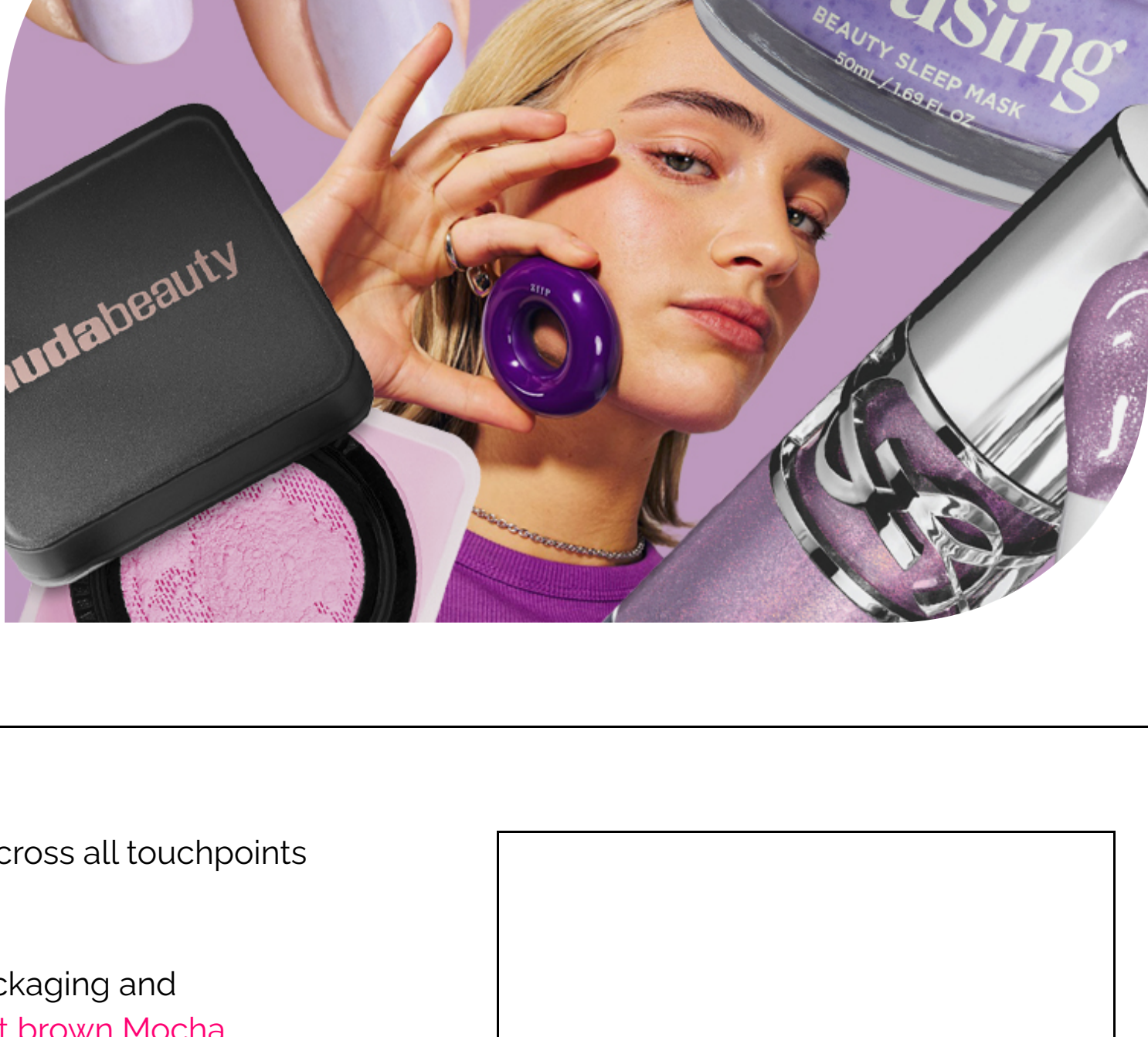


Lilac becomes beauty's 2025 signature colour in wake of Brat and Barbie summers #223263

By Amanda May | Published: 16-Apr-2025

Colour Cosmetics Skin Care Marketing

With beauty brands dropping a wave of pastel launches, lilac has emerged as the true colour of beauty in 2025. But what does this shift mean and can the hue cross into cult status?



