

INTRO: WHAT IS COOL AMONG EURASIAN YOUTH?

Trendconsultancy agency Science of the time, based in the Netherlands, has conducted the biggest research on what EurAsian youth thinks “cool”: attractive and inspiring with future growth potential. Almost 3.000 students from more than 15 universities were involved, from Shanghai to Lisbon. All students were commissioned to upload at least four examples of “cool” to www.scienceofthetime.com. This way the EurAsian Cool City Hunt project has collected over 10.000 examples of “cool”. The very best Top 25 of those are now published at the website. The research projects gives the most thorough overview of what grabs the attention of EurAsian Youth. What inspires them? What has seductive power to them? Ten key insights are presented here.

1. The law of the General and the Particular



The Law of the General and the Particular is more powerful than ever before! As many of us are living in more general and broader contexts than before – keyword: globalization - we see the attraction growing of all that is close by, that is intimate. Of all that represents our roots. Of all that we can call really our own. The EurAsian Cool City Hunt project documents this loud and clear. Many of us travel over various countries. When we come back after travelling nothing is more cool than brushing your teeth in your own bathroom feeling a small carpet of moss that you have cultivated

yourself under your feet. (nr 11 in the Top 25) All over Asia and Europe we see traditional festivals gaining in coolness. For instance, the Poomba Festival in Korea (nr. 14). Why? Because it reconnects to our national roots. These are more cherished in times that we all develop a global outlook on life. From Southern Europe the I-deck was contributed as an example to the Cool City Hunt project: it is a mix of the contemporary Ipod and the old pickup gramophone. Designed in order to give us back that nostalgic physical-interactive moment with the music we are playing (nr. 22).

2. The power and Attractiveness of Web 2.0

Today, my 14 year old daughter told me she's pregnant. I work as a public speaker for promoting celibacy and safe sex. FML

#4685696 (250) | I agree, your life sucks (16064) - you totally deserved it (9289)

On 08/20/2009 at 4:15pm - kids - by younggrammy (woman) - United States (Pennsylvania)

That the younger generations gather and connect on the virtual platforms of the Internet, we know of course. Call it Web 2.0. Some people have started proclaiming Web 3.0 or even Web 4.0. That is nonsense - or at least totally unnecessary. The power and attractiveness of Web 2.0 is far from exhausted. On the contrary, every month brings new cool examples. At www.fmylife.com (nr. 19 – the f stands for fuck) a healthy growing community of young people shares ‘life’s little fuckovers’ in a pretty original format. Commenting on each other, supporting and criticizing each other. At www.rentafriend.com (nr. 74) they effectively search to fulfill all their expected and unexpected needs with regards to social contacts. And at www.43things.com (nr. 9) but also at www.dreambank.com (nr.93) they follow and stimulate each other’s dreams. Getting connected to these intense Web 2.0 empowered activities and desires, should be key to future marketing and communication. Unfortunately, many still do not get it.

3. Social and Eco-Responsibility



Social and Eco-Responsibility are appreciated issues amongst young people in EurAsia. They provided us with an original and distinctive angle (that shouldn't cost too much!). At www.kiva.com (nr. 24) you can donate (some) money to really poor people and follow how they manage to give a positive turn to their lives with that money. (There is a clear link with Web 2.0). In the physical world of Amsterdam we see strong and solid women gathering in order to shop together for social responsible gear (nr. 18). Pleasure and the Good Cause reunited. Club Watt (nr. 98) now goes global. There the energy of the steps on the dancing floors is transmitted in energy in order to enlighten the whole club. It is considered cool all over Asia and Europe – and most probably everywhere else as well.

4. Cherish your City



Never underestimate young people's love for the cities they live in. This love is exuberantly documented in the EurAsian Cool City Hunt project. (And, of course, there is a link with insight number 1: when we are going to live in more general and broader contexts, the closeby and the intimate grow in attractiveness, including your own city.) WallsNoteBook strikes a chord worldwide. It is a sketchbook with many empty walls in your city. You can practice in the sketchbook, before you will leave your tag on the real wall of your choice (nr.2). Other example: also the guy who is painting the houses of snails, afterwards releasing the 'personalized' snails in his favorite city park is not silly but cool (nr. 13). He is cherished the subtle and little beauties of life. And enriching its city with it.

5. My Life, My Body: Let Us Decorate



Chopstick bra's in Shanghai – quite indeed a bra with non-disposable eating sticks in it. Jeans with a computer key board on it – from Skopje, Europe. Young subway travelers who dress themselves like virtual anime figures – from Tokyo and Seoul. It all radiated the desire to show who you are. To show who you are in a distinctive manner. New? Of course not. Old as the roads to Rome, as we say. However, every new generation builds another part of that road. And it is shiny and new and totally not blasé. Call the trend: My Life, My Body: Let Us Decorate! Everybody who knows to tap into this trend adequately – that is: creative and original – will grab the attention and goodwill of EurAsian youth. No other generation has such desire to put its identity into its appearances. And by the way, they submit these appearances for general scrutinizing on www.checkyourimage.com (nr.7).

