



Influencer Trends Wrapped



Review of
2023

Introduction

A YEAR OF INFLUENCER TRENDS OVERVIEW

2023 was a whirlwind of influencer trends, from extravagant brand trips to the rise of "delulu" culture. But amidst this chaos, three overarching themes emerged that defined the year:

1. The Veil of Influence Has Been Lifted

Audiences are becoming increasingly aware of the business behind influencer marketing, leading to more scrutiny and criticism of influencers. This trend is reflected in the rise of "deinfluencing," where people are speaking out against influencers they believe are misleading or inauthentic and/or encouraging less mindless buying inspired by social media.

2. The Year of the Girlie

Celebrations of female achievement and joy were everywhere in 2023, from the *Barbie* Movie to the Taylor Swift Eras Tour, the Women's World Cup, and Beyoncé's *Renaissance* tour. This trend empowered women and girls to embrace their "girlie" interests without shame. However, it also led to the use of phrases like "Girl Math" and "I'm just a girl" to describe things that were considered feminine or stereotypically girly. This language can be seen as both empowering and problematic, as it can both celebrate femininity and reinforce harmful gender stereotypes.

3. Confidence Beyond Perfection

There was a shift away from cookie-cutter perfection in 2023, as people embraced their uniqueness and authenticity. This was reflected in trends like "being delulu," "tube girl," and the "it girl" trend. These trends all celebrated individuality and self-expression, but they could also be seen as narcissistic or self-absorbed.

These three themes paint a picture of a year in which influencer culture evolved and adapted to the changing tastes and expectations of audiences. As we move forward, it will be interesting to see how these trends continue to shape the world of influencers and everchanging landscape of social media. Read on to get a recap of some of this year's biggest influencer and social media trend stories!



Timeline

2023

JANUARY



TRIPPIN' W.
TARTE

FEBRUARY



BOLD GLAMOUR
FILTER

MARCH



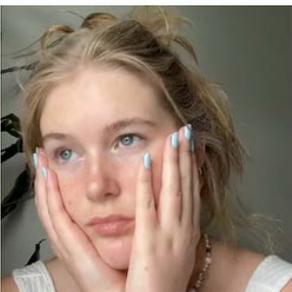
INFLUENCERS BORNE
OF FANDOMS

APRIL



SOFIA RICHIE'S
WEDDING

MAY



#CLEANGIRLTOK
TO #MESSYTOK

JUNE



THE NEW MAIN
CHARACTER ENERGY

JULY



BARBIE WORLD
MANIA

AUGUST



TUBE GIRL VIRALITY
& BEING DELULU

SEPTEMBER



FIFA WORLD CUP &
WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

OCTOBER



I-T-G-I-R-L
TREND

NOVEMBER



THE CEILING
CHALLENGE

DECEMBER



INFLUENCING TO GIVE
BACK

JANUARY: #TrippinWithTarte Controversy

Cosmetics brand Tarte found themselves at the centre of controversy more than once in 2023 as a result of their longstanding 'Trippin' with Tarte' Influencer brand trip concept. They kicked off the year by bringing approximately 50 influencers on a lavish trip to Dubai as an extravagant way to launch their Marajuca Juicy Glow Foundation, which almost instantly drew social media backlash and branded the activation as extremely out of touch, given this and recent years' economic outlook.

TikTok users were quick to attempt to estimate the cost per Influencer to bring them on this all-expenses-paid vacation, with some suggesting it may have cost between \$50,000-\$100,000 per talent & guest to have them join the brand in Dubai. While it appeared to be a partnership with Sephora Middle East, it's also likely that there would have been some sort of contra deals with the Ritz Carlton hotel given the volume of creators posting dedicated villa tours on TikTok, or even Visit Dubai itself, given the number of high-profile influencers in attendance.

While the brand was initially garnering plenty of negative attention for the trip, they also happened to post a 'Director of Marketing' role within only four days of the trip coming to an end, leading some TikTok conspiracy theorists to believe that it was such a "fail" that Tarte fired their marketing department (highly unlikely, given the tight timeframe that would have barely allowed for any reporting to be completed).

