

JOURNEY

JOURNEY WORLD MAGAZINE

ISSUE 01 / 2026

LIVING ON THE MOON
BOLD DESIGNS
FOR LUNAR HABITATS

LIVE MUSIC FOREVER
VIRTUAL CONCERTS
WITH POP AVATARS

**A NEW ERA IN
PLACEMAKING**
HUMAN-CENTERED
URBAN DESIGN



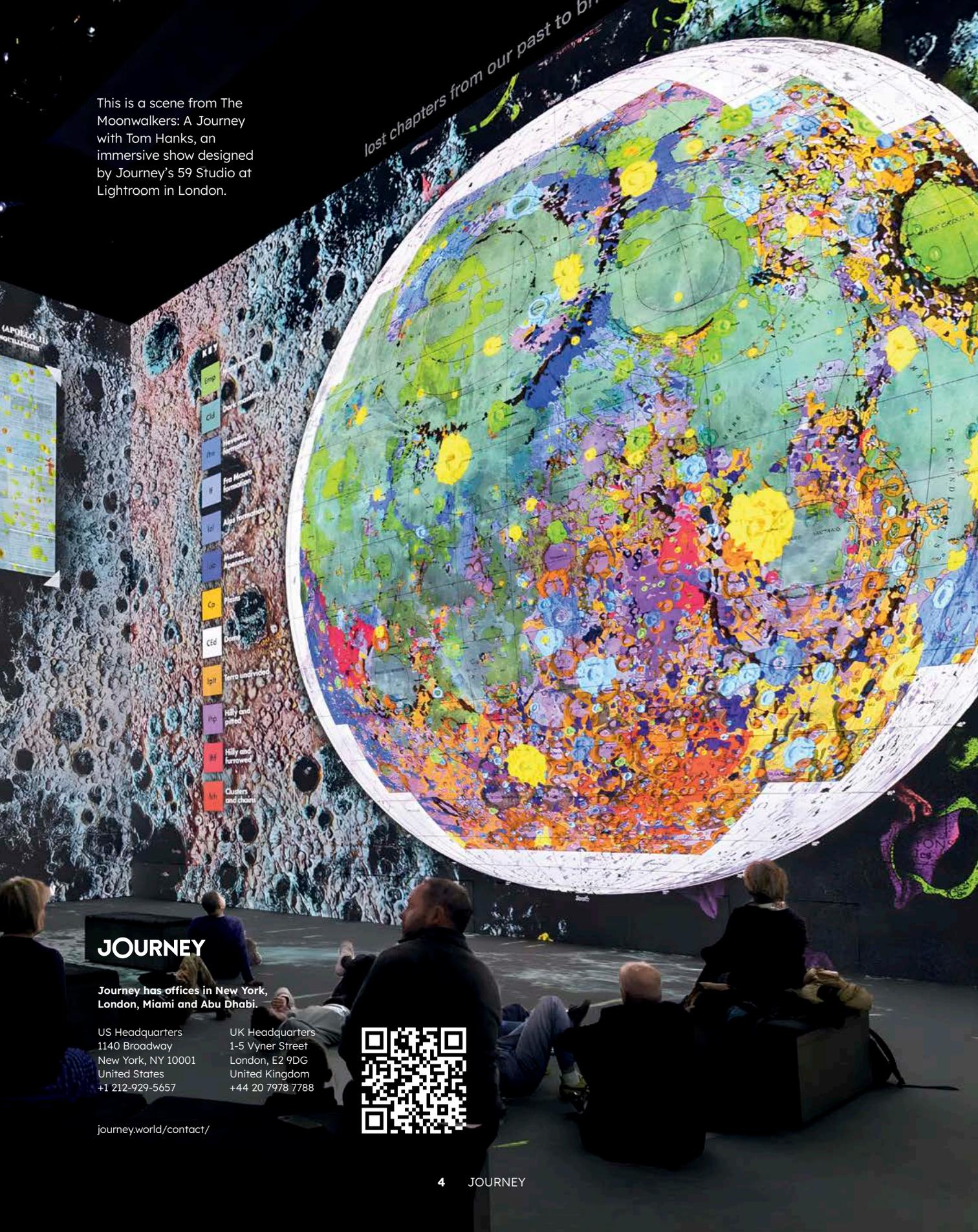
Journey recently welcomed Dimension Studio into its family of design and production studios. For more than a decade, the UK-based studio has been shaping the future of filmmaking and immersive storytelling. TV and movie projects include a historical drama starring Anthony Hopkins called *Those About to Die*; the Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks-produced *Masters of the Air*; the musical fantasies *Wicked Parts 1 & 2*; and Robert Zemeckis' 2024 drama *Here*. In live music, Dimension Studio has worked with the UK's largest music festival Glastonbury, as well as Norwegian band Röyksopp and British musician Floating Points.

"At Journey, we believe the future of design belongs to those who can bridge imagination, storytelling, and technology," says Journey's CEO Andrew Zimmerman. "Dimension embodies that philosophy completely. Together, we're not just creating new forms of content; we're inventing new ways for people to experience the world."

Dimension team members working on *The Heist* for the Evolution of Virtual Production documentary.

This is a scene from The Moonwalkers: A Journey with Tom Hanks, an immersive show designed by Journey's 59 Studio at Lightroom in London.

lost chapters from our past to bring



JOURNEY

Journey has offices in New York, London, Miami and Abu Dhabi.

US Headquarters
1140 Broadway
New York, NY 10001
United States
+1 212-929-5657

UK Headquarters
1-5 Vyner Street
London, E2 9DG
United Kingdom
+44 20 7978 7788



journey.world/contact/



Welcome to our World

Welcome to the launch issue of Journey World magazine. A gift for our many friends and clients around the world, this publication exists to bring you intriguing stories from a whole raft of experienced journalists about the businesses and sectors Journey works in. It shines a spotlight on outstanding ideas in multidimensional design, entertainment, fine dining, travel, culture, fashion, retail, healthcare, technology and much more.

In this first issue you'll discover how digital avatars are changing the live music scene. You'll learn how humans might one day live on the surface of the Moon. You'll immerse yourself in the excitement of the upcoming soccer World Cup. You'll wonder if the famous Michelin Guide is still the culinary force it once was. And you'll discover the future of small concert venues, fashion shows and duty-free shopping.

Journey has always prided itself on leading the way in multidimensional experience design—both physical and virtual—that connects people, brands, and culture. We hope this magazine highlights the importance of such projects, and the way they improve the lives of the people who ultimately experience them.

ANDREW ZIMMERMAN
CEO & CO-FOUNDER

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Every issue, Journey highlights an awe-inspiring experience from around the world. This time it’s the Pont Neuf in Paris.

BY THE NUMBERS

To close out each issue, Journey tracks data on places where people of the world come together. This time, it’s theme parks.

JOURNEY

Journey is a global design and innovation agency shaping the future through multidimensional experiences that connect people, brands, and culture.

Issue 1 / 2026

Journey World magazine has been created for the agency’s friends and associates around the world.

T: +1 212-929-5657

E: hello@journey.world

W: www.journey.world

Journey editorial team:

Matt Quinn, Gabriela Steiner.

Cover: Mark Boardman/Meiklejohn. **Additional photography:** Dimension, Lightroom, 59/Journey; Johnny Wolf Studio; Rita Choo/@rita_louisiana; olli0815, Leon Neal, BbenPhotographer, Max Cisotti, Dave Benett, Victor Boyko Peter White, Victor Virgile/Gamma-Rapho, Roger Wood/Picture Post, Matthias Hangst, Alessandro Sabattini, Jean Catuffe, Jacky Ghossein/Fairfax Media, Culture Club, Agoes Rudianto/NurPhoto, Berlin-Bild/ullstein bild, D Dipasupil John Phillips/UK Press, Christian Rose/Roger Viollet, ekkawit998, Ron Pownall, Michael Ochs Archives, Kevin Winter for Coachella, Simon Wohlfahrt, Patrick Kovarik, Marco De Swart, Odd Andersen, Clement Mahoudeau, Cris Bouroncle/AFP/Getty Images; Johan Persson/ABBA Voyage, ABBA Voyage; Hufton+Crow, Jamie Staker/V&A; University of British Columbia Archives, [UBC 1.1/9765-10]; Alberto Romano/British Museum; ICON; www.imigo.it; NASA; Saklarboy/Shutterstock; iGA; Adobe Stock; Matt Crossick/PA Media Assignments; Matthew McNulty; Pip Cowley; Sofar Sounds

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E: info@almamedia.co.uk

W: www.almamedia.co.uk

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A NEW ERA IN PLACE MAKING

Collaboration between urban designers and local residents to create engaging, user-friendly public spaces and buildings—placemaking—is what enables the world’s great modern cities to thrive. Journey’s Matt Quinn explains how.

ILLUSTRATION MARK BOARDMAN





In the old days, the Norrebro district, in the Danish capital Copenhagen, was renowned for petty crime and social unrest. With much of the area cut off from the rest of the city by major highways, it was down at heel and down on its luck. Tourists steered well clear of the place.

But that all changed in 2012 when a 30,000 square meter (320,000 square foot) public park called Superkilen was built. With playgrounds, sports facilities, cycle lanes, gardens, trees, a café and a restaurant—many of its features chosen by the immigrant communities living here—it is now enormously popular with both Danes and visiting tourists.

Superkilen is now held up as a shining example of what professionals within the built environment refer to as placemaking. A term used by architects, urban planners and developers, placemaking focuses very much on the needs of the human beings who live, work and play in buildings and public spaces. It often involves collaboration between designers and the local community, with the aim of improving social interaction and well-being, while reflecting local culture.

Worldwide, there are some stellar examples from recent decades. In New York City, for example, there is The High Line, a linear park constructed on an elevated

former railroad. In Washington, D.C., is The Wharf, a revitalized waterfront area. In London, two great examples are King's Cross and Battersea Power Station, both of which have totally regenerated former industrial sites. In Singapore, Marina Bay has integrated offices, retail, commerce, hotels, arts, sports and recreation into one vast city quarter. In the South Korean capital, Seoul, there is Cheonggyecheon, a former city sewer that has been turned into a popular urban park. At their core, all these projects have the public good at heart, in addition to any need to generate income.

The concept of placemaking is hardly new. In ancient Greece, citizens would gather in the agora, a public space where commerce, the arts, sports, politics and philosophy were all encouraged. By the Middle Ages, marketplaces and city squares became the focus of communal activity.

But it wasn't until the 1960s that the modern concept of placemaking developed. Writers such as Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte advocated designing cities for human citizens rather than just for cars and shopping malls, with the focus on lively neighborhoods and inviting public spaces. The Danish architect Jan Gehl summed it up when he said: "First life, then spaces, then buildings – the other



Opposite page: Superkilen, in Copenhagen, Denmark. This page, top: Cheonggyecheon Park in Seoul, South Korea; above: a car boot market in King's Cross, in London, UK.

way around never works". He also said: "In a society becoming steadily more privatized with private homes, cars, computers, offices and shopping centers, the public component of our lives is disappearing. It is more and more important to make the cities inviting, so we can meet our fellow citizens face to face and experience directly through our senses. Public life in good quality public spaces is an important part of a democratic life and a full life."

Having worked on multiple regeneration projects in North America, Europe and further afield, Journey places the human user at the center of the multidimensional experiences it designs. Matt Quinn is a managing director at Journey. He worries about regeneration projects that fail to consider the local people who will eventually use them. "A developer might buy a piece of land, hire an architect, and then start designing buildings," he says. "But they don't necessarily consider what the identity of the place is going to be. Who will come here? How will they use it? How will it become an important part of the local community? How will it differentiate itself from other developments nearby? Many developers fail to realize it's not just about the buildings, but also about the spaces in between the buildings." →



Battersea Power Station hosted a fashion show during London Fashion Week in September 2025.

Even historic buildings and public spaces can adapt to welcome new users. Quinn cites the example of city museums. Journey has worked with The British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Musée National de la Marine in Paris, and The Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science in Miami. The agency knows how many of these famous institutions are trying their utmost to shed their elitist images and attract new audiences. “They have realized museums can function as much more than mere repositories for treasures and artworks,” Quinn explains. “They have seen how members of the local community use the museums for other reasons. They might picnic on the front lawn, for example. Or they might do their graduate photographs in front of the columns on the front steps. They might use the observation deck to take photos across their city. Or they might just come along to meet in the museum café. For centuries these museums have been focused purely on their collections inside, but now they have started to rethink how they might reach out to the community living and working nearby.”

Quinn points out how placemaking has encouraged city authorities to blur the boundaries

between different types of leisure and entertainment. “Take New York City, where I work, for example,” he says. “In years gone by, the demographic of people who attended the Metropolitan Opera or the New York Philharmonic would have been totally different from those who went to Broadway, or a Mets baseball game or a concert at the Bowery Ballroom. But now, public institutions know they must appeal to new audiences to generate the income they need. There isn’t the patronage there once was, where you might throw a gala dinner, for example, to raise the ten million dollars you needed to fund your next opera season.”

Quinn says, as certain cities grow in size and importance worldwide, the future for placemaking is brighter than ever. “Placemaking proves that when people shape the places around them, streets become stages, parks become meeting grounds, and buildings become part of a shared story. It’s a reminder that great cities aren’t measured in skylines, but in the everyday moments they make possible. In this new era of placemaking, all of us—designers, citizens, and communities alike—are the co-authors of the places we call home.”

THE EMPIRE STATE

BUILDING EXPERIENCE

NEW YORK



THE AFTERLIFE OF POP STARS



The virtual ABBA pop concerts in London have proved you don't need real stars to perform in the flesh to sell tickets. So, why aren't other famous musicians and bands staging virtual concerts? Music strategist and podcaster Keith Jopling negotiates a minefield of copyrights, permissions and family estates.

ABBA Voyage has been a sell-out ever since the show first launched in May 2022, with an estimated four million fans attending the virtual concert in London. For the producers, using digitally-created avatars instead of the real Swedish band members was an enormous gamble. The production costs alone, including the construction of a purpose-built, 3,000-seat venue called ABBA Arena, were rumored to be \$175 million.

