

21st Century Collecting

**How collecting is evolving:
now and in the future.**

Introduction

Collecting has undergone dramatic changes in the 21st century, with new ways to collect and new categories emerging. Catawiki and Hypebeast have collaborated on a comprehensive survey of five key geographic regions, exploring the most important factors shaping collecting. This mapping provides a fresh perspective on the dynamics of contemporary collecting, and it reveals fascinating insights into how behaviour is adapting to the digital world.

As we approach the end of the first quarter of the 21st century, this collaboration reflects on how the rapid pace of cultural evolution—fueled by technology and social media—has reshaped the landscape of collecting. Having looked back at the first quarter of the 21st century with *The Definitive List of 21st Century Icons*, Catawiki and Hypebeast now focus on current behaviours and the trends expected to define the future of collecting. The report aims to uncover what is driving growth in collecting and how new cultural and technological factors are transforming the market.

The 21st Century Collecting report shows that collecting is hugely popular and growing across all markets. By looking more deeply into who it is growing with and why, we see some exciting trends. The rise of social media, online communities, online marketplaces, and influencer culture plays a fundamental role in this surge, with spending expected to increase significantly in the coming years. Collecting has also evolved into a multifaceted activity for nearly all collectors, with many engaging in related pursuits that enhance their connection to the items they collect. For Gen Z collecting represents a new way to interact and socialise—both with peers who share similar interests and with brands, celebrities, and creators.

Technology from the recent past is amongst the biggest trends emerging shaping the future of collecting. For the younger generation, this is closely linked to the accelerating cycles of obsolescence, which have intensified their sense of nostalgia and driven their passion for collecting as a means to capture and preserve the eras they are experiencing. As we move forward, understanding these evolving trends and their impact on collecting will be essential for anticipating the future direction of this dynamic and ever-expanding field.

Methodology

Each key market—France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium—had 1,000 participants surveyed in August 2024 (500 participants for Belgium).

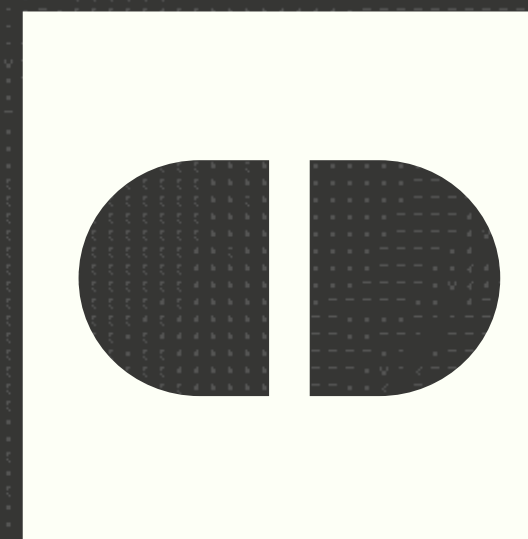
Participants ranged in age from 18 to 65. Initially, we defined collectors and those interested in collecting based on their genuine passion and interest for various categories of special objects. The survey then focused exclusively on this group of current and potential collectors.

Participants were asked a mix of fixed-choice and open-ended questions, with the survey structured into four parts.

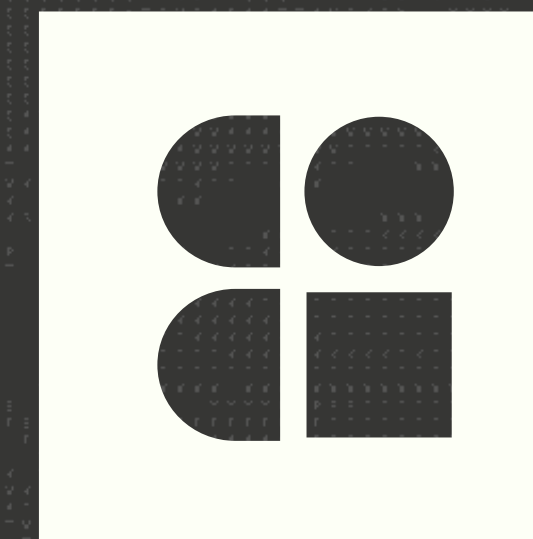
The survey aimed to test hypotheses related to demographic shifts, developments in online culture, the values associated with collecting, and emerging approaches to ownership.

SURVEY STRUCTURE

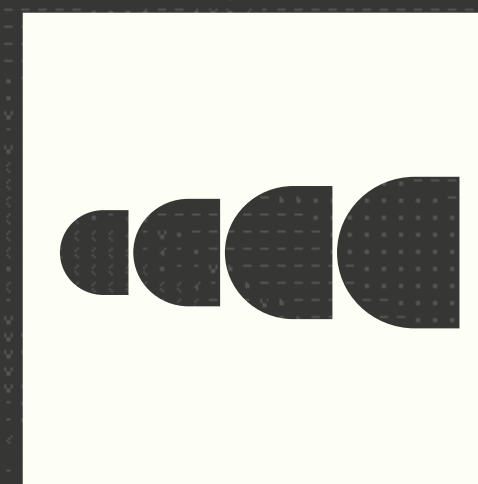
1 Questions about the participants and their relationship to collecting.



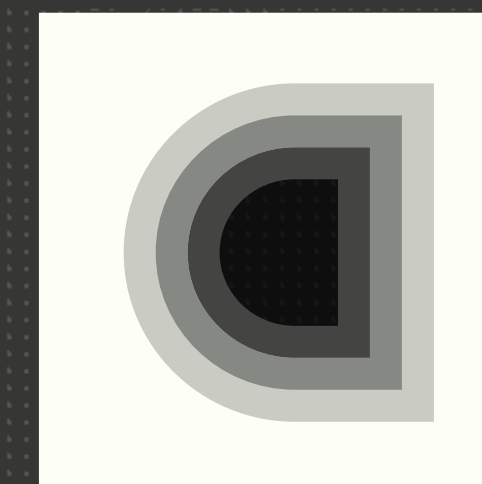
2 Questions about how participants collect the objects they are interested in.



3 Questions about how participants expect to collect in the future.



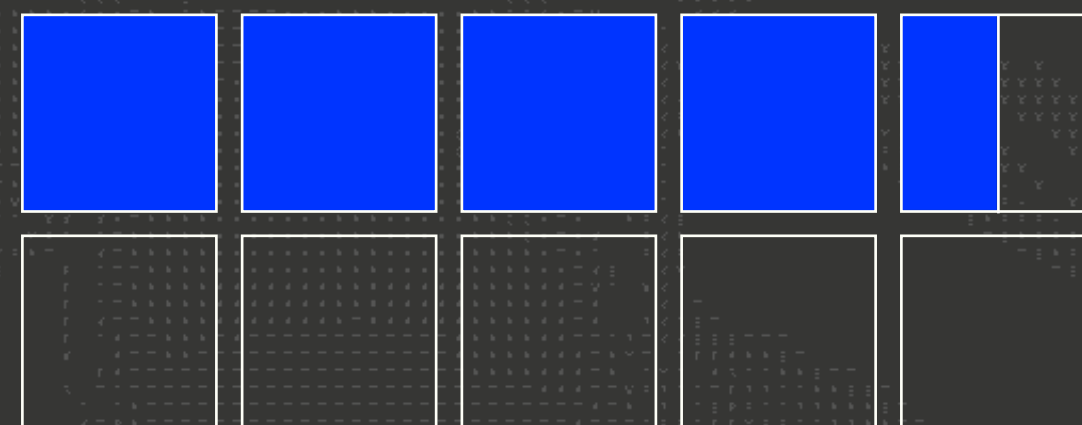
4 Questions about participants' opinions on how the world of collecting will evolve.



Main Conclusions and Global Insights

45%

of adults are active collectors.

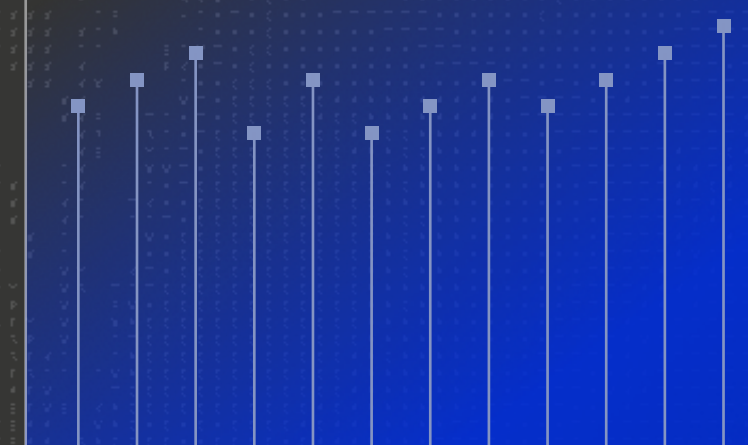


Are we all becoming collectors now?

Nearly half of all adults currently collect in some form.

€1,500+

average annual spend on collecting.



We are seeing changes to what is being collected and how it is being collected.

The online world will continue to play an increasingly important role in defining the culture of collecting.

14%

of adults are considering collecting.

90%+

of collectors participate in related activities to their collection.

70%+

of collectors think that technology will change how they interact with their collections.

30%

of collectors plan to increase spending in the next 3-5 years and 40% plans to maintain it.

“Gen Z embraces the social side of collecting.”

20%

of collectors follow social influencers in their interest areas.

Connection & Fandom: The majority are collecting in order to be part of something bigger. Collecting communities, fandoms and social media are all fuelling future collectors.

“Reselling is expected to rise as a key trend.”

40%

of collectors expect to resell items more than they currently do.

Reselling: The practice of reselling items is becoming more prominent. Collectors are not only acquiring but also trading and selling items, which is reshaping the landscape of collecting.

“Nostalgia for the 1970s and 1980s will be at an all-time high.”