Beauty is in the midst of a new obsession – a love affair with the colour lilac across all touchpoints – but is it just a fad or a much broader movement?

The pastel hue has been dominating the cosmetics sphere this year, from packaging and marketing to product shades, despite colour specialist Pantone declaring that brown Mocha Mousse would reign supreme.

But mauve's takeover is not by chance, the hue's appeal is deliberately in contrast to the bold, call-to-action colours that have taken the past two years by storm – Chai! XG's lime green Brat summer and hot cerise Barbie pink.

Lilac's newfound popularity signals a wider shift in what consumers are looking for and where beauty brands' attention should be focused.

'After the Barbiecore and Brat summer eras, consumers are now seeking depth and authenticity, and lilac answers that call,' explains Ayushi Dugar Bajoria, founder and Creative Director of multidisciplinary digital design company Obleeq Studio.

'It feels personal, grounding and emotionally intelligent, while still carrying that dreamy, almost whimsical touch that beauty brands love to play with.'

The ascent of lilac is the result of both cultural timing and emotional resonance

'Psychologically, lilac evokes feelings of calm, creativity, introspection and subtle luxury.

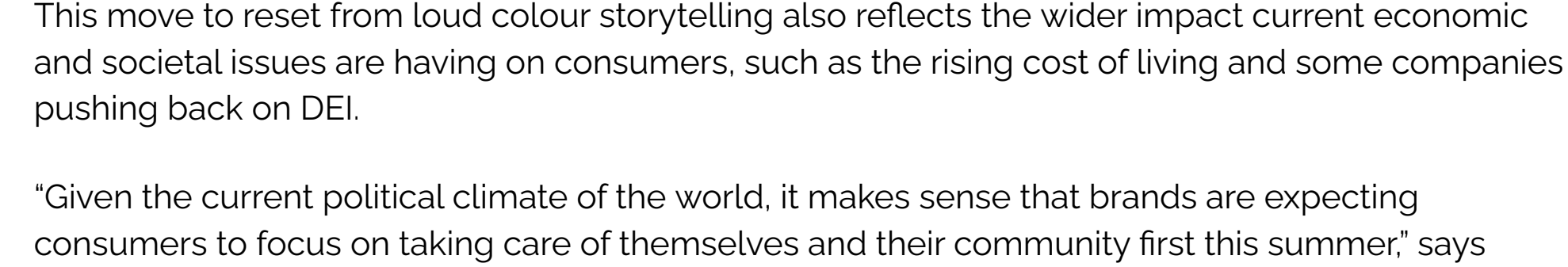
'It is a colour associated with imagination and emotional intelligence. Unlike the bold primaries that scream attention, lilac invites presence.'

This year, a wave of beauty brands have been dropping lilac-themed launches and campaigns.

From Rituals Gen Z-focused The Dream Collection, which is marketed in a purple, dream-like space using AI; to Harry Styles' Pleasing's Beauty Sleep Mask, which uses mauve as its core packaging aesthetic.

Glossier's latest fragrance addition You Fleur is housed in a mauve bottle, and was complemented with a pop-up in Paris, France, which was decorated with purple petals and flowers.

YSL Beauty's new Lavishine Plumping Lip Oil Gloss collection contains a daring lilac shade as part of its 'playful expansion', while ZILP has even tapped a darker version of purple for the aesthetic design of its latest facial device ZILP Dot.



Rituals The Dream Collection campaign showcases a purple dream-like world

Hitting an emotional sweet spot

This move to reset from loud colour storytelling also reflects the wider impact current economic and societal issues are having on consumers, such as the rising cost of living and some companies pushing back on DEI.

'Given the current political climate of the world, it makes sense that brands are expecting consumers to focus on taking care of themselves and their community first this summer,' says Marketing and Creative Strategist Sona Shekhawat.

