

hospitality design

looking ahead
7 trends in 2021




looking ahead

As one of the more trying years in many of our memories comes to a close, we can take solace in the design that inspires and has us looking forward to a bold and purposeful future—not just in the realm of hospitality, but beyond it. To celebrate that, we highlight seven evolving trends that remind us of the normalcy we aim to regain next year and help us stay excited about what's to come.

While many children continue to learn remotely, immersive educational spaces for youngsters prove excellent design is uplifting, and conducive to collaboration and learning. In healthcare facilities, biophilia is more than just a buzzword but rather an intentional practice that profoundly promotes healing physically, mentally, and emotionally. And with shopping's ever-increasing shift to online, the experiential approach may well be the way that in-person retail can rebound and thrive.

Speaking of experiences, photo-worthy, participatory exhibits and museums are altering the neighborhoods they occupy, while bold concepts are redefining the meaning of hybrid—spaces that take the blurring of disciplines to the next level to keep guests engaged. And considering how urban fabric is shifting and more people are craving access to nature than perhaps ever before, daring concepts are putting biodiversity at the forefront.

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**THE COLOR
FACTORY**
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By ALIA AKKAM and MATT DOUGHERTY



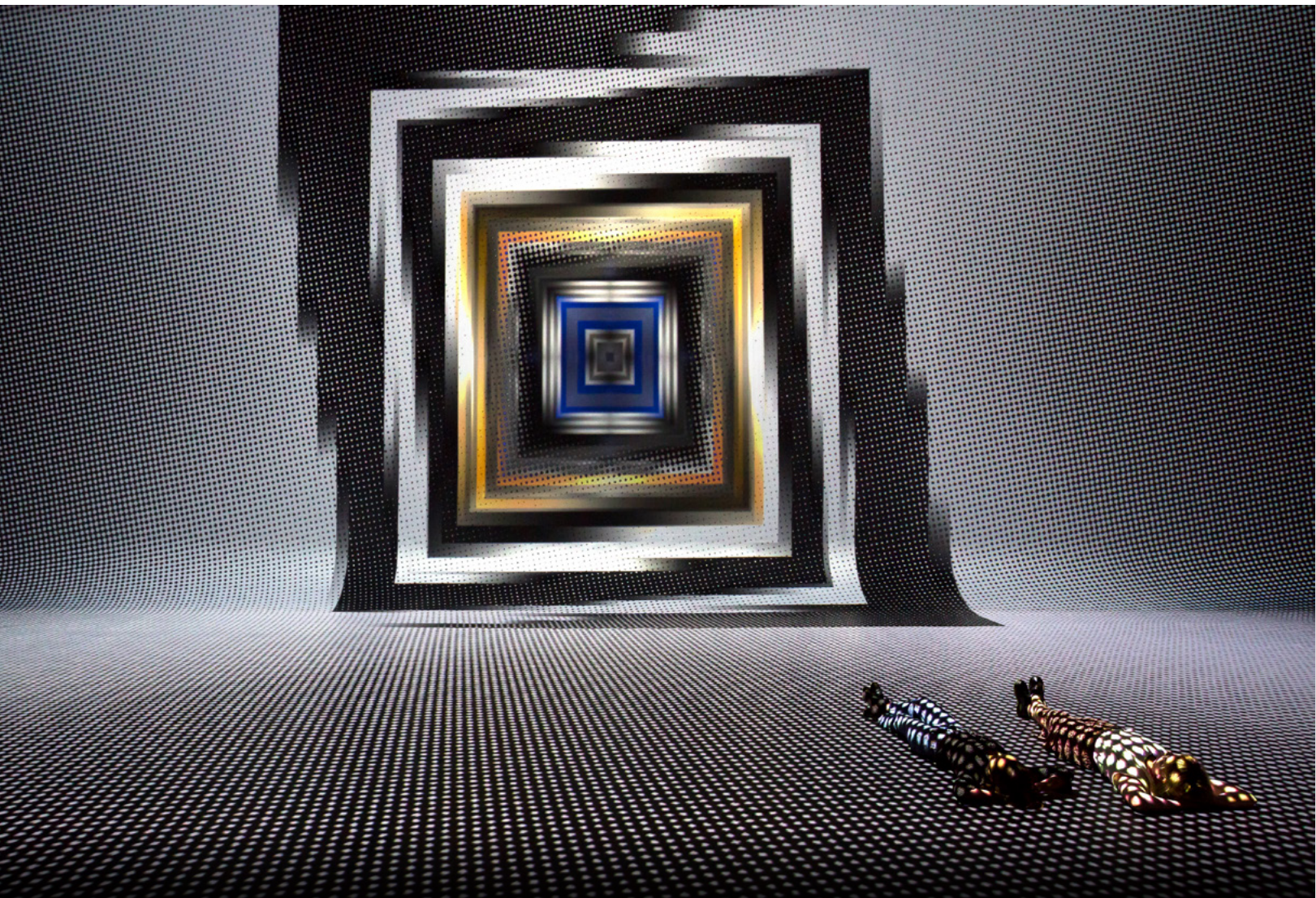
Off-White Miami

A deep orange-colored X overlaying the word “shop” on its opaque polycarbonate façade hints that the bi-level Miami Design District outpost of fashion designer-entrepreneur Virgil Abloh’s Off-White will transcend conventional retail. Here, Abloh, in collaboration with Rotterdam, the Netherlands-based AMO—the research and design studio of architecture practice OMA—redefines the purpose of a contemporary brick-and-mortar shop through the notion of flexibility.

Drawing from the dynamics found inside fulfillment centers, the linchpin of eclipsing online sales, the boutique signifies an anonymous canvas type of architecture, as AMO director Samir Bantal puts it. “Machines driven by consumers’ desires become a well-orchestrated choreography of efficiency. Moving racks bring the requested dreams closer to fulfillment center workers who package the goods ready to be sent out. The interior is therefore always in flux,” he explains.