“Vintage technology emerges as a major future collecting trend.”

Immediacy: Rapid obsolescence in technology is making items collectable at a much faster pace. Cycles of nostalgia are occurring more rapidly, with Gen Z collecting items out of nostalgia for the more recent past.

Germany

Germany shows the greatest potential for growth in collecting.

Germany is poised to become one of the highest-spending nations of collectors among the surveyed countries. Technology will play a pivotal role in this growth, as German collectors are emerging as online experts and tech-savvy connoisseurs. Fashion is one of the most favoured categories, with Germany increasingly influencing the global fashion scene. As Gen Z gravitates towards unconventional and rare items, such as toys, video games, and photography, it's clear that German collectors place a premium on pieces that reflect discernment, refinement, and insider knowledge. In a digital world where information is readily accessible, exclusivity has become an increasingly coveted trait, driving the decision to become collectors for many Germans. This may also explain why German collectors are so tech-savvy and why a significant number anticipate that digital advancements will dramatically reshape their collecting habits.

Collector Persona

ONLINE EXPERTS 	FUTURE GROWTH 	FASHION FOCUSED 
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DYNAMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

43%

of Germans are active collectors.



15%

of Germans are considering diving into the world of collecting.



34%[^]

spending rise in the next 3-5 years.

Germans are set to become the highest spending collectors across the surveyed countries.

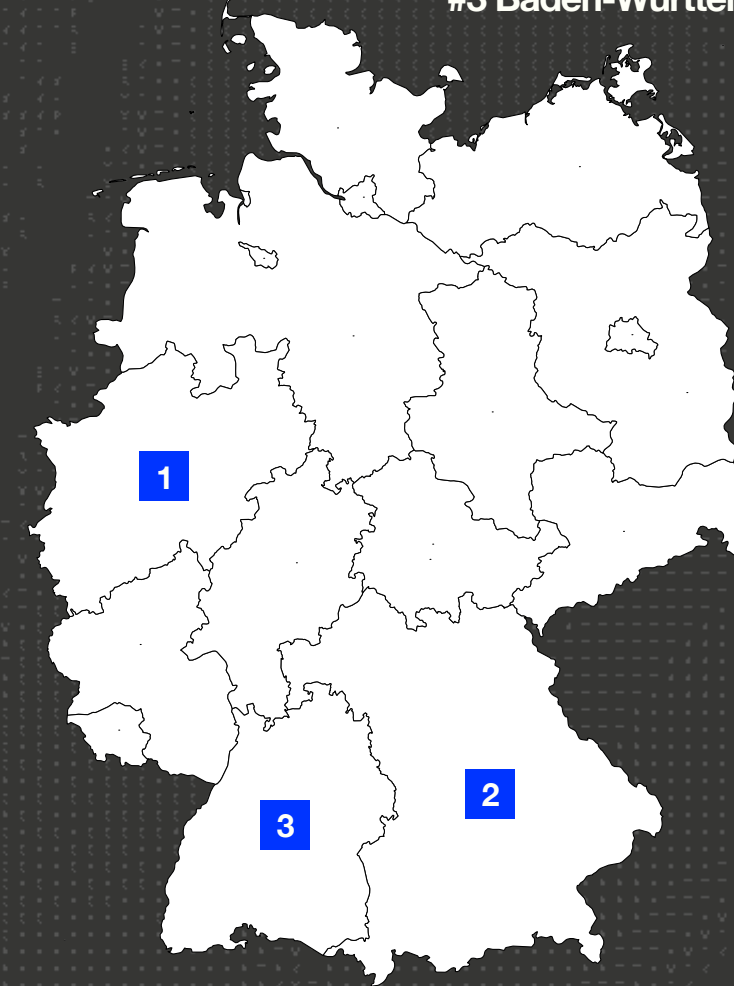
€1,623

yearly spend on collecting.



Collecting Hotspots

- #1 Nordrhein-Westfalen (NRW)
- #2 Bayern
- #3 Baden-Württemberg



20%

of collectors follow social influencers in their interest areas.



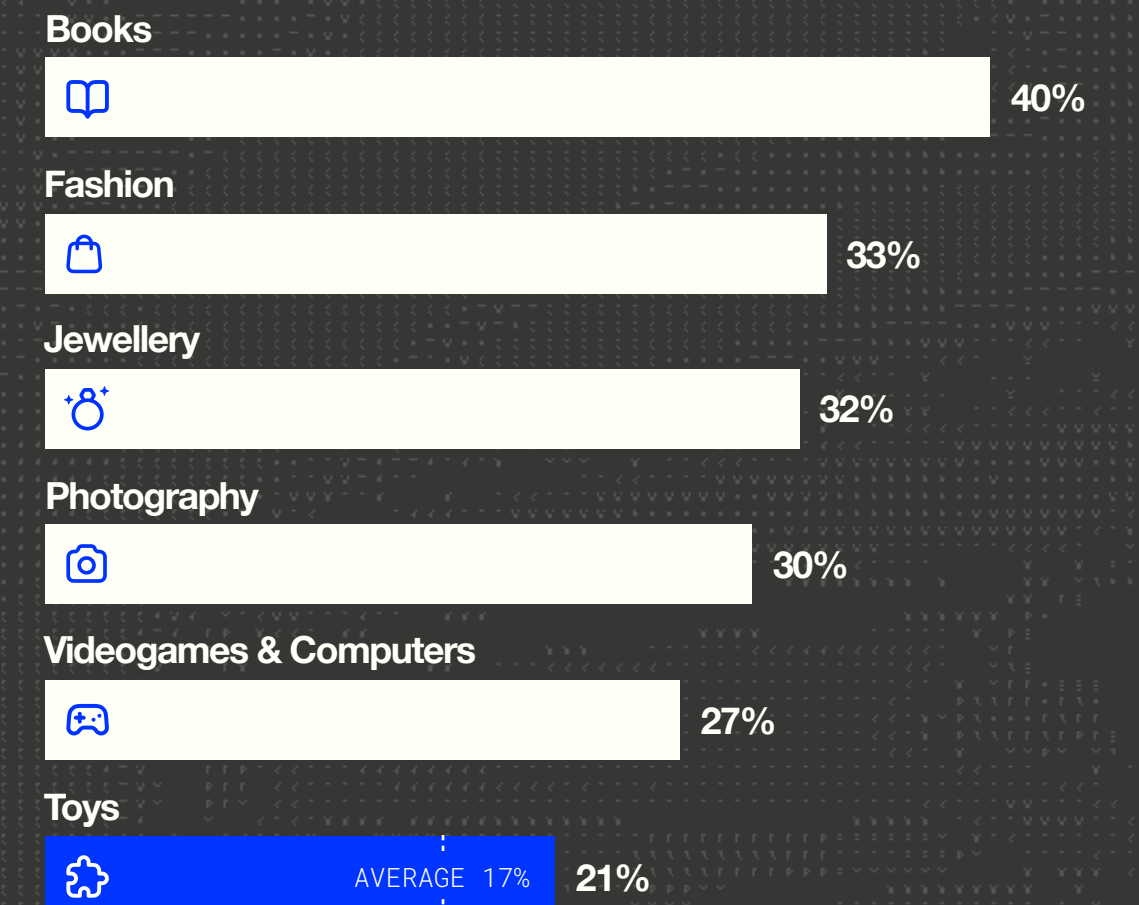
90%+

of collectors participate in related activities to their collection.

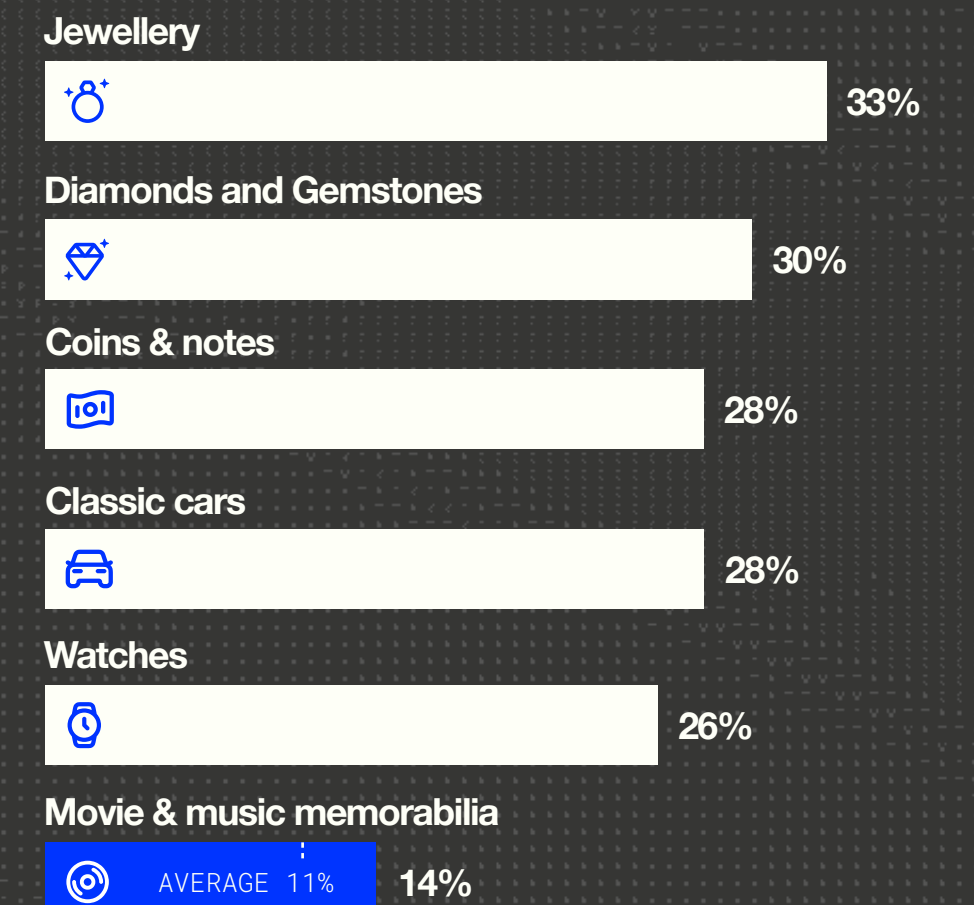


DISCERNING AND UNCONVENTIONAL

Top categories they are interested in:



Top categories they believe will be worth collecting in the future:



Germany



60%
of Gen Z in Germany plan to spend more on collectables (vs 32% average).

