

St Adobe Stock

# Creative Trends 2023

CONTENT NEEDS GUIDE

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# Introduction



The uncertainty of the last few years has taken a toll on consumers. Many people are weary, and while determined to foster change and make progress, they also need ways to find relief.

We see these sentiments driving global demand for certain types of stock visuals. In our 2023 Creative Trends brief, we offer strategic tools and insights to help creatives stay ahead of the curve, confidently plan or pivot projects and campaigns, and evolve branding to ensure marketplace appeal in 2023.

*Keywords and titles play a vital role in surfacing your content on Adobe Stock. When you submit your content based on this creative trends guide, include the following keyword to be considered for special promotional opportunities:*

**CFC2023CT**



## What to submit

### Photos, illustrations, and vectors

- Horizontal and vertical close-ups, pulled-back shots, and detailed images with space for copy and cropping
- Action portraits, series, and sequences showing:
  - People engaged in tasks or activities while exhibiting a range of emotions
  - Details of cast and environment
  - Behind-the-scenes and candid between-scene takes

### Video

- Clips with edit handles between 1–5 seconds on each end—submissions can be 5–60 seconds, but we recommend 10–20 seconds for each clip.
- Series and sequences from multiple angles and perspectives for various use cases like social media and television
- Candid lifestyle stories and details of activities across all genres, such as home and family, business, sports and fitness, environment, and wildlife and nature

- Ambient motion content that can be looped and run for several minutes (e.g., content used as ambient device backgrounds where motion is slow and subtle; aerial, drone, or time-lapse content; or graphic elements, backgrounds, and textures)
- People, animals, and objects on green screens and neutral backgrounds

### Metadata Tips

Representation is a key customer need, so keep these in-demand search terms handy when keywording your content:

- diverse/diversity
- gender fluid
- multiracial
- interracial
- LGBTQ
- queer
- nonbinary
- multigenerational

[See more video content needs](#)

# Explore trends



Psychic Waves



Real is Radical



Animals and Influencers



Retro Active

# Psychic Waves





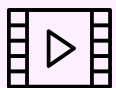
**55%**

*of gamers played during the pandemic as a form of stress relief in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>*

## Overview

Linked to wellness and experimentation along with escapism, psychedelia, and surrealism, Psychic Waves is a growing creative trend that represents a search for deeper meaning in a complex world. The trend spans many demographics.

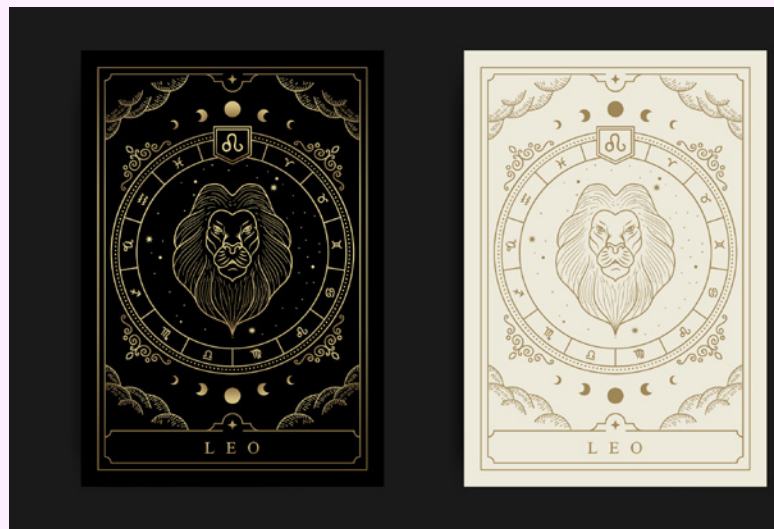
The Psychic Waves focus on mental and emotional experience shifts away from traditional representations of wellness with a focus on how it feels more than how it looks. The trend's aesthetic shares visual elements from gaming, VR, and internet youth culture in its range of colors and gradients, shape-shifting forms, color-changing surfaces, and imaginary dreamscapes.



