo in carbonite - which may or may not kill him in the process - Fett lets Leia say her last goodbyes. "She blurts 'I love you,' to which he replies, 'I know.'"

Despite only a few minutes of screen time, this scene cemented Boba Fett's position as a pop culture touchstone. He was so popular among the Star Wars fandom that Disney eventually spun a side story about his creed in The Mandalorian, which gave us Baby Yoda.



DID YOU KNOW?

The phrase "I have a bad feeling about this" is the most prolific Star Wars quote in the franchise. The line's been said - in various iterations - by a main character in every single episode, from A New Hope to The Last Skywalker.

3 "IT'S A TRAP!"

- Admiral Ackbar

WHERE: Episode VI: Return of the Jedi

CONTEXT: Admiral Ackbar, commanding officer of the Rebel Alliance's rag-tag fleet, ejaculates his immortal line when it dawns on him that he's led his fleet into an ambush and they're about to be annihilated by the Empire's bigger, badder ships during the Battle of Endor.

According to several researchers, "It's a trap!" is the most memed line of dialog from any movie in history.

4 "DO. OR DO NOT. THERE IS NO TRY."

- Yoda

WHERE: Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back

CONTEXT: Luke Skywalker ends up on Dagobah to seek the tutelage of a Jedi Master named Yoda. During the Jedi training, Luke is tasked with Force-lifting his X-wing fighter out of the swamp. When Luke tells Yoda that he will try, Yoda scolds him with "Do. Or do not. There is no try."

In Kill Bill Vol. 2, Pai Mei alludes to Yoda's line when teaching a young Beatrix to punch through a solid beam of wood. He quotes:

"No wonder you can't do it, you acquiesce to defeat before you even begin."

5 "THESE AREN'T THE DROIDS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR."

- Obi-Wan Kenobi

WHERE: Episode IV: A New Hope

CONTEXT: When Obi-Wan, Luke, and the two wanted droids R2-D2 and C-3PO are in Mos Eisley, they encounter some Stormtroopers who ask about the droids. Obi-Wan uses the "Jedi mind trick" and says, "These aren't the droids you're looking for." The trick works - they leave them alone.

The line has been used and parodied many, many times in film and drama, from That 70s Show to House and The Big Bang Theory.

THE LIST

MOST VIEWED MUSIC VIDEOS ON YOUTUBE

#1 BABY SHARK DANCE | PINKFONG

7.041 billion (2016)

The super catchy children's song is hard to get out of your head, probably because you've heard it too many times - especially when you've been around your nieces or nephews. The #babysharkchallenge trended on Twitter when people filmed themselves doing the Baby Shark dance moves.



#2 DESPACITO | LUIS FONSI ft. DADDY YANKEE

7.038 billion (2017)

This was the song that launched a thousand dance classes and a dozen other versions in different languages. Meaning "slowly" in Spanish, the popular Reggaeton hit bridged the gap between Spanish and English pop. Despacito reached 2 billion views faster than any MV in Youtube's history.



#3 SHAPE OF YOU | ED SHEERAN

5.05 billion (2017)

Sheeran's hit is accused of ripping off an earlier track by Sami Switch called 'Oh Why', but that didn't stop his video - starring Sheeran as an aspiring boxer who falls in love with another amateur boxer - from hitting bigtime views. This upbeat hit has meaningful lyrics coupled with a dancey beat.



#4 SEE YOU AGAIN | WHIZ KHALIFA ft. CHARLIE PUTH

4.79 billion (2015)

The song was commissioned for the soundtrack of Furious 7 (2015), and serves as a tribute to the late actor Paul Walker who was a star of the Fast and the Furious franchise. The video featured scenes of Walker from various Furious movies, and the poignant lyrics helped the song climb the charts.



#5 UPTOWN FUNK | MARK RONSON ft. BRUNO MARS

3.99 billion (2014)

With fun lyrics and a retro funky motown vibe that's geared towards a wider mainstream audience, Uptown Funk is infectious. The MV features Ronson and Mars in fedoras and dapper suits as they prowl the city streets. The song became the longest-running #1 hit of Bruno's career.



#6 GANGNAM STYLE | PSY

3.84 billion / 2012

The longest-running video on the list, Psy's first major hit broke records with this hilarious video depicting a silly horse dance. It's also the first non-English MV to sit on top of Youtube's most-viewed list. While the song received mixed reviews, its catchy tune and beats were undeniably popular.



#7 SORRY | JUSTIN BIEBER

3.36 billion (2015)

This may be one of Bieber's most famous songs, but oddly, he never appeared in this iconic MV at all. Originally, this dance video - featuring a group of colourfully-dressed dancers - was supposed to accompany the song's lyric video, but Bieber's management decided to use it as the song's official MV instead.