41%
anticipate reselling (vs 26% average).



Interested in jewellery, photography, toys, video games, computers.

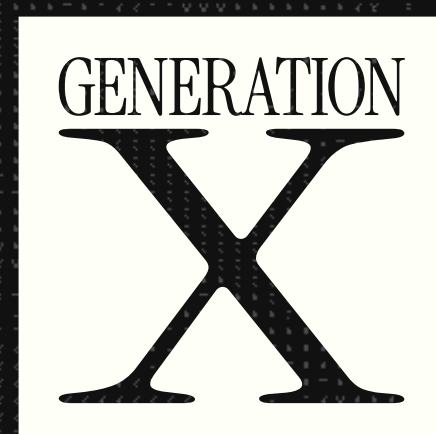


80%
of Millennials in Germany track the value of their collections (vs 70% average).

32%
collect for future investment (vs 27% average).



Interested in toys, video games, computers.



41%
collect to keep, more than any other generation (vs 32% average).



17%
of Boomers expect to resell collectables (vs 26% average).

33%

of German collectors are driven by the desire to own rare and one-of-a-kind objects.



Rarity and exclusivity are the biggest draws for German collectors.

German collectors are online savvy.

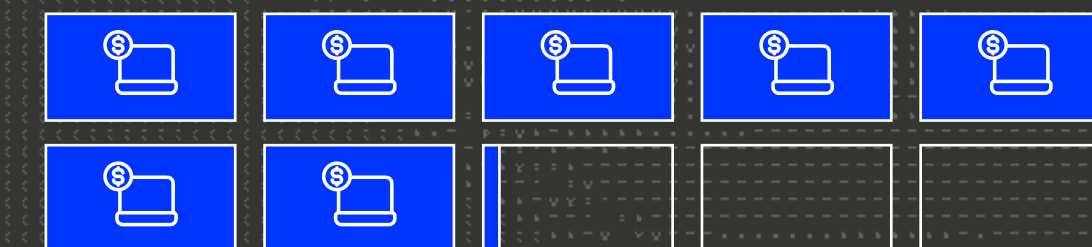
77%

expect advancements online and with social media to transform how they interact with their collections.



71%

currently purchase online.



The German resale market is gaining momentum.

70%

THE HIGHEST AMONGST ALL COUNTRIES SURVEYED

regularly monitor the value of their collection.



27%

expect to resell items more than they currently do.



Italy

Italy has a deep cultural connection to collecting.

Italy boasts the highest number of collectors and the greatest increase in those expected to begin collecting. Italian collectors have varied and diverse interests, with the widest range of passions among the surveyed countries. Heritage is important to them, with most stating that they began collecting to preserve valuable items and pass them on to future generations. For Italian collectors, their passion is a social activity incorporated into many aspects of their lives. They participate in several activities related to their collection and are highly active, finding others with the same interests and developing communities. Italians are catching on to the financial potential of collecting and many expect to begin using those community connections to begin reselling items a lot more in the future. Whether for heritage, nostalgia or contemporary trends, enthusiasm for collecting continues to grow dramatically.

Collector Persona

BORN COLLECTORS



PASSION AND HERITAGE



FORMING SOCIAL BONDS



COMMUNITY COLLECTORS

57% ▲ THE HIGHEST AMONGST ALL COUNTRIES SURVEYED
of Italians are active collectors.



16%
of Italians are considering diving into the world of collecting.



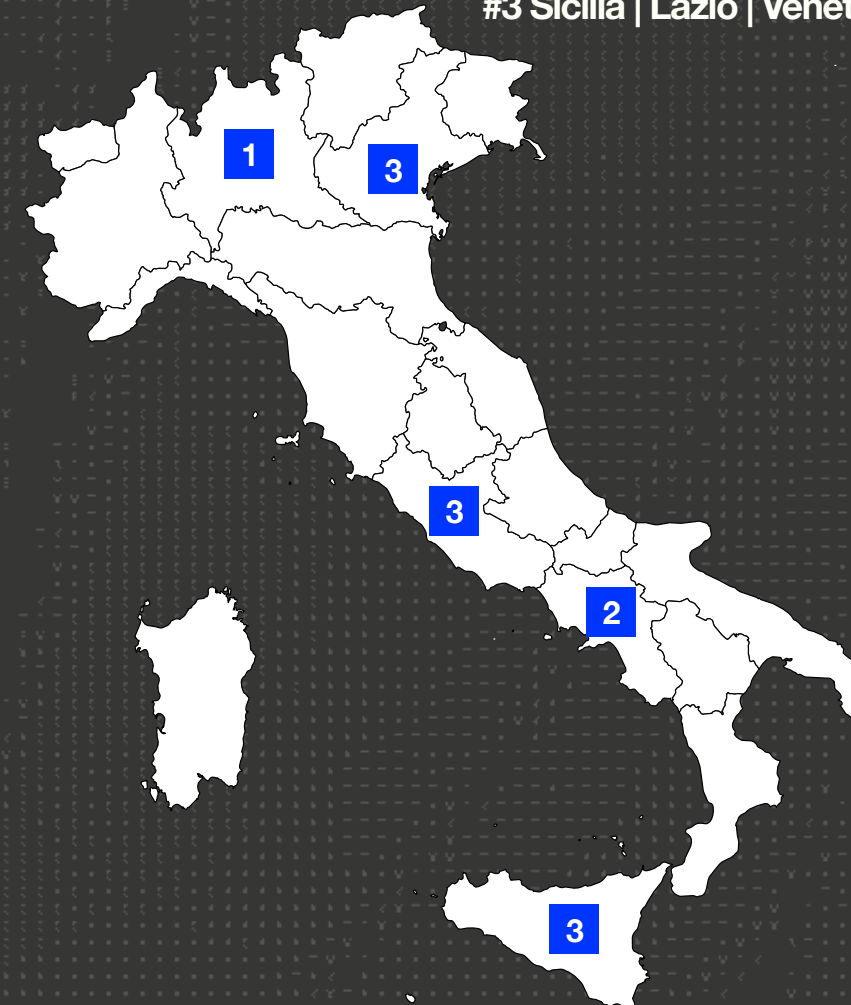
37% ▲ THE HIGHEST AMONGST ALL COUNTRIES SURVEYED
spending rise in the next 3-5 years.

Italian spending is expected to skyrocket in the coming years.

€1,381
yearly spend on collecting.



Collecting Hotspots
#1 Lombardia
#2 Campania
#3 Sicilia | Lazio | Veneto



36%
started collecting to save valuable items and leave them to future generations.

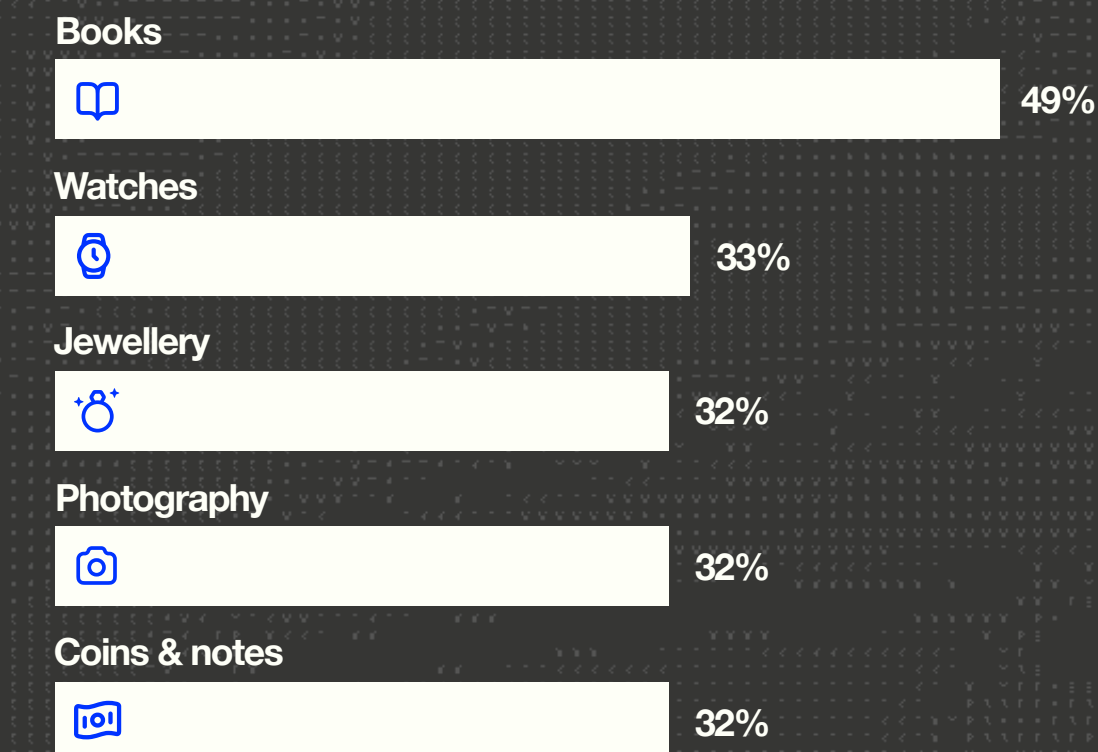
Collectors preserve heritage through collecting in Italy.