6. The Power of Surprising Design



Never, ever underestimate the power of Surprising Design. Whatever savvy young people may appear, they are shorter in this world than anyone in his thirties or further. Therefore they are more impressionable. More (easy) impressionable by anything that looks original and surprising. More impressionable by anything that is convincingly off the beaten track. Any brand or company that want to tap into that impressionability must know how to use innovative design. And therefore must know the recent list of coolest examples. A USBstick designed as a retro clothespeg: cool. (nr. 26 from Lisbon). A pillow with an extra arm attached to it, to hug you in your sleep when you are alone in the bed: cool (nr. 53 from Minsk). A tattooed tooth: cool (nr. 84 from Shanghai). The new Vogue magazine filled with 'happy, happy' extremely hip girls from Tokyo's fashion district: cool (nr. 63 from Tokyo). And that little carpet from organic moss, we have mentioned already.

7. Cool Masculinity

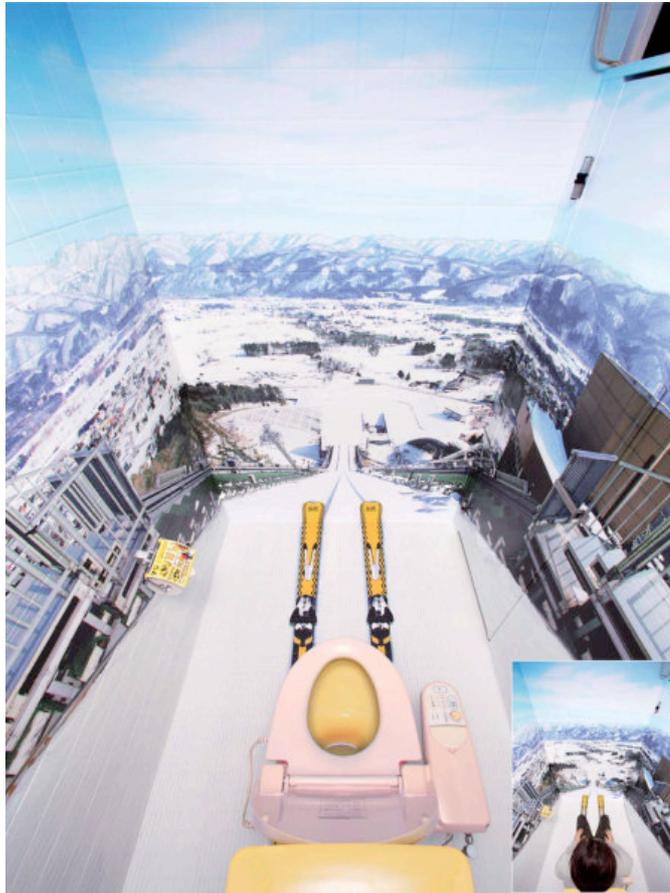


When we focus on what the EurAsian male contributes to the Cool City Hunt research when it comes to cool masculinity, then we see examples abound that show males in over-the-top, macho gestures and activities, far beyond the realities of everyday life. This is the case on both continents. Seriously executed, but fake (and high paid) kidnap adventures are considered cool (nr. 5). A weekend of war playing with your mates on a deserted place at the country side: utterly cool. Illegal motor surf boarding in the canals of Amsterdam (nr 28): Man, you have me hooked. Young men these days are living in a highly feminized world. They react with over the top ‘symbolic’ macho activities. Which they proclaim: cool.

8. Cool Feminity

When we focus on what EurAsian females contribute to the Cool City Hunt when it comes to cool femininity, then we see examples abound that show women Who Really Have Capacities – and who therefore really are going to make it in life. This is even stronger so in Asia than in Europe. Cool example: successful Korean women start online selling businesses and show themselves and their successes as the Ultimate Example (nr. 3). So where masculine cool often exhibits an escape from the real world, feminine cool primary aims at striving to get a top position in the real world. It is an indication that women will be the future first sex. Do we compare Europe and Asia then we can clearly document that Fighting Hard is more an Asian value than an European one. This might not be a surprise, but the Cool City Hunt project shows what it looks like.

9. Alternative Commercial Communication



“Alternative” commercial communications often are considerably appreciated by the Young EurAsians. As long as they are original, creative and unexpected. (Therefore, television commercials seem to appeal the least.) Lipton Tea built a great tea garden park in Istanbul – embracing the city (insight 4) and at the same time emphasizing that they understand and respect the authentic tea culture of the Middle East (nr 24). Coca Cola introduces its Gorgio Max Coffeebrand in Japan by introducing it on creatively redecorated toilets. The toilets are painted giving you the illusion as if you are standing at the top of a ski slope. On the floor are ski’s with shoes on it. You can shove your feet in it. In the meanwhile you are simply sitting on the toilet pot. The whole ambiance aims at giving you that powerful “racing” feeling - empowered by the new coffee brand (nr.46). And then there is the Eau de Pussy concept sparkling water drink. When you order the drink you are supposed to also get shown a view of the beautiful lady who bathed in the water that you are actually going to drink. (nr. 74). Commercial communication should be distinctive. The EurAsians participants of this research illustrate it with many examples.

10. Empower and Enrich my Life

Last but not least, a rather ‘abstract’ guideline. Please, be aware that everything that really empowers, that really enriches life or imagination, will be embraced. Inversely proportional: nothing is more boring than a gadget without the right spirit. In the whole Top 100 we made out of this research, there is not any gadget mentioned: too artificial, too commercial, too one dimensional, far too less distinctive and creative. If you want to appeal to EurAsian youth, please, avoid that. For instance, by taking these insights as a serious guideline.

Carl Rohde is head of www.scienceofthetime.com , a virtual network of market- and trend researchers worldwide. Next to that he is professor Trend Watching at Fontys Universities. Ingeborg Bruinewoud works at www.scienceofthetime.com and coordinates the international Cool City Hunt project.