

THE NEW SUBLIMITY

02 : 05 : 2015 Suffocation : Spiritualism : Sublime

Identified by LS:N Global in 2012, The New Sublimity macrotrend charted a widespread consumer movement away from busy, hyper-connected, digital lifestyles to prioritise personal fulfillment and wellbeing.

New Sublimity Overview



Shorefast Foundation, Fogo Islands, Saunders Architecture

Fed up with materialism, let down by capitalism, disconnected and discombobulated in their digital lives, consumers are seeking escape from their busy lifestyles and aspiring to a new set of values.

Meanwhile, they are culling bold brash brands in favour of those that are considerate, quiet and intuitive. The New Sublimity is not about abandoning digital life though. Rather than simply switching off, consumers are mastering a new on-off way of being. As they do, they are becoming digital dieters, mindfulness novices, daydream believers and jolly good fellows.

Where once always-on culture was all-pervading, consumers today are seeking digital invisibility. Constant conversation and dialogue is losing its appeal, and in its place, people are yearning for contemplation. From hotels to airports, consumers are looking beyond aesthetics and seeking the sublime.

Click through the sections on this page to see how The New Sublimity trend has been manifest since 2012.

2012



Bivouac NYC by Thomas Stevenson

March: New York pitches rooftop campsites

Urban camping company Bivouac NYC forms, allowing pre-booked guests to stay in temporary camps on building rooftops.

Guests register online and the location and campsite details are sent by SMS to their phones. The campsites feature a library, wifi, a small fridge and kitchen area.

Key Development: Consumers are looking to experience a sense of escapism from the mundane within the city.



Harm Rensink urban spa, Eindhoven

November: Urban spa retreat pops up in Dutch city

To escape the noise, pollution and distractions of city life, residents often find that the only option is to pack their bags and head to the countryside for the weekend.

Studio Harm Rensink creates a sanctuary in the centre of Eindhoven to answer this need for an urban retreat.

Key Development: Brands are providing consumers with the means to relax and slow down in unconventional temporary spaces.



Starbucks Espresso Journey by Nendo, Tokyo

November: **Starbucks creates a more reflective experience in Tokyo**

Starbucks joins forces with design agency Nendo to create a contemplative space all about the journey of espresso and the relationship between coffee and reading.

Key Development: Concepts such as Starbucks Espresso Journey offer visitors a thoughtful and calm experience in an unbranded designed space.

2013



No Noise at Selfridges, London

January: **Selfridges creates The New Sublimity-inspired No Noise campaign**

Selfridges taps into The New Sublimity trend and launches its No Noise store-wide campaign encouraging customers to come into its stores to meditate and to seek moments of peace and tranquility amid the shopping hustle and bustle.

Key Development: Retailers are creating new contemplative experiences in-store to nurture creativity and quality decision-making.



Camp Grounded

March: **Adult retreat offers Digital Detox**

Digital Detox organises Camp Grounded, a summer retreat giving adults a chance to unplug from the digital world and escape from the stresses of everyday life.

Key Development: Brands are asking consumers to give up their laptops, mobiles, social media, clocks and work emails for a while in order to embrace deeper thinking.

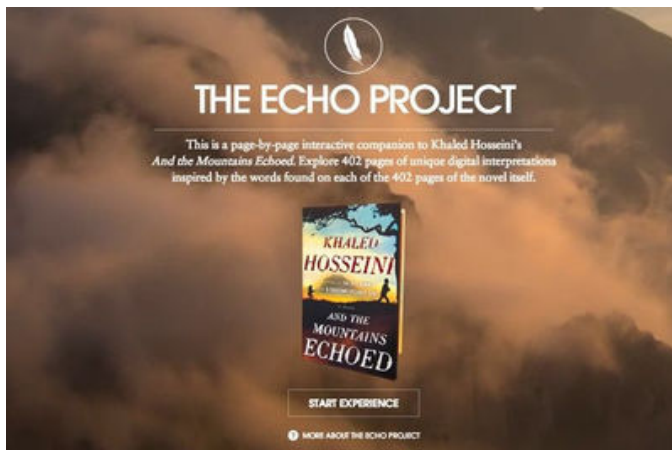


May: **Sublimity Retail spreads to Brazil**

The new Nanak Emporium in Brazil is designed around the Sikh triangulated concept of health, happiness and holiness.

Key Development: Cutting through the visual noise of products, retail designers worldwide are providing alternative clam spaces to relax in-store, inspired by holistic practice.

2014



The Echo Project

April: **Penguin creates a digital book that induces zen-like calm**

Penguin Canada's The Echo Project is a digital e-book designed to enhance the experience of reading. Sections of the passage induce meditative experiences for the reader.