96% ▲ THE HIGHEST AMONGST ALL COUNTRIES SURVEYED
take part in collecting related activities.

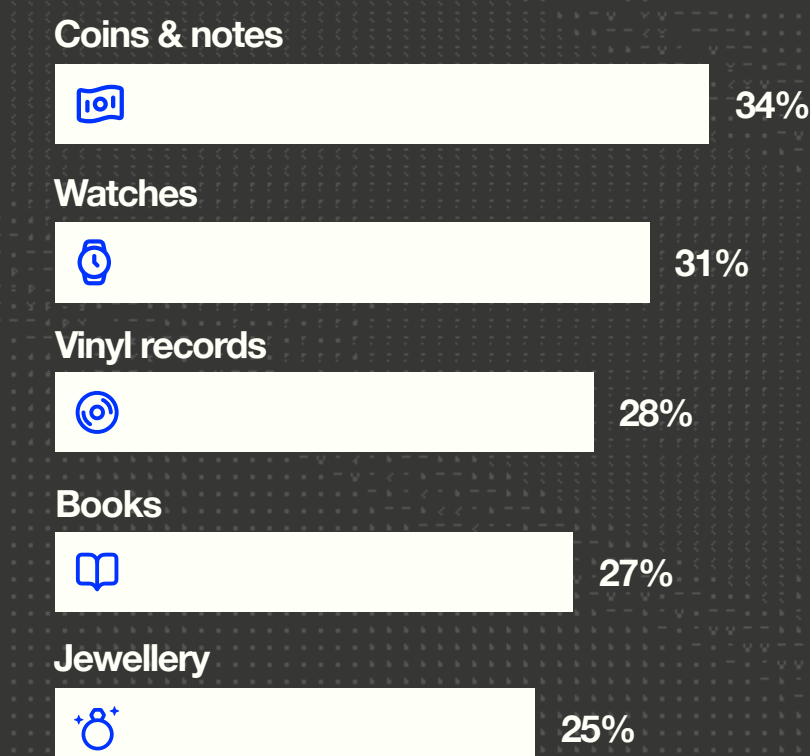


DIVERSE INTERESTS

Top categories they are interested in:

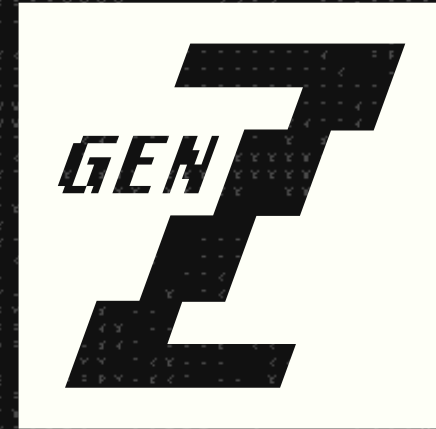


Top categories they believe will be worth collecting in the future:



Italians have the widest range of passions.

Italy



51%
of Gen Z in Italy
plan to spend more
on collectables (vs
37% average).

42%
expect to resell (vs
25% average).



Interested in fashion.

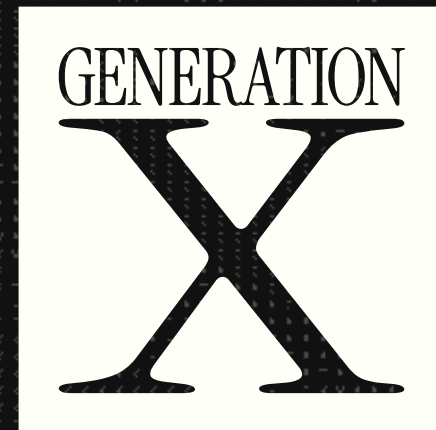


€1,450
spent by Millennials on
collectables last year.

35–44
year olds are the
highest spenders in
the country.



Interested in
nostalgic items like
comic books and
video games.



82%
of Gen X stay informed
about their collectables
(vs 74% average).

78%
see nostalgia driving
future collecting (vs
72% average).



55%
of Boomers are
likely to track value
(vs 68% average).

15%
expect to sell their
items (vs 25% average).

38%
prefer to keep their
collecting private
(38% vs 27%
market average).

Technology is shaping the future of Italian collecting.

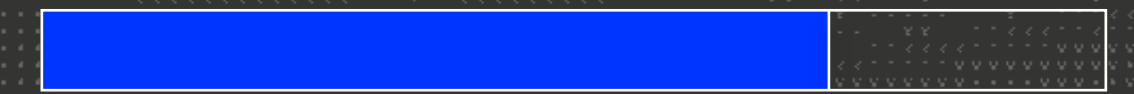
78%

expect advancements online and with
social media to transform how they
interact with their collections.



74%

think streaming platforms will play a
major role in how items are bought
and owned.



A growth-driven shift in the Italian resale market is on the rise.

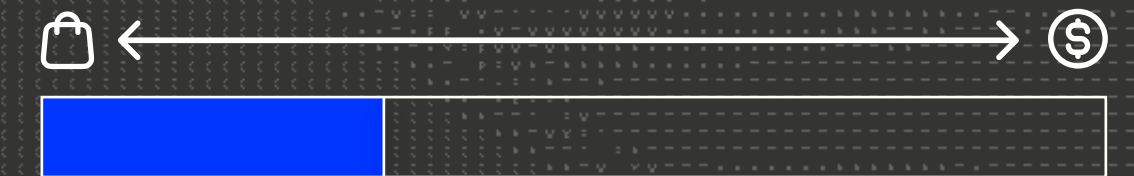
68%

regularly monitor the value of their collection.



32%

expect to resell items more than they
currently do.



France

France's collecting landscape is defined by passion, refinement, and a deep appreciation for aesthetics.

French collectors are drawn to the artistic value of their items. The younger generation has discovered collecting through a love for luxury goods, with passion being the primary motivator. Rather than focusing on the financial value of their collections, they are driven by an admiration for craftsmanship and an intellectual curiosity. When it comes to future trends, nostalgia plays a dominant role, with many looking to recapture past eras. An emerging environmental and social awareness is also reshaping their collecting habits, with a shift towards sustainable and environmentally conscious practices. They are prepared to fully embrace technology if it enhances their appreciation for the items they are passionate about. France's collectors are driven by beauty and curiosity; their collections are a demonstration of their connoisseurship, ultimately leading to a thriving future market.

Collector Persona

APPRECIATION FOR BEAUTY



NEW NOSTALGIA



COLLECTING CONSCIOUSLY



AESTHETIC SOPHISTICATION

47%

of French are active collectors.



10%

of French are considering diving into the world of collecting.



22%[^]

spending rise in the next 3-5 years.

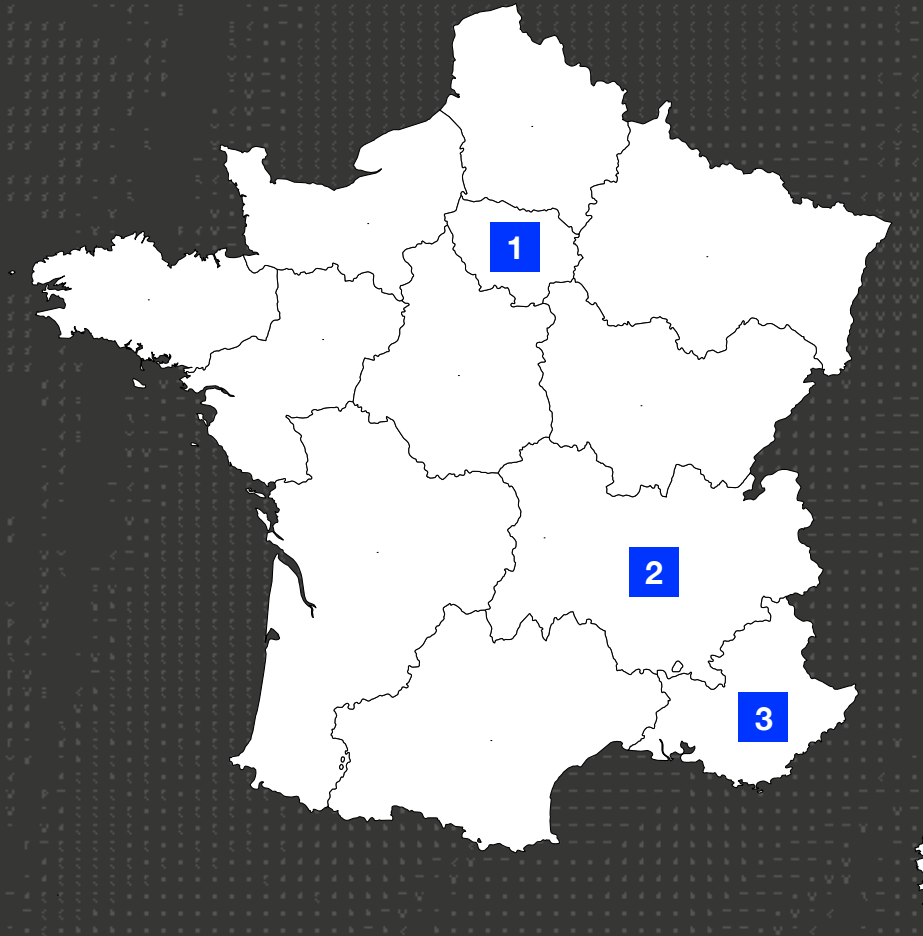
French collectors are likely to spend more on their interests.

€1,400

yearly spend on collecting.

Collecting Hotspots

- #1 Île-de-France
- #2 Rhône-Alpes
- #3 Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur



Intellectuals and aesthetes

37%

of French collectors were first captivated by the aesthetics of the objects they collect.