Despite the backlash, the brand was able to masterfully save face with their reactive social media response. The official Tarte brand channels and the CEO responded to these theories using trending sounds and cheeky captions, and even went so far to offer Spencer Pratt a fake Director of Marketing job when they noticed he was reviewing their products in a Sephora in the wake of the controversy. These tongue in cheek responses really fostered positive sentiment in comments and seemed to turn the conversations around, and it can't be argued that people are much more aware of the brand than they were before.



311M

Views of
#TrippinWithTarte (the
official hashtag for
Tarte's brand trips) in the
last 12 months



@SpencerPratt

"I am the new director of brand
marketing @tartecosmetics
#tartecosmetics #tarte"



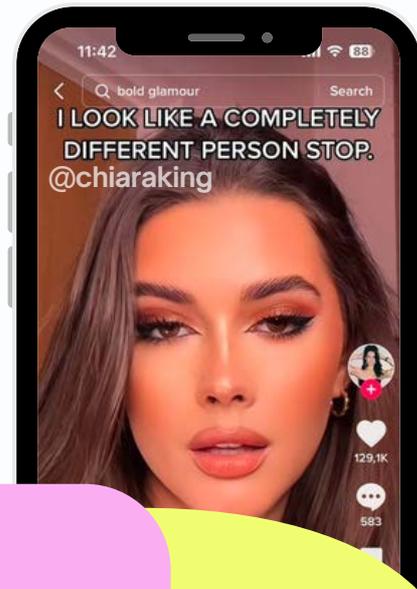
FEBRUARY: Bold Glamour Filter

In February, the incredibly advanced Bold Glamour filter took TikTok by storm. This is not your average beauty filter... it drew extreme criticism for its perpetuation of unrealistic beauty standards and is notable because the filter is nearly undetectable—it doesn't budge when obstructed!

TikTok declined to comment at the time, but AI experts speculated that the filter makes use of machine learning technology known as Generative Adversarial Networks where the users' face is completely mapped, then merged with the components of the filter, and the two are seamlessly integrated to perfectly merge with their own face.

It's hyper-realistic and many users criticised it for being "freaky," perpetuating western beauty standards, and damaging to one's self-esteem.

Dove responded with a rapid reactive influencer campaign where they encouraged users to "turn their back" on the use of this filter, using a hook that tells audiences how 85% of girls have used image retouch apps and filters by age 13 which drew critical acclaim.



577M
Views of
#BoldGlamourFilter on
TikTok

@joannajkenny
"DON'T USE THIS FILTER ⚠️
This is the viral filter everyone is using rn. Tell me honestly, have you ever not shown up irl because of how you've misrepresented yourself on social media?"

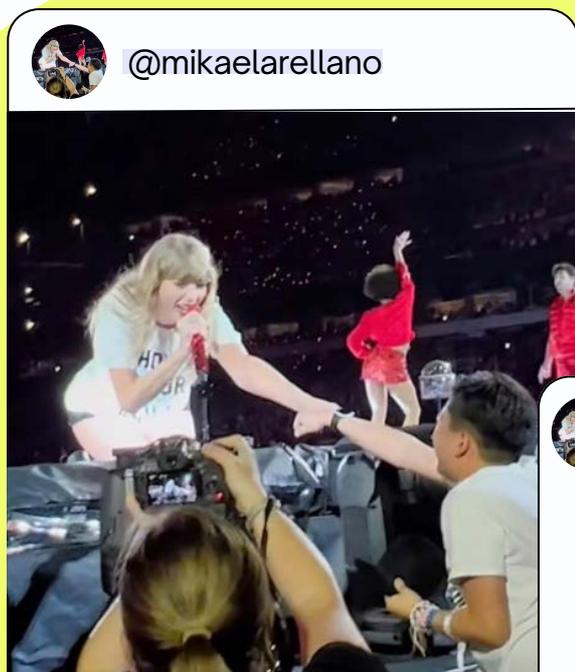


MARCH: Influencers Borne of Fandoms

Brands have been trying to crack fandoms to drive affinity for many years now, seeking to tap niche categories, universes, celebrity stan culture, and fan-built worlds to connect more deeply with their audiences. While the concept of fandom is nothing new, the idea that influencers could rise through the ranks of semi-anonymised fan communities from places like online forums, the bygone era of Tumblr, and fan conventions certainly is. In 2023, there was a cultural shift that carved out a place for super fans to become influencers in their own right, breaking through the superfan bubble and spilling into the mainstream as fan culture exploded this year.