Key Development: Digital mediums are evoking soothing, escapist environments that transport visitors from the traditional reading experience.



Folly, Serpentine Pavilion 2014 by Smiljan Radić, London

June: **Sublime pavilion is installed in London's Hyde Park**

The Serpentine Gallery Pavilion is designed as a public space for contemplation and references the extravagant pavilions that became popular in the 18th century.

Comprising a large cylindrical structure resting on quarry stones, it appears to float and glows at night because of its translucence.

Key Development: Brands and designers are creating monumental outdoor shared spaces within the city for contemplation.



Paper Later

July: **The Newspaper Club creates slow media**

Newspaper Club introduces PaperLater, enabling consumers to print stories from the web into a personalised paper that can vary in length from eight to 24 pages.

Key Development: Creative initiatives such as PaperLater serve as a way to focus the mind when presented with the internet's constant flow of information.



L'isole interior by Le Creative Sweatshop, Paris encourages visitors not to use social media or electronic devices.

November: **A new counter-opinion, the Joy of Missing Out, is emerging**

Instead of hungering for more information about friends' carefully tailored online identities, people are setting off on their own journeys of self-discovery, finding that missing out can be an ideal to strive for.

Key Development: Digitally detoxing is no longer viewed as a difficult disconnection from technology, but as a positive move, rebranded as JOMO, the Joy of Missing Out.



Happy for Life App, The Guardian, UK

December: The Guardian aims to understand happiness levels with app

The Guardian has developed an app to help track the happiness levels of its users. **Happy for Life** aims to understand a user's general happiness levels, as well as making recommendations to boost feelings of contentment and wellbeing. Each day for three months, users are recommended three activities, such as calling a neglected friend, learning a poem or going for a jog. On completing a task, users are asked to rate their happiness.

Key Development: Consumers continue to search for happiness as they turn away from today's hyper-connected world through a new wave of mentoring apps.

2015



From Then On, Formafantasma for Established & Sons

January: Slowness gains momentum in a world tired of moving too fast

The World Institute of Slowness, a movement advocating the benefits of slowness and slow thinking, invites us to slow down, take our time and better understand ourselves.

The think tank, founded in 1999 by former physicist Geir Berthelsen, has since diversified into a range of business tools designed to challenge existing corporate mindsets that are high on quantity and low on quality to encourage long-term growth.

Key Development: Slowness is a departure from conventional brand leadership, and SlowConsulting, the practical arm of the institute, aims to inspire change that focuses on people, not consumers.



Pipilotti Rist, Worry Will Vanish, London

January: Enter the den of zen and kiss your worries goodbye

Worry Will Vanish is an immersive exhibition that explores the relationship between nature and the body. All the elements of the exhibition were created following principles of Autogenic Training, a method of relaxation developed in 1932 by German psychiatrist Johannes Heinrich Schultz.

Visitors can relax into a state of calm, discovering a zen retreat amid London's bustling west end.

Key Development: A growing amount of immersive spaces invite visitors to enhance their mental wellbeing through contemporary psychedelic experiences.



Sacred Introvert Retreat Tour, Glastonbury, UK

February: New holiday service aims to challenge myths about introverts

Introverts can now book holidays with like-minded people via a tour service that caters specifically to their needs. **Sacred Introvert Retreat Tours** and its accompanying blog are inspired by **Susan Cain's TED Talk** and **best-selling book** *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking*.

Each day on the road is followed by a rest day for tourists to reflect and recharge, or engage in optional extras, such as yoga, meditation, talks and walks.

Key Development: Brands and services like Sacred are beginning to create experiences that shed the stigma associated with introverts and focus on the individual.



Paus by Louise Nyborg, London

July: New platform encourages people to take a moment to slow down

The aim of Paus is to facilitate a moment of calm through a desktop or mobile device. Fittingly, the site is a refuge from the frenetic world of online banner ads and flash players, featuring simple animations in soft pastel colours.

Through interactive geometric puzzles, games, breathing and listening exercises, Paus helps users to find time in the day to go slow and focus on being in the moment. Its Daily Slow activities, for example, give users a different technique each day to help them find a balance between fast and slow.

Key Development: As mindfulness is becoming more mainstream, consumers are looking to technology to help them switch off.

Noise Complaints In New York City

trulia



Trulia Noise Maps, New York

October: Property search company Trulia is helping buyers find a slice of the quiet life

Trulia teamed up with location data experts CartoDB to create a map that visualises noise levels across New York, Seattle and San Francisco by compiling noise complaints made by residents.

Key Development: Consumers are increasingly aware of how noise pollution affects their health and wellbeing, and continue to seek to escape the adverse effects of an always-on society.