Pophouse Entertainment, the Swedish company behind the show, has now set the bar for what a virtual music concert can achieve. Working with visual effects company Industrial Light & Magic, the four ABBA band members—Agnetha, Björn, Benny and Anni-Frid—spent weeks in motion-capture suits to create 3D digital avatars that resemble their younger selves. Both fans and critics agree the results are astounding.

Imagine a perfectly rendered digital production of Jimi Hendrix's legendary Woodstock performance in 1969. Or Queen's performance at Live Aid in 1985. How about The Beatles at Shea Stadium, or even a famous Mozart performance?

Where ABBA Voyage hits the mark, another high-profile production, Elvis Evolution, appears to have missed. Produced by Layered Reality, in collaboration with Elvis Presley's estate, it is billed as a "walkthrough immersive experience giving you a multi-sensory journey through Elvis' rags-to-riches story from country boy to musical icon". The production includes real-life actors, themed rooms and a live band, combined with archive film material. But the show has gone down like a lead balloon. Many fans expected something closer to ABBA Voyage, and the chance to see a digitally rendered Elvis on stage. Unlike ABBA, however, Elvis is no longer around to help create his own avatar.

It's unfair to bracket ABBA Voyage and Elvis Evolution together. In essence, they are high-profile experiments: one has worked and one hasn't. A key challenge for the producers is that this category of entertainment is far from defined. →



So, what's next? Pophouse Entertainment has since acquired the copyrights and intellectual property rights to all works by US rock band KISS, in a deal reported to be worth more than \$300 million. With the original band now retired from live performance, the producers say they wish to preserve KISS's "iconic music, enigmatic personas and expressive imagery for generations to come". That starts with a 2027 tour, featuring virtual avatars, again created by Industrial Light & Magic, but this time with a rumored investment of \$200 million.

In the case of ABBA and KISS, the goal is to continue a band's entertainment (and money-making) power long after retirement. So, why can't this also work with deceased artists and legends? Ignore Elvis Evolution for a minute. Instead, imagine a perfectly rendered digital production of Jimi Hendrix's legendary Woodstock performance in 1969? Or Queen's performance at Live Aid in 1985. How about The Beatles at Shea Stadium, or even a famous Mozart performance? For music fans, the possibilities are mouth-watering.

Staging a virtual show is hugely expensive and risky. It also requires clearing a minefield of rights and permissions from many copyright-holders.

Almost four years since ABBA Voyage opened to rave reviews, you'd expect the live music industry to have pounced on such opportunities. After all, Elton John has retired. So has Billy Joel. Led Zeppelin split up decades ago. The Rolling Stones are barely rolling on. The clock is ticking on the music industry's guaranteed tentpole live performers. Avatar concerts reimagine these acts for new audiences—minus creaky bones and joints. ABBA Voyage offers younger fans a glimpse of the group frozen in their prime, while those who were there first time around experience delirious nostalgia. →



Elvis Presley at the Elvis Comeback TV special in California in 1968.
Left: KISS performing in Boston, Massachusetts in 1975.

BETTER THAN THE REAL THING?

While purists dismiss virtual concerts as gimmicky, there's no disputing their popularity. Here are some memorable examples.

Tupac Shakur (pictured)

In 2012, 15 years after he was shot dead, a computer generation of the US rapper appeared at the music festival Coachella alongside the real-life Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg. The projection technique is called Pepper's ghost, named after 19th century British scientist John Henry Pepper, and involves reflecting ghostly images off angled sections of glass.

Girls' Generation

In 2013, virtual avatars of this K-pop band performed in Seoul's Gangnam District in front of thousands of South Korean fans.

Everland

South Korea's largest theme park has staged multiple virtual concerts, featuring artists such as Psy, Big Bang and 2NE1.

Michael Jackson

Using the same Pepper's ghost effect as Tupac Shakur, this US pop legend performed virtually, six years after his death, at the 2014 Billboard Music Awards in Las Vegas. It included a rendition of his infamous moonwalk.

ABBA

ABBA Voyage has sold nearly four million tickets since it first opened in London in 2022. The digital avatars were created by the real members of the band using motion-capture suits.



The ABBA Voyage avatars.



So why aren't more virtual concerts already in production? The key reason is cost. These shows are hugely expensive, and therefore massively risky—far riskier than standard concert tours. ABBA Voyage needed to run for a long time in order to cross into profit. To reduce the financial risk, new, cheaper technology is required.

Staging virtual shows also requires clearing a minefield of rights and permissions from many copyright-holders. This becomes more complex with the estates of deceased artists. Barney Wragg is head of British production company Unit1 Studio which plans to create virtual concerts for multiple music stars, using avatars—similar to the ABBA Voyage show. His first job was a digital recreation for Scottish singer-songwriter KT Tunstall. Having spent most of his career in entertainment, he doesn't view copyright as a major barrier. "The rights can be negotiated if the will is there to do it," he says.

But is the will always there? Eamonn Forde is a music journalist and author of *Leaving the Building: The Lucrative Afterlife of Music Estates*. His book

covers the complexities of rights within the music industry but also reveals stars' reluctance to become avatars: "Many living artists are putting conditions in their wills stating that they should not be turned into a virtual attraction," he writes. "Some may entertain the idea, but it seems most are squeamish about it at best and outright opposed to it at worst."

Many artists, especially older ones, are frightened off by the rapid onslaught of AI technology, so that producers of virtual concert tours will need to work hard to ensure their productions stand up artistically and, at the very least, leave the legends with their integrity intact. With so many artists sceptical, the pool of talent for the biggest shows—and therefore the most viable and least risky—may already be smaller than we think. As Forde explains: "Only a handful of acts are famous enough globally for the numbers to make sense. This will not be a universal strategy for dead acts. If your name is not big enough to make a jukebox musical work in your lifetime, the audience for a virtual show is simply not going to be there."

At best, these shows are high-concept, technologized theatre, merging cutting-edge film production with concert rituals—but also guaranteed perfect performances, night after night. From a fan's perspective, virtual concerts cut down on travel and carbon footprint. Companies can now design shows that would be impossible in regular concert venues. In the next decade or so, Wragg envisages a whole global network of virtual concert venues.

But one important question remains. Is a virtual performance equivalent to a live one? Fans will always be unforgiving (as with *Elvis Evolution* and a few previous early attempts at holograms) when a digital representation fails to capture the nuance of a performer's human presence. Indeed, perhaps it is the unpredictability and surprise—and imperfection—of live shows that music fans really find compelling. They must be emotional. Production companies will no doubt relish these challenges. However, plenty of other challenging digital technologies have fallen by the wayside in recent years.

This is far-out, risky stuff, requiring big belief, big bets and impeccable business planning. And, as ABBA Voyage has proved, brilliant execution. It has to be better than the real thing. **○**

*Keith Jopling is author of *Body of Work: How the Album Outplayed the Algorithm and Survived Playlist Culture* (Repeater/Penguin).*

JOURNEY IN MUSIC

Live music and theatre of all genres work brilliantly alongside the multidimensional design in which Journey specializes. Using set design and light, sound, and video effects, Journey and its studio 59 have worked on major projects with Netflix, The Metropolitan Opera, London Olympics, Caesars Palace, The Victoria and Albert Museum, and famous musicians such as Sting and David Bowie.

Even ten years after his death, the latter is still one of the UK's most globally admired and respected pop stars of all time. So, back in 2013, when London's Victoria and Albert Museum launched their David Bowie Is exhibition, curators knew it would be a sell-out. It was 59, a Journey studio, that was tasked with designing the exhibition, in collaboration with Real Studios. And it was the first time the V&A had invited an external production company to lead the design of one of its shows.

After a year of research and development, 59's Mark Grimmer led the design on the project, working closely with Real Studios' Mike Hawkes. In addition to multiple set designs and video installations, there were over 300 objects on display, including handwritten lyrics, drawings and costumes, all reflecting Bowie's constantly changing identity and omnivorous consumption of culture.

After opening at the V&A, the exhibition then toured to another 11 museums across Europe, the Americas and Japan, attracting over two million visitors in all.



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

In the world of museums, they call it visible storage. With up to 90 per cent of collections usually hidden away in dusty storage rooms, innovative curators are now exposing rarely-seen items to public view.

It feels rather like rummaging through family heirlooms in the attic. At London's new V&A East Storehouse museum, there are thousands of Britain's antiques, artworks, treasures and trinkets on public display, stacked floor to ceiling in a vast, utilitarian hangar. Most still sit in their wooden crates, secured by straps, or are screwed onto metal shelves. Mischievous visitors, if they so desired, could run their grubby fingers over many of the artefacts. Indeed, curators occasionally find themselves ticking off the more errant. This is a museum, but a highly unusual one.

The items appear to be stacked randomly. One minute you'll be admiring a 13th century Indian sandstone carving, the next you'll spot a mirrored electric guitar that once belonged to the rock band Kiss. A South African throwing spear from the 19th century sits between a bicycle from the 1950s, and a Victorian painting of Venus in the Titian style. An early 20th century African robe rubs shoulders with a 1970s Italian lamp. A Piaggio scooter painted by Polish-American artist Daniel Libeskind is parked in the shadow of a Japanese porcelain dish. The →

The V&A East Storehouse in London, UK.

seemingly random juxtaposition of objects make the experience all the more intriguing.

“We are trying to show the full breadth of the V&A’s collection,” says curator Georgia Haseldine. “This is a wild and fabulous collection. There is so much here, something for everyone; almost like choosing your own adventure as you go through, rather than us telling you a detailed, single narrative.”

Among curators, it is a concept known as visible storage. With many of the world’s museums and galleries struggling for space, and the lion’s share of their collections hidden away in dusty storage, it’s an ingenious solution. But actually, not a novel one. Canadian anthropologist Audrey Hawthorn is often credited with inventing the idea of visible storage, back in the 1970s at the University of British Columbia’s Museum of Anthropology, in Vancouver, when she allowed visitors access to the museum’s entire collection in one vast room. “All objects should be out front, accessible to everyone,” she once said.

This revolutionary system eventually caught on at several other major museums across the world, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Brooklyn Museum, in New York City; The Strong, a

vast collection of toys and games in Rochester, New York; The Smithsonian, in Washington D.C.; The Depot at Boijmans Van Beuningen, in Rotterdam, Netherlands; Museum Aan de Stroom, in Antwerp, Belgium; Rietberg Museum, in Zurich, Switzerland; and Museo Larco, in Lima, Peru.

As well as displaying thousands of objects never before viewed by the public, these open-storage museums give visitors a rare glimpse behind the scenes, turning the museums inside out, in a way. In the early 2020s, at Amsterdam’s Rijksmuseum, for example, specialists spent months restoring Rembrandt’s famous painting *The Night Watch*, while visitors were allowed to watch them at work through a glass barrier—part art restoration and part performance art. A few years ago, The Depot, at Boijmans Van Beuningen, similarly drew back the curtains when it allowed visitors to wander around its storage area. The director of this Dutch museum at the time was Sjarel Ex who explained: “What’s the English expression—‘out of sight, out of mind’? So much of what museums do happens in the dark. We wanted to bring some of it into the light.”

This is clearly what curators have done at London’s V&A East Storehouse. Here, as visitors wander in →

As well as displaying thousands of objects never before viewed by the public, these open-storage museums give visitors a rare glimpse behind the scenes, turning the museums inside out, in a way.

Opposite, top: A technician works on restoring Rembrandt’s masterpiece *The Night Watch* at the Rijksmuseum, in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Below: Visitors at The Depot, at Boijmans van Beuningen museum in Rotterdam, Netherlands.





Above: Items in storage in the Victoria and Albert Museum archive. Right: Audrey Hawthorn at the University of British Columbia.



HOW DID VISIBLE STORAGE COME ABOUT?

It is the late Canadian anthropologist Audrey Hawthorn who is credited with inventing the idea of visible storage. In the 1970s, when she worked at the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology, in Vancouver, she was instrumental in displaying as many of the museum's objects as possible within one single, vast room. Those that remained in storage through lack of space could be viewed on request.

"A teaching museum of ethnography should deliberately share its ethnographic collections with every level of student," she wrote. "All objects should be out front, accessible to everyone."

awe around the exhibits, they must be careful not to bump into storeroom employees in overalls wheeling items around the three exhibition levels. From one vantage point, guests can watch as specialists carry out conservation work on certain exhibits. Peering through the glass floor beneath their feet, they may even catch sight of a forklift truck or a cherry picker moving heavier items around. It's rather like being in a vast Amazon warehouse, only with beautiful, and sometimes priceless artifacts on the shelves rather than cardboard parcels.

There are half a million works stored in the V&A East Storehouse in all, including 250,000 objects, 350,000 books and 1,000 archives. At any one time, around 1,300 of them will be displayed on the public shelves, with items regularly swapped out and rotated. Although there are no display labels, QR codes enable visitors to explore each item's back story.

There are also several large-scale displays, including a 15th century palace ceiling, a 20th century brutalist council block façade, a Picasso stage cloth, a 1920s German kitchen, and a 1930s wood-panelled office designed by US architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

The most unusual aspect of all is a service called "Order an Object" which allows visitors to browse the museum website, select up to five items they wish to examine and, after giving a fortnight's notice, view them on site.

Given the V&A's global reputation, this form of visible storage could well catch on at other major institutions around the world. It certainly has its advantages, saving space and offering more exhibits than would be possible in traditional displays—all the while giving visitors a glimpse behind the scenes of how museums function.

But there are disadvantages, too. The ventilation system at V&A East Storehouse has to work hard to extract the potentially damaging moisture from visitors' breath. And in an era when political protesters occasionally vandalize works of art, curators here are surprisingly trusting.

Above all, though, they are happy to display so many objects that might otherwise never be seen. "Most museums show one to five per cent of their collections, and that's kind of mad, right?" Haseldine says. "Why do we not let the public in to see everything else? This is a call to action. Access can't be for the privileged view. Access is for everyone. Democratizing access to our national collections is so important." ○

JOURNEY IN MUSEUMS

Journey has worked with many museums and cultural institutions around the world, including The Victoria and Albert Museum and the Crown Jewels at the Tower of London (both in London, UK), Zayed National Museum and Abrahamic Family House (both in the United Arab Emirates), Delta Flight Museum (in Atlanta, Georgia, USA) and the Bob Dylan Center (in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA).