Super fans of Taylor Swift, *The Hunger Games* franchise, *Barbie*, and Women's Sport all had their time in the limelight this year, with the media attention on each universe being higher than ever, and with TikTok algorithms pushing fan faces into public consciousness as they showed off their knowledge and drove intrigue into these super popular properties.

One such example includes Taylor Swift's super fan, Mikael Arellano becoming prominent figure in the Swiftie community after he went viral for originating a TikTok dance to the singer's *Bejeweled* and Swift incorporated it into the choreography for the song during the record-breaking Eras Tour. He became so iconic within the community that he was selected to receive Swift's "22" hat during the live performance he attended, indicating his influence within Taylor Swift's world and community, and fellow Swifties celebrated him and his "achievement" for their fandom in plenty of follow up content.



Super Swiftie Mikael Arellano meets Taylor Swift



APRIL: Sofia Richie's Influential Wedding

If you can believe it, Sofia Richie Grainge's wedding was only this year. Dubbed the "American Royal Wedding," this star-studded event cemented Sofia's It Girl status and smartly launched her bona fide influencer career. This strategic move was timed right when the whole world seemed to be craving the **#CleanGirl** look and the **#QuietLuxury** aesthetic which Sofia effortlessly embodied.

While Sofia had been in the public eye for years now, the launch of her TikTok just days ahead of her wedding was a smart, tactical move in upgrading her from teenage nepo baby to an elegant, married woman "brand." Speaking directly to camera, Sofia captured the attention and hearts of Gen Z as she casually conducted GRWM-style content and behind the scenes videos which made her luxurious wedding somehow feel approachable, personable, and captivating to her new audience of millions.

The wedding of course had plenty of celebs in attendance, but in keeping with Sofia's instant influencer status, she also included a handful of influencer talent including Marianna Hewitt and TikTok comedian Jake Shane.

The momentum of her TikTok debut continued and the launch was perfectly timed because following the wedding, Sofia took her new fans along on her honeymoon to the Maldives and then to get ready and attend the King's Coronation Concert where her Dad Lionel performed. Since, Sofia has inked long term partnerships with brands such as Jo Malone, Hourglass Cosmetics, and more.



65M
Number of 'likes' Sofia Richie Grainge has achieved on TikTok since hard-launching her wedding GRWM videos

@syddakid2222
"Just so you know your wedding is my royal wedding..."



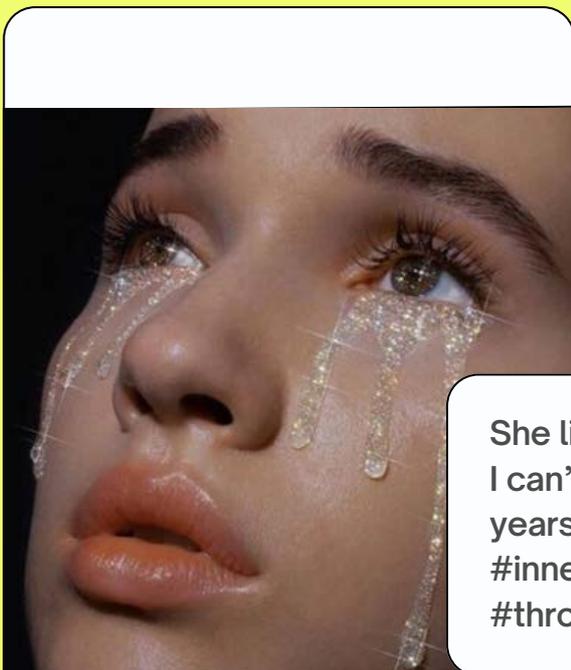
MAY: #CleanGirl to #MessyTok

While the first few months of the year saw an intense focus on luxury aesthetics, clean girl makeup, “that girl” energy, and the hustle culture epitomised in the “5-9 after my 9-5” trend, it was in the late springtime that nano and micro creators began to push back on these unattainable, wealth-coded aspirational ways of existing.

Inspired by the popular crying filter that proliferated on Snapchat (and popularised when Drake began using it as his concert), this movement was spurred by “normal people” who realised that perfection just wasn’t something they were seeking. In response, we saw an increase in messy aesthetics which began to dominate on social media.

Creators developed makeup tutorials inspired by the act of crying and indie sleaze styles cropped up yet again. The shift to unpolished looks, aesthetics, and attitudes signalled the rise of an “IDGAF” shift in culture that has continued to evolve over the course of the rest of the year.