#8 SUGAR | MAROON 5

3.31 billion (2015)

"Sugar" not only had a catchy tune, it also had a memorable MV that featured the band allegedly crashing weddings and performing to surprised couples. The buzz on the internet was whether or not the video was staged (yes, it was), but at least two weddings featured in the MV were really real.



#9 ROAR | KATY PERRY

3.2 billion (2013)

Filmed like a short movie where Katy crash-lands in a jungle and survives on her own, the campy video features an ensemble of wild animals and an animal print-clad Katy channelling Tarzan vibes. The girl power element is strong in this MV, and alludes to Katy finding strength after her divorce.



#10 THINKING OUT LOUD | ED SHEERAN

3.11 billion (2014)

In Ed Sheeran's second entry on the list, he takes centerstage by debuting some impressive ballroom dancing moves - the rumba - with a dance partner. The moves were choreographed by a team from So You Think You Can Dance who put Ed through more than 40 hours of dance training.



BY NINA GAN

Reminiscing the Unknown

WHY 80S NOSTALGIA RULES IN ENTERTAINMENT

What do *Stranger Things* (2016-present), *Ready Player One* (2018), and *Wonder Woman 1984* (2020) have in common? While they're produced recently for today's audience, they're mostly set in an era that celebrates the nostalgia of the 80s. Unlike biopics like *Bohemian Rhapsody* (2018) or historic drama like *The Crown* (2016-present) that have a fixed timeline, why are these fictional titles focused on an era that's more in tune with our parents' childhood? And what makes them so endearing, especially among a younger audience who (most likely) haven't lived through the 80s?

THEMES OF RETRO FLICKS

For films and TV series set in the era, a number of 80s themes are used. *Stranger Things* focuses on the strong bonds of friendship that are used in the kid movie format of the 80s, like *The Goonies* (1985) and *E.T.* (1982). Much like in any childhood, good friends often bond over a geeky hobby. For Gen Z, it's video games; in *Stranger Things*, it was *Dungeons & Dragons*. Both promoted the fundamental idea of teamwork and the battle of good against evil - a social glue as old as time.

A popular 80s trope is the existence of a classic evil lair and/or a rich, crazy nemesis, as can be seen from the trailers of *Wonder Woman 1984*. It also takes a comedic jibe at awkward 80s fashion (like the infamous bum bag).



NOSTALGIA IS MEDICINE

There are many studies that found that nostalgia triggers positive emotions, especially when it relates to a time when things were simpler. Even though you may not have lived through the 80s, you've probably watched reruns of older films or TV shows as a child, most likely with your family. It's these family moments that you might associate with the warmth of nostalgia.

Yet "nostalgia" also refers to a feeling of familiarity that doesn't always relate to actual memories. You can actually experience anemoia - the nostalgic sense of longing for a past you never lived yourself.

Nostalgia has been known to represent a past as we imagine it rather than the actual past - so it's possible to feel a strong sense of relationship with a place or thing even when you've never been there or done that before. Our brains create associations of past memories with new ones so whenever we recognise an event that resembles something we've encountered in the past, we unconsciously tend to feel the same emotions as well.

This explains why we tend to have a positive emotion when watching nostalgic movies even when we've never lived through the era.



Some films aren't set in the 80s, but heavily use its pop culture references, especially geek culture. For example, *Ready Player One* showcases classic games like *Street Fighter*, anime like *Gundam*, and movies like *The Shining*. While the titles may be more familiar with Gen X, these characters have endured the test of time. Simply head to a con convention and you'll find a huge, younger fanbase for these characters.

Another popular theme of 80s movies is martial arts, portrayed in films like *Kickboxer* (1989) and *Karate Kid* (1984). The central premise of these stories follows the nerds-to-hero formula, where the bullied takes a stand and emerges victorious. It's a theme that ages well, and the 2018 series *Cobra Kai* continues the story of *Karate Kid* 30 years on, tapping into the nostalgia of high school rivalries.

WHY THE 80S?

Arguably, the 80s was an era that heavily influenced the entertainment we have today. It was a decade that gave us disaster movies, buddy movies, rogue cop movies, superhero movies, and more.

The decade basically introduced us to 'high-concept' films, with cinematic plots that could be easily characterised by one or two sentences and therefore easily marketable and understandable. The formulaic approach, including using pop soundtracks, villain monologues, and the one-man army hero trope, is still used in the films of today.

More than anything, these retro-themed films show how nostalgia gives us a positive emotion even when we've never lived through the era. The 80s as a genre has created an enduring legacy that was experienced first-hand by Gen X and passed along to today's generation of entertainment consumers.