One of the latest projects was at London's British Museum, the oldest public museum in the world. Along with exhibition designers Ralph Appelbaum Associates, the design agency was asked to breathe new life into two of the museum's most precious artifacts: the Vindolanda tablets and the Assyrian lion hunt reliefs. Using sound, motion and narrative design, Journey transformed both displays into captivating immersive experiences.

The lion hunt reliefs of Ashurbanipal date from around 640 BC, and comprise large stones carved over 2,500 years ago, depicting a dramatic ritual hunt on horseback. Journey used spotlights to progressively illuminate sections of the relief (pictured below), while sound effects portrayed the thunder of chariot wheels and horses' hooves, and the roars of lions being pursued.

"The projection has significantly increased the attracting and holding power of the displays," said Stuart Frost, head of interpretation at the British Museum. "I've even observed everyone watching the animation spontaneously applaud at the end."



LIGHTS, CAMERA, FASHION

In the old days, fashion houses would invite a clutch of buyers and journalists to private showings. Nowadays, they stage vast, opulent spectacles, live-streaming the events to billions worldwide. Fashion writer Mary Jane Pittilla analyzes how these shows might develop in the future.



Left: Chanel used a replica Eiffel Tower in their Paris fashion show in July 2017. Previous page: Karl Lagerfeld staged a 2016 show in front of the Trevi Fountain in Rome.

1 9th century fashion designer Charles Frederick Worth had no idea just how influential he would one day prove to be. In the 1860s, on becoming the first designer to use live models rather than mannequins to display haute couture, the Englishman inadvertently invented the idea of the modern fashion show.

Buoyed by the patronage of European royalty, he used to stage seasonal shows to introduce new designs and to shape sartorial taste, placing the designer—not the client—at the center of fashion’s creative authority. In effect, he invented the idea of the runway and the fashion show—controlled, choreographed spaces where garments could be viewed, discussed and sold.

Across the 20th century the format expanded, from intimate salons to magazine shoots, then to public fashion weeks that transformed collections into cultural events. By the turn of the 21st century the runway had become an arena for narrative spectacle and technical innovation—a medium as much about set design, lighting and motion as about tailoring and textiles. Fashion shows are now multi-million-dollar theatrical productions with celebrity front rows, and brands competing to create memorable images for social media feeds.

Technology has played a major role. The late British designer Alexander McQueen fused choreography, mechanization and cinematic camera work in his shows to create cultural moments that went viral online. His 2009 show *Plato’s Atlantis* was among the first runway shows to be webcast to a global audience, revolutionizing the idea of an invitation-only spectacle.

The late Karl Lagerfeld was also a pioneer in the field, especially when he transformed Paris’s Grand Palais into spectacular scenes that, over the years, included icebergs, a fairground carousel, a bomb-damaged theatre, a 150-meter-long cruise ship, an airport, an Indian palace, and even a space station with its very own rocket blasting off.

Throughout the 2010s and 2020s the idea of a simple runway seemed limited, as fashion houses and major brands experimented with livestreaming, 3D animations, and augmented reality that blended the physical and digital worlds. Virtual fashion weeks were even staged online on virtual world platforms such as Decentraland.

After the Covid pandemic, physical shows returned with even more moneyand extravagance. Take US musician Pharrell Williams, appointed to helm Louis Vuitton’s menswear division in 2023. He has turned the French fashion brand’s runways →



into major events, incorporating set designs with full-size street scenes and a fully functioning steam train. At his debut show in June 2023, he transformed Paris's historic Pont Neuf bridge into a golden runway, with performances by a gospel choir and Chinese pianist Lang Lang, and a guest list that included Beyoncé, Jay-Z, Rihanna, A\$AP Rocky, Zendaya and Kim Kardashian.

The number of attendees on fashion-show guest lists is increasing. In 2024, no fewer than 4,000 VIPs, journalists and guests flocked to a vast futuristic greenhouse at the Louvre museum, in Paris, to

celebrate ten years of Nicolas Ghesquière as creative director at Louis Vuitton.

What of the future, then? Will shows be broadcast live to anyone who wishes to watch? Yes, say the experts. Expect real-time streaming online; invitation-only online feeds for professional buyers; and public spectacle streams tailored to different social platforms. Fashion brands will customize the experiences, platform by platform.

More importantly, how will ordinary shoppers purchase the garments they see on the runways? The runway-to-rack gap is collapsing. Shoppable live

Left: Pharrell Williams' debut show for Louis Vuitton on the Pont Neuf, in Paris in 2023. Below: Actor Richard E. Grant modelling in the Miu Miu womenswear show during Paris Fashion Week in 2025.



streams, dedicated product launches immediately after the show, and virtual garments (for avatars or digital animations) provide multiple retail options. Industry reports predict that fashion companies will continue to sell their products directly to consumers through their own online channels but, to increase sales, they will also tell compelling stories about their brands, building emotional connections and customer loyalty. Other marketing strategies include the use of interactive lookbooks, gamified launches in virtual worlds online, and collaborations with gaming platforms and →

Having a celebrity on the catwalk always amplifies a brand's social media presence. Think back to 2022, when actress Nicole Kidman appeared at a Balenciaga haute couture show in Paris.



A Christian Dior salon show in 1952.

influencers. The media moment of these shows will be amplified by pre-show teasers, post-show commerce opportunities, and digital assets such as augmented reality animations.

AI is sure to play a role, too, although human models need not fear for their jobs quite yet. Experts believe their roles will diversify. Physical models retain value for the cultural cachet of live presence, and having a celebrity on the catwalk always amplifies a brand's social media presence. Think back to 2022, when actress Nicole Kidman appeared at a Balenciaga haute couture show in Paris.

Perhaps there is a risk that fashion shows will become too overblown and pretentious. Experts are divided on this. Spectacle without strategy risks diluting brand identity and wasting budget. Industry commentators warn that when production becomes the story, the clothes can lose their selling power. Spectacle should be treated as one instrument among many, they say. It must support storytelling, drive sales, and be sustainable, both environmentally and economically.

If Charles Frederick Worth could see just how enormous the fashion industry had become, he would probably agree with that sentiment. ○

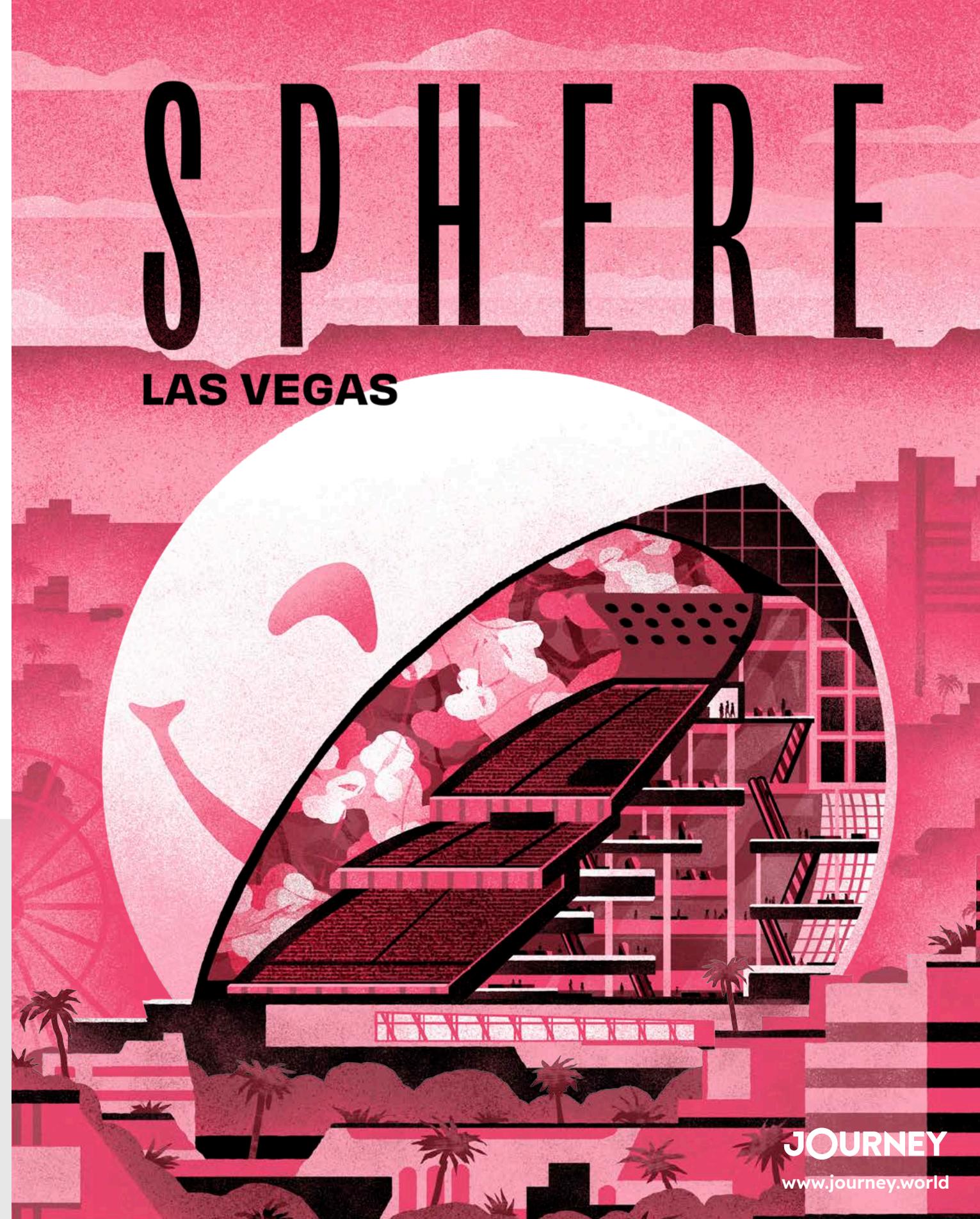
JOURNEY IN FASHION

Fashion shows come to life when accompanied by light, sound and video effects. This was displayed admirably when Journey designed an immersive show about the cultural history of fashion show runways at London venue Lightroom. Entitled *VOGUE: Inventing the Runway*, it drew on

Vogue magazine's rich archive and contributor network to take visitors on a cinematic journey through the evolution of the fashion runway. Featuring the work of such fashion luminaries as Alexander McQueen, Christian Dior, Dolce & Gabbana, Givenchy, Gucci, Jean Paul Gaultier, Louis Vuitton, Versace and Vivienne Westwood, the show launched in November 2024.

Lightroom, close to London's King's Cross station, was founded

in 2023—a joint venture between Journey's 59 Studio and London Theatre Company. After its critically acclaimed inaugural show—*David Hockney: Bigger & Closer* (not smaller & further away)—it went on to stage the Vogue show, as well as *The Moonwalkers: A Journey with Tom Hanks*, and *Prehistoric Planet: Discovering Dinosaurs*. Lightroom's shows are playing at other venues across the world.



LUNAR LIVING

With multiple lunar missions planned over the next decade, it won't be long before astronauts need to live on the Moon. Science writer Simon Ingram explores the challenges involved.



At the height of the space race, as NASA strove to put their man on the Moon, it was a Pennsylvania artist by the name of Davis Meltzer who gave us the first glimpse of what daily life on our nearest celestial neighbour might eventually look like. Beneath starry infinity, he drew dreams of a future lunar micro-society vividly spilling from dwellings dug deep into the austere moonscape. Published in National Geographic magazine, the images gave America a relatable, technicolor vision of life on another planet.

Even in the late 1960s, this was no fantastical spitballing. These drawings answered the conjecture of the sharpest scientific minds of the time; people who knew that living on the Moon would require rather more than imagination and a grin. Meltzer accounted for everything, from agriculture to dormitories, oxygenation, social spaces—even a swimming pool. All except the answer to one expensive question: given the challenge of getting a spaceship the size of a cable car to land on a rock with much less than zero manufacturing capacity, how on Earth—or rather, 384,400km off-Earth—was building any kind of structure possible?

The lack of a compelling reason to pursue lunar colonization meant this wasn't a question that would trouble NASA for long. As of 2026, however, some 84 lunar missions have been scheduled for the next four years. With private rockets continuing to slash the cost of getting freight into space, NASA's Artemis III lunar landing slated for 2027, and billionaire sights set ever more firmly on the real estate of our celestial neighbours, design companies are presenting space agencies with visions of how months-long habitation on the Moon might really look.

Global architecture firm Hassell is one. In early 2024, it revealed its lunar habitat masterplan in collaboration with the European Space Agency, designed to accommodate up to 144 lunar pioneers. Xavier De Kestelier is head of design at the company. "We're comfortable with the unknown a little bit—and that's a really good skill to have," he tells Journey magazine. "As an engineer, you want the 100 per cent straight away. As an architect, you work in this very, very technical field. But be brave a bit, as well."

De Kestelier is often asked if he draws inspiration from science fiction. "I always use Antarctica as a really good analogue," he says. "You're more remote in Antarctica in the winter than you are in the International Space Station. You're further away. During winterization, you can't get evacuated from Antarctica."

UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES

De Kestelier suggests the Antarctic bases Halley VI and Concordia are Earth's closest equivalents to the harsh environments of the Moon. Nevertheless, with lunar colonization, architecture is being tasked to solve problems never faced before—deeply scary, existential problems.

Firstly, the Moon has no atmosphere to slow the hail of celestial shrapnel that has brutalized it since creation. So, any structure must have skin tough enough to withstand lethal puncture from around 33,000 ping pong ball-sized meteoroids that strike the Moon every year.

Its surface is a vacuum, so while external pressure isn't the menace it is in the deep ocean, any human-containing vessel must be internally pressurized to around 5 pounds per square inch (0.34 bars)—our requirement to stay oxygenated, hydrated and generally alive.

With lunar colonization, architecture is being tasked to solve problems never before faced—deeply scary, existential problems.

