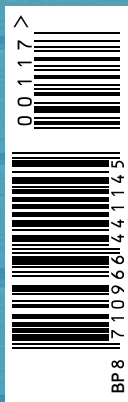
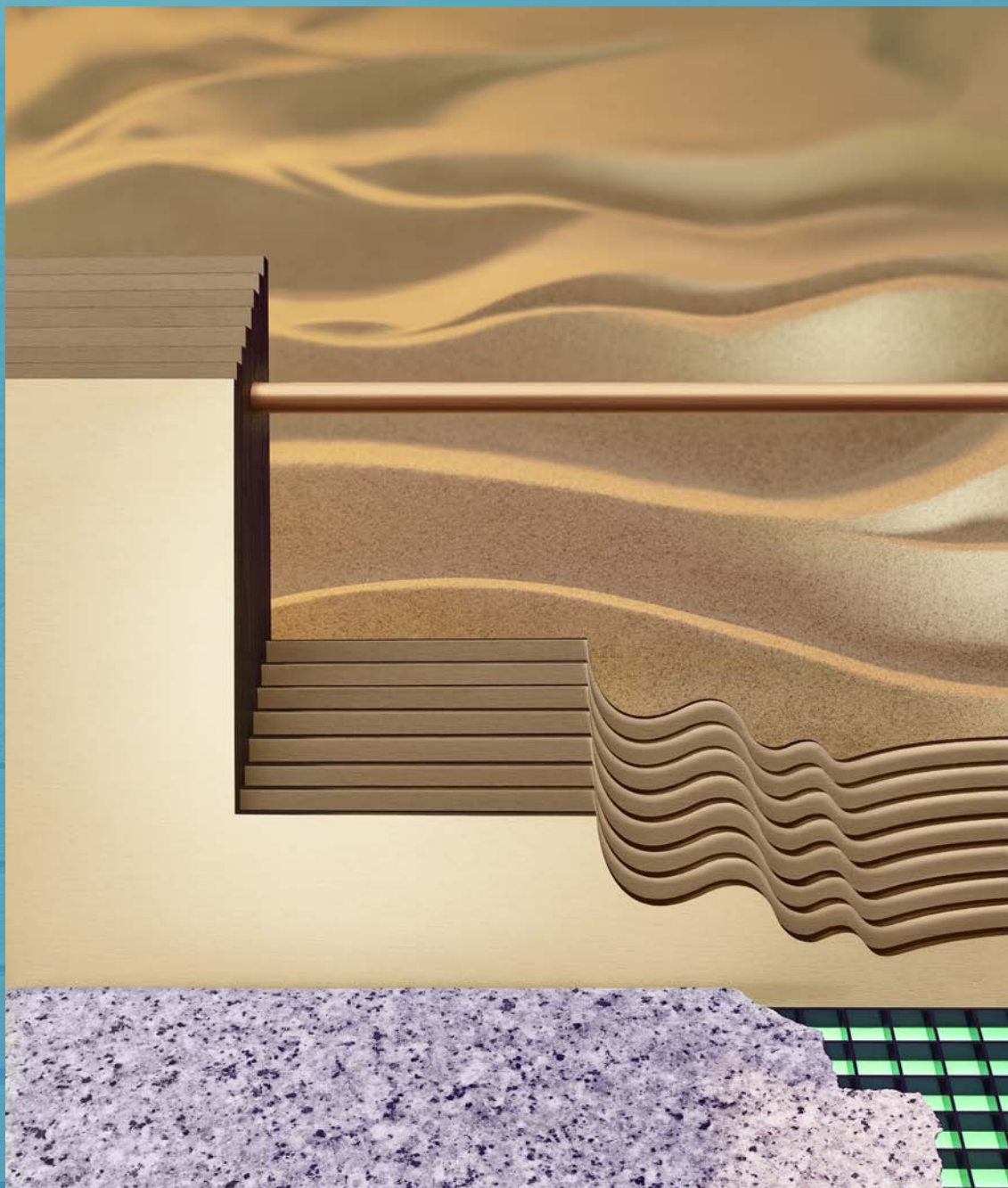


FRAME

THE GREAT INDOORS

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THE FASHION OF FITNESS

Tapping into the
wellness industry

Lessons from
David Chipperfield

Challenging
tomorrow's workplace

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a desert landscape. In the foreground, there are sand dunes with a wooden walkway that curves through them. The sky is a soft, hazy orange, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall tone is warm and minimalist.

Fitness

LAB

While some fitness fanatics are out to shrink in size, the wellness economy itself is swelling exponentially. Not only have health-related spaces upped their game — there's more appeal, more *design* — the trend is also invading retail, hospitality, work and living. Follow **THE FASHION OF FITNESS**.

The Fashion of Fitness

The headquarters of fashion label Dsquared2 saw the addition of a luxury spa and gym earlier this year (see p. 152).

Helio Barbetta

As personal transformation becomes a luxury commodity, more and more industries tap into the **WELLNESS SECTOR**.

Words
JONATHAN OPENSHAW

WE'RE ON A HEALTH KICK that goes beyond treadmill desks in contemporary offices. The success of athleisure in recent years marks the merging of health, wellness and style, but the trend is only one proof point of a far broader shift towards personal transformation as a luxury commodity. Whereas luxury once meant the latest handbag or gold-logo-encrusted sunglasses, it is now just as likely to signify an investment in experiences that build a 'better you'.