PANDEMIC PREDICTORS 2020 IN POP CULTURE

ON REAL-LIFE SCENARIOS

CONTAGION (2011): It's arguably the most accurate depiction of health systems (and society) collapsing amidst a pandemic. Its portrayal of mass hysteria, the CDC's struggle to fulfill its role, and the local authorities' reluctance to take fast action all seem eerily present. Especially since it shows how the virus spreads from a bat, to a hand-shaking restaurant chef, to an international traveller. Inspired by the idea of what would have happened if SARS had been worse, it's something of an ode to frontline heroes.

WORLD WAR Z (2013): Eight months into Covid, we're all accustomed to international border closures, as is depicted in this film. Covid thankfully doesn't involve roving hordes, but zombies have long been the metaphor for an unknown plague. Beyond its jump-scares and zombie violence, WWZ shows another side of a pandemic – the level of desperation and self-sacrifice needed to be a Human Challenge Trial volunteer.

12 MONKEYS (1995): Unlike Contagion, which shows us the arc of an outbreak, 12 Monkeys asks: "What if you could go back in time and prevent it?" The film's set in 2035, in a post-pandemic world where humanity's been degraded to living underground in anarchic alliances. They invent a time machine, and try to go back in time to cure the apocalyptic pandemic before it starts. With mind-blowing plot-twists, it touches on the very real, deep-seated uncertainty and existential dread many of us feel in 2020. What if society were to collapse? What if all this were somehow preventable?

Popular culture gives us a sense of shared identity, meaning, and purpose that transcends differences in geography, race, ethnicity, religion, or politics. From the isolation of stay-home-notices to the fear of going out without a mask, here are some movies and TV series – the vehicles of pop culture – that capture the zeitgeist of 2020.

ON THE MUNDANITY OF ISOLATION

#ALIVE (2020): We're used to living in close proximity to each other, yet for many of us, one of the strangest adjustments amidst Covid has been the sense of isolation, especially during Circuit Breaker (or SHN). The film plunges hopelessly unprepared gamer Joon-woo into a sudden zombie plague. Locked in his apartment, he's more likely to die of thirst than the zombies outside, but as his mental condition declines by the day, he nearly takes his own life out of depression. #Alive explores the existential dread of suddenly not being able to leave home.

RAIN (2018-2020): Faring marginally better are the two siblings who literally grow up in isolation in Rain. While they have plenty of food and what it takes to survive for a long while, they eventually break quarantine after years of boredom and curiosity for the outside world. While Covid's thankfully hasn't come to this extreme, we can all probably empathise with the need to explore the outside world.

Art may just imitate life a bit more than we're comfortable admitting, and these films and series show us the likely scenarios we can plunge into if we're not careful.

WEAR PROTECTION BEFORE LEAVING HOME

BIRD BOX (2018): While the movie's premise was essentially a visually-transmitted infection (sort of), the idea of never leaving home without the safety of your blindfold feels eerily similar. There's an unknown "thing" in the air, and despite all our technology, our best defence is only a thin strip of cloth between us and possible death. It's a feeling anyone who's ever left the house and forgotten their mask will instantly recognise.

ON THE INEQUALITY OF SUFFERING

PARASITE (2019): Rather than dealing with the virus or isolation, Parasite deals with the class divide that affects poor and rich people differently. With Covid, the most economically vulnerable inevitably become the most physically vulnerable. In the film, the rich were able to weather the storm by staying home while the poor lost everything to the flood. For some, Covid's just a big inconvenience. For others, it's life-threatening. While the virus doesn't discriminate, our society does it for us.

BY YIN LOON

REVENGE OF THE SHE-GHOUL FEMALE GHOSTS IN POP CULTURE

Horror film buffs may cite plenty of films that have scary male ghosts, ghouls, and demons, but if we've learned anything in cinema, it's usually the female entities that leave lingering heebie jeebies long after we've watched them on screen.

From the creepy twins of *The Shining* to the long-haired Sadako in *The Ring* to the creepy Pontianak, it's clear that there's just something extra scary about female ghosts.

WOMEN AND REVENGE

Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. It serves as a warning: anger her or wrong her, and you know you'll be in for a really bad time because in typical horror stories, she will return as a vengeful ghost. In Asia, there are many types of vengeful female ghosts. Whether it's a Japanese onryō or the Pontianak, these white-garbed, long-haired spirits are bound by a desire for vengeance and are capable of injuring or killing people. In many cases, their haunting spree doesn't end with the death of their killer.

In *The Ring* (1998), Sadako, who was thrown into a well by her father, takes revenge for her death through a videotape that kills the viewer within 7 days. She uses nensha, an ability which allows her to telekinetically burn images into a videotape, while trapped in the well. In *Ju-On, aka The Grudge* (2002), Kayako was murdered by her husband, triggering a series of murders of everybody who set foot in the house by her ghost, starting with the death of her husband.