Sustenance is a challenge, given lunar water is likely difficult to utilize, if present at all. Temperatures swing from above boiling in the sunshine—260°F or 127°C—to well below the lowest Antarctic winter at night, or around minus 208°F (minus 133°C). There is the problem of construction materials. With NASA estimating a cost-per-pound upwards of \$10,000 to ship materials from Earth, De Kestelier stresses how local materials will be essential. The primary resource is regolith, a pesky mix of weathered rock and dust.

Then there is arguably the biggest challenge: radiation. Galactic cosmic rays and solar particle events are deflected by Earth's atmosphere, but no such protection exists in space from their potential effects—which range from cancers, to DNA damage, to radiation sickness. Any structure would need substantial shielding; simply planning to live underground overlooks the spicy issue of being able to dig sufficiently into the surface. →



Artist's rendition of architecture company Hassell's lunar modules. Previous page: Artist's rendition of a lunar construction system, designed by architecture firm ICON.

Some speculative solutions are emerging, however. De Kestelier confirms Hassell's designs are "modular and scaleable"—in other words, big things built from smaller things, and growing over time. In his team's vision, initial habitable structures will comprise modular, inflatable, pill-shaped structures, as rounded walls handle pressurization more effectively than straight sides. Radiation could be shielded against using interlocking pods similar to the concrete tetrapod structures used for coastal defences. These could be 3-D printed from regolith and stacked to break the path of those deadly lunar winds.

THE HUMAN FACTOR

But as De Kestelier explains, while most challenges can be overcome with technology and engineering, one cannot. "The tricky thing is a design that people feel is their home—to have normal life in a completely

“The tricky thing is a design that people feel is their home—to have normal life in a completely internalized space. How do you make these spaces more human?”
Xavier De Kestelier, head of design at architecture firm Hassell.

internalized space,” he says. “How do you make these spaces more human?”

Given an astronaut's life is structured minute-to-minute, nuance can be forgotten in the pursuit of utility. “It shouldn't look like the inside of an angry machine,” De Kestelier says, noting that the original designs of 1970s space station Skylab lacked a communal dining table until industrial designer Raymond Loewy proposed it. “Having a conversation while having a meal... such a human thing to do. The other thing he added was a window. Imagine going around the Earth for months and never seeing Earth, because from a pure engineering perspective, a window is a weakness in the shell. But the astronauts used that window the whole time.”

He references the International Space Station's

radial window—or Cupola—that took 23 years to develop, and was once canceled by NASA because they failed to appreciate its function? “Now it's the most famous space in the ISS,” De Kestelier adds. “This is where they take the pictures, where they play the guitar.”

Moon-dwellers will also need leisure space for sports and exercise. And the Moon's low gravity—one sixth of Earth's—will affect the design of the habitats, requiring strategically placed grab rails, taller ceilings for those bouncing steps, little need for stairs, and superhuman games of basketball. Not the swimming pool that Davis Meltzer's envisaged, though; in reduced gravity, De Kestelier says, “the waves might really get wild.”

MATERIAL MATTERS

But first, the basics of sustainable structures need to be refined right here on Earth, which means a lot of homework. Lunar regolith is a menace. It is sharp, electrostatic, abrasive and hazardous to health. Get a robot to heat and harvest it, however, and it's full of useful things such as iron, aluminium, magnesium, sil and oxygen. If we're going to build anything on the Moon, we must learn to love it.

Florida-based Space Resource Technologies (SRT) manufactures simulant regolith for space researchers to test their lunar-bound equipment, using samples and data from the 1970s Apollo program to faithfully recreate it from terrestrial minerals. “Imagine the texture of baking flour mixed with coffee grounds—kind of,” says Anna Metke, owner and head of SRT, of regolith. “The Moon gets hit by micro-meteorites constantly. The energy from these impacts melts the regolith, leaving behind tiny bits of glass that keep getting shattered again and again. The result is a thin layer of sharp, fluffy glass spread across the Moon's surface.”

This dust, rather like our own dear sand, gets everywhere, presenting hazards for anything milling around in it. SRT goes as far as smashing its regolith simulant to achieve just the right sharpness, then sorting it into a range of sizes to match particle distribution on the Moon. “All of this accuracy matters when you're testing hardware,” Metke adds. “Rover wheels need to grip without sinking, gears have to tolerate ultra-fine dust, and electronics need protection from particles that stick in very specific ways. The mineral makeup, the shape, and the size all affect how the hardware survives.” →



Hassell designs for a communal bar and recreation area (top) and personal living space (above).

THE ESSENTIALS OF LUNAR LIVING

How will the basics of lunar life be solved? Here are the latest plans.

POWER

Both NASA's Artemis base camp and China's international lunar research station are planned for the lunar south pole. Here,

solar panels would enjoy mostly continuous sunlight, reducing the need for logistically tricky battery storage. Backup is likely to be via a nuclear fission reactor, effectively cooled by deep-shadowed craters.

WATER

The lunar south pole is believed to harbor ice, which could be melted for water. Synthesizing water from oxygen

found in regolith and hydrogen from solar winds is also a possibility—with the main problem being management in the Moon's extreme environment; liquid water exists in a narrow band of temperature effectively non-existent on the Moon.

FOOD

Regolith may be an effective soil; tests continue. Otherwise, a mixture of dehydrated nutrition from Earth, hydroponic cultivation, or

plants specially modified on Earth to grow in extreme conditions may be longer-term solutions.

AIR

The good news is that oxygen is plentiful in regolith—some 42 per cent of its makeup. But oxygen is only around 21 per cent of what we breathe, with the rest being mainly nitrogen. Nitrogen is in very short supply on the Moon, so initially will likely need to be imported, then potentially harvested from organic processes. Overall this is one of the trickiest problems to solve.



Earth rising above the moon's horizon as seen from the Apollo 11 spacecraft in 1969.



Apollo 17 astronaut Gene Cernan driving the lunar rover vehicle on the Moon in December 1972.

Said hardware will be fundamental to any lunar settlement, and careful testing, Metke says, is critical. The European Space Agency's failed Beagle 2 Mars lander is a case in point. "Accurate regolith simulants are the closest we can get to replicating the Moon here on Earth—whether it's figuring out how to 3D-print with lunar dust, grow plants in regolith, build landing pads, or extract aluminum from the surface," Metke notes. "We spend billions sending this equipment to space. It's kind of embarrassing if we don't prepare properly."

Davis Meltzer's 1960s illustrations, then, weren't that far removed from the reality most contemporary developers are currently pursuing. And the frontier remains the same: create civilization where it isn't. Right?

Xavier De Kestelier is keen to manage expectations. "At the moment, for the Moon and Mars, we're far away from establishing civilization," he warns. "These are extremely harsh environments. There will be more people, for longer periods of time; for research, for exploration, for tourism, probably. But will you go and live there? I don't think so." [🔗](#)

LIVING IN EARTH'S ORBIT

As NASA works on the next generation of space stations, Journey has joined the team on one of the more ambitious designs. Called Starlab, it is due to launch in the 2030s.

The International Space Station has served the world's astronauts admirably for almost 30 years, but it is now well beyond its intended lifespan. Come the 2030s, it will need to be retired from service.

Right now, Journey is working on a highly ambitious project to design one of several commercial space stations that will eventually replace it. Called Starlab, and funded by NASA and the European Space Agency, it will orbit at 300 miles (500kms) above the Earth, supporting research, exploration and long-term space missions, with room for a crew of four. It will be 17 meters (56 feet) tall and 7.7 meters (25 feet) wide.

Journey is collaborating with hotel group Hilton and aerospace corporation Airbus to shape the interior of Starlab, and ensure a "functional, flexible and future-ready living space" for the astronauts aboard. In addition to crew quarters and laboratories, there will be exercise, hygiene, and stowage areas.

Tim Kopra is CEO of Starlab Space, the global network of companies overseeing the project. "We want to create an intuitive and comfortable environment for astronauts that allows them to fully focus on their mission," he says. "Journey understands how to merge design and technology in a unique context. Its work will help make Starlab not just a successful operational platform in low-Earth orbit but also an exceptional place to work and live."

Lionel Ohayon is a co-founder at Journey. "Our mission is to create multidimensional experiences for the world's most compelling and ambitious projects," he says. "We're applying our decades of design expertise to humanity's next frontier: space."

Construction has already started on a full-scale mock-up of the space station, which will be housed at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, where its facilities can be thoroughly tested.

Starlab is aiming to launch ahead of the planned retirement of the International Space Station in the 2030s, so as to ensure a continuous human presence in orbit. The station will offer research and commercial opportunities for government agencies, academic institutions and private industry worldwide. ○



HOW TO WIN THE WORLD CUP

Tactics, technique, fitness and a bit of luck are all crucial to winning soccer's World Cup. However, an examination of the history and statistics of this global sporting extravaganza proves the reasons for victory can be unorthodox. Soccer writer Joe Boyle explains.

Pelé, perhaps the greatest soccer player ever to draw breath, certainly knew how to win the World Cup. “Everything is practice,” said this supreme athlete who lifted the trophy three times. But is there more to winning the Beautiful Game’s ultimate prize? Of course skill, athleticism, luck and grit all play a vital role. What about home advantage, kit color, economics, leadership, and penalty shoot-outs? It turns out all these are crucial too.

CALL IT THE BLUES

This does not feel like a coincidence, but almost a guaranteed prediction. In 16 of the 22 World Cups held so far, the victors have worn a kit in which the color blue has featured. Uruguay, Italy, France and Argentina have 11 trophies between them, wearing shirts in which blue predominated. Brazil may be famous for their golden shirts, but they wore blue for their first World Cup win, in 1958; Sweden, their co-finalists, won a ballot to see which side would play in their preferred yellow tops and probably now wish they hadn’t. Brazil’s four other victories came with them wearing yellow, but no prizes for guessing what color their shorts were.



	W	D	L	PTS		
3	2	0	1	6	✓	✗
3	1	1	1	4	=	✗
3	1	1	1	4	=	✗
3	1	0	2	3	✓	✗

P	W	D	L	PTS		
3	2	0	1	6	✓	✗
3	2	0	1	6	✗	✓
3	1	1	1	4	=	✗
0	1	2	1	1	=	

WIN YOUR GROUP...

In a long tournament, it can be tempting to think you have time to hit your stride. Think again. Topping your group is now almost a pre-requisite for winning the title, even if you do so without playing particularly well. Not since Italy finished second in their group in 1982 has the eventual winner failed to top their group. Generally, the winners must also win their first game, though both the marvellous Spanish side of 2010 and Argentina, in Qatar

in 2022, lost their openers—the Argentineans spectacularly to Saudi Arabia. Nonetheless, despite those opening defeats, both teams clawed their way back and ended up winning their groups.

... BUT DON’T START TOO FAST

While winning your group is usually a requirement for success, it’s generally wise to keep your best soccer for later in the tournament. Except for a spell between 1990 and 2010, every World Cup-winning side has scored more goals per game in the knock-out stages than in the group stages. World Cup history is littered with sides who peaked too soon. Famously, the Hungary side of Ferenc Puskas scored 17 goals in the two group games in 1954, 10 more than did West Germany, who would later beat the Hungarians in the final. Since then, only two World Cup winners have entered the tournament’s second phase as outright leading scorers: West Germany in 1990, with ten goals, and France in 1998, with nine. At the other extreme, Italy went on to win in 1982, despite only scoring two goals in the group stage.

CHOOSE A HOME-GROWN MANAGER

Mauricio Pochettino, the Argentinian currently in charge of the United States’ national team, can already forget about lifting the trophy. Every single manager to win the World Cup has been home-born. Admittedly, it’s also true that all but two of the losing finalists were also managed by a home-grown manager, with Sweden, in 1958, managed by Englishman George Raynor, and the Netherlands beaten in the 1978 final under the guidance of Austrian Ernst Happel. So, while a home-grown →



Pelé celebrates after Brazil win the 1970 World Cup final in Mexico City. Previous page: Lionel Messi and his Argentinian fans and teammates after winning the 2022 World Cup final in Qatar.

manager doesn't mean you won't lose a final, it's as safe a bet as there is that you won't win it without one.

LEAD FROM THE BACK

It is perhaps fitting that the only two out-and-out forward players to captain their side to World Cup glory from the front were Argentina's two geniuses: Diego Maradona in 1986 and Lionel Messi in 2022. A couple of attacking midfielders captained the Italians, in 1938, and the Germans, in 1954, but otherwise the winning captain has always been a defender, midfielder or, on five occasions, a goalkeeper.



DON'T BE PRE-TOURNAMENT FAVOURITES

Being the pre-tournament favourites is something to avoid. Since 1966, favourites have won the World Cup on just three occasions: West Germany (1974), Brazil (1994), and Spain (2010). The only other occasion a favourite made the final was when Brazil lost to France in 1998. Otherwise it has been an exit earlier on in the knock-out stages or, embarrassingly on four occasions, at the group stage, as the pressure to meet the pre-tournament billing proved too much to handle.



PREPARE FOR PENALTIES

No team can now enter a World Cup without rigorous preparations for penalties. Almost a third of matches in the knock-out phase at the last World Cup in Qatar went to penalties. Shoot-outs were introduced into the tournament in 1978, prior to which tied games in the knock-out stage were either replayed or sorted by the drawing of lots. In the 12 tournaments since then, five of the eventual winners had to navigate the

perils of a penalty-shoot out at some point en route to lifting the trophy. Three of those shoot-outs in fact took place in the final itself, with Brazil the first team to win on a shoot-out, in 1994, followed by Italy in 2006 and Argentina in 2022 (having also come through on penalties in the quarter-finals).

BE PART OF THE BIG SIX

While the number of teams competing in the World Cup finals is rising to 48—triple the number that took part in 1978—the number of teams likely to win is small. Only eight countries have lifted the trophy. Of these, England (1966) and Spain (2010) have won just once; and Uruguay twice, in the tournament's nascent years. That means 18 of the 22 tournaments have been won by just five countries: Brazil, Italy, France, Argentina and Germany. Compare this to the major European and South American international competitions. The European Championships have seen ten different winners, including relative minnows Denmark and Greece, while the Copa America has been won by eight nations, including Colombia and Peru. In other words, the World Cup brings the cream to the surface. World Cup glory is the preserve of soccer's traditional powerbase.