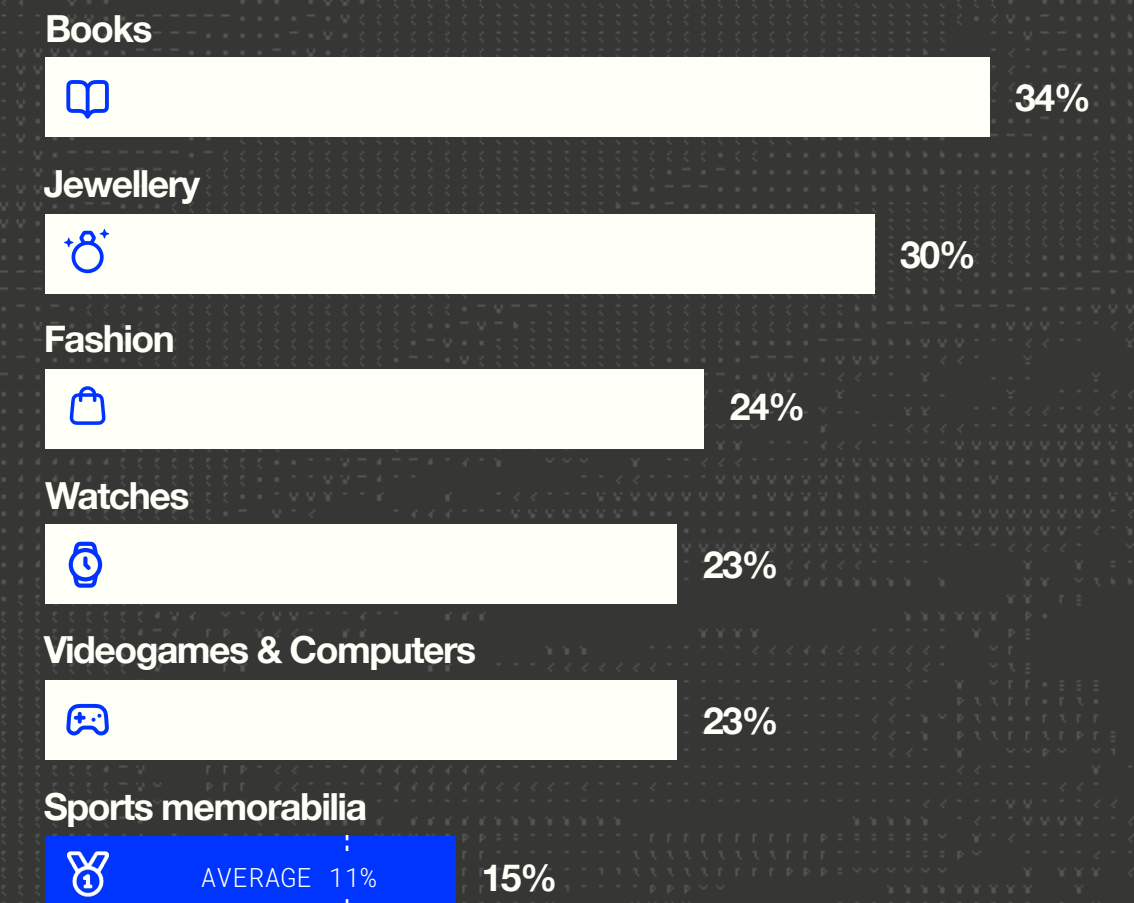
27%+

conduct thorough research and want to become an expert.

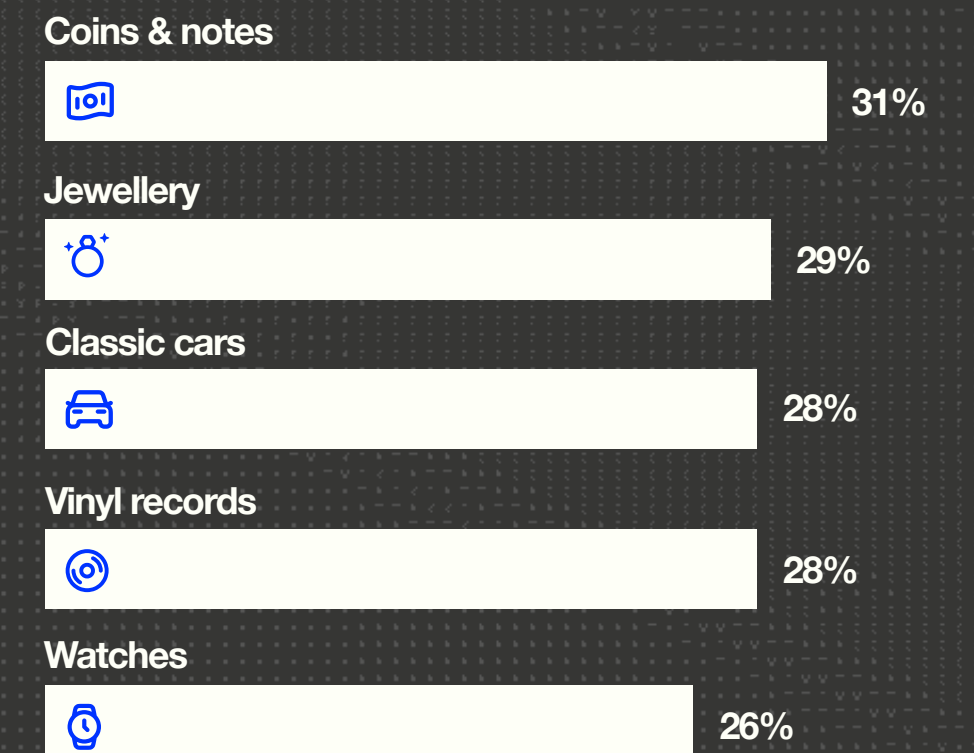
French collectors take a deeper approach, valuing taste and refinement.

INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY

Top categories they are interested in:



Top categories they believe will be worth collecting in the future:



France



73%
of Gen Z collectors prefer online purchases (vs 55% average).

86%
demand higher brand engagement with celebs/creators (vs. 52% average).



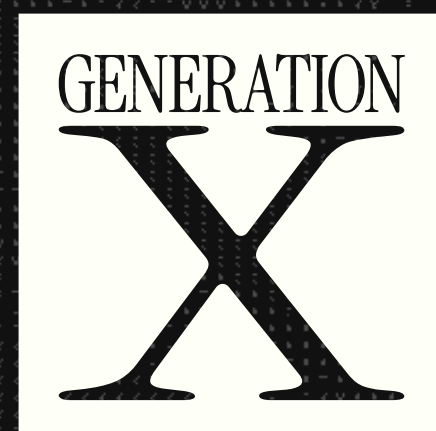
Interested in luxury items like watches and jewellery.



25%
of Millennials in France sell their collectables, surpassing other generations (vs 16% average).



Interested in video games.



31%
of Gen X started collecting to relive childhood nostalgia (vs. 26% average).

31%
prefer keeping items over selling for profit (vs 71% average).



23%
of Boomers collect stamps, more than other generations (vs. 15% average).

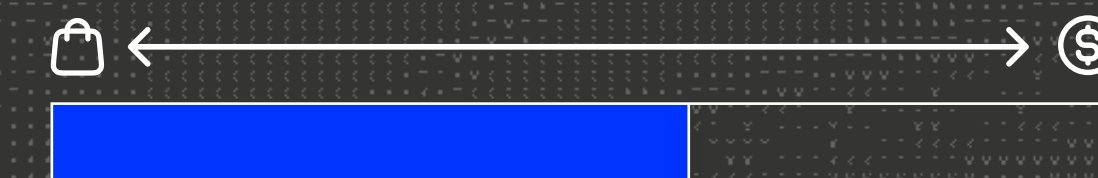
47%
prefer to keep their collecting interests private (vs 34% average).

France's resale market is set to boom.

84%
of French collectors purchase items to keep them.



59% ▲ THE HIGHEST AMOUNT OF FUTURE RESELLERS
expect to resell items more than they currently do.



The environmental impact of purchasing habits is becoming just as important as the items themselves.

73%
think second hand and collectables will be the new norm in popular culture.



23%
believe in a shift towards more sustainable and eco-friendly collections.



The strong draw of nostalgia is now being felt for the recent past.

74%
see childhood nostalgia as a key driver for future collecting.



68%
believe items from the past decades will make a big comeback.



Netherlands

There is a strong love for collecting in the Netherlands, with the Dutch having the highest average yearly spend.

Given the Netherlands' global reputation for its fashion and design schools, it is unsurprising that Dutch collectors maintain deep connections to the creative industries, often focusing on items that enhance their lives through artistry and design. Looking at perceived value, classic art is expected to remain a key category, while younger collectors are fuelling enthusiasm for fashion, photography, and music. Social media, online influencers, and thought leaders play a significant role in shaping collecting tastes and contributing to the growth of the resale market. While joy and creativity are the primary motivations behind collecting, Dutch collectors are also taking a long-term approach, recognizing the value of their collections and investing strategically for the future.

Collector Persona

HIGH SPENDERS



SOCIAL FIRST



JOYFUL, COLLECTING CREATIVES



TAKING JOY SERIOUSLY

45%

of Dutch are active collectors.



14%

of Dutch are considering diving into the world of collecting.



22%[^]

spending rise in the next 3-5 years.