**There were more than**

**250M views**

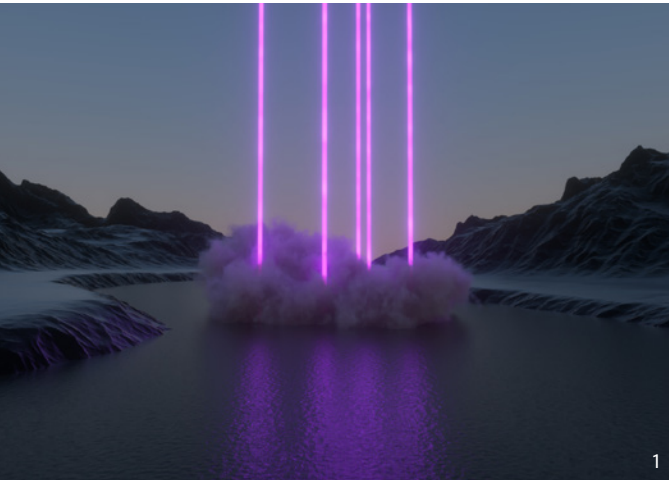
*of YouTube videos that included "tarot" in the title in the US in 2021, prompting the platform to launch a customized tarot card reading experience in 2022, using popular YouTubers as characters on its tarot card displays.<sup>2</sup>*



Pinterest searches for feeling-forward emotional escape rooms are scaling among teens. Gen Zers are looking to create spaces where they can decompress and express their emotions and state of mind.<sup>3</sup>







## More insights

1. As faith in institutions shrinks, alternative beliefs and practices grow such as astrology and tarot readings: Estimated to be worth **\$2.2bn** globally, the astrology industry is gaining traction. **One in four** Americans believe in astrology, according to a recent poll by YouGov, and this rises to **37%** for adults under 30.
2. Pinterest reports searches for “higher vibration” up by **145%** since the end of 2019
3. Already embedded in digital culture, **digital lavender** is a hue now seen across both virtual and physical worlds, with its associations with wellness, digital escapism and stability. The increasing popularity of the color across sectors is tied to consumers’ growing focus on mental health and wellbeing.
4. **Mood Blossom** is an AI-powered app that visualizes the user’s sense of wellbeing in the form of a floral avatar.



## Adobe Stock content needs

### Mental health and healing

Contemporary approaches to mental wellbeing incorporate an expanding mix of old and new, blending influences and approaches across science, cultures, regions, and disciplines.

Adobe Stock is looking for still and motion images that show a variety of ways to address and treat mental health issues, including addiction, depression, and anxiety. For example, images could show mental health sessions taking place in safe in-person, virtual, and metaverse environments like medical offices and private spaces.

### Nature's healing powers

Customers across sectors are searching for conceptual and lifestyle visuals across all asset types that show the positive effects and healing powers of immersion in nature.

### Soothing the self

Images showing the ways we gently nurture ourselves to support body, mind, and spirit are an integral element of narratives about wellness and wellbeing.

With consumers now expecting realistic and authentic visuals, prioritize imagery that portrays a real range of emotions and don't shy away from depicting fatigue, stress, and signs of depression.



## Calming spaces and places

In these challenging times, people from all walks of life are alleviating anxiety by spending time in safe spaces. As such, there's high demand for many styles of imagery that present serene environments and contemplative moments of self-care and self-soothing.



## Religion and tradition

Religious observance plays a big role in the Psychic Waves trend by presenting local and global rituals in our search for meaning and deep connection. Adobe Stock is always looking to grow and update our offerings showing contemporary spiritual and religious practices and how they look today across Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist rituals and gatherings.

Accurate presentations of Indigenous and ancestral traditions are also growing in demand. Images showing multigenerational families and friends teaching, practicing, and celebrating traditions, rituals, and holidays—with and without Western cultural influences—are all key parts of this trend.