Off-White mirrors that adaptability, accommodating exhibitions, talks, performances, and DJ sets. The store also stars a floor-to-ceiling movable wall that is, “in fact, a huge rack that transforms from display unit to stage to art space,” Bantal says. All the Italian-made furniture, outfitted with wheels, can also be easily reconfigured.

Viewed through glass, the stockroom is a standout feature, as is the sleek stainless-steel shelving and black Marquina and white Carrara marble rails that connote the streetwear label’s inherent luxury. An electric blue staircase, forest green fitting room, and red benches provide bursts of color to the industrial setting. Defined by corrugated metal walls, mesh ceiling panels, tubular lighting, and concrete flooring, the spare aesthetic is “silent on purpose,” says Bantal, “to reflect the utilitarian inspiration.”



Nxt Museum Amsterdam

Devoted to showcasing new media art, Nxt Museum reflects cofounders Merel van Helsdingen and Natasha Greenhalgh's fascination with the future. Bringing another jolt of creativity to the redeveloped Amsterdam-Noord neighborhood, Nxt, complete with a community-driven lab revolving around education, research and development, and an artist residency program, debuted in August, unveiling a thought-provoking fusion of art, science, and technology. Greenhalgh, the museum's creative director, designed it "in line with the aspirations and ambitions of the cross-disciplinary creators we present and collaborate with." Through a series of versatile, individual rooms for each work, she adds, "the installations are able to come to life in their fullest forms."

These large-scale, multisensory works are the showstoppers, so materials, including steel and soft fabrics, feature functional attributes to ensure structural, light, and sound quality. In contrast to the dark, nearly black finishes that dominate the exhibition hall—a practical decision that also lends an aura of intimacy and immersion, Greenhalgh points out—ultramarine blue is equally impactful. Covering the floor and a nearly 30-foot-tall wall in the entrance hall, it guides guests inside, "but also, conceptually, pays homage to the history of art," says Greenhalgh, noting the hue's considerable evolution, from its appearance as a rare pigment in Renaissance paintings to the mass appeal of International Klein Blue and even the infamous Windows Screen of Death. Such storytelling is integral to the journey. "It was important to us that navigating and engaging with the space be intuitive and liberating," says Greenhalgh, so that visitors sense they are "free to move, feel, connect, seek, and learn as they please."