Interestingly, many films portraying the vengeful female ghost almost always double as a murder-mystery – solve the haunting, and you'll often discover one or most the following: the real killer, the motive or the location of the female corpse.

In the Thai film, *Shutter* (2004), Natre's ghost sought revenge on a group of university men who once gang-raped her by coercing them to commit suicide. Since her ex-boyfriend Tun didn't do anything to stop or expose them, she reveals photos of her rape to Tun's current girlfriend, Jane, who then breaks up with him.

South Korea's *Bunshinsaba* (2002) is a classic revenge story involving a mother-daughter duo who were murdered by the townfolk. Their spirits are awakened via a ouija board by a group of schoolgirls who want revenge on their classroom bullies. After possessing one of the girls, they kill the bullies before going on to complete their revenge on the rest of the town.

FEMINISM AND THE SHE-GHOST

In Southeast Asia, the legacy of the Pontianak has spawned numerous movies in Singapore and Malaysia, with the latest being Glen Goel's *Revenge of the Pontianak* (2019).

According to Malay folklore, a Pontianak is the spirit of a woman who died at childbirth. As a vengeful spirit, she seduces and kills men. Instead of the usual white garb, she sometimes appears as a beautiful woman – she's not afraid of walking alone at night and can be as provocative as she wants without fear. In a patriarchal society, the Pontianak is an icon of feminism.



THE IMAGE OF FEMALE GHOSTS

What makes female ghosts scary is partly due to the look: long, black hair that (usually) covers most of her face and she's typically dressed in a shapeless white dress or smock. The image of the long-haired lady in a white dress isn't just limited to Asian horror stories. Plenty of western horror has adapted to that look as well, most recently on Netflix's *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (2020) – the Lady of the Lake's appearance is similar to Sadako.

When it comes to being scary in horror films, the ghosts don't have to be adult women. Even innocent-looking girls – like those twins in *The Shining* or the sweet Regan MacNeil of *Poltergeist* – scare the bejesus out of us.

But perhaps there's nothing more visually frightening at first glance than the image of a ghostly old woman – viewed as particularly repulsive, they represent all that's most frightening in a society. Just think of the old lady in Room 237 in *The Shining*, or Bertha Mills in *The Others*. A woman is evidently a terrifying thing no matter what her age.

WOMEN ARE SCARY

The female ghost subverts the conventional view of woman as a passive, obedient creature and supposes that the angry, violent, retributive urges suppressed in life may emerge after death in twisted malevolent form.



CARTOON FAMILIES

FROM THE FLINTSTONES TO KING OF THE HILL

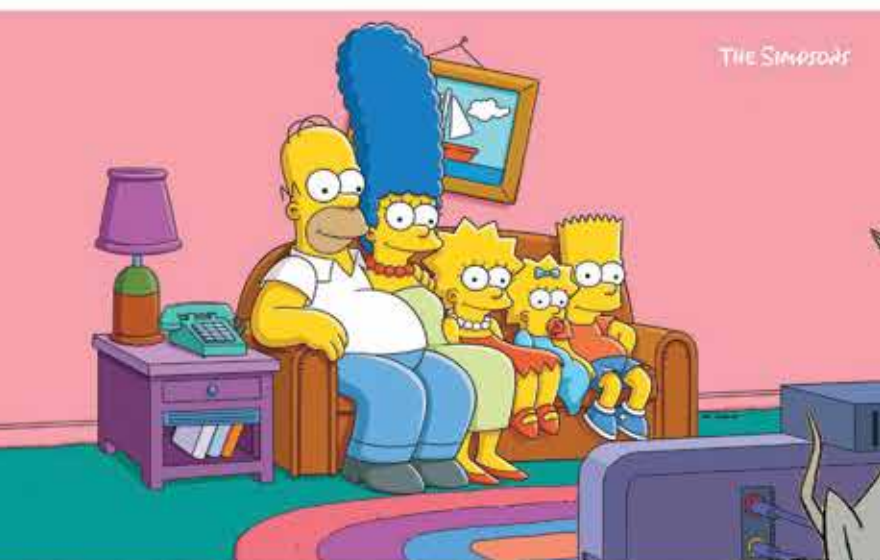
BY NINAGAN

We all grew up watching cartoons, and amidst the stories of transforming robots, mischievous babies, and superhuman kindergartner girls you'll find cartoons that showcase the shenanigans of the nuclear family, like The Simpsons.

The nuclear family has been the subject of cartoons for about 60 years, starting with The Flintstones (1960-1966), and followed by The Jetsons (1962-1987). Fast forward a couple of decades, and you have long-standing series like The Simpsons, Family Guy, and King of the Hill. These cartoons were so influential that their format became the template for some of the most popular modern sitcoms.