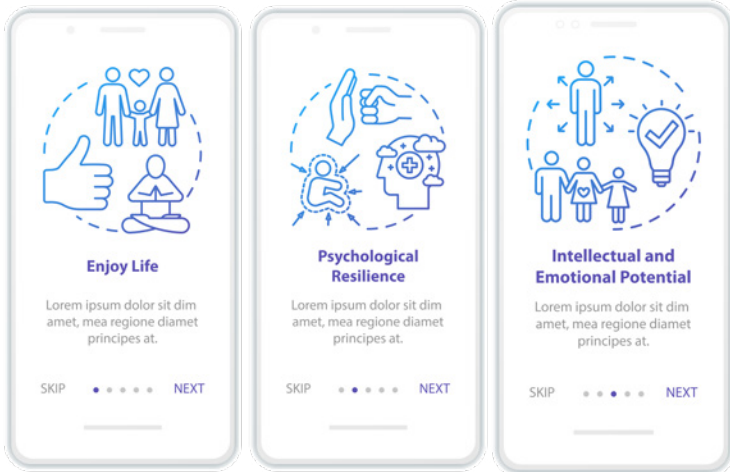


## Spirituality, astrology, and beyond

During stressful times, alternative beliefs grow. In recent years, many have moved away from traditional religions to New Age spiritual beliefs. Astrology and tarot card readings are also on the rise, as is the practice of manifestation.

In response, many brands across sectors are working with visuals that incorporate tarot, astrology, and the zodiac to represent alternative types of faith and self-exploration.

Consider the ways you can incorporate elements of spirituality in your own work, whether by using signs of the zodiac or tarot cards in still lifes or by showing representations of meditation and manifestation.



## Science and technology

As more of our lives are spent online, digital spaces are becoming safe spaces. YouTube, Twitch, TikTok, and video games provide community during periods of isolation. People are now turning to "calmtainment" channels and mental health apps to maintain their mental and emotional health. Studies are showing the benefits of gaming to alleviate stress.

Customers across many business types are searching for gaming- and metaverse-inspired imagery they can use for narratives around immersive and expansive experiences—idyllic wild gardens, waterscapes, galaxies, and the cosmos.



## Surreal self

Imaginative portraits conceptual and dreamlike in nature, that evoke different moods, emotions, and experiences that can't be conveyed literally are powerful and in demand in these times of exploration and anxiety.



## Surreal textures and backgrounds

Contemporary and trending textures and backgrounds are always in high demand, instantly setting the mood for so many visually-driven projects.

Since experiential portrayals of wellbeing and emotions play such an important role across sectors, these visuals are growing in demand. Surreal, abstract, and psychedelic elements play an important role here. Try working with soft, dreamy shapes, gradients and palettes - many of which resemble elements in web design and gaming.

Consider submitting both still and moving assets: Slow and subtle movement attracts attention and enhances engagement: Create still assets with a subtle motion element or relaxing ambient motion content for backgrounds.





## Bring the Psychic Waves trend home.

Create a spiritual, calm vibe through eye-catching videos. Capture elements of non-traditional wellness through surreal illustrations, video and photography.

[Check out the Psychic Waves collection](#)



1



2

## Metadata Tips

Consider including these customer searches related to **Psychic Waves** in your keywords when submitting relevant content:

euphoria

dream/dreamy

aura

calming

psychedelic

spiritual/spirituality

self care/selfcare

wellness

healing

mental health

tarot

astrology

zodiac

spiritual

gradient

# Real is Radical





There's been a  
**300%**

*increase in "Accept your body" searches, according to a recent Pinterest Body Neutrality Report.<sup>4</sup>*

## Overview

As expectations for diverse and authentic visuals have become mainstream, the demand for real, unvarnished moments, experiences, and realities continues to grow. The Real is Radical trend reflects a push back against filtered content and brands across every industry are releasing campaigns featuring all races, genders, ages, abilities, and identities that favor candid over curated moments.