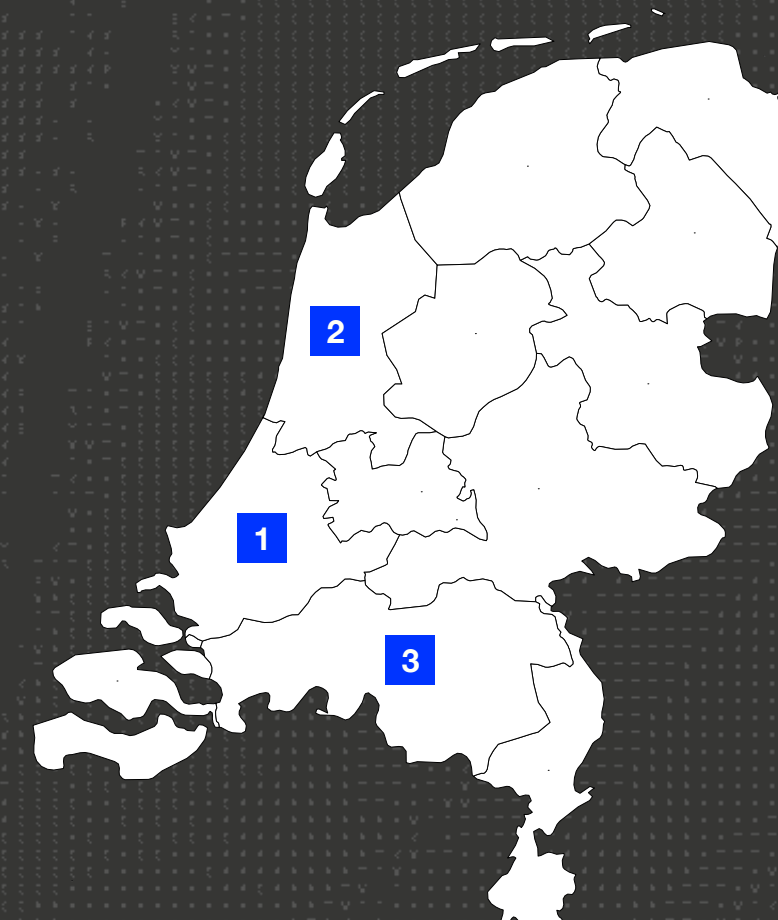
Dutch collectors are investing heavily in their collections.

€1,663

yearly spend on collecting. ▲ THE HIGHEST SPENDING

Collecting Hotspots

- #1 South Holland
- #2 North Holland
- #3 North Brabant



46%

of Dutch started collecting for pure enjoyment!



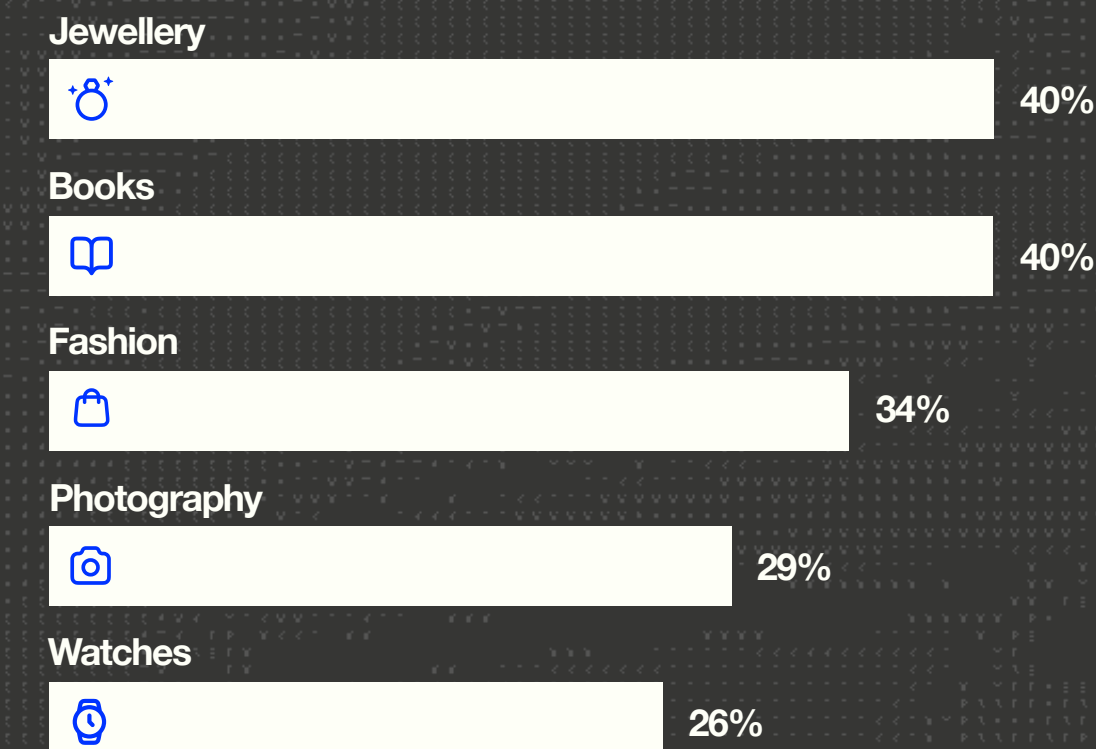
72%

see childhood nostalgia as a driver for future collecting.

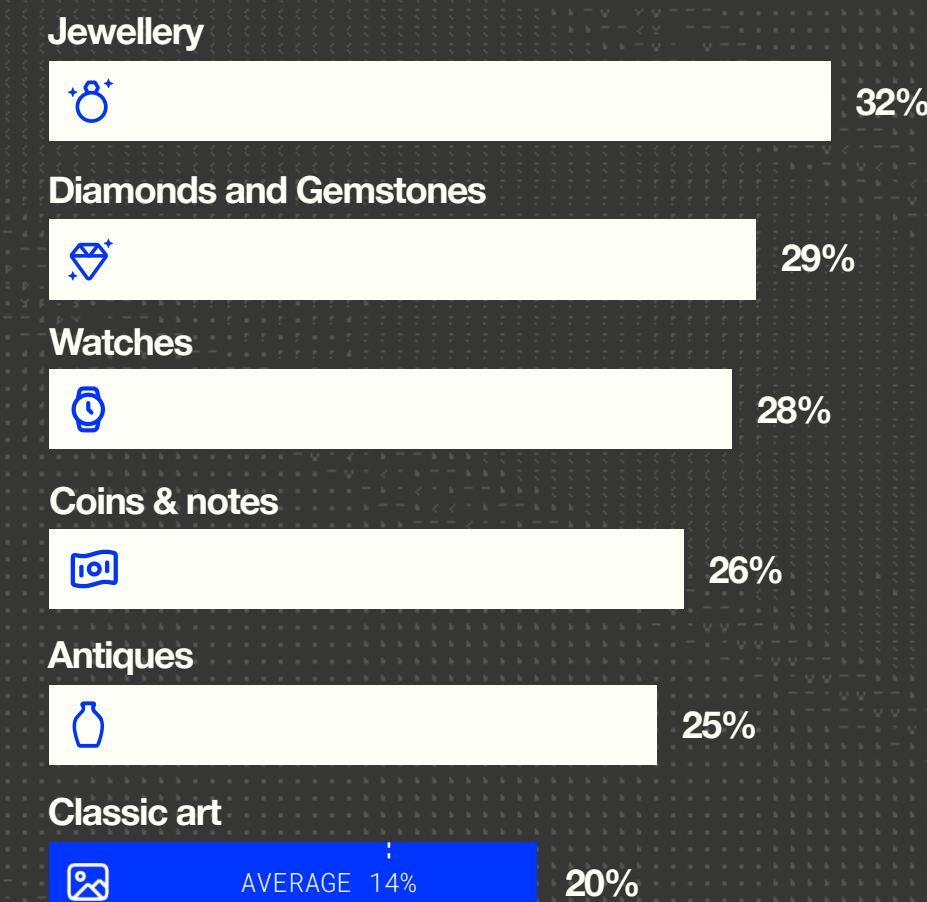
For Dutch collectors, nostalgia is a key future trend.

CREATIVE INVESTMENT

Top categories they are interested in:



Top categories they believe will be worth collecting in the future:



Netherlands



70%
of Gen Z in the Netherlands track the value of their collections (vs 58% average).

51%
plan to spend more, and 35% expect to resell.



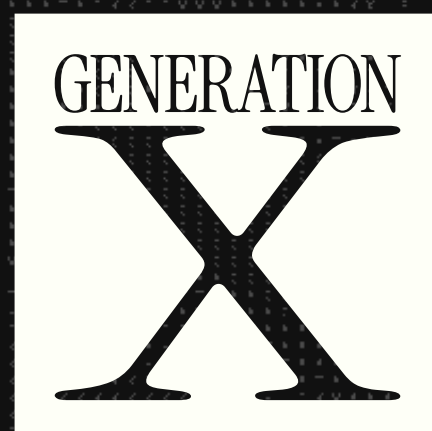
Interested in jewellery, fashion, photography, music.



€2,006
Millennial spend on collecting last year (the most out of all generations), and expect to spend even more (€2,268).



Interested in jewellery, fashion, books.



73%
of Gen X don't plan to resell their collectables (vs 67% average).



58%
of Boomers don't track the value of their collections (vs 42% average).

86%
don't sell their items.

34%
keep their interests private.

Social media has become a powerful tool in the Dutch collecting landscape, allowing collectors to discuss and explore their interests.

69%
of Dutch collectors currently purchase online.



27%
of collectors follow influencers and thought leaders in their areas of interest.