The Color Factory Houston

After a successful debut in New York in 2018, the Color Factory opened a Houston outlet late last year, enlisting a roster of artists to contribute to the ambiance of various rooms within the interactive museum. “We strive to create an experience that inspires joy and connection,” says chief experience officer Tina Malhotra. “[We want visitors] to feel the awe that comes along with something so unexpected and fun.” Therefore, each room offers something different than the one before, but all share the ability to “inspire positive emotion, curiosity, and connection,” she adds.

In Houston, artist Soo Sunny Park installed a dichroic glass sculpture that explores iridescence as a principle. As natural light fills the room, colorful shadows and reflections cover the space and shift throughout the day. Additionally, the “Your Magic is Real” exhibit, from artists Alicia Eggert and James Akers, requires two people to each touch a sensor and then hold hands to power the room around them, culminating in a neon light show. “Our main goal is to delight customers with experiential art that is both beautiful and meaningful,” Malhotra says. “We immerse people in our colorful world with hopes that they’ll take that joy back into their everyday lives.”





Elementary School Amos Psáry, Czech Republic

Despite the developments sprouting in Psáry, a village in the Czech Republic's Central Bohemian Region, there remained a dearth of "civic amenities," points out architect Štefan Šulek, cofounder of Prague-based SOA Architekti. The arrival of Elementary School Amos, then, was profound. Beyond its scope as an educational institution, it was designed as a public space where residents can gather at the onsite municipal library or partake in sports clubs. "Within a short period, various activities connecting the school's life with the community—cooking courses, lectures, exhibitions, workshops—were created," adds Šulek.

Locals also took note of the sustainable infrastructure, underscored by heating pumps, radiant floor heating, and rainwater and pressure-controlled ventilation systems. Embracing a rural vernacular befitting of the environs, SOA built a quartet of minimalist white buildings with pitched roofs, punctuated by a low-slung structure clad in vertical larch slats, to Passive House standards (an energy efficient construction rating where buildings require little energy).

This pivotal volume is home to the double-height canteen, decked out with bright red chairs and whimsical graphics based on children's drawings, where students eat at picnic tables and hang out on the adjacent outdoor terrace. Birch is plentiful and laminated spruce beams support the ceilings because wood is, as Šulek puts it, "a natural part of our life." Learning unfolds in those surrounding bi-level buildings, in fluid clusters of rooms arranged around wide staircases. Each ensemble, including a central hallway and outdoor space, is swathed in a differentiating upbeat pastel hue. "Color depth," says Šulek, "helps classes evoke a sense of belonging."



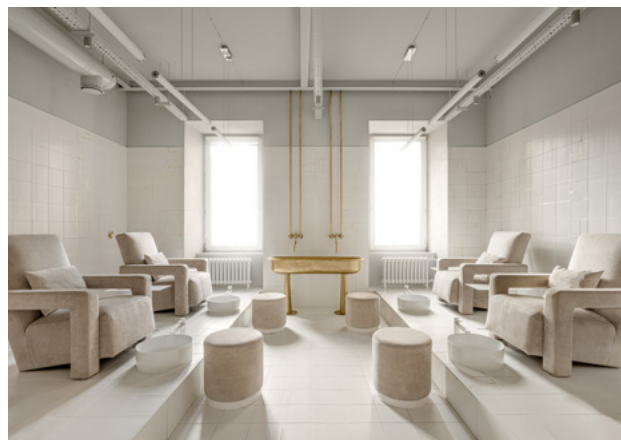
Say No Mo Kiev, Ukraine

An industrial-glam vibe suffuses a two-story salon set in a 19th-century building in Kiev's Pechersk district that doubles as a cocktail lair. Designed by local studio Balbek Bureau, it first beguiles customers with a dramatic duo of cast-in situ concrete forms, an arch that calls to mind ruins (which took four months to construct), and a jagged-edged reception desk. "We wanted the passage from the lobby to look monumental. The structure of the arch and the reception desk convey the design concept—imperfection, brutalism, and natural textures," explains architect Slava Balbek, the studio's founder and CEO.

This raw, unconventional approach to beauty is reinforced in the pedicure zone adorned with cracked tiles that represent kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken pottery. Rather than flaws,

Balbek points out, the fissures "are treated as features that make the tiles unique. Perfection is boring." Another highlight of the area is a freestanding washbasin pieced together from two vintage Soviet-era baby bathtubs. Post treatment, guests can unwind in the lounge, by the bioethanol fireplace suspended from the ceiling, or camp out with a cocktail at the bar swathed in panels of titanium nitride-coated polished stainless steel.