BALANCE THE BOOKS

If you're looking for an economic reason to work out who might win, keep an eye out for GDP growth, which the World Bank started to measure in 1960. Since then, the only winners while their nation was in economic decline was Argentina in 1978. They were certainly back on track when they won in 2022, at which point the country was enjoying a healthy →



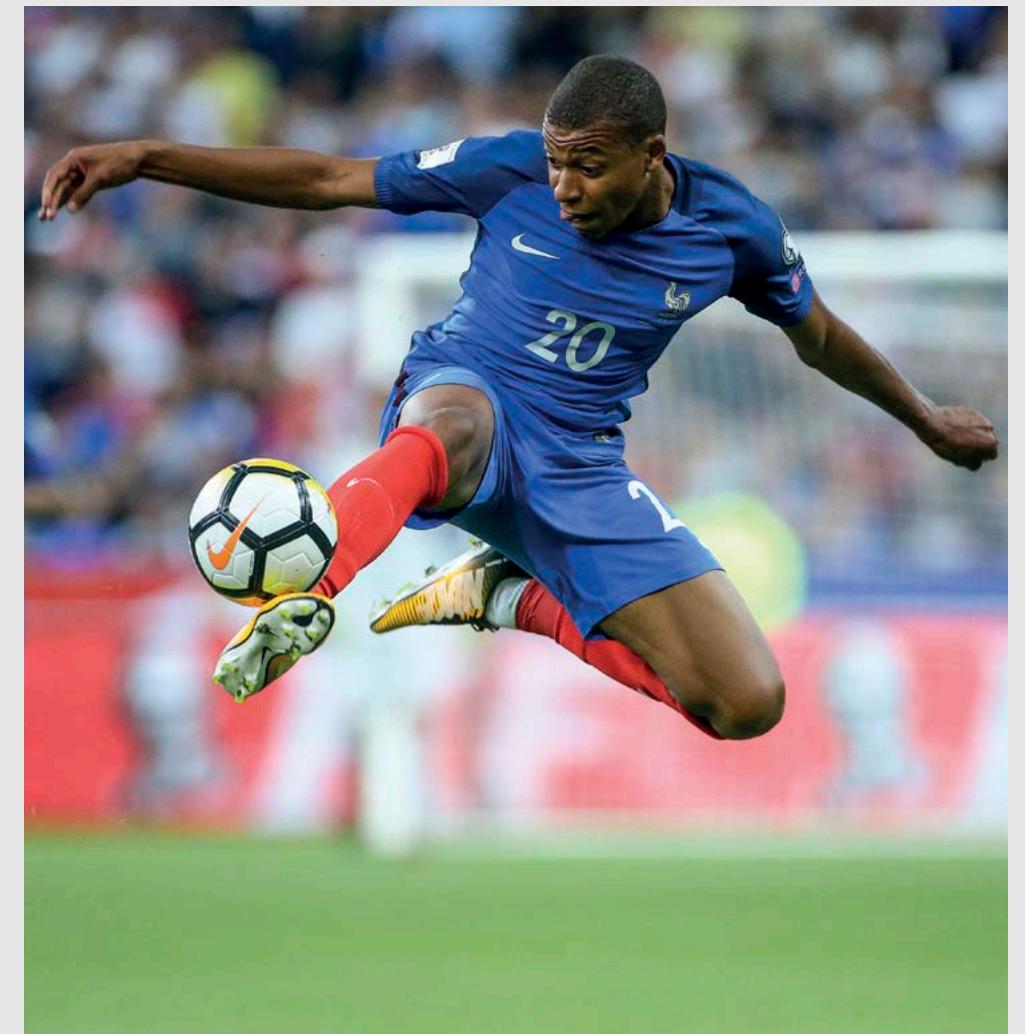
**2026 FIFA WORLD CUP
June 11th to July 19th**

This tournament, staged across USA, Canada and Mexico, will be the first to include 48 national teams, with the final line-up decided in March 2026. They will compete in 11 American, three Mexican, and two Canadian venues. Cape Verde, Jordan and Uzbekistan will make their World Cup debuts, while Argentina is the defending champion. The final will take place on July 19th at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, USA.



GREATEST OVERALL WINNERS

- Brazil**
5 wins 1958, 1962, 1970, 1994, 2002
- Germany**
4 1954, 1974, 1990, 2014
- Italy**
4 1934, 1938, 1982, 2006
- Argentina**
3 1978, 1986, 2022
- France**
2 1998, 2018
- Uruguay**
2 1930, 1950
- England**
1 1966
- Spain**
1 2010

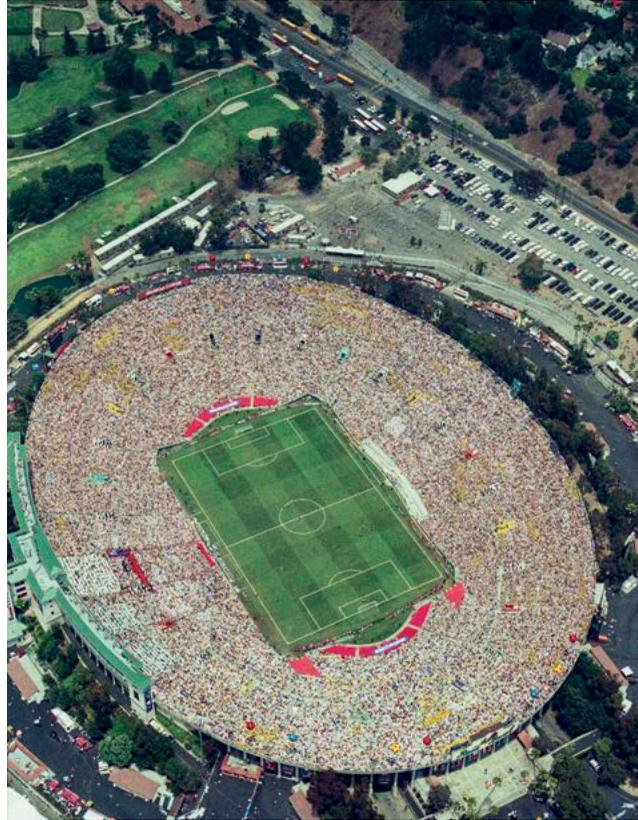


Kylian Mbappé of France at a World Cup qualifier against Netherlands in 2017.

5.3 per cent GDP growth. Of course, GDP growth does not equate to wealth and, if wealth were the measure, then USA would have won the World Cup five times rather than Brazil. Nonetheless, it is noticeable that Brazil's World Cup doldrums in the 1980s coincided with an era in which the country found itself in regular recession.

TRAVEL WELL

While playing at home in any sport almost always confers an advantage, it is now almost certain the victorious nation in a World Cup will have to win without the support of a partisan home crowd. That's because it is increasingly unlikely the host nation will win the World Cup. Since 1978, only France, in 1998, has managed to win on home soil. This is a marked shift from the years prior to 1978, when five of the 11 tournaments were won by the host nation. Part of the explanation is FIFA's decision to award the World Cup to hosts who don't come from soccer's top tier. Yet, such an explanation only goes so far. Since 1978, Spain, Italy, Germany and Brazil, all from the sport's highest rank, have failed to win despite home advantage. ○



A packed stadium for the 1994 World Cup final between Brazil and Italy at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California.

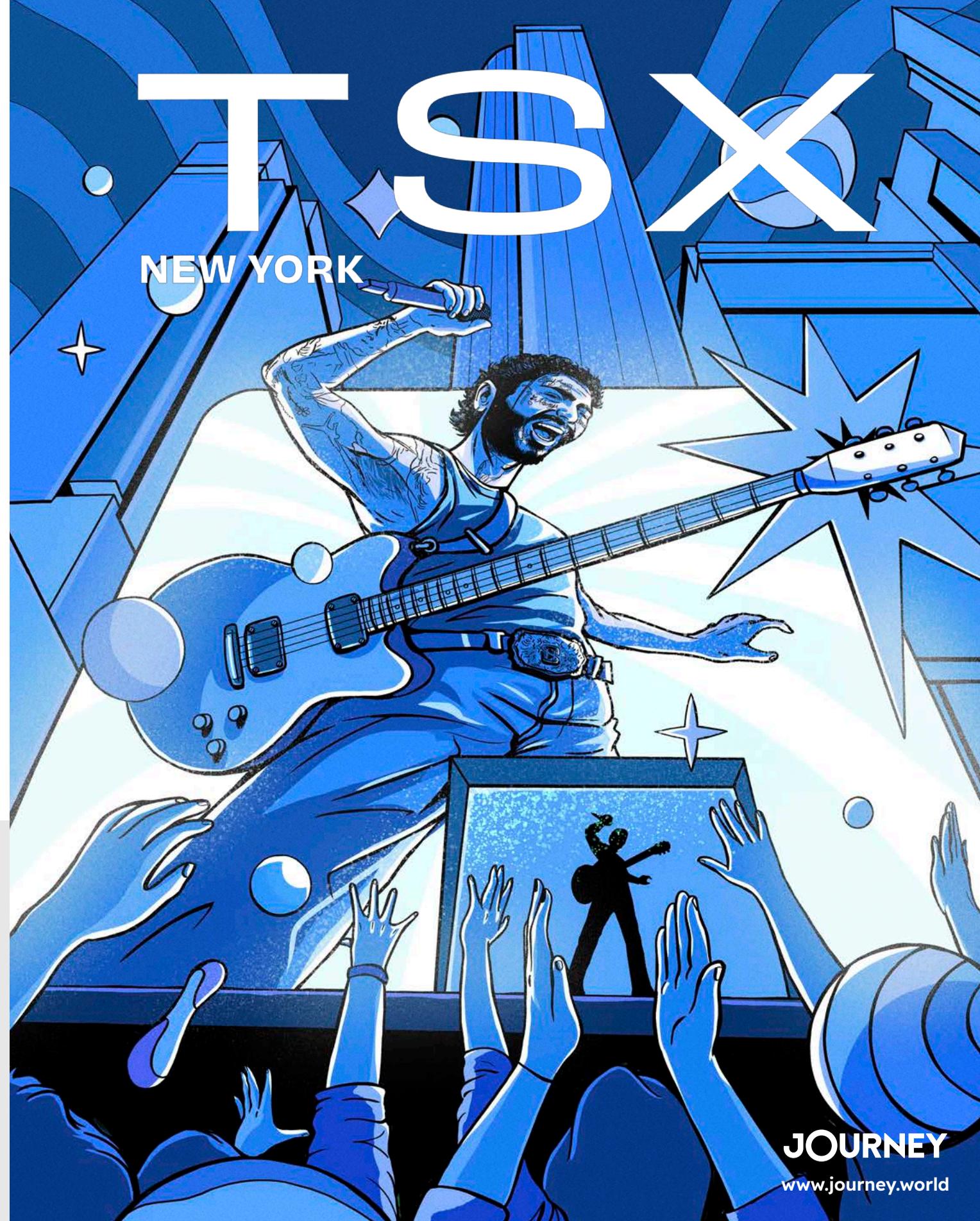
JOURNEY IN SPORTS

Sports and entertainment fans expect ever closer relationships with the athletes, teams and celebrities they follow. In a recent report, entitled Power Play: The Future of Venues, Journey analyzes how these relationships will ultimately reshape stadia, arenas and

other venues in the future. It is filled with strategic advice on which areas stakeholders ought to invest in when constructing new venues, both in the real world and online.

The in-depth report outlines how fans now expect technology to grant them unrivalled viewing and immersive engagement; how they view themselves as collaborators with their

favorite stars through content, merchandise or bespoke events; how they are willing to pay for exclusive products and services; why they will no longer tolerate irritating venue services such as parking, long queueing, and slow food and beverage offerings. The report also explains how fans will interact with venues, teams and stars before, during and after each event they attend.



HAS THE MICHELIN GUIDE RUN OUT OF ROAD?

Once the bible for discerning foodies, the Michelin Guide and its old-school system of awarding stars to top restaurants is now under threat as younger diners look elsewhere for recommendations.

The head chef at this restaurant in Greenland was once awarded two Michelin stars.

Bernard Loiseau was one of France's most celebrated chefs—a gastronomic virtuoso whose Burgundy restaurant used to welcome celebrities, politicians and the very wealthy. He had published best-selling cookbooks. He regularly cooked on French TV and was paid to endorse popular foods. He had been honored with France's greatest order of merit, the Légion d'honneur. And his restaurant—La Côte d'Or—had been awarded three stars by the Michelin Guide.

But in February 2003, after finishing his lunchtime service, the 52-year-old drove home, climbed the stairs to his bedroom, locked the door, and shot himself dead with a hunting rifle. Although he had been suffering from depression, some within the trade suggested it might have been the threat of losing a Michelin star that had pushed this renowned perfectionist over the edge.

One cannot overplay the influence of the Michelin Guide within the world of haute cuisine. For most of the 20th century, this much-consulted series of red guidebooks, which has since largely converted to online, was by far the most important arbiter of restaurant quality worldwide. Chefs and maitre d's, especially in France where the guide was born, quiver at the thought of inspectors paying secret visits to their establishments. Michelin stars—up to a maximum of three for restaurants where “the cooking elevates the craft to an art form”—are considered by many the ultimate accolade in the restaurant business.

But is the guide still the force it once was? Michelin's position as top dog seems now to be under threat. For Generation Z, at least, influencers, social media and more fashionable restaurant guides—such as The World's 50 Best Restaurants, LaListe, Tripadvisor, OpenTable, World of Mouth—offer more important recommendations.

The first Michelin guidebook appeared in 1900 when brothers André and Edouard Michelin realised that useful maps, travel tips, and recommendations for gas stations, mechanics, hotels and restaurants would encourage more road travel, thereby boosting sales of the tires they manufactured. By the 1920s, the brothers had recruited a team of mystery diners—or restaurant inspectors, as Michelin now calls them. It was in the 1930s that the Michelin star rating system was established, with one star signifying “a very good restaurant in its category”; two stars denoting

“excellent cooking, worth a detour”; and three stars signaling “exceptional cuisine, worth a special journey”.