The aesthetic of this content is also inspired by the 2014 Tumblr era, providing a nostalgic throwback to millennials’ teenage years when they had no responsibilities, plenty of daytime naps, late nights and furtive smoking. The “she lives inside of me trend” took off for it’s ability to appeal to our emotions surrounding our inner child through a look back to childhood years in the 2000s. Pop idols such as Billie Eilish, Gracie Abrams and Olivia Rodrigo as well as “regular girls” across TikTok have been using these “messy” and nostalgic aesthetics as a means of self-expression and therapy for communicating their feelings and issues with like-minded users.



2B

Views for #MessyTok
on TikTok

She lives inside of me...
I can't believe this was 16
years ago #nostalgic
#innerchild #2000skids
#throwback

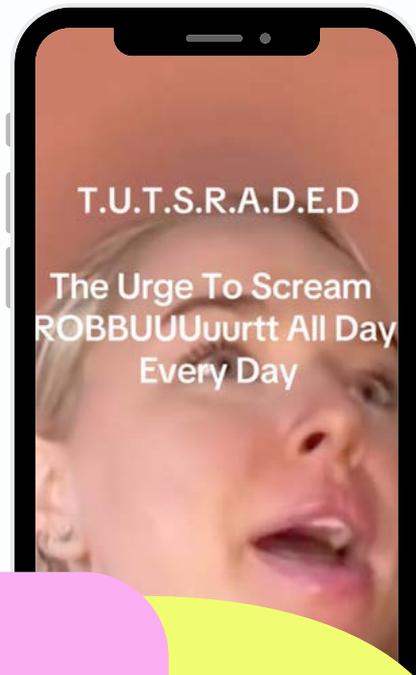
JUNE:

The New Main Character Energy

“Main Character Energy” has dominated social media culture since it first came to the fore on TikTok in 2021 soon after the pandemic. Whilst in previous years, “main character energy” took the form of personality-driven content and self-expression in the form of maximalist attitudes to fashion and daily routines, being the main character in 2023 shifted from a romantic depiction of your own life to embracing the weirder sides of it.

This year, content creators have harnessed the confidence to push back against societal expectations by expressing themselves in less than conventional ways—such as running an errand whilst their hair is setting in curlers. More recently, we have seen even your typical “That Girl”-types of creator share “bts” (behind-the-scenes) footage showcasing the messier side of their lives with comedic spins through the #ThingsISufferFrom trend. Since TikTok is a personality-first platform, “weird” is the new charming in 2023 and beyond.

Emerging empowered narratives of main character energy which challenge conventions are also coming fore in the form of #DINKs (Dual Income, No Kids) culture. Also, single women in their 30s are taking to TikTok to flip on its head the idea that hitting conventional life milestones under the pressure of time should be normalised. Across social media, women are sharing what main character energy should be all about - celebrating you, of course!



172M

Views for
#ThingsISufferFrom on
TikTok

Can't stop, won't stop
#ThingsISufferFrom
#ThisIsMe #Relatable



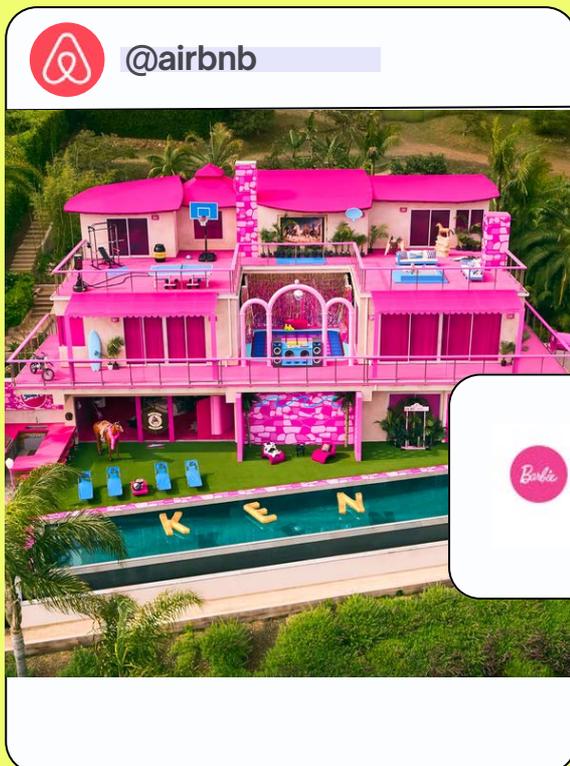
JULY:

Barbie World Mania

There is no denying the wild success of Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* in 2023. The much-anticipated film sparked official brand collaborations to a level never seen before, and encouraged countless unofficial brand and influencer iterations of content with millions of users around the world seeking to get in on the fun.