These family cartoons are a great way to gauge the state our society is in, as the animators generally followed an 'art imitates life' approach. You'd expect to see a shift in the portrayal of family and societal life of the characters in these cartoons as they aged, and while some aspects have changed, it's clear that some societal issues from the past haven't evolved much.

However, one thing was clear - despite the medium being cartoons, they've always dealt with very adult subject matters.



THE HOME AND FAMILY LIFE

Older generations may remember The Flintstones and The Jetsons as wholesome entertainment that featured the classic nuclear family.

Both cartoons reflected the lifestyle based on the postwar boom - in The Flintstones, Wilma and Betty are constantly saying, "charge it!", which was a very 60s thing with the rise of credit cards. The Jetsons portrays a world of robot housekeepers, smart homes, jetpacks, and flying

cars, reflecting the futuristic outlook of Americans during a time of incredible advances in home appliances. Even the Flintstones alluded to this with the bird record player and the Brontosaurus crane at the quarry where Fred and Barney work.

While The Flintstones and The Jetsons were the postwar boom family of the 1960s, The Simpsons (1989-present) and Family Guy (1999-present) were the nuclear, 2.4 children family

from the late 1980s. While the earlier cartoons focused on the backdrop of modern family life, we're starting to see the portrayal of dysfunctional family relationships in later cartoons.

Bart and Lisa Simpson are siblings who - with opposite personalities - are often at odds with each other, with parents who have questionable parenting styles. Homer is as dumb as characters come, and at times forgets he has a third child. In Family Guy,

parents Peter and Lois Griffin have an overweight, unintelligent son Chris who's constantly at odds with his sibling Meg, who's often bullied by her entire family - including her (weird) infant brother, Stewie. In both cases, the daughters are either forgotten or ill-treated.

King of the Hill (1997-2010) also features a normal "dysfunctional" family, where Hank Hill is often at odds with his only son, Bobby, who prides himself on being artful rather than athletic.



ON JOBS AND GENDER ROLES

Earlier cartoons portrayed how even blue collar workers could lead an idyllic life. Fred Flintstone is a "bronto crane operator" at quarry while George Jetson simply pushes buttons at his futuristic workplace three days a week, yet manages to snag a deluxe apartment. Fast forward to the time of the Simpsons and Griffins and it seems that the workplace and career hasn't changed that much, until we see the arrival of the middle-class with assistant manager Hank.

However, no matter what the era, the roles of the husband and wife haven't changed: the father is always the main breadwinner while the mother stays at home.

Sexism was often in-your-face in The Jetsons. In an episode where Jane learns to drive, George responds, "Well, it's probably better if you don't Janey. Driving requires a man's skill; a man's judgement; a man's technical know-how." Fred Flintstone goes one step too far when he refuses

to cook for himself while Wilma was busy working a gig - he throws violent tantrums, telling her to quit because "A woman's place is in the home!"

In The Simpsons, Lisa has often been the sole voice of feminism, only to be shot down by her dad with misogynistic lines like, "If you were a boy, you'd be a scientist." Peter Griffin is often seen making inappropriate jokes about women, like, "Women are not people, they are devices built by Jesus Christ for our own entertainment."

However bad these husbands seem, the reality of toxic masculinity becomes amplified because we see their wives settle for mediocrity, because a happy marriage is too much to ask for from husbands who don't care.

Things start to change with King of the Hill's flipping of gender roles, with high femme Luanne being a secretly skilled mechanic, while Bobby's love of pink and his feminine mannerisms are often a point of contention with Hank.



JANE LEARNS TO DRIVE



HOMER AND HIS MISOGYNISTIC LINES



BOBBY LOVES PINK

SOCIAL COMMENTARY

These cartoons have covered plenty of societal issues, covering a wide range of topics from environmentalism to racism.

Lisa Simpson's character is a contemporary cartoon icon for those seeking social justice around the world. She's exposed the harsh realities of climate change (she's also vegetarian), talked about mental health, opposed gender stereotypes,

and stood up for freedom of the press.

Over its course of 30 years, The Simpsons basically "grew up" with viewers getting increasingly woke. Over time, the character Apu - the Indian convenience store owner - became a symbol of racism with his distinct accent that's theatrically thick and voiced by a Caucasian. Family Guy's African American character, Cleveland is also voiced by a

Caucasian, and since the Black Lives Matter movement, both actors have quit their roles.

Family Guy is known for regularly portraying racial stereotypes: the Griffin family's Hispanic housemaid Consuela speaks in broken English with incorrect sentence structure, and in one episode, Peter meets a Muslim named Ahmoo who not only made Peter blow up a bridge, but also made him drive because the security won't allow anyone with dark skin pass.