**68%**

*of people surveyed globally (and 79% of LGBTQ+ people) believe that beauty standards in marketing and advertising are narrow and unrealistic.<sup>5</sup>*



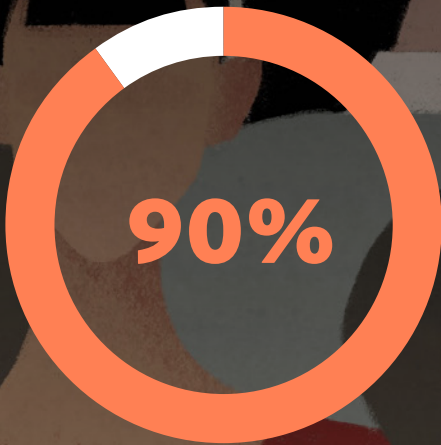
**#OneThingAboutMe**

*hashtag has amassed more than*

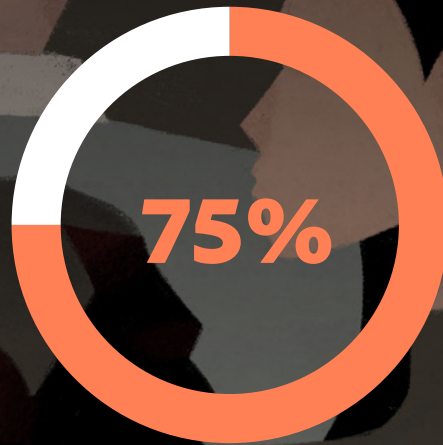
**1.7 billion views**

*What started off as a lighthearted trend-narrating videos with the phrase “one thing about me”, set to an instrumental audio of Nicki Minaj’s Super Freaky Girl, morphed into an outlet to share traumatic experiences.<sup>6</sup>*

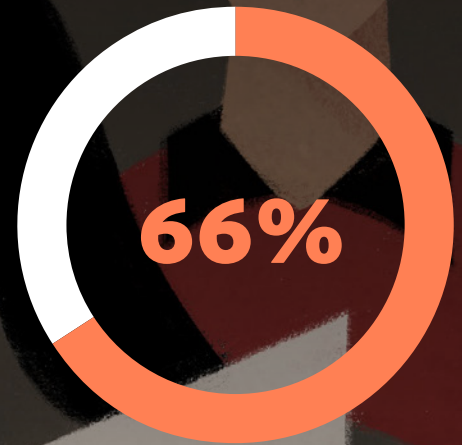
## Conversation around inclusion.



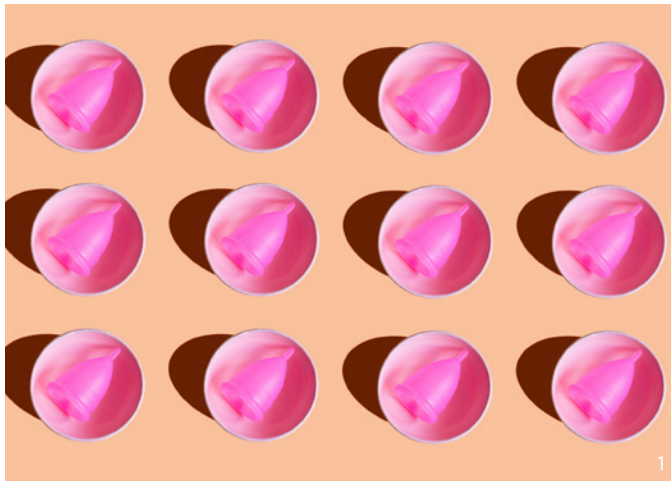
say equality is now everyone's business.



say companies and brands must play a role in solving big societal challenges such as equality and social justice.



of people agreeing that they are more inclined to buy from companies who speak out on issues of equality and inclusion.<sup>7</sup>