Influencers created hair, makeup, and outfit tutorials inspired by the film, and the iconic, star-studded soundtrack spawned plenty of reactive TikTok trends and dances, including an incredibly viral dance choreographed by TikTok dance darlings @CostNMayor set to the film's version of *Barbie World*. It drew over 48 million views and encouraged duets from countless users, including even Ashley Tisdale.

While the nostalgia and enduring love of the Barbie brand paired with its colourful aesthetics and star-studded cast made it an almost-guaranteed hit, its empowering message for women and girls inspired a groundswell of commentary on social media about the essence of what it means to be a woman in today's society. It can be credited as a core reason why 2023 was such a pivotal year for celebrating women's art, achievements, and successes and its impact will be felt for years to come.



1.4B
Views of #BarbieWorld
on TikTok



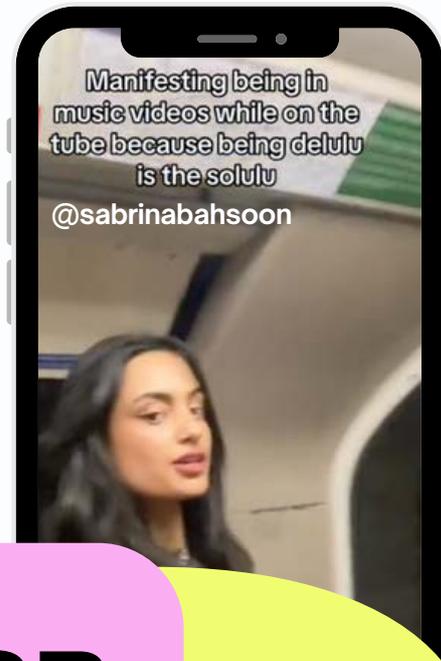
AUGUST: Being “Delulu” & Tube Girl Virality

Sabrina Bahsoon went instantly globally viral when she originated the eponymous “Tube Girl” trend. It was simple – Sabrina merely chose to film herself selfie-style whilst dancing confidently to rising hits on the London Underground and posting it to TikTok.

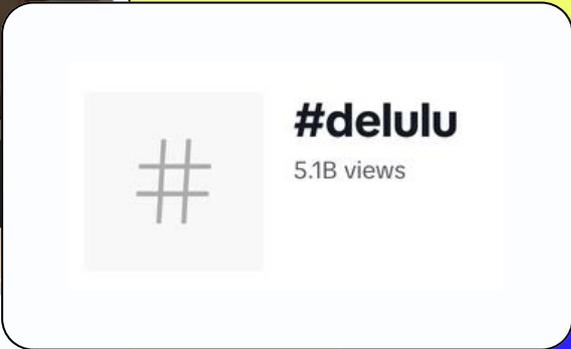
Her public display of unapologetic self-expression and confidence was remarkable because it defied social norms and unwritten codes that exist to discourage such behaviour in public spaces. Her content format inspired copycats in major cities around the world who were inspired to step out of their comfort zone and express their creativity.

This trend flourished around the same time that TikTok users began espousing the power of being “delulu” (i.e. “delusional”) in pursuit of their dreams and desires as a way of believing in and empowering oneself.

These complementary trends highlight the growing desire for personal freedom and eschewing what’s expected of us, particularly among younger generations. In a society that often prioritises conformity and self-consciousness, the Tube Girl trend serves as a reminder that it’s okay to let loose and express oneself without fear of judgment. It’s a testament to the power of social media to amplify individual voices and encourage self-acceptance.