While The Simpsons and Family Guy are snapshots of contemporary American society, The Jetsons predicted what society would be like in the future. It showcased modern conveniences we have today, like video chats, smartphones, and drones but yet despite the conveniences - housewife Jane only has to push buttons for machines to do the housework and George has a 3-day work week simply pushing one button - they both complain about a hard day's work.



Although these may be seen as excessive and in-your-face, the racism portrayed is not far from the reality of current society.

Nooo... no.

CONSUELA

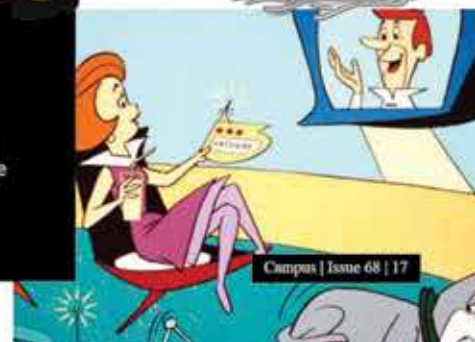
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THEIR INFLUENCE

It goes without saying that some of these cartoons have inspired modern-day sitcoms. In mirroring the nuclear family as it evolves with society, these cartoons serve as a mirror of human behavior and paved the way for more innovative cartoons we see today.

Without them, we wouldn't have popular, offbeat family cartoons like Rick and Morty (2013-present), which bravely deals with all sorts of issues from alcoholism to toxic parenting and mental health problems.

Cartoon family sitcoms exaggerate the caricature of family dysfunctions to create comedy, and as author Joseph Conrad writes, "A caricature is putting the face of a joke on the body of a truth."



FROM DALEKS TO TARDIS

IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF DR. WHO

Dr Who is one of the most iconic, long-running franchises in TV history. It's also one of the most complicated, involving 13 different time-travelling main characters (sort of), all of whom are the same "Doctor". For the uninitiated, here are the four main elements of Dr. Who to get you started on the franchise.



1

THE DOCTOR

The "Doctor" is actually a Time Lord, a race of intelligent beings from the planet Gallifrey who have mastered time-travel and can perceive all times (the past, present, and future) simultaneously. Theoretically, Time Lords can live forever, but they are not all-powerful. Their physical forms can be killed, but they are also able to regenerate a maximum of 12 times. A Time Lord's policy is to strictly observe, but not interfere with other lifetimes or the course of history.

Each time the Doctor regenerates, its personality changes, and it has no control over the look or gender of its next incarnation. This Doctor actually likes humans, tries to blend in, and feels compelled to help protect them, creating conflict with fellow Time Lords. Because audiences didn't know anything about this weird, space- and time-travelling alien, the actors were credited as "Doctor Who".

While David Tennant and Matt Smith are probably the best known, modern incarnations of the Doctor, the most iconic Doctor is the fourth one played by Tom Baker (1974-81). Instantly recognisable for his long, multi-coloured scarf, fedora hat, and quirky mannerisms, his stint as the Doctor coincided with the series going global.

2

THE COMPANIONS

Apart from the Doctor, the franchise's other mainstay character has been the Doctor's various "Companions". Officially, there's been over 40 Companions written into the series, with a number of other recurring characters probably qualifying as companions of sorts.

Early on, the Companions' role was to act as a narrative vehicle for the audience by asking the Doctor questions, or becoming plot devices when the Doctor needs to save them. They're also frequently killed and written out of the script. Many of the Doctor's Companions have been young women, but they were never in romantic relationships with the Doctor.

As time passed, the archetype Companion evolved into a more proactive character, most recently becoming a vehicle for social commentary in 2017, when the 12th Companion Billy Plotts was established as LGBT.



3

THE DALEKS

The Daleks are the original villains of the series, and main enemy of Dr. Who and his fellow Time Lords. If you're unfamiliar with the show, Daleks are the angry robots that resemble studded dustbins that roll around repeating the word "exterminate!" as they try to kill all non-Dalek lifeforms.

Daleks are actually a genetically-engineered race of aliens called Kaled from the planet Skaro. After a devastating nuclear war, the Kaleds were engineered to become a "master race" of cyborgs devoid of empathy, and named Dalek (ie. Kaled spelled backwards). Loosely based on the Nazis, their sole mission is to exterminate all "inferior" (ie. non-Dalek) life in the universe.

Despite being evil, Daleks have become a hugely popular pop icon, turning up as villains everywhere from Toy Story to the Lego Movie. They're also hugely collectable, with original, full-size 2-metre tall Daleks from the show easily selling for over \$50,000.