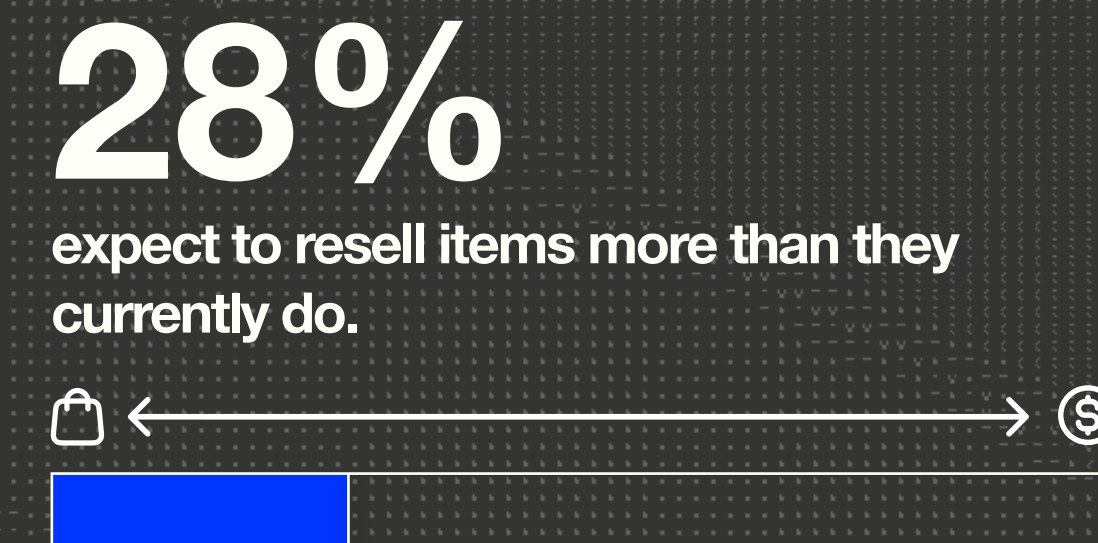
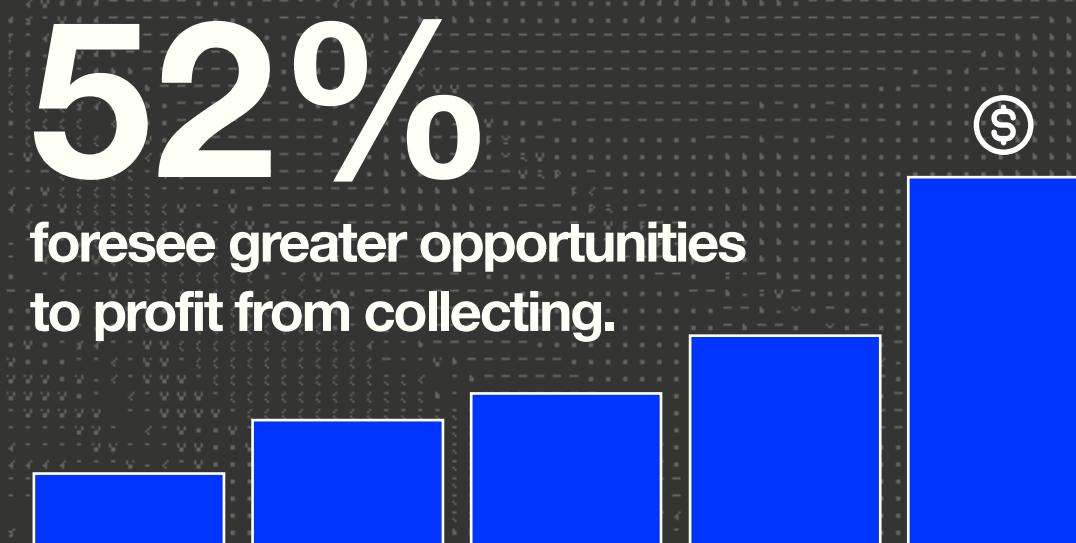
23%
of collectors are active in online communities, wanting to constantly keep themselves informed about their passions.



13%
got inspired by social media to start their collection.



The Dutch resale market is gaining traction.



Belgium

Belgian collectors are defined by a deep appreciation for heritage and history, viewing themselves as conservators with a broader understanding that extends beyond personal interest.

Belgians are driven by a long-term mindset, with the future value perception of Belgian collectors strongly tied to jewellery, diamonds, antiques and watches - items that have traditionally been seen as timeless, with stable consistent value. Belgian collectors have a thoughtful approach, collecting to learn new things and gain a greater understanding of the significance behind their items. While online technology and social media are expected to play a transformative role for Belgian collectors, they remain committed to a long-term view, purchasing to keep, preserve and resell in the future.

Collector Persona

CONSERVATORS 	REDISCOVERING THE PAST 	LONG-TERM MINDSET 
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INVESTMENT AND PRESERVATION

50%
of Belgians are active collectors.



15%
of Belgians are considering diving into the world of collecting.



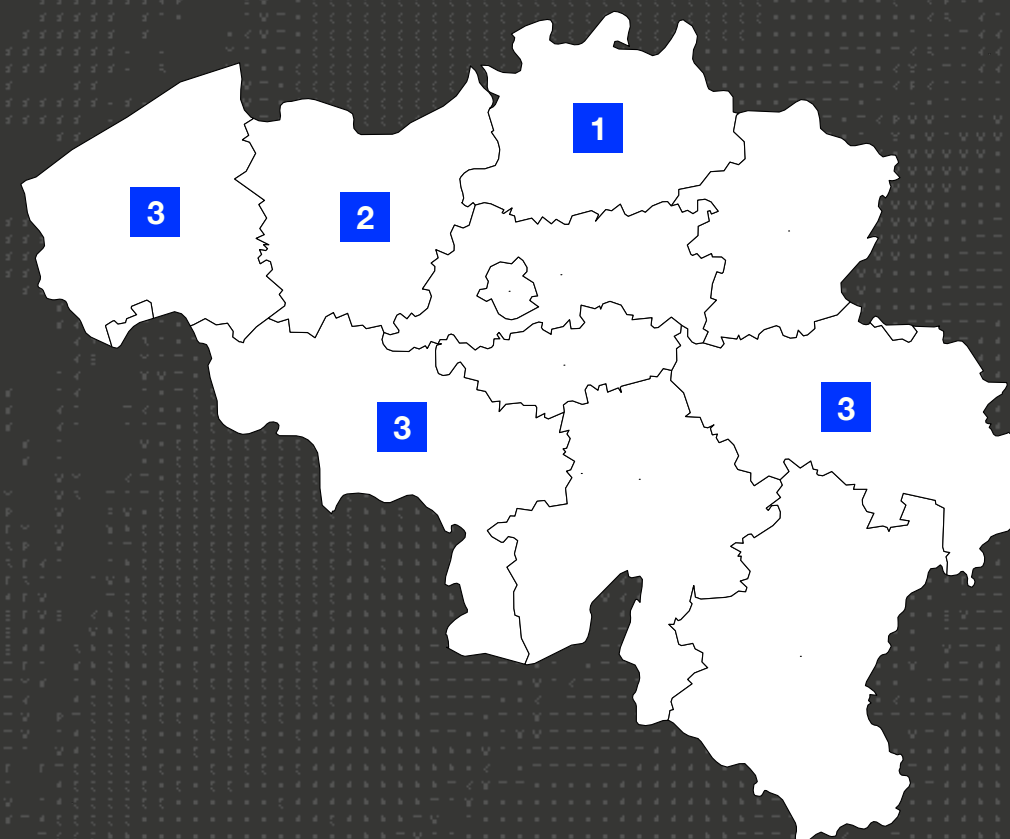
33%[^]
spending rise in the next 3-5 years.

Belgian collectors are set to increase spending on their passions.

€1,508
yearly spend on collecting.

Collecting Hotspots

- #1 Antwerp
- #2 East Flanders
- #3 West Flanders, Liège and Hainault



20%
started collecting to learn new things.

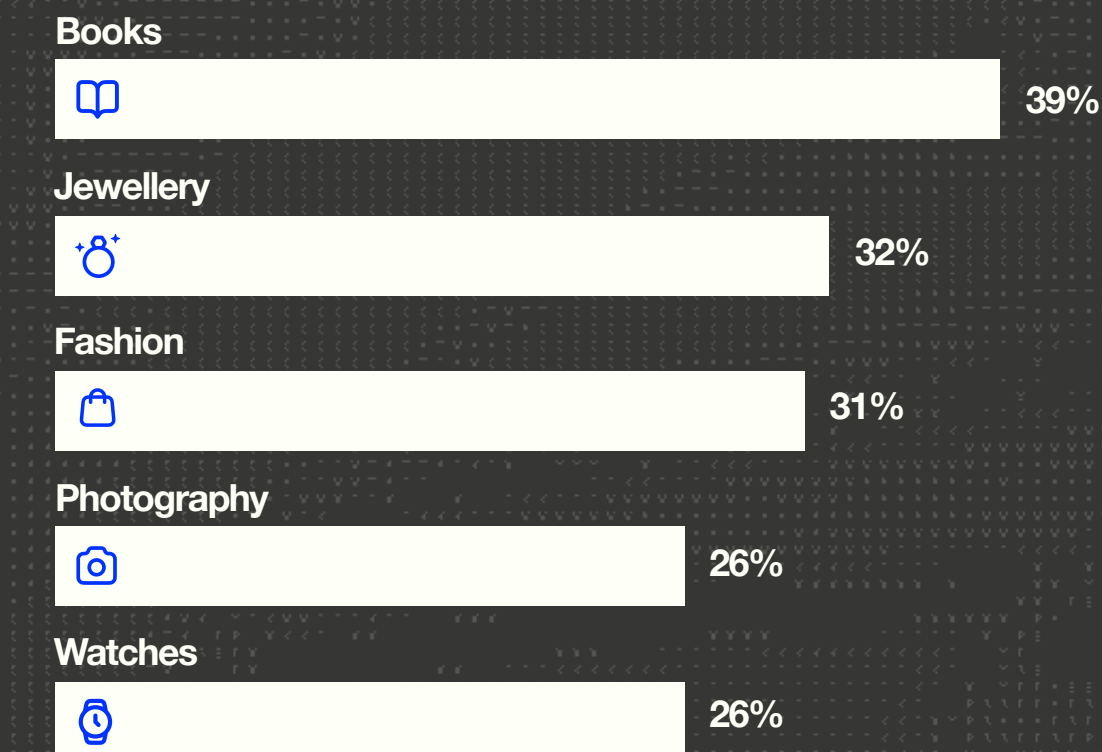


17%
started to explore the history of the items they were passionate about.