1.8B
Views of #TubeGirl



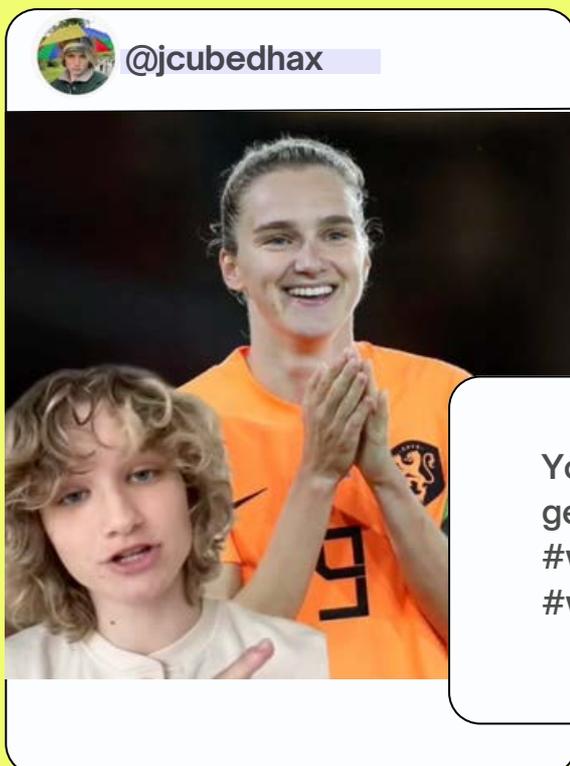
SEPTEMBER: FIFA World Cup & The Rise of Women's Football

The Women's World Cup took TikTok by storm, especially off the back of FIFA's partnership with the platform giving fans exclusive looks behind-the-scenes and tournament coverage that inspired. Google also made waves for their partnership which tailored its Search function to include more inclusive responses for "gender-ambiguous" sports searches. TikTok has been majorly responsible for generating unprecedented interest in women's sport this year, and has enabled communities to build and grow at accelerated rates. The hashtag #WomensFootball on TikTok now has over 5.1 billion views leading to a surge in popularity amongst Gen Z who historically haven't taken as much interest in traditional sport as previous generations

This year in particular the competition became a display of inclusivity and representation from the footballers themselves and fans of the sport. Influencers across social media platforms shared videos of the best moments from the games as well as displays of player affection and sideline romances on the benches.

The distribution of this footage and positive commentary from fans and influencers has caused a ripple effect of inclusivity that has reached far beyond the pitch and into more conservative countries helping to shape more progressive narratives where traditional media has failed to do so.

Gen Z's enhanced interest in women's football has influenced categories outside the sport where we have seen influencers converge their passions with their enthusiasm of the sport. For example, there has been an increased appetite for fashion + football where many new fans took to socials to discuss "What should I wear to a football game?" Fashion and football became so popular that influencers such as Amelia Dimoldenberg solidified the #BlokeCore movement as one of the trendiest styles this year and last.



5.1B
#WomensFootball

You guys it just keeps getting BETTERRRRRR
#wlw #gay #lebsian
#worldcup #wwc



OCTOBER: I-T-G-I-R-L, You Know I am *That Girl*

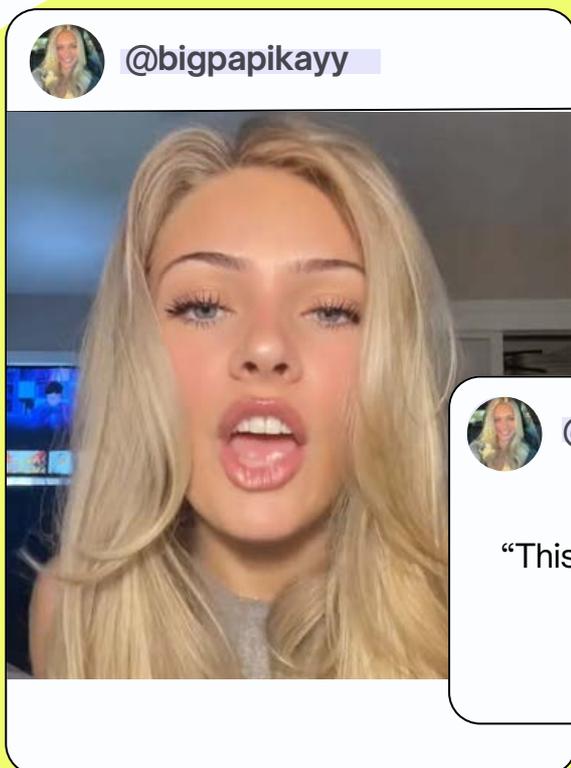
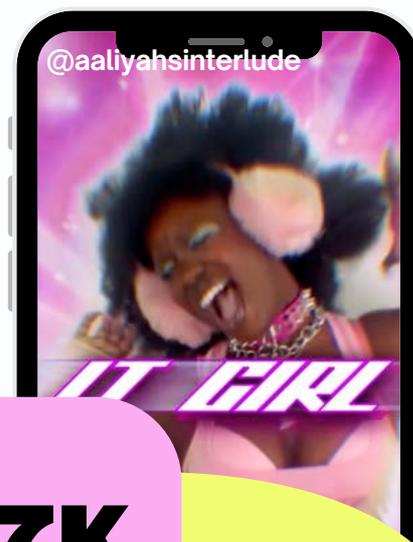
This Autumn we couldn't get up and coming artist Aaliyah's *Interlude's* TikTok viral hit out of our heads. The tune proliferated all over TikTok and subsequently rose through the charts thanks to its social media success accompanying thousands of users' "bad b*tch selfie"-style TikTok videos.