## More insights

1. **BeReal won iPhone App of the Year in 2022** – for its authentic view into users daily lives, sidestepping filters and other production elements with posts restricted to a short window of time-and has been installed over **53 million** times worldwide.
2. Model Bella Hadid who has **56.5 M followers** on Instagram and has received a lot of press around her openness on social platforms around her struggle with mental health ,recently received over 2.5 M likes in November when she **posted images of herself crying** and addressed her consistent struggle with anxiety.
3. About **15% of the global population is disabled**, and Apple's latest ad, "**The Greatest**," featuring an inclusive, disabled cast demonstrating their talents got more than 8M views on YouTube within 2 days of its December launch.
4. **Dove's "Reverse Selfie" campaign** revealed the lengths to which teenage girls manipulated their social media 'selfie' images, challenging unrealistic and harmful beauty standards, increasing brand affinity by 21% and sales by 11%.
5. Many very common experiences for women, like menstruation, remain heavily stigmatized. Campaigns such as **Bodyform's Periodsomnia campaign** features real-life and un-aestheticised portrayals of experiencing period pain and insomnia.



## Adobe Stock content needs

### Authentic expression

Realistic representation begins with people's facial expressions and body language. To convey your human emotions, experiences, and identities in photos and videos, you'll need to plan your productions and engage your subjects in a variety of ways on set.

Present diverse portraits that feature people experiencing a wide range of moods. Include joyful images that celebrate personal identity across all ages, identities, disabilities, genders, and cultures.

### Candid moments and connection

In their search for realistic imagery, stock customers consistently request candid-looking assets and "off" moments. They want shots ranging from quiet moments and vulnerability to over-the-top hilarity to outright anger. At Adobe Stock, we're looking for imagery that presents these unvarnished moments.

With increasing isolation due to the pandemic, digitization, and remote work, there's high demand for visuals of people connecting. At Adobe Stock, we'd like to see images showing experiences and expressions of love between family, friends, and neighbors, both in person and virtually.





## Style as self-expression

Fashion, makeup, and grooming are all forms of self-expression. Adobe Stock is looking for both everyday and bolder looks—contemporary styles that communicate personal identity, heritage, and cultural and religious backgrounds.

Stock customers want visuals that present expanded notions of gender—masculinity, femininity, and nonbinary. They want to see images and videos of people with varied style choices and looks in both personal and professional settings.

And given the growing preference for unfiltered visuals, natural-looking faces and all body types and physical abilities are in demand. Be sure to provide images with minimal or no retouching or makeup so audiences can identify with natural skin textures and imperfections.



## Diverse and healthy bodies

Demand continues to grow for content presenting all types of bodies across all demographics. In some sectors this is a relatively new phenomenon, and it's created a major need for content—particularly around fashion, beauty, fitness, and food.

Adobe Stock is looking for content that depicts diverse people involved in healthy activities, such as fitness, sports, and outdoor adventures. In your content, be sure to reflect the persistence, dedication, and empowerment of people engaging in physical activity, and show all body and skin types, ages, genders, and abilities.

When it comes to style and beauty images, present a range of body shapes and sizes in images that show both close-up details as well as wide-shot perspectives.

Also, submit images of subjects with all body sizes enjoying the process of preparing, eating, and sharing food across cultures, locations, and environments.



## Taking Action

We're living in a time of widespread public concern about many issues, from social justice to the environment. A major content need in the Real is Radical trend is the representation of people expressing their opinions and standing up for their beliefs, whether one-on-one or in groups.

Adobe Stock is looking for contemporary and engaging imagery depicting activism in a variety of settings. Think of the ways you can show community-building and organizing in your region, as well as people demonstrating for social justice and sustainable lifestyles.



## Bring the Real is Radical trend home.

Explore these motion, design, and photographic visuals to get inspired, and then create your own Real is Radical assets.

[Check out the Real is Radical collection](#)



## Metadata Tips

Consider including these customer searches related to **Real is Radical** in your keywords when submitting relevant content:

self expression  
radical  
rebel/rebellious  
expressive  
honest  
vulnerable

confident/confidence  
authentic/authenticity  
diverse  
authentic  
candid  
social justice

connection  
activism  
sustainability  
youth culture

# Animals and Influencers





There's been a  
**118%**

*Increase in global demand  
for anime content in the last  
two years.<sup>8</sup>*

## Overview

From real-life furry friends to charming anime avatars, charismatic creatures are proven attract and retain consumer interest and engagement. As a result, they've begun to occupy an important place in brand messaging, proliferating across sectors in the form of anime, illustrations, photography, and 3D renders.