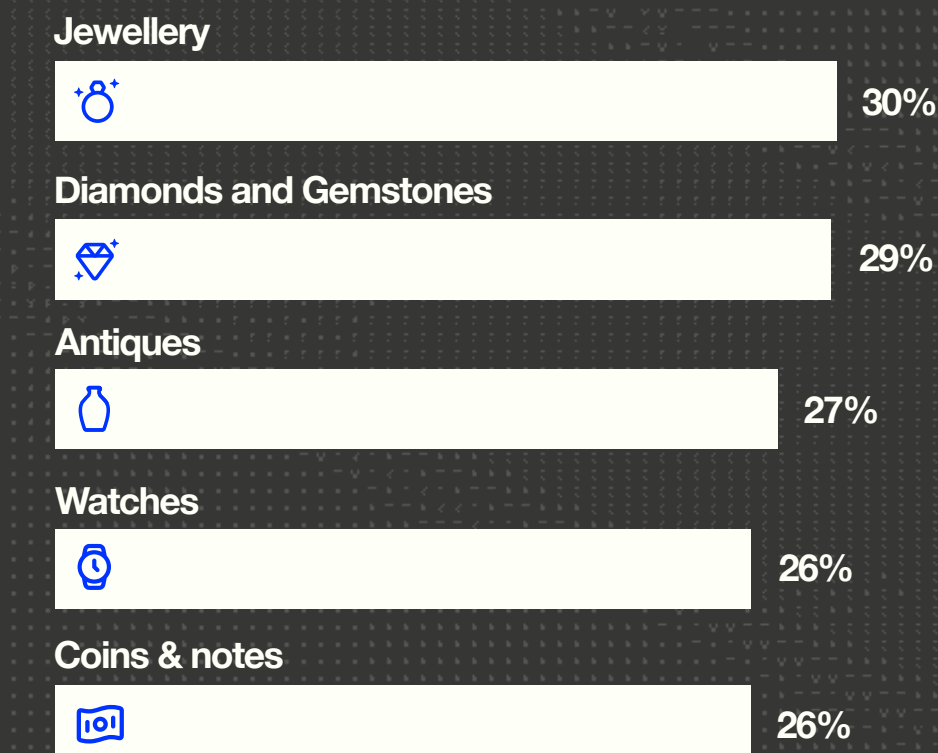
Collecting is a way to connect with the past in Belgium.

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Top categories they are interested in:



Top categories they believe will be worth collecting in the future:



Belgium



€1,671

Gen Z spent the most on collectables last year.

53%

51% plan to spend more, and almost 1 in 3 expect to resell (31% vs 19% average).

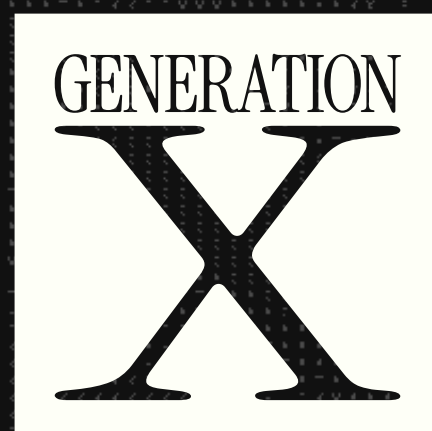


Interested in cameras, optical equipment, photography.



71%

of Belgian Millennials believe secondhand and collectables will be the new norm in the future (vs 63% average).



62%

Almost two thirds of Gen X think future collectors will form strong connections with artists, brands, and creators (vs 51% average).



€1,226

Boomers in Belgium spent the least on collectables last year.

42%

keep their interests private, indicating they are less social than younger generations.

They expect the lowest future spend (average €1,891) compared to younger generations.

Belgians tend to preserve items rather than flipping them for quick profit.

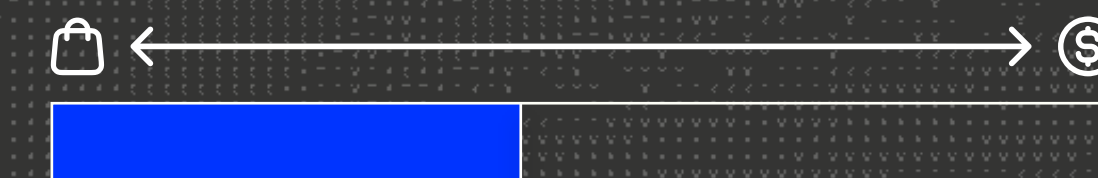
81%

of Belgian collectors purchase items to keep them.



44%

expect to resell items more than they currently do.



20%

of Belgian collectors devote a significant portion of their resources to acquiring items for their collections.



For Belgians, future collecting will all be about nostalgia.

"People will be nostalgic for simple things, it's about bringing your past back to life".

Technology is set to reshape the collecting experience in Belgium.

75%

expect technological advancements, such as online marketplaces and social media, to transform how they interact with their collections.



Who is Catawiki?

Catawiki is the leading online marketplace for special objects that fulfil people's passions.

Bridging the gap between the exclusive and the accessible, we offer over 75,000 objects in auction every week - each reviewed and selected by one of our hundreds of in-house experts specialised in Art, Design, Jewellery, Fashion, Classic Cars, Collectables and much more.

Our experts help ensure only the best, quality objects are offered on Catawiki and they refuse nearly 700,000 objects every year.

From collectables that define decades to art that defies convention, from timeless timepieces to cars that capture eras – we offer it all. At our core, we're about the thrill of the find and the joy of owning something truly special.



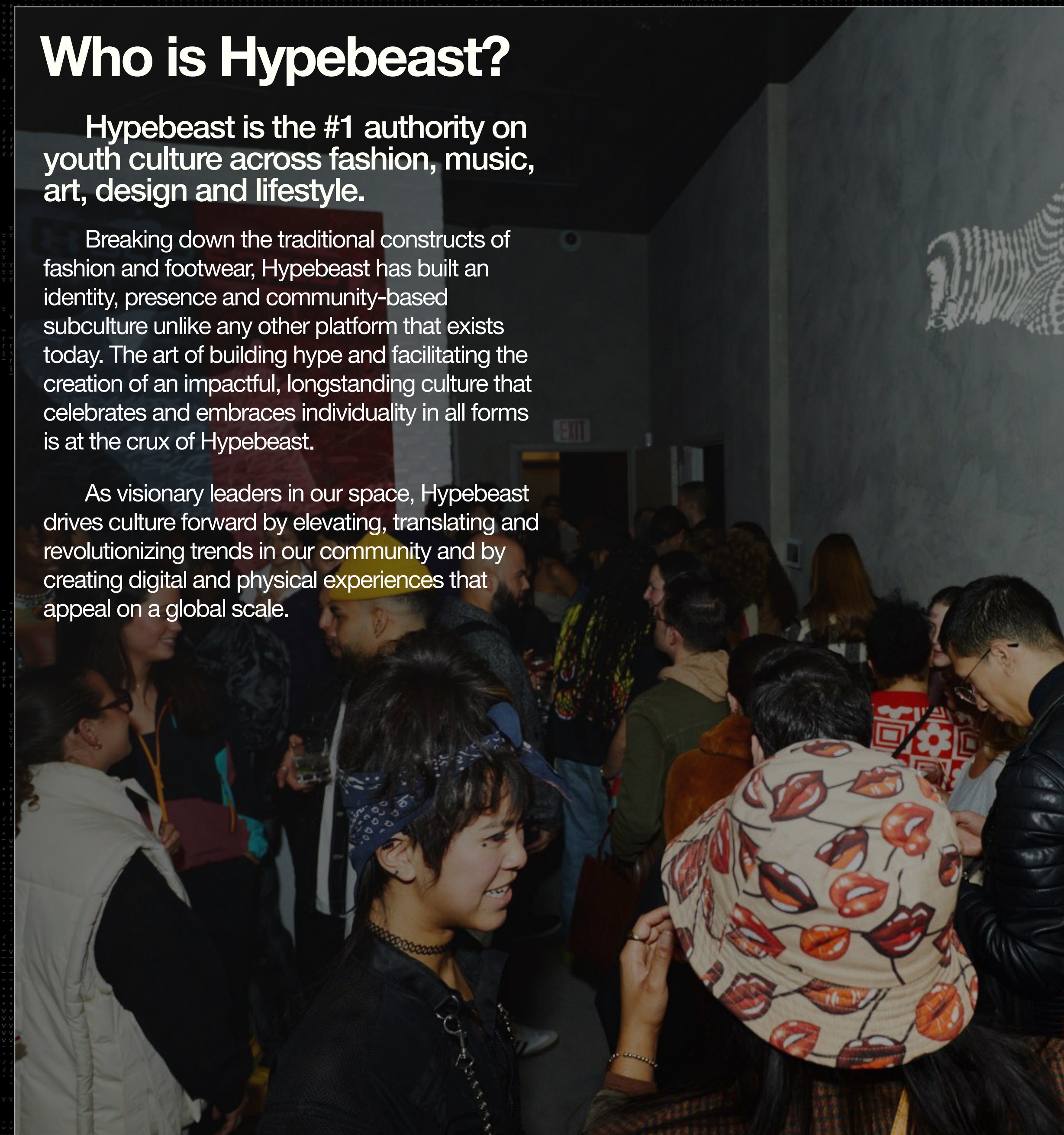
catawiki

Who is Hypebeast?

Hypebeast is the #1 authority on youth culture across fashion, music, art, design and lifestyle.

Breaking down the traditional constructs of fashion and footwear, Hypebeast has built an identity, presence and community-based subculture unlike any other platform that exists today. The art of building hype and facilitating the creation of an impactful, longstanding culture that celebrates and embraces individuality in all forms is at the crux of Hypebeast.

As visionary leaders in our space, Hypebeast drives culture forward by elevating, translating and revolutionizing trends in our community and by creating digital and physical experiences that appeal on a global scale.



Thank You