Uniting all three of these main areas (makeup and hair sessions take place on the lower level) are rounded golden panels on walls and columns that act as bar shelves and partitions. "Like beauty and the beast," says Balbek, the "cold and ascetic" concrete provides welcome contrast to the gold that "adds coziness, warmth, and introduces a touch of gloss."



Maggie's Leeds Centre United Kingdom

Soft, soothing design is at the heart of Maggie's centers across the UK (and the few abroad), which lend emotional and practical support to people affected by cancer. The brand's most recent, Maggie's Leeds, by London's Heatherwick Studio, is one such harmonious example.

Constructed from prefabricated, sustainably sourced spruce, the building is situated on the grounds of St. James' University Hospitality in Leeds, England, on a "tricky sloped site," as Heatherwick's project leader Angel Tenorio puts it. A trio of graceful structures shaped like mushrooms and flaunting sinuous timber fins each enfold a counseling room, while underneath and between them is an expansive staircase and the communal areas, including a centerpiece kitchen, teeming with plants.

Lime plaster helps regulate the passive-ventilated structure's humidity, walls of windows magnify the outdoors, and two Heatherwick-designed tables that take cues from the surrounding curves are fashioned from cork and beech. Such elements help "remove any of the traditional hallmarks of a clinical healthcare environment. Instead of cold and harsh stainless steel, we chose to use natural materials, which have an inherent warmth to them," says Tenorio.

Atop the roof is a landscape installation designed by Wiltshire, England-based Balston Agius that calls to mind the Yorkshire woodlands. "The site was the last patch of green space on the hospital's campus. From the outset, we wanted to ensure that the center would be giving back more than it was taking away," says Tenorio. "We also knew that an extraordinary garden made up of thousands of plants and bulbs could have a powerful and transformative healing effect on visitors."



Photos by HUFTON+CROW

Self-Sufficient City Xiong'an New Area, China

Still knee-deep into this pandemic, it's hard to fathom the idea of another looming, yet that's exactly what Vicente Guallart imagined during lockdown, when the founder of Barcelona-based Guallart Architects and his team entered a global competition to design a mixed-use, post-COVID development for China's Xiong'an New Area. The firm's winning proposal melds the European streetscape with contemporary Chinese-style highrises and farmland. "We want to create a neighborhood that allows an ecological lifestyle within an urban environment," says Guallart. Although the solutions illuminated in the self-sufficient city already exist, "they have never been put together," he adds, pointing out that the project's goal is to foster "quality of life, at a reasonable price, [rather] than the industrialization of a city without a soul."

Encompassing four cross-laminated timber blocks built to energy-saving Passive House standards, the city will feature a mix of residential typologies, along with offices, a swimming pool, shops, and even a kindergarten and fire station, so that all the facilities one might need in quarantine are less than a mile away. Coworking digital factories that produce objects on 3D and rapid prototyping machines are also slated for the site.

Outdoor space, coveted in confinement, is a hallmark of the masterplan. Food-producing greenhouses, for example, will be topped by energy-generating sloped roofs. "Biodiversity is key in cities," says Guallart, noting that he envisions each apartment's large terrace to act as a thermal regulator with plants and commodious interior courtyards landscaped with trees and gardens. "We want to make cities that promote life."



what i've learned

Episode 49: Chef Daniel Boulud



Details

Chef Daniel Boulud is known for his career-defining time at Le Cirque and the exciting yet challenging experience of opening his namesake restaurant Daniel. The success of the fine dining institution led to his growing food empire, but Boulud's influence reaches outside of the kitchen. Beyond Michelin Stars and James Beard Awards, he considers cultivating young talent one of his greatest accomplishments. While the industry may have to be reimaged in this new reality, he says that one thing it won't lose is its talent, passion, and commitment.

Episode 50
Danish Kurani
Kurani

Episode 51
Roger Thomas
The Roger Thomas Collection

Episode 52
Sheldon Scott
Sheldon Scott Studios

Episode 53
Chef Andrew Carmellini
NoHo Hospitality

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