As the century progressed, so did guidebook sales, eventually reaching 30 million worldwide. Today, Michelin rates over 40,000 different restaurants, awarding stars on five criteria: “Quality of the ingredients used; mastery of flavor and cooking techniques; the personality of the chef in the cuisine; harmony of flavors; and consistency between visits.” Interestingly, inspectors claim not to judge a restaurant's interior decor, table setting, or service quality when awarding stars.

In the guide there are currently 157 restaurants with the maximum three stars—French and Japanese

Michelin's position as top dog seems now to be under threat. For Generation Z, at least, influencers, social media and more fashionable restaurant guides offer more important recommendations.

establishments dominating—plus a further 514 with two stars and over 3,000 with one star.

The stars can be both a blessing and a curse, however. While there's no doubt they place restaurants firmly on the culinary map, they also impose enormous pressure on hard-working chefs—both to maintain the stars they have won and to win more stars. Certain chefs have even asked Michelin to revoke their stars because they felt they created unreasonable expectations from customers or forced restaurant owners to spend extra money on service and décor.

In 2019, South Korean chef Eo Yun-gwon lodged a criminal complaint against Michelin for featuring his restaurant in the guide after he had requested them not to do so. He later told CNN: “Michelin Guide is a cruel system. It's the cruellest test in the world. It forces the chefs to work around →

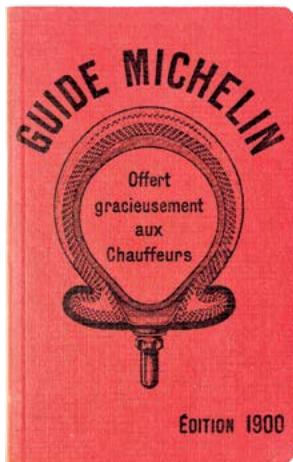


Chef Fabien Ferré (above) views the Michelin Guide differently to the late food critic Anthony Bourdain (top).



Gen Z diners are eschewing the Michelin Guide and following the recommendations of alternative guides such as the World's 50 Best Restaurants. Chef Mitsuharu Tsumura's Maido restaurant in Lima, Peru (above) is currently top of the latter.

HOW THE MICHELIN GUIDE CAME TO RULE CUISINE



André Michelin and his younger brother Édouard (pictured below) founded their famous tire company in 1888, in Clermont-Ferrand, in central France. Having worked together to save the ailing family business—then a manufacturer of farm equipment—they first developed pneumatic bicycle tires and later motor-car tires.

It was in 1900 that they published their very first Guide Michelin, given away for free and packed full of useful maps, travel tips, and recommendations for gas stations, mechanics, hotels and



restaurants across France. The clever idea was that this would encourage motorists to drive more, thereby boosting sales of Michelin tires. The tactic worked and guides for other nations soon followed.

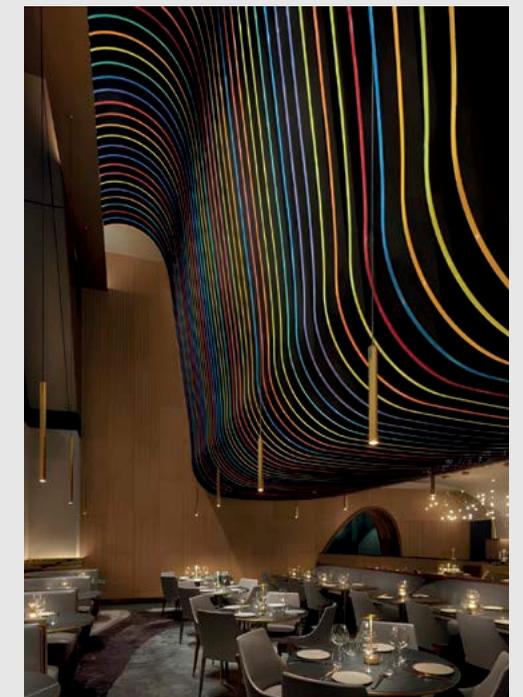
In the early 1920s, while visiting a tire dealer, André noticed copies of his free guide propping up a workbench. Selling it, he suddenly realised, instead of giving it away would boost its reputation. It wasn't long before the brothers were recruiting mystery diners to review restaurants, with the famous star rating system following on.

In all, more than 30 million hard-copy guides have been sold worldwide, while millions more readers view reviews online. The identity of the restaurant inspectors has always been shrouded in mystery. Like spies, they are advised never to reveal their secret role to outsiders.

JOURNEY IN HOSPITALITY

Journey has worked on many successful hospitality projects, including hotels, restaurants, cocktail bars, cruise ships, live music venues, airports and retail venues. One of the more unusual ones combines fine dining and contemporary art at a large restaurant called 53, in the MoMA Museum of Modern Art, in New York City. Directly beneath the new David Geffen wing of the museum, the Asian-style restaurant spans three floors and features distinct dining areas: a street-level bistro, a cellar-level main dining room, and a subterranean speakeasy.

Journey was charged with designing the overall dining experience, taking its inspiration from Chinese imperial palaces, Taoist principles, and contemporary art. In collaboration, the renowned Friedrich Petzel Gallery has curated a rotating art program that will be displayed throughout the restaurant so that diners can move from one scene to the next, through a series of galleries. The sunken, double-height main dining room is visible from street level, bustling by day and glowing by night. The subterranean speakeasy, called Ba53ment, draws inspiration from regal Asian motifs.



a year waiting for a test [and] they don't know when it's coming."

Food writer and travel documentary-maker Anthony Bourdain was also critical of the star system. "I know many of the three-star Michelins never change their menu in order to have perfect consistency," he once said. "It's basically robotic cuisine; they cannot afford to change, because that was the winning formula."

British restaurant critic Jay Rayner once dined at three-starred restaurants every day for a week, while researching a book.

"It was an awful and deadening experience," he said. "You are dragged into a particular setting which seems to have much more to do with status and financial heft than it ever does to do with appetite or greed." He later added: "The idea that we need a guidebook that takes a year to produce, that is handed down from anonymous experts, feels bizarre."

More nuanced in his opinion is Fabien Ferré, head chef at La Table du Castellet—a restaurant in the foothills of Provence, in the south of France. In 2024, at the age of 35, he became the youngest ever three-starred French chef in the Michelin Guide. While he insists there are plenty of restaurants without stars that still shine extra brightly, he in no way denigrates the guide. "Nowadays, one, two or three stars are a true gauge of quality," he explains. "They also make life easier for us because they help us with publicity and recruitment. No one should spit on the Michelin Guide. It's an excellent guide and I support it. It has put us on a pedestal and now we must fight to stay at the top."

Nevertheless, he understands there are people who believe the guide is no longer the gastronomic bible it once was. "Even though I can't climb into the heads of the inspectors who work for it, I'm convinced they know what they're doing," he adds.

Perhaps the last word ought to go to Michelin itself. Understandably, the company is proud of its hard-earned reputation. "Considered by many to be the hallmark of global fine dining and quality cuisine, the Michelin Guide wields immense power over chefs, restaurateurs and foodies the world over," it states. "It may divide opinions across the food service industry, but its influence is undeniable. French chef Paul Bocuse, a pioneer of nouvelle cuisine, once said, 'Michelin is the only guide that counts.'" [O](#)

CALL OF DUTY

Silent discos, art galleries, curated cocktails and brain massages... To survive in the highly competitive world of retail, duty-free shopping is re-inventing itself, offering customers increasingly exciting experiences within airport terminals. By Tina Milton.

Duty-free shopping has come a long way since its humble beginnings. It was in 1947, at Shannon Airport, in Ireland, where airplanes often stopped to refuel on their way across the Atlantic, that local businessman Brendan O'Regan first realized the potential of tax-free shopping, selling liquor to passengers in transit. The kiosk he launched—still in operation—set a blueprint for the luxury travel retail and dining malls one finds in modern airport terminals.

Nowadays, international airports are vast metropolises for some of the world's most important luxury brands—flagship stores advertising their latest wares to global travelers. According to the Duty Free World Council, retail is now the largest contributor to non-aeronautical income in airports. In 2024, total worldwide travel retail and duty-free sales exceeded \$74 billion. Airport hubs increasingly rely on commercial revenues to fund the development of their infrastructure and to minimize the landing fees payable by airlines.

Yet, despite growing passenger numbers, the long-standing notion that duty-free offers cheaper prices than downtown stores is fading. According to management consultancy firm Kearney, 40 per cent of travelers question the value of duty-free goods. While global airline passengers numbered 9.5 billion in 2024, →



retail sales remained 13 per cent less than in 2019, with spend per traveler down by 17 per cent.

The former president of the Tax Free World Association, Philippe Margueritte, has called for a “retail revolution” that surpasses any cookie-cutter approach to duty-free stores and fixed product offerings. He says a greater sense of place, excitement and agility is needed, blending products with services and exploiting real-time data to customize what’s offered to travelers. “A strange feeling of ‘all airports look the same in duty-free’ has emerged with the consolation of our industry,” he explains. “However, a great deal of effort is being made to create a stronger sense of place and more excitement.”

Bargain-hunting passengers now have access to price-checking apps, with strong competition from e-commerce retailers putting them off airport purchases. Add to this a growing demographic of younger shoppers keen to enjoy more memorable retail experiences, such as product engraving, curated food and drink tastings, and beauty and wellbeing treatments. According to fashion house L’Oréal, by 2028, Generation Z customers will account for 30 per cent of all international travelers. As Emmanuel Goulin, president of L’Oréal Travel Retail, explains:

“We are reinventing the airport experience and turning airports into entertainment destinations.”

It’s a tactic being adopted globally, with airports in the Middle East among those at the forefront. At Hamad International in Doha, for example, Qatar Duty Free partnered with L’Oréal to open the

**“We are reinventing the airport experience and turning airports into entertainment destinations.”
Emmanuel Goulin, president of L’Oréal Travel Retail**

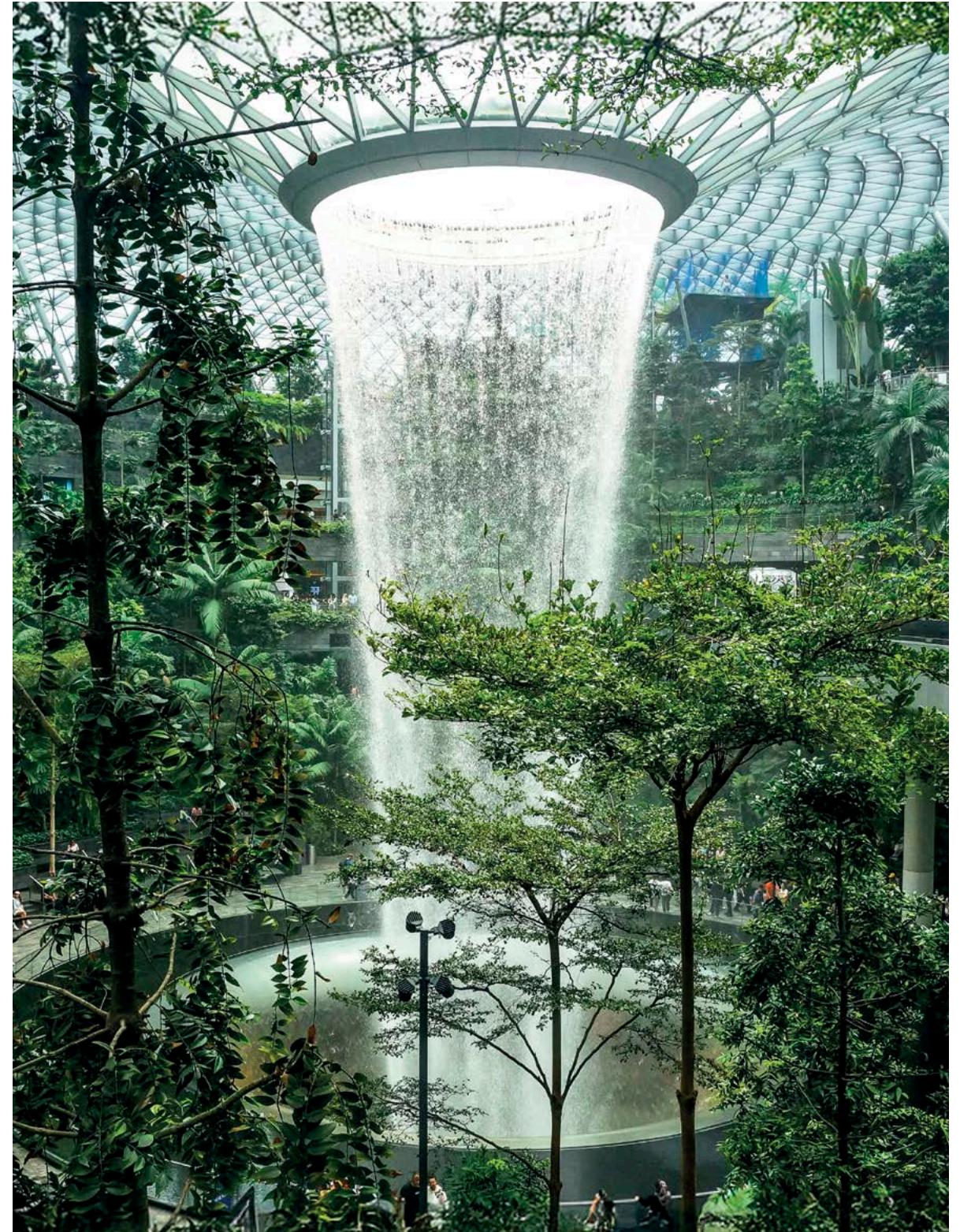
Lancôme Café de la Rose this year, believed to be the first beauty-branded café in any airport worldwide. Other concepts driving sales include travel-retail exclusives, brand activations, walk-through stores, and retail offers sent directly to customers’ phones.