# 70%

*of Gen Z in the US take their fashion inspiration from dressing their avatars, according to a report from Roblox and Parsons School of Design.<sup>9</sup>*



# 58%

*of consumers follow at least one virtual influencer on social media and **virtual influencers yield 3 times more engagement than humans**, brands are leveraging them in more and more ads.<sup>10</sup>*



The following stats are from a survey conducted by the agency Uncommon, which created a playful ad campaign celebrating the mental and physical health benefits for the UK pet insurance agency ManyPets.<sup>11</sup>

**89%**

of people say pets make them more active.

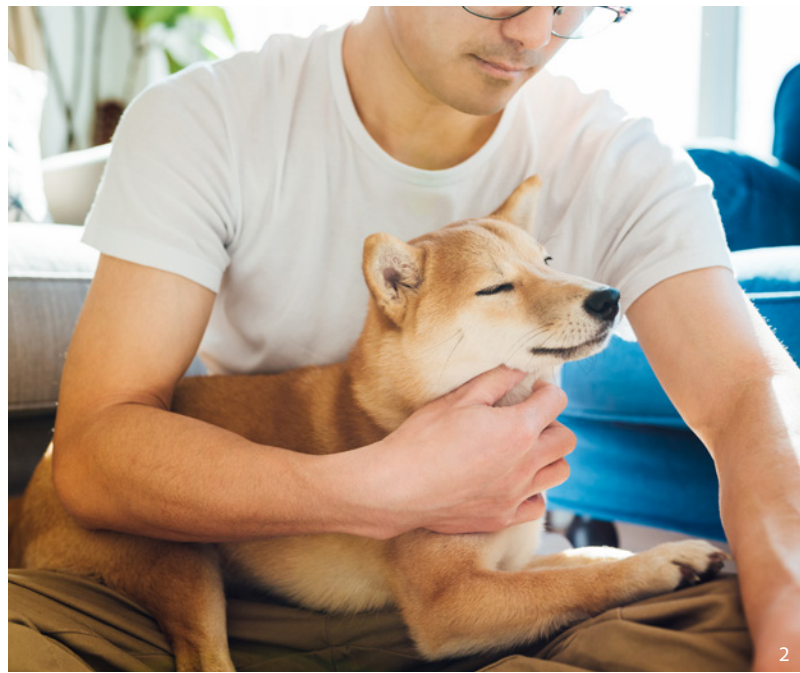
**80%**

say their pet gives them more energy.



## More insights

1. 3D renders and avatars of animals are proliferating too- consumers are finding comfort in pets in the virtual realm, appearing in commercial campaigns across many sectors from companies like **Asana**, **Gucci**, and **Kia**.
2. The Digital Pets Company, developer of digital 3D dogs, announced that it would launch AI-driven canines as new companions in the metaverse. The goal is to forge an intimate emotional attachment for the user to a digital being, indicating a growing overlap between our physical and virtual lives.
3. Global demand for anime content has grown 118% over the past two years, making it one of the fastest-growing content genres during the pandemic, according to Parrot Analytics.
4. Netflix says that **over half of its 222 million subscribers** watched anime in 2021, with the numbers expanding to 90% of Japanese Netflix users, and the company set up **a new creative team** dedicated to producing anime in the same year.
5. Music stars are harnessing the growing popularity of Anime's cross cultural appeal across many project types: The Weeknd unveiled a semi-autobiographical anime video for his song **Snowchild**. Hip-hop star Megan Thee Stallion's lyrics, interviews, and magazine cover shoots continue to highlight **her love of anime**.



## Adobe Stock content needs

### Beasts and besties

Companies are using an incredible range of animal visuals and characters, from adorable to mischievous, to attract consumer interest.