'Light purples are associated with self-care due to lavender-scented and lavender-infused relaxation products often, unsurprisingly, being lavender-coloured.

'They are also associated with queer identity, according to Kassia St. Clair, author of The Secret Lives of Color.'

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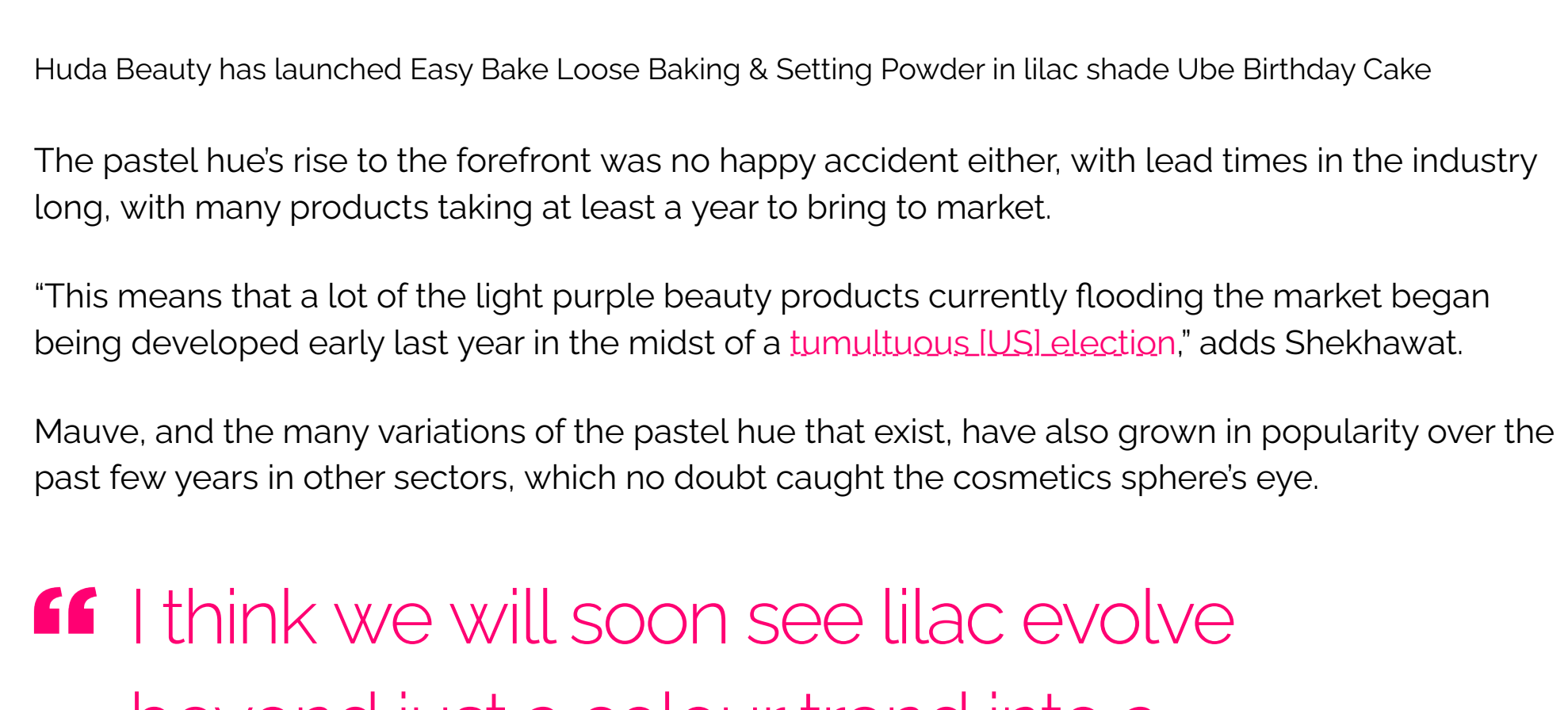
Naomi Omamuli Emiko, co-owner of growth studio for beauty and wellness brands TNGE, agrees that lilac has a much deeper