The Catch Up Grant from Samsung, Scandinavia

October: Samsung launches The Catch Up Grant competition

Samsung went to extreme measures to promote its SUHD tv with a prize that granted one person the opportunity to catch up on all of the television shows he or she had missed, but – even better than their sitting room – they watched in the ultra-remote location of Thiksey, a Tibetan monastery in the Himalayas. There they had the chance to watch programmes for 100 days on Samsung's new SUHD with a 65-inch curved screen.

Key Development: People now use the act of binge-watching television as a way of shutting out the world in their quest for personal downtime.



November: Loop.pH creates an immersive Chronarium Sleep Lab

London-based designers Rachel Wingfeld and Mathias Gmachl worked with a sleep scientist, a sound artist and a meditation expert to create a silk-draped space filled with different sounds and visuals, as well as hammocks, in which to relax.

The total effect was designed to be a sequence of physical experiences that induce a harmonious mood and reset circadian rhythms.

Key Development: People are increasingly exploring new solutions to counteract the adverse effects of contemporary living. Sleep has become a particular focus, especially across hospitality and personal technology.

2016



Flowstate App, US

February: Flowstate is a writing tool that uses positive friction to induce a state of creative flow in the writer.

Based on ancient writing disciplines, Flowstate forces writers to stay in the moment until they enter a state of creative flow by deleting everything if the user stops writing.

Users select the amount of time they want to write, from five to 180 minutes, and once the timer starts they are not allowed to stop. If their fingers leave the keyboard for more than five seconds, the letters begin to lose their shape, blurring like a memory until vanishing completely without a trace.

Key Development: Designers are experimenting with how to put people into more or less focused states of mind to boost their creativity, improve memory and alleviate stress in the physical and digital worlds.



The Den, Los Angeles

February: New studios offer an accessible way into the practice of meditation and mindfulness

Forgoing languid spiritual teachings in favour of affordable, drop-in classes, studios are offering a way for busy urbanites to unplug and unwind. Mimicking the accessibility of on-demand beauty services such as Heyday and Drybar, these new meditation spots take a convenience-driven approach to meditation.

Key Development: As people look for reflection and secular spiritualism, mental wellbeing is becoming a priority as they seek new ways to combat the stresses of city life.



The Wide World by Renan Porto, Rio de Janeiro

March: Interactive storybook app The Wide World helps children understand complex emotions

Through a unique double narrative structure, The Wide World follows Daniel, a young boy who can travel outside of his body when he falls asleep. By tilting the iPad, the reader can switch between two narrative strands that affect the course of the story. The Wide World storybook deals with complex and challenging themes such as mental illness.

Key Development: Consumers are looking to improve their mental wellbeing and a range of digital apps are emerging to enable moments of discovery and reflection.



Glued app, UK

April: Glued is an app that gamifies digital downtime for the family

Quantifying the usage of family screen time, Glued encourages families to use devices more thoughtfully by rewarding points for sticking to allotted screen time limits. It uses the principles of gaming to encourage children to compete against their siblings and parents to win pole position on a digital leader board.

Key Development: People are recognising that true mindfulness is about balance, not about setting idealistic and unachievable goals.



Alex Carro

July: Alex Carro's mixable, multi-use skincare range is simplifying complicated beauty rituals.

The unisex range comprises five products that can be blended together to suit a user's individual skincare needs. The exfoliating powder, for example, can be combined with the multi-use balm to create a smoothing lip treatment.

The brand decided to simplify the line to five products, one of each type, to help remove the clutter, confusion and stress from our daily skin needs.

Key development: Consumers are rejecting bold and brash brands in favour of those that take a considered and intuitive approach.



Plate by Tatjana Giorgadse for Steinbeisser on Jouw, Amsterdam

September: A new online store dedicated to experimental cutlery and dishware has opened.

Dutch design studio Steinbeisser has collaborated with Lloyd Hotel and Cultural Embassy to create Jouw, an online store selling unusual cutlery and dishware. To re-address the rituals of dining, the cutlery and tableware puts people out of their comfort zone and encourages them to eat more slowly.

Key development: The slow and mindful approach of The New Sublimity is moving on. Now it is taking slow food and mixing it up to make it a more challenging but ultimately fulfilling experience.



Headspace app

October: A new app from the founders of guided meditation platform Headspace aims to help children to become more mindful.

Aimed at Generation I, born between 2000 and 2010 and who are typically regarded as rowdy and restless, the visual-first app seeks to instil a sense of calm, focus and connection in their lives through a series of mindfulness exercises.

Key development: Mindfulness is now a global phenomenon that has entered the minds and hearts of the mainstream majority.