The deep bond between people and animals, particularly pets, creates a never-ending demand for creatures in all asset types. Adobe Stock needs everything from straight lifestyle photography to anime and 3D renders of pets, both solo and with their family members, across cultures and regions.

Seasonal or humorous elements create instantly meme-worthy still and motion content, while relationships between pets or emotional support animals and people can be presented in everyday scenes or fantasy situations for games and virtual gatherings.



## Avatar immersion

Customers are searching for a wide range of avatars to create exciting narratives within the growing virtual culture.

Virtual or synthetic avatars offer unlimited potential for self-expression in gaming and virtual gatherings. The sky's the limit for this kind of content, and diversity, fantasy, fashion, and culture all come into play. Consider creating diverse avatars on basic backgrounds or in fantasy and futuristic settings.

Anime now has massive cross-cultural appeal. Brands are working to depict vibrant characters in action-filled plots that combine science fiction, history, and fantasy to explore futuristic worlds and experiences.



## Virtual and metaverse lifestyles

With virtual work, learning, fitness, and shopping continuing to develop, demand is scaling for lifestyle scenarios of people using VR and experiencing virtual environments.

Customers are searching for images depicting digital experiences as teaching aids in the classroom and at home; teams cross-collaborating across real and virtual work and learning environments; and people using VR to shop, work out, socialize, travel, and entertain themselves.



## Environments and backgrounds

All these engaging characters need a place to play! With virtual and immersive experiences growing exponentially, customers are working with a huge variety of backgrounds and environments to align with their brand messaging.

Adobe Stock is looking for virtually rendered locations, whether cultural points of interest or artistically imagined settings, as well as more abstract designs to serve as backdrops for subjects to inhabit.

Sustainability also plays an important role for all business types. Brands in many sectors are working with virtual spaces that show the positive and negative ways humans impact the environment.



## Bring the Animals & Influencers trend home.

Get a peek into an avatar's virtual world with a video. Connect with consumers' love for their pets with cartoon-like illustrations of cute animals. Or capture the bond between pet and owner with a crisp image of them together. Explore these motion, design, and photographic visuals to get inspired, and then create your own Animals and Influencers assets.

[Check out the Animals and Influencers collection](#)



## Metadata Tips

Consider including these customer searches related to **Animals and Influencers** in your keywords when submitting relevant content:

3d avatar  
3d creatures  
3d environment  
3d landscape  
avatar

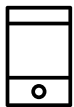
cyber  
cute creatures  
pets  
anime  
metaverse

virtual  
gaming  
immersive  
virtual reality  
virtual background



# Retro Active






**47%**

*of people seek downtime from smartphones. There is a wistfulness to return to the 'good old days' before constant connection, according to Ernst & Young reports.<sup>12</sup>*

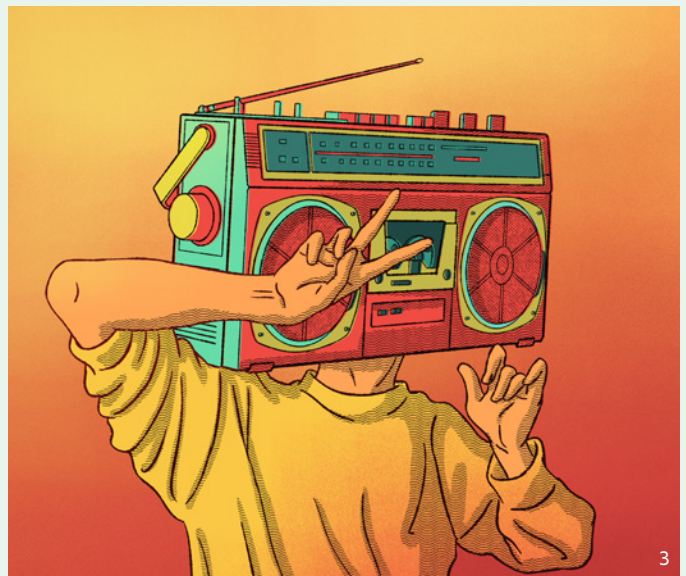
## Introduction

Adobe Stock has seen a huge surge of interest in visuals referencing the 90s and Y2K eras, ranging from fashion, vintage tech, and design aesthetics. The resurgence of the "noughties" is related to Gen Z's always-evolving interest in and experimentation with styles popular before their time. And older consumers find both familiarity and comfort in vintage references during a time of uncertainty.



