

IDEAS AND INDUSTRIES FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS

We asked three renowned futurists for their predictions of what will shape Africa – and the world – in the next decade. Brace yourself for what’s coming.

THE 10 SEISMIC SHIFTS

Renowned New York-based futurist **Faith Popcorn**, who famously coined the word “cocooning” in 1981 and got most of her predictions right, explores the decade ahead with her 10 “seismic shifts”. “Unthinkable. Apocalyptic. End of days,” says Popcorn. “Those are some of the ways this moment in history is being described. As a futurist, I’m here to tell you that life goes on, with our current challenges quickening our cultural evolution.” In her own words, here’s what she thinks is unfolding over the next decade. “That’s your checklist for understanding our fast-evolving future. The accelerating rate of change may seem scary, but it means there’s never been more opportunity to reinvent tomorrow. Let’s get going,” she says.

1. The Metaverse mandate: Living in the metaverse, a parallel digital universe, is our next frontier. It’s being built by people like artist Krista Kim, whose NFT (non-fungible token) Mars House – a file showing a stunning intergalactic abode – sold for over \$500,000. Nightlife will get ‘versed, too. The pandemic may have closed Cape Town’s Raptor Room, but how about tuning into its live music in the ether? Brands are already colonizing this space, with Gucci offering meta-handbags and sunglasses

in Roblox, the online gaming platform.

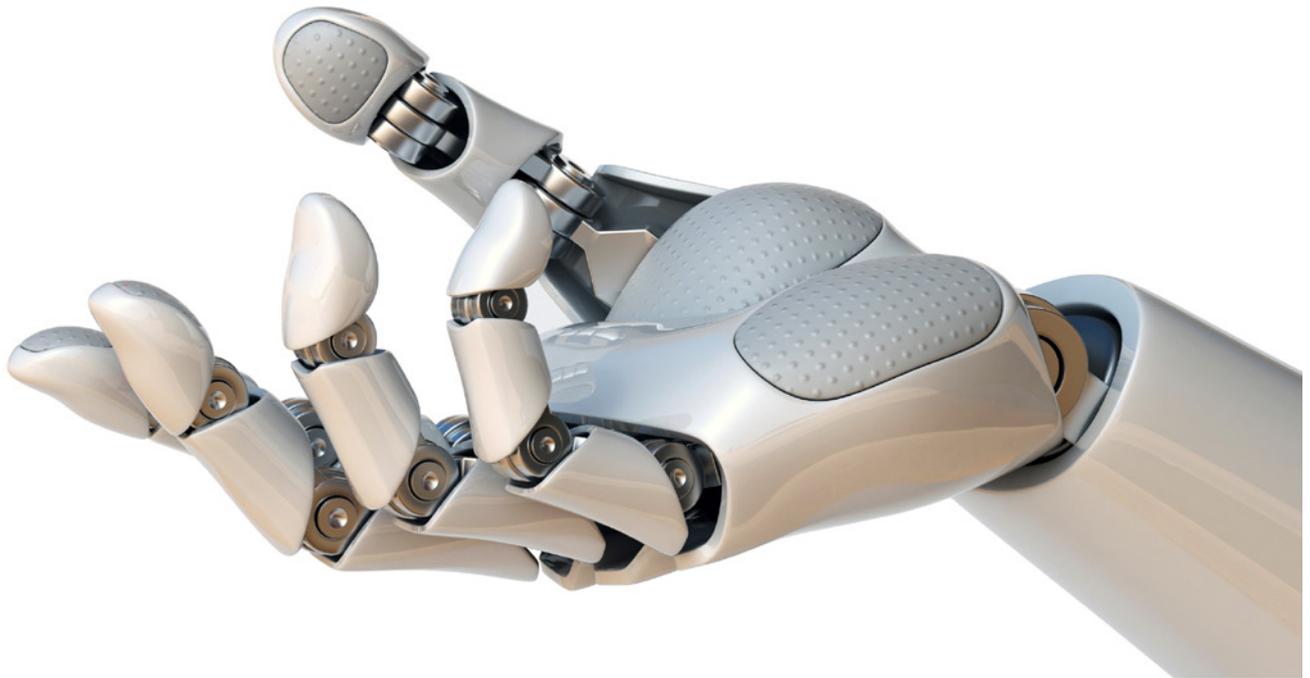
2. The humanoid revolution:

We’re merging with technology, and next-gen human/microchip hybrids are coming. Elon Musk’s Neuralink, a brain-internet interface, is already being tested in monkeys; a rival company, Synchron, is green-lighted for human trials. And Musk is also creating Tesla Bot, a humanoid robot that will do our dirty work. Every business should get ready for this revolution.

3. Diversity driven: We’re embracing and elevating the complexities of each person’s unique identity. Mass is over; inclusivity is the new need. Look at Geenie World, the beauty marketplace that uplifts brands that identify as BIPOC- and LGBTQIA+-owned. Sharing stories of how you are supporting the previously marginalized is every business’ mandate.

4. Dark revelry: “The world’s a mess – let’s party” is a rising vibe. The need is to escape it all, which is why alcohol and drug use is reportedly soaring, as are videogames that let you “be bad” virtually. Brands and entrepreneurs that allow people cut loose without getting arrested will soar.





5. Mainstream mysticism: Self-knowledge and soul navigation help us manage the intensity and uncertainty of life. Daily LSD microdosing is already here. Next: Drop-in centers and resorts that guide you through hallucinogenic trips will be the new yoga. Is your business ready to support this consumer?

6. ProgramMe: The desire for personalization is surging – “Know me, optimize me!” is the consumer mantra. What’s ahead: Wearables, swallowables, apps like CompanionMx that eavesdrop on our conversations, and chatbots like Ellie that comfort us. AI will soon be managing our every mood moment.

7. Planet in peril: The United Nations says it’s “code red for humanity”. The drumbeat of climate change is quickening, as is that of eco innovation with Gen Z leading the charge. Every brand must be transparent and proactive about how it’s helping either to preserve the environment... or colonize outer space.

8. Gender blenders: “Male or female” is no longer the question. Now, gender is fluid, not fixed. Zanele Muholi, a South African visual activist and photographer, has been documenting those who are transgender and intersex. Designers like Timeekah Murphy are creating fashion that reflects our non-binary moment. Stop thinking of your consumers as “he” or “she” – we’re in the era of “they.”

9. The Big Boom: While many marketers are GenZennial-focused, the Boomers have the money, they are going fully digital, and they spent 49% more online in 2020 than they did in 2019. Science is keeping us working, playing and reproducing at later and later ages. Who’s ready to recognize

this incredibly vibrant generation and serve their emerging needs? If you say, “I am,” you win.

10. The New NeighborGood: With times this tough, every business needs to show its purpose and activate for social good, but not in a bandwagon-jumping way. Ask, how can I respond quickly and authentically to the news? Look at Airbnb opening its doors for free to Afghan refugees – this is a new model of using what you have and operating straight from the heart.