4

THE TARDIS

The Doctor time-travels in the TARDIS - a time machine disguised as the show's iconic, blue police box. The TARDIS is supposed to be able to change its appearance to match its environment, but due to a malfunction, Dr. Who's TARDIS is permanently stuck in its 1963 exterior.

As a time machine, the TARDIS distorts time and space (ie. it's "dimensionally transcendental"), making it much bigger inside than it looks on the outside. Inside its phone box shell is a separate dimension which is theoretically infinite and includes a library and swimming pool. The TARDIS is also sentient, and able to help the Doctor without being asked.

In real life, the TARDIS was such an instantly recognisable icon of the series that real Police Boxes and the TARDIS became synonymous in the UK in the '70s. Today, it's one of the most collectable, large-scale pieces of pop culture merchandise, with different prop versions going for 6-figure amounts. The main difference between various TV and movie prop versions of the TARDIS is that some have inward-opening doors, others outward.

We Need No Rescuing

STUDIO GHIBLI HEROINES

Ghibli films are an endearing legacy, bringing to life stories catered to every sphere of society. Known for their visual mastery, storytelling, and slow pacing for dramatic effect, Ghibli films also have one more strand to their DNA: strong female characters. Many of the films feature girls going on grand adventures into worlds unknown, using or discovering their inner strength they never knew they had. Here are some Ghibli films featuring heroines who need no rescuing:

Kiki

from KIKI'S
DELIVERY SERVICE

Kiki is a young witch who, upon coming of age at 13, leaves home on a flying broom with her black cat, Jiji to seek a new place to live and work. She settles into a seaside town called Koriko, and offers her assistance to a bakery in the form of a flying delivery service in exchange for lodging. Along the way, she befriends Tombo, a geeky boy who's obsessed with flight.

After a negative feedback regarding a delivery, she becomes depressed and loses her magical ability to talk to Jiji and fly her broomstick. However, her motivation and powers return when she rushes to save a trapped Tombo who was dangling precariously on an airship by flying to him with a borrowed broom, earning praise from the entire town.

Chihiro

from SPIRITED AWAY

When elementary student Chihiro and her parents entered an abandoned theme park, they inadvertently stepped into the netherworld. A frightened Chihiro soon finds that she has to fend for herself in this strange place, aided by the friendly spirit Haku, because her parents have been transformed into pigs.

Throughout the film, she slowly transforms from a spoiled child into a mature girl who manages to hold down a job without complaining no matter how hard it got; she's had to work with ghouls, handle difficult customers, and brave her outlandish boss, Yubaba. Yet Chihiro never gives in to greed or places her own needs above others'. By the end, she gains the admiration of everyone in the netherworld, and ultimately manages to overcome her initial fears to save Haku as well as her parents.

Sophie

from HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE

As a young woman, Sophie was always concerned about her plain looks, so when she was transformed into an old woman by the vindictive Witch of the Waste, she easily made peace with her new self. She finds adventure in the form of a moving, mechanical castle where she befriends fire demon Calcifer, young boy Markl, and the powerful, handsome wizard, Howl.

The story is set during wartime, where warships and witches create havoc wherever Sophie goes. Along the way, she takes it upon herself to protect a young boy and a wasted witch. Originally a timid person, being an old woman emboldens Sophie to do brave things - she wanders into the wastelands, confronts the witch Sulfman, and ultimately, she saves Howl and stops the war.

San

from PRINCESS MONONOKE

A human girl adopted by Wolf Gods, San has grown into a tough warrior who identifies as a wolf, with a hatred for humanity for destroying nature. Over the course of the film, her blind hatred is challenged, thanks to the appearance of Prince Ashitaka, a human cursed by a demon boar.

Her fighting spirit remains strong, and despite her hatred for what humans - in the form of Lady Eboshi and her Iron Town - have done to destroy nature for their own gains, she eventually learns to accept coexistence. When the Forest Spirit's head was decapitated and stolen, she and Ashitaka managed to return it, and remove the demon boar curse. While she holds admiration and love for Ashitaka, she refuses to forsake her values, and declines to join him in the human world.



There are many other heroines, each with their own style of heroism. One of the common traits? Never giving up. Whether it's fighting for herself or for others, Ghibli's female characters are far from damsels in distress. According to Hayao Miyazaki: "Many of my movies have strong female leads - brave, self-sufficient girls that don't think twice about fighting for what they believe with all their heart. They'll need a friend, or a supporter, but never a savior. Any woman is just as capable of being a hero as any man."

high fashion meets gaming

when luxury brands get into games

by nina gam

What do luxury designer brands and video games have in common? Given that their target audiences are so different in their consumer habits, you'd be hard pressed to find a link. But for a while now, luxury brands have been targeting a consumer group that's spending more time online. And they're doing it with online games.

a new kind of collab

This type of partnership isn't new - brands like Moschino and Diesel have joined games like 'The Sims' and 'Second Life' in the early 2000s. 'Final Fantasy XIII' worked with Prada in 2012 to dress their characters, and in 2016 they worked with Louis Vuitton to clothe Lightning, the heroine of XIII.