Pop-up shops have also proved to be a popular way of launching products, acting as a testbed for new →

BUY BEFORE YOU FLY

Which airports are best for shopping? According to customer surveys by airport consultancy Skytrax, these were the top ten worldwide in 2025.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hamad International (Doha, Qatar) 2. Singapore Changi (Singapore) 3. Heathrow (London, UK) 4. Paris Charles de Gaulle (Paris, France) 5. Istanbul (Istanbul, Turkey) 6. Narita International (Tokyo, Japan) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Dubai International (Dubai, UAE) 8. Leonardo da Vinci Rome Fiumicino (Rome, Italy) 9. Hong Kong International (Hong Kong, China) 10. Incheon International (Seoul, South Korea) |
|---|---|



The indoor waterfall at Changi airport, Singapore.



Above: Estée Lauder bauble-making station in Macau Airport. Top: A duty-free shop in Berlin Airport in 1966.

brands, and presenting seasonal offers. At a duty-free complex in China's Hainan province, for example, Yves Saint Laurent launched a pop-up promotion called YSL Beauty Light Club, which included a make-up service, a fragrance bar, and something called a "silent disco fragrance finder", all within an old-school nightclub atmosphere featuring an avatar DJ.

Enhancing the passenger experience doesn't stop at retail. Airports are also investing heavily in new terminal facilities with the experience of the traveling public front of mind. Facilities include anything from playgrounds, parks, sleep pods and cinemas to spas, restaurants, sensory zones and art galleries.

It's all a strategy to devise ever more imaginative ways to encourage travelers to part with their money. Airports and the duty-free stores within them are no longer mere elements of the trip; they are part of the destination. ○

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT THE SHOPPING

Airports and their retailers are becoming increasingly extravagant in their efforts to attract customers

Hamad International Airport, Doha, Qatar

The Dior Luxury Beauty Retreat offers a sanctuary for beauty and well-being combined with luxury retail. Features include eight treatment rooms, space for men's well-being, product engraving and a jacuzzi. At the Louis Vuitton airport lounge, travellers can dine on a menu designed by French Michelin-starred chef Yannick Alléno.

Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Mind Oasis by Rituals is a wellness space for travelers, featuring hydro massagers and a brain massage pod. The latter uses breathing techniques, sound vibrations and fragrance to "induce a meditative state and recharge the mind".

Incheon International Airport, Seoul, South Korea

Designed by Peter Marino, an architect and long-time Chanel collaborator, the double-decker Chanel Duplex store features a selection of contemporary artwork.

Singapore Changi Airport, Singapore

From butterfly gardens, cinemas and rooftop swimming to walking nets, mazes, slides and the world's biggest indoor waterfall, Jewel is more entertainment resort than traditional airport retail mall.



Singer Olivia Nelson performing a pop-up gig for passengers in Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport in 2024.

JOURNEY IN AIRPORTS

Journey has designed amazing spaces at several key airports across North America, including Toronto Pearson International, John F. Kennedy International, Ronald Reagan Washington National, Philadelphia International, and LaGuardia.

Much of its work is in collaboration with OTG, a leading airport restaurant and retail management company. "We're constantly innovating new ways to make the terminal experience spark delight and, if we're being honest, provide comfort amid delays and cancellations," says Journey managing director David Taglione. "Over the years we've crafted environments that not only look and feel special, but also generate some of the highest revenue figures per departing passenger in the industry."

The company's approach starts with the understanding that airports, more often than not, stress people out. "Every feature we craft, whether it's a lounge, a lighting array or a tapas bar, aims to quiet the anxiety that air travel singularly stirs," Taglione explains.

One of Journey's flagship projects is at LaGuardia Airport, in New York City. Here, it has worked on Chase Sapphire Lounge, an airport lounge offering travelers a respite from the hustle and bustle of the main airport. Features include two areas for working or relaxing, with private phone rooms; a wellness area with bookable treatments and private rest pods; as well as a private bathroom, a nursing room and a kids' room. The food offering includes fresh and seasonal menus and locally inspired dishes, as well as craft cocktails, a curated wine list and local coffee.



LIFE-CHANGING COMMERCE

In his new book, celebrated US business theorist B. Joseph Pine II explains how customers seek much more than mere products from their business transactions. They desire total transformation. It's a call to action for both commercial companies and the people who buy from them.

Browse the business section of a bookshop and the titles shine out like crystal balls, each offering the reader a novel view of the future. For CEOs and entrepreneurs looking to catch the next wave, the right theory can prove an invaluable source of propulsion.

Best-selling author B. Joseph Pine II has form in the soothsaying game. Thirty years ago, in his landmark book *The Experience Economy*, he explained how businesses ought to look beyond commodities, goods and services in an effort to provide memorable experiences that powerfully engage their customers. Over the subsequent decades, he has watched this vision take shape, as businesses across all industries have recognized the competitive advantages of building more intimate and longer-lasting customer relationships. Pine has walked the walk too, offering management advice to Fortune 500 companies and startups alike.

Now, he has updated his world view. His latest book, called *The Transformation Economy: Guiding Customers to Achieve Their Aspirations*, urges business leaders to take the next step beyond experiences and actively find ways to help their customers change in lasting ways.

Companies are already missing a trick when it comes to value, warns the 67-year-old. "Whatever

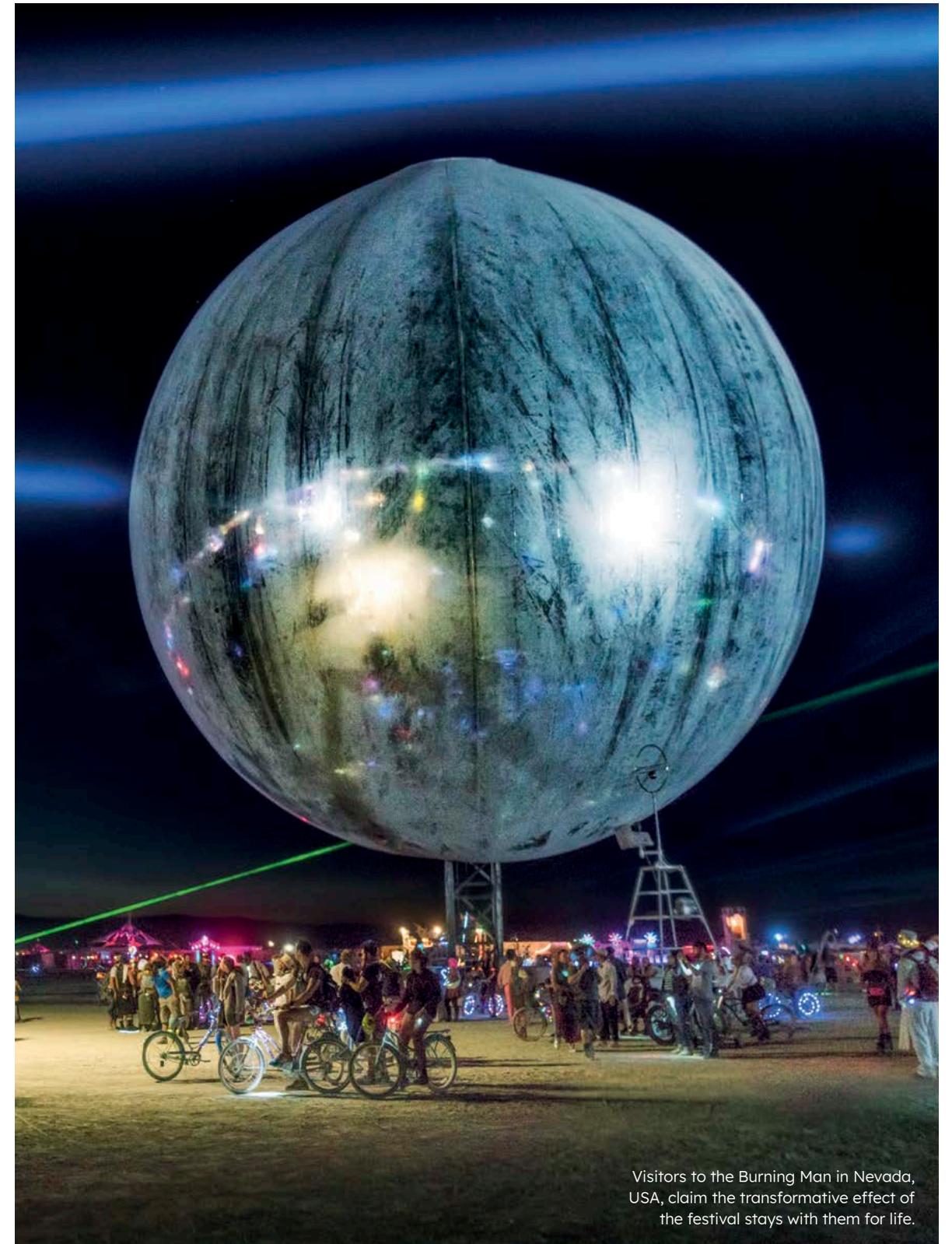
you sell to your customers today, I guarantee you they want more. The ends they desire are to have a better life or a better business. To be healthier, wealthier, wiser. To have meaning and purpose. Not just to buy, but to become who they want to become. What people want, in short, is to be transformed."

Those businesses that can crack the formula will thrive, Pine says. Those that don't are on their way to becoming mere commodity suppliers to competitors who understand what their customers truly want.

FROM INPUTS TO OUTCOMES

The major difference between an experience and transformation is time. An experience like a concert or a vacation may stick in the memory, but the outcomes are short-lived. Life moves on. A transformation, conversely, has the power to alter who the customer is. The effects are longer lasting. A successful gym program, for example, isn't measured in the daily number of dips and curls, but in the benefits of physical fitness. Education isn't about class attendance, but the opportunities brought by knowledge.

Take the legendary annual music festival Burning Man. Those who make the arduous journey into the Nevadan desert will encounter goods, services and →



Visitors to the Burning Man in Nevada, USA, claim the transformative effect of the festival stays with them for life.



A less orthodox way of seeing Rome.

experiences aplenty. But it's the transformative effect that will stay with them for life. For ever more, they can call themselves a "burner" and fellow burners will understand. As a result, the organizers can factor this unique outcome into their pricing—and customers are willing to pay a premium.

For businesses looking to add depth to their customer experiences—effectively turning them into life-changing experiences—the first step is to really understand what those aspirations are. Pine calls this "the five whys test". Rather than accept the first answer, keep asking "Yes, but why?" until the essence of what the customer really wants is laid bare.

Is it the feelgood factor of an excellent cup of coffee you're selling—or something deeper like a sense of fulfillment or renewed purpose? Do your customers want to refine a small area of their lives, like lowering their golf handicap, or are they reaching for total metamorphosis, like a career shift? The challenge for businesses is to understand where and how they can contribute to that change.

HUMAN FLOURISHING

Transformations need not be as overt as life coaching, a wellbeing app or studying for an MBA. Pine cites

the example of an Italian food hall chain called Eataly which ticks the boxes in terms of upgrading a shopping trip into an immersive experience. It then takes the next step by educating customers around the slow food philosophy and inviting them to find meaning in the simple art of Italian cooking.

Eataly invites its customers on a quest of discovery in terms of healthy eating and food appreciation, but also in evolving their sense of identity. "Think of how much more customers buy from Eataly once they discover and become devoted to Italian foodstuffs and cooking," Pine says. "Even more so if they intentionally embrace slow food."

In that sense, he suggests, "the customer is the product." Pine contends that the true purpose of the enterprise is not shareholder primacy or quarterly progress but, rather, fostering "human flourishing". Profit is simply a metric of how well a company contributes to that flourishing.

There's another way to look at this: when companies are in the business press for the wrong reasons, it's because they have lost their focus on human flourishing. Pine points the finger at social

"The ends that customers desire are to have a better life or a better business. To be healthier, wealthier, wiser. To have meaning and purpose. Not just to buy, but to become who they want to become. What people want, in short, is to be transformed."
B. Joseph Pine II

media companies that try to make people addicted to their products. They are acting against the benefit of their customers for the sake of short-term profits, he warns. Ultimately, it won't end well.

TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEYS

A practical cornerstone of his book is what he calls encapsulation: preparing customers before an experience, encouraging reflection afterward, and supporting integration over time. Even modest experiences become more transformative when framed this way. Rather than designing solely for peak moments, companies must consider what comes before and after.

Pine uses the example of Explorer X, a travel company that designs experiences to enable transformation. Dedicated to crafting highly customized journeys with lasting personal impact, the company encourages travelers—called explorers—to approach travel with curiosity, openness and intention. Rather than setting rigid goals in advance, Explorer X recognizes that transformation often emerges through discovery along the journey, as travelers encounter new perspectives and ways of living.

Central to Explorer X's success is encapsulation. Before departure, clients receive a guide to mindful travel, prompting them to clarify their motivations, intentions, questions, actions and way of being on the journey. During travel, explorers are encouraged to reflect regularly through writing a journal. Afterward, a journey reflection guide helps them make sense of their experiences and identify new actions, behaviors and mindsets to apply to their lives.

"The most transformative sector in my experience is travel," says Pine. "People seem to be most open to change when they leave their everyday lives—and there are lots of opportunities for companies to help them do that."

With his new book, Pine challenges leaders to rethink not only what they sell, but why they exist. For strategists and entrepreneurs grappling with how to stand apart in a saturated economy, The Transformation Economy could be a more fruitful place to play. Guiding transformation is undoubtedly harder than staging experiences. It requires deeper insight, longer horizons and greater responsibility. But if Pine is right, it is also where the future of economic value lies. ○

SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSFORMATION

In his book, Pine carefully defines the difference between experiences and transformations—and what a meaningful transformation looks like.

•
 The shift from experiences to transformations is to move from creating memories to achieving aspirations.

•
 Transformations are effectual outcomes that change individuals in a lasting way.

•
 Without a change in values, behaviors, purpose, or some other fundamental aspect of self, no transformation occurs.

•
 The transformation affects the very being, the identity, of the buyer.

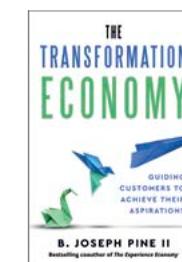
•
 Where experiences are inherently personal, transformations are fundamentally individual.