The song's fusion of Y2K style and Harajuku fashion resonates with a collective yearning for the 1990s and early 2000s, a time associated with carefree attitudes and vibrant subcultures. This nostalgia reflects a longing for simpler times and a connection to a shared cultural era.

The song's lyrics and accompanying TikTok videos advocate for self-expression, individuality, and embracing one's unique style. This emphasis on self-definition aligns with the growing societal trend towards personal autonomy and the ability to curate one's identity.

The lyrics' focus on self-confidence, independence, and unapologetic self-expression resonates with contemporary feminist ideals. The It Girl persona embodies a sense of empowerment and agency, challenging traditional gender norms and embracing female individuality.

In essence, the It Girl trend intertwines cultural nostalgia, self-expression, social media influence, feminist empowerment, and the ephemerality of digital trends. It serves as a microcosm of society's fascination with individuality, self-definition, and the power of online communities to shape cultural norms and aesthetics.



417K
Videos on TikTok using
Aaliyah's *Interlude's* "IT
Girl" song

@bigpapakayy
"This song is stuck in my head
👤"



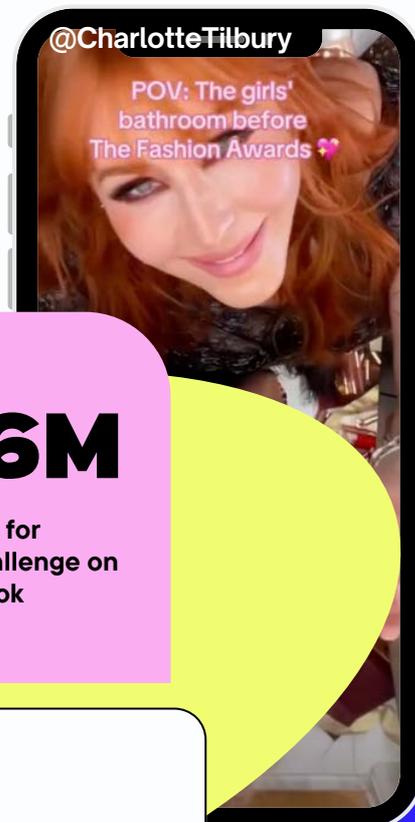
NOVEMBER:

It's all about the "Ceiling Challenge"

Recently, social media has literally been giving users a new perspective! The birth of the "ceiling challenge" has risen to new heights of fame with influencers and celebrities such as Charlotte Tilbury and Jenna Ortega getting in on the fun. It's a trend that started simply (originated by a 17-year-old named Josiah Lebante in the Philippines) which soon blossomed into a global sensation highlighting the unique power of TikTok to surface and expose content to viewers across all corners of the globe.

The content from this challenge sees people taping their phone to the ceiling and filming themselves from a bird's-eye view as they express themselves in various ways. The adaptability and ease of being able to replicate the challenge across a diverse range of activities—from singing and sleeping to performing crochet crafts and juggling basketballs — has enabled the challenge to become one of the biggest trends on TikTok this year.