'Consumer demand is increasingly drawn to an introspective, inside-out purchasing desire; it's less about "what I have" and more about "who I am"', says Anni Hood, founder of the Wellness Business Consultancy and cofounder of Well Intelligence. 'Creating emotional connection is vital for brand sustainability in what is becoming

a much more esoteric consumer environment. Putting the soul back into opulence means meeting the core of what really matters to people – meaningful connection, authenticity and simplicity.'

Recent research from Harris Group found that 72 per cent of millennials prefer to invest in experiences rather

than material goods, signalling a move away from acquisition towards less tangible services. Instead of surrounding themselves with stuff, a

majority of younger consumers seem to be looking for brands that can be lifelong partners in a personal journey of self-improvement. This is the crux of the transformation economy, which has seen consumer focus shift from goods to services to experiences, the latest being personal transformation. »

'Health-enhancing services are gaining in popularity'



Paula Lobo



↑ From athleisure to 'fitniture'

Many designers who viewed the upswing of high-end fitness apparel are revamping exercise equipment. Hong Kong-based Edmond Wong conceals work-out apparatus inside a series of furniture that includes a pull-up table, a dumbbell lamp and a sit-up daybed.

← From experience to transformation economy

More and more consumers are rejecting tangible products in favour of mind- and body-enhancing experiences and events such as The Museum Workout, a joint effort by New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, Monica Bill Barnes & Company and performer Anna Bass. Each session combines a fitness class with a museum tour.



Sven Philipp

↑ From closed-off to design-led

Boutique fitness studios are on the rise, with high-intensity spinning classes at the forefront of the development. A far fetch from the traditionally ‘clinical’ gym, these studios resemble sumptuous hospitality venues. Berlin’s Becycle features a bar, a lounge, a sportswear shop and a co-working zone. Götz + Bilchev Architekten and DRAA collaborated with Lien Tran to realize Becycle’s nightclub-like interior design.

FIVE FACTORS POISED TO ENRICH WELLNESS FACILITIES

- ① **Programmable spaces.** Digital backdrops, immersive projections and hi-tech lighting will ensure seamless transitions from one activity to another.
- ② **Participatory content.** User-generated content will become the norm. Participants’ performances will provide real-time content.
- ③ **Physical and virtual unite.** Real-life experiences will be augmented by simu-

- lators, immersive technologies and interactive screens.
- ④ **Performance arenas.** A good balance of shared experiences and individual performances will motivate participants.
- ⑤ **Out and proud.** Home work-outs will yield ground to fitness studios that provide a healthy social atmosphere and an opportunity to shop. – BQ

Backing up the Harris Group study is a report released by the Global Wellness Institute, which shows that the wellness sector grew 10.6 per cent from 2013 to 2015, the year in which it reached a grand total of US\$3.72 trillion. These statistics are based on a diverse group of ten markets known as the ‘wellness cluster’ – everything from beauty aids and weight loss to health tourism – and the report’s projections indicate a mounting growth rate that will continue at least until 2020. During the period reviewed, 16,000 new spas opened their doors and an extra 230,000 people found jobs in the wellness industry.

In the heroin-chic 1990s, health and beauty routines were often seen as dirty little secrets to be kept behind closed doors. In the current climate, saturated by social media, the opposite is true. Viral phenomena such as ‘Transformation Tuesday’ (10.7 million hashtags on Instagram) compete with endless proclamations of ‘self-love’ (7.5 million) and ‘me time’ (2.9 million). It’s no wonder that brands from Nike to Adidas to Lululemon are investing in increasingly sophisticated spaces where consumers gather to worship at the altar of the selfie. Although it might not come as a surprise to find that sportswear companies are expanding into work-out facilities, fitness is entering other sectors as well. Sports permeate all aspects of everyday life, giving rise to boutique fitness studios that combine exercise, hospitality, retail and a host of related amenities. Take London department store Selfridges, which launched the nearly 3,500-m² Body Studio at its Oxford Street flagship last year (*Frame III*, p. 106). Body Studio – the store’s largest single department – covers everything from athleisure to ‘facial work-outs’ for keeping cheeks trim.

It doesn’t stop there. You’ll discover spaces supporting physical wellbeing

‘Consumer focus has shifted from goods to services to experiences and now to personal transformation’

inside Silicon Valley’s biggest tech companies and at high-end hotels that cater for guests with health-focused lifestyles. From in-house nutritionists and neuroscientists to lunch-time work-out sessions under the guidance of personal trainers, health-enhancing services are gaining in popularity.

It’s easy to be cynical about the commercial motives that prompt brands and companies to throw their weight behind the transformation economy, but we should also consider the scale of the global health crisis. According to researchers at the Johns Hopkins

Bloomberg School of Public Health, 86 per cent of US adults will be obese or overweight by 2030, and PricewaterhouseCoopers estimates that workers’ sick days cost UK employers £29 billion a year. Developed countries face an unprecedented health crisis driven by sedentary, office-based lifestyles and the consumption of industrially processed foods. If it’s possible to reframe the notion of luxury – to put it in a context with fewer logos, less leather and a greater sense of wellbeing – surely that’s a good thing?

Brands and companies that truly take transformation to heart have the opportunity to become valued partners for clients, guests, tenants and employees in pursuit of self-improvement. And as health, fitness and wellbeing turn into aspirational activities, architects and designers are responding with spaces that fit *all* the needs of today’s body-conscious society. ●