•
 While experiences happen inside of us, transformations change us from the inside out.

•
 Companies that guide transformations ideally shouldn't refer to their customers as users, clients, or even guests, but rather as aspirants.

•
 The economic function for transformations is to create the conditions under which aspirants transform themselves.

•
 Businesses stage experiences but they guide transformations, leading customers along a journey from who they are today to who they want to become.



The Transformation Economy: Guiding Customers to Achieve Their Aspirations, by B. Joseph Pine II, is published by Harvard Business Review Press in February 2026.



Rockwood Music Hall
in New York City.

THE WORLD IS YOUR VENUE

Olivia Reid is a New York City-based musician and lead strategist at Journey. In this article, which first appeared in Rolling Stone magazine, she explains how venues need to design their live-event spaces.

In 2024, I played my last gig at Rockwood Music Hall. For years, this venue in New York City's Lower East Side was considered a rite of passage—where budding artists could move up the ranks of their three stages and build a New York fan base. When it closed in November 2024, you could feel the grief in the air.

The sad truth is, beloved small venues are disappearing. The rent climbs and the grants dry up, while legacy community spaces pay the price. Yet, fans are craving more—more connection, more experiences, more variety. At the same time, businesses everywhere are trying to create and sell experiences. Maybe these forces aren't at odds. Maybe they're waiting to find each other.

EVERY SPACE HAS A STAGE

The amalgamation of these conditions highlights an opportunity for hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions, museums, cruise ships and other everyday spaces.

These businesses have two things artists need most: a physical footprint and an audience. Many of these spaces already dabble in the occasional acoustic performance or DJ night, but what if these spaces were designed from the outset to perform?

Imagine a restaurant that's built to double as interactive theatre. A retail space that can shift instantaneously into an immersive media room. An observation deck that's built to become a skyline stage. Or a museum that regularly comes alive as a multi-stage, with different musicians in every hall. Designing for a live mode could unlock an entirely new class of small venues, where artists thrive, guests linger and businesses tap into a new revenue stream.

PROOF BY POP-UP, READY TO SCALE-UP

We already know it works. Take music event company Sofar Sounds. They currently host nearly 10,000 shows a year, across 400 cities worldwide, transforming living rooms, lobbies and storefronts →



Olivia Reid playing live at the Bowery Ballroom, in New York City. Photo by Rita Choo (@rita_louisiana)

HOW TO DESIGN A LIVE VENUE

There are key checkpoints to design a space that can also be a venue.

1. Build to support hospitality and high-quality live experiences from the start

Seating, sightlines, acoustics, lighting and service infrastructure should be initially designed to always be able to support live events, even if not always active. Your primary use case (whether food and beverage, retail, hospitality, etc.) should thrive independently, then uniquely amplify when live mode is active. The Dome by Princess Cruises—designed by Journey company ICRAVE—uses this exact mentality to offer drinks and daybeds during daytime hours, and then reveal a hidden stage and stadium seating once the sun goes down, with design fit for a Cirque Éloize acrobatics show.

2. Layer immersion as a live attractor

Interactive technology and AI-enabled data reactivity deepen engagement, especially if programmed on a live cadence. Category 10, in Nashville—another one

into ticketed, intimate concerts. Ski resorts from Colorado to Scandinavia have turned their après-ski moments into mountaintop DJ sets. Even New York's Edge Observation Deck, a Journey partner, has redefined its skyline view as a live venue, partnering with Tao Group for its Marquee Skydeck, and turning the city's highest terrace into a stage in the sky throughout the summer of 2025.

These are proof points for the value of the pop-up venue: interesting spaces create a unique and memorable experience. But when even pop-ups carry today's high ticket prices, the resulting experience will often fall short of the expectations of audiences and artists alike. Short-term seating, rented PA systems and lack of audio-visual content create an overarching sense that the experience is a temporary environment.

The popularity of the pop-up leaves something to be desired but serves as a prequel to the future of venues. As this desire for new live experiences in unique destinations grows, spaces that are built from the outset to succeed in venue mode will thrive. The evolution offers new revenue potential for businesses thoughtfully designed to support a live mode, while providing more places for artists to build a live community.

Imagine a restaurant that's built to double as interactive theatre. A retail space that can shift instantaneously into an immersive media room. Or a museum that regularly comes alive as a multi-stage, with different musicians in every hall.

of our Journey projects—embodies this. On top of its transformation from country restaurant and retail shop, visitors turn their eyes upward to see the eye-catching, moving ceiling: an immersive installation light show. Due to open a second location in Las Vegas, the Nashville spot has proven that if one physical footprint is designed properly with technology integrated, it can attract audiences as a light show, a line-dance hub, a concert venue and a nightclub.

3. Prioritize building authentic communities as extensions of your brand

Businesses can evolve from what they're famous for with careful design of their venue alter-ego. Are you a museum that's focused on modern art? Maybe your venue only books acts that utilize modern art visuals. Are you a gym with a rooftop? Maybe your venue is a sunrise dance party intended to inspire movement. Are you a restaurant serving fusion cuisine? Maybe you specialize in programming musical acts that blend genres from two or more cultures.

Designing your business to act as a venue shouldn't be an afterthought, nor does it need to be inauthentic.

This is a way to tap into different sides of your same audience, shifting the view of your target customers to more holistic, multidimensional personas. Curating a venue destination gives artists and fans a place to gather, and a programming schedule to talk about, both of which inject new cultural depth into your business.

The most successful next-generation businesses aren't chasing gimmicks or rapidly producing pop-ups; they're activating their footprint as a multi-use experience destination, each with a unique point of view and a system for igniting live content. Venues as afterthoughts don't last; venues built for longevity in a live mode thrive.

The approach creates a symbiotic solution to the small venue crisis, designing from the outset to support programmed live experiences to ignite flat physical spaces. Prioritizing venue design recognizes the power of music, entertainment, immersive media and live connection as both cultural lifeblood and business advantage. The reward? More art, more experiences, more engagement, and more revenue. [O](#) →



A musician in the reading room at the British Museum in London.

THE GIG ECONOMY

All around the world, small music venues are threatened by gentrification, property development, and rising rents. But certain legendary clubs still thrive, as John Lewis discovers.

Los Angeles, USA THE ECHO

LA is still home to two venerable 500-capacity venues—The Troubadour and the Whiskey a Go Go—which between them have hosted hundreds of famous and infamous bands. Now, a new generation has embraced The Echo, a 350-capacity club in the Echo Park neighbourhood, with gigs from the likes of Beck, Billie Eilish, St. Vincent and even the Rolling Stones over the last few decades, as well as forward-facing alternative, electronic and hip-hop.

New York City, USA VILLAGE VANGUARD

Promoter Max Gordon opened this jazz venue in Greenwich Village in 1935, hosting hundreds of titans over the years, including Lead Belly, Sidney Bechet, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane and Miles Davis. He worked alongside his wife Lorraine. So dedicated were they both to their genre that, the night after Max died, Lorraine immediately reopened the club. It continues to attract jazz greats to this day.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil BIP BIP

A fixture in Brazilian music since the late 1960s, this rowdy, hole-in-the-wall venue, just behind Copacabana's Avenida Atlantica promenade, features live

sessions most evenings, with local musicians playing samba, chorro, bossa nova and more. The simple dining tables, topped with oilcloth tablecloths, usually spill out onto the street. Most nights, local musicians will turn up with acoustic guitars, hand percussion, whistles and cuicas to play impromptu sets.

London, UK THE 100 CLUB

Live music in London's Soho district has been decimated by hikes in rent, rates and inflation, but one venue has kept going, almost unchanged, since 1942. The 100 Club—with its stage along one side of the basement room, rather than at the end—has hosted everyone from Glenn Miller and Louis Armstrong to the Sex Pistols and Metallica.

Paris, France NEW MORNING

In recent decades, some of Paris's most interesting venues have been moored on the River Seine, with a shifting cast of barges hosting a wide variety of music. But one landbound survivor has been the 500-capacity New Morning, in the 10th arrondissement, a home for jazz, soul, funk, hip-hop and African music since 1981. Prince, Dizzy Gillespie and Bob Dylan have played over the years. The club was founded in 1981 by Egyptian-

born Eglal Farhi who famously said her secret to live music was “not to allow routine to set in.”

Berlin, Germany SCHOKOLADEN

“A middle finger to the area's oversaturated commercialization,” is how *The Berliner* magazine describes this small venue in the German capital. Founded in the early 1990s, in a former chocolate factory (hence the name) in the Mitte district, it keeps Berlin's countercultural flag flying with punk and alternative gigs, and has welcomed the likes of Fontaines D.C., Future Islands and local heroes Beatsteaks.

Johannesburg, South Africa THE RADIUM BEERHALL

The city's oldest bar and grill dates back to 1929 with history as a tearoom and beer hall that served black and white customers, even when illegal under the apartheid regime. It is now a home for frequent live rock, reggae, jazz and other genres.

Lagos, Nigeria NEW AFRIKA SHRINE

The initial Shrine was launched by the rebel Nigerian afrobeat pioneer Fela Kuti in 1970 but burned down by government troops in 1977. Its successor, New Afrika Shrine, was founded in 2000 by Fela's offspring Yeni and Femi. The latter regularly performs at the club, as does his brother Seun.

Tokyo, Japan JAZZ SPOT INTRO

Since the 1950s, Tokyo has been famous for its “jazz kissa” venues—small coffee shops that



Above: Florence and The Machine at the 100 Club in London in 2009. Right: Nina Simone at New Morning in Paris in 1981.



used to play American records for Japanese jazz aficionados who couldn't get hold of imported vinyl. Many of these cafes (Birdland, Body & Soul, Goro Goro Café) now host live music. Jazz Spot Intro is particularly intimate, with a capacity of only 25 or so, and hosts regular jam sessions.

Rome, Italy ALEXANDERPLATZ JAZZ CLUB

This intimate, atmospheric, 150-capacity club near St Peter's Basilica was launched in 1984 by the celebrated promoter Giampiero Rubei. He died in 2015 but his temple of jazz is stronger than ever.

As well as local bebop talent, and the occasional soul and Latin gigs, the venue has hosted the likes of Chet Baker, Chick Corea, Michel Petrucciani and Wynton Marsalis. The exposed brick walls feature autographs, photos and dedications from them and other jazz legends who have visited over the years.

Date for the Diary

EVERY ISSUE, JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS AN AWE-INSPIRING EXPERIENCE FROM AROUND THE WORLD.



LA CAVERNE DU PONT NEUF, PARIS, FRANCE, JUNE 6-28, 2026

Pont Neuf, the oldest bridge across the River Seine, in Paris, is soon to have a completely new makeover. In June this year, French artist JR will transform it into an immersive installation called La Caverne du Pont Neuf, featuring artistic renditions of large rock formations. It is a tribute to a former transformation of the same bridge, back in the 1980s, when Parisian artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude wrapped the famous monument in over 430,000 square feet (40,000 square meters) of fabric.

“The debate that a project in a public space can provoke is of equal value to its artistic realization,”

says JR, whose work will be open to the public between June 6th and 28th. “Art is a transformation, and a way of renewing the way we look at the world around us.”

JR, whose pseudonym represents his first name Jean-René, is renowned for monumental public art projects that “inspire passersby to ask questions and confront their own perceptions.” His work has been displayed in museums, public spaces and conflict zones all over the world. This includes the Musée Louvre in Paris; the Venice Biennale in Italy; a favela in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and a prison in California.



The original wrapped bridge in 1985 (top left) and the design for the new installation (above).

By the Numbers

EVERY ISSUE, JOURNEY TRACKS DATA ON PLACES WHERE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD COME TOGETHER.

Theme parks and amusement parks are constructing ever more dynamic rides and attractions in the effort to draw in more visitors. While the United States leads the way, Chinese and Japanese parks enjoy large numbers too.

[Information from the 2024 Themed Entertainment Association global experience index.]

Number of visitors 2024 (in millions)

1	Magic Kingdom (Walt Disney World Resort) Lake Buena Vista, Florida, USA	17.84
2	Disneyland Park (Disneyland Resort) Anaheim, California, USA	17.34
3	Universal Studios Japan Osaka, Japan	16
4	Tokyo Disneyland Tokyo, Japan	15.1
5	Shanghai Disneyland Shanghai, China	14.7
6	Chimelong Ocean Kingdom Hengqin, China	12.63
7	Tokyo Disneysea Tokyo, Japan	12.44
8	Epcot (Walt Disney World Resort) Lake Buena Vista, Florida, USA	12.13
9	Disney's Hollywood Studios Lake Buena Vista, Florida, USA	10.33
10	Disneyland Park (Disneyland Paris) Marne-la-Vallée, France	10.21
11	Disney California Adventure Park (Disneyland Resort) Anaheim, California, USA	10.05
12	Universal Studios Beijing Beijing, China	9.78
13	Universal Studios Florida (Universal Orlando Resort) Orlando, Florida, USA	9.5
14	Universal Islands of Adventure (Universal Orlando Resort) Orlando, Florida, USA	9.45
15	Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park (Walt Disney World Resort) Lake Buena Vista, Florida, USA	8.8
16	Universal Studios Hollywood Universal City, California, USA	8.7
17	Hong Kong Disneyland Hong Kong, China	7.94
18	Europa-Park Rust, Germany	6.2
19	Efteling Kaatsheuvel, Netherlands	5.6
20=	Walt Disney Studios Park (Disneyland Paris) Marne-la-Vallée, France	5.6
20=	Everland Yongin, South Korea	5.6
22	China Dinosaurs Park Changzhou, China	5.38
23	Lotte World Seoul, South Korea	5.3
24	Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park Shanghai, China	4.73
25	Chimelong Spaceship Hengqin, China	4.63



JOURNEY

Journey has offices in New York,
London, Miami and Abu Dhabi.

US Headquarters
1140 Broadway
New York, NY 10001
United States
+1 212-929-5657

UK Headquarters
1-5 Vyner Street
London, E2 9DG
United Kingdom
+44 20 7978 7788



journey.world/contact/