Where 2022 was the year of the "0.5 selfie" - a.k.a. "the point five selfie" - 2023 looks like the year that kickstarted the "ceiling selfie" as the latest camera trend. The ceiling trend is shedding an entirely different perspective on already popular content formats influencers are used to shooting on social platforms today such as GRWMs, tutorials, wellness rituals, #CleanTok, unboxings and much more. Since the rise of "bestie culture", this style of filming is further enabling influencers to shoot content more easily with groups of colleagues, family, and friends so they can share new perspectives with their audiences. This challenge allows for so much creativity that it's definitely turning into a selfie format that has enough legs to last well into 2024.



596M

Views for
#CeilingChallenge on
TikTok



Christmas PJ party
#ceilingtrend #girlsnight
#christmastime
#friendsgiving



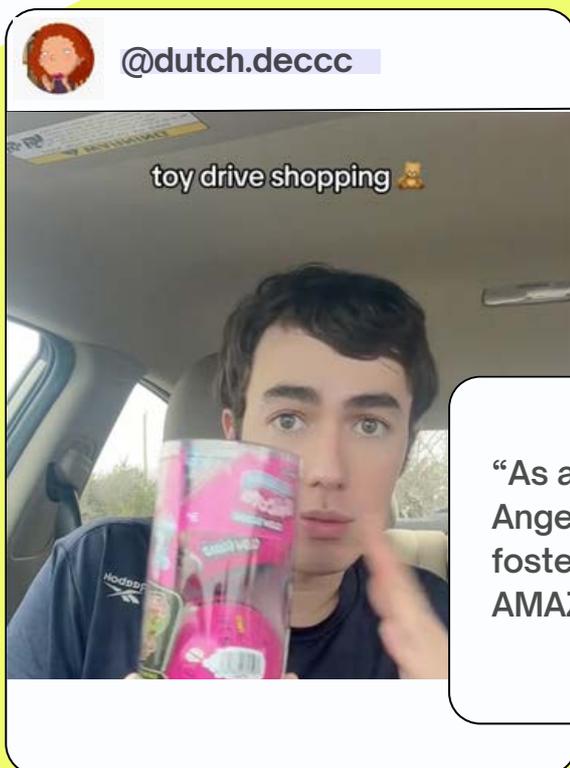
DECEMBER: Influencing to Give Back

“Haul” videos have long been a favourite content format of influencers and social media users. You probably know it well: a chatty talent speaks directly to the camera and shares with their audience the rundown of all their latest purchases, usually straight from the shopping bag or the box it arrived in. From clothes and shoes, to cosmetics, decor, even groceries... if you can buy it, you can “haul it.” And who doesn’t love shopping?

In reality, this popular content format is known for garnering extreme criticism, and now as the world faces high cost of living crises, the humble haul can seem more out of touch than ever.

This year though, there’s been a noticeable rise in influencers encouraging their audience to shop for others in need, with many content creators reinventing the haul by sharing what they’ve purchased for their local “Angel Trees” (a popular charitable effort where anonymous families can be “adopted” by their community to receive gifts to open on Christmas morning).

It’s not a completely selfless effort—the influencers sharing their Angel Tree hauls are obviously garnering engagement, perceived philanthropic status, and earnings from their views. Even so, it has helped the Angel Tree concept gain notoriety and can help to encourage others with more means to give back to their local community, shopping for fun and spurring more people than otherwise would have to spend less on themselves this season and more on others who would be truly grateful.



144M
Views of #AngelTree on
TikTok in the last 30 days

“As a case worker thank you! Angel tree donors make our foster kids Christmas AMAZING.”





Conclusion

KEY LEARNINGS

The world of influencer marketing is constantly evolving, and 2023 was no exception. From the rise of female empowerment to the shift away from cookie-cutter perfection, there were a number of significant trends that emerged this year. Here are four key learnings from 2023's influencer marketing trends:

SCRUTINY REMAINS HIGH

Audiences are becoming more aware of influencer marketing and are more likely to scrutinize influencers they believe are misleading or inauthentic.

IT'S FINALLY BECOMING A GIRLS' WORLD

There was a rise in female empowerment in 2023, with many trends celebrating women and girls embracing their "girlie" interests without shame.

PERFECTION IS SO PASSÉ

There was a shift away from cookie-cutter perfection in 2023, as people embraced their uniqueness and authenticity.

THE GOODFLUENCER

There was a growing movement of influencers using their platform for good, by encouraging their audiences to shop for others in need and raise awareness of charitable causes.



THANK YOU!



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