 **156,542**

*cassettes* were sold in the UK in 2021, according to the British Phonographic Industry, the highest number since 2003 and an increase of 94.7% on 2019 sales, and artists including Taylor Swift, Lady Gaga and Dua have decided to release their new music on cassettes.<sup>13</sup>



Hashtags related to #Y2K continue to grow on social media

**TikTok** **1.1 billion**  
views of #y2k fashion

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**Instagram** **1,339,000**  
posts as of 12/22

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**Pinterest** **47%**  
YoY increase in search for 'y2k outfits'  
since 2020<sup>14</sup>



## More insights

1. Consumers are **looking to the 1990s** for beauty inspiration and leaning on old staples. Gen Z, for instance, has discovered Clinique's decades-old cult favorite Black Honey Almost Lipstick, the brand's most popular product. #BlackHoney has over 137.9 m views on TikTok and one tube is sold every minute.
2. Social media accounts focusing on Y2K attract big followings: TikToker **@overthemoonfaraway** with 1.8 M followers recreates moments US Millennials endured as teens, as **a Hollister customer in 2005** and **wearing Juicy Couture in high school**.
3. Young consumers are reviving the digital camera as a low-tech aesthetic. **#DigitalCamera** has more than 157m views on TikTok, featuring creators such as **@emmajeancarke** and US-based **@morefromminaa** who take outfit pics and selfies using a compact digital camera.
4. On TikTok, the hashtag # SkaterBoy has over 3bn views and there's a **new generation of skater boys** embracing fashion heavily influenced by 90's and Y2k rave styles. Seen across cult streetwear brands, often in partnership with larger sports companies like Nike, Asics and adidas, this trend appeals to skater boys looking to subvert traditional masculine fashion stereotypes through bright and optimistic color palettes, psychedelic prints and oversized looks.



## Adobe Stock content needs

### Style and beauty

Try applying vintage and retro color palettes, textures, and design styles in updated ways to avatars, virtual influencers, and real models. Think wide-leg or low-rise jeans, cargo pants, bucket hats, and chokers. Reinterpretations and updates of grunge are in high demand as well.

Adobe Stock needs solo portraits as well as great lifestyle images. Consider capturing groups of Gen Z friends hanging out together in a variety of settings— at home entertaining, socializing after school, spending time outside, or vacationing in early aughts fashions.



## Accessories, still life, and backgrounds

Retro concepts are booming in popularity, especially those that integrate, update, and mix visual styles and design assets from the 90s and Y2K eras.

Consider creating still and motion assets that show people using tech from the 90s and early aughts, like flip phones, CDs, cassette tapes, boom boxes, classic video game controllers, and wired headphones.

Style your subjects in 90s and Y2K fashions and beauty accessories like scrunchies.



### Bring the Retro Active trend home.

Explore these motion, design, and photographic visuals to get inspired, and then create your own Retro Active assets.

[Check out the Retro Active collection](#)





## Metadata Tips

Consider including these customer searches related to **Retro Active** in your keywords when submitting relevant content:

retro  
vintage  
Y2k  
2000s  
90s

neon  
stickers  
glitch  
goth  
grunge

hip hop  
vaporwave  
nostalgia  
kitsch



## Dig deeper: Inspiration and references

### Courses

- Quick Class: [Get started with Adobe Stock](#)
- Quick Class: [Expand your portfolio to include Stock Video](#)

### References

- [Maximize Metadata to Get Discovered](#)
- [Contributor Handbook](#)

### Blog

- [The Siege of Ponthus: Creating an Epic 3D Environment](#)
- [Representing disabled people in stock imagery with authenticity and respect](#)

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