Fast forward to today, and you'll find similar partnerships. Nintendo's 'Animal Crossing: New Horizons' allows players to customise their outfits, from a Prada bob to a complete wardrobe from Chanel or Dior. Brands like Valentino and Marc Jacobs offer gamers access to their virtual clothing for free via special codes obtained from the brands' Instagram Stories.

Louis Vuitton recently collaborated with 'League of Legends' to create bespoke

skins for characters Qiyana and Senna, as well as capsule collections available for in-game purchases.

Meanwhile, Gucci has created athletic wear for the game 'Tennis Clash', and collaborated with 'Genies', where users can dress their avatars in the brand's clothes and use them on social media platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram.

The benefits for both parties are clear: gamers who're unable to shop freely can customise their avatars with clothing by various brands they'd normally have no access to. Luxury brands can connect to 2.5 billion gamers around the world - a huge potential new market since, according to research, the average gamer is upper middle class.



Hermes' H-pitchhh



Gucci's Sneaker Garage

designer games

Over the past year, luxury brands have been releasing their own games as marketing tools. For example, Hermès' mobile app 'H-pitchhh' lets players virtually toss a horseshoe in an homage to their coveted Horseshoe Stamp.

Louis Vuitton's 80s-style free-to-play game, called 'Endless Runner', is a classic scrolling arcade game reminiscent of 'Super Mario', inspired by Virgil Abloh's 2019 show. Meanwhile, Burberry released 'B-Bounce' - where mascots jump between platforms like in classic 'MegaMan' - to coincide with the drop of their Monogram Puffer Collection.

Gucci's mobile app features a suite of arcade games where users can while away their time, or virtually try on their accessories using Augmented Reality (AR). Their new Gucci Sneaker Garage lets users design virtual sneakers and put them on their feet using AR.

the virtual economy

Virtual burlesque dress costs \$9,500

Much like the real world, virtual world items have value because of their scarcity; they can also be sold and shared. While most of us equate fashion with something tangible, people actually drop real money to buy virtual things.

One user dropped \$2,400 on a pair of virtual Yeezy 2 Cheetah sneakers on 'Agleit', a mobile sneaker game where players buy virtual versions of rare designer kicks.

Someone else spent a whopping \$9,500 on a digital dress that only exists on Instagram. The tailored dress, called Iridescence, was the first digital couture to be auctioned on the blockchain.

Gamers have already collectively dropped about \$100 billion on virtual gaming goods, and designer wear is just another extension.

moving forward

With more and more people turning to video games during the pandemic, it only makes sense that luxury brands are tapping into this market. As they look to thrive in the next decade, we'll be seeing more brands integrating into digital worlds where consumers are increasingly spending their time.

Bespoke skin for Qiyana



Do you want to see this custom design?

Chanel Jacket

Travis

Cancel

Save

Chanel in Animal Crossing



Final Fantasy Prada edition



fashion is gaming

The act of trying on designer wear has not just been incorporated into games, they've become the game.

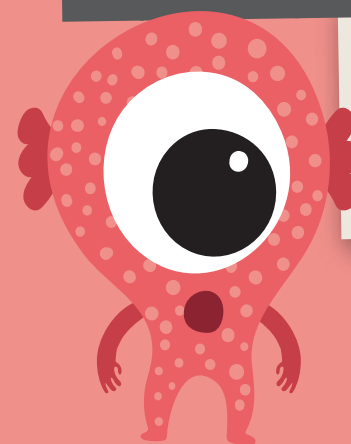
Virtual styling app 'Ada' has 20 luxury brands, including Armani and Dior, to outfit players' 3D avatars. At \$1-\$1,000, players can purchase luxury clothes and accessories, and pose their avatars in customised interiors. Fashion game 'Dress' is where gamers try on high fashion - with clothes from 100 designer brands like Prada and Valentino - and compete with other players in set challenges. Here, 5,000 'Dress' dollars costs £3.99.



Virtual styling app 'Ada'

Dior
ARMANI

STRESS RELIEF



It's the end of the year, and we're all gearing up for the holidays. We may have nowhere to travel to this year, but here's something you CAN do while stuck at home: opening your advent calendar. Whether you're stressed from exams or simply looking forward to some surprise, an advent calendar is just what you need.

Make a copy of this Advent Calendar and write a gift for yourself (or someone) or a challenge under each number. Once Dec 1 comes, open the first box to mark off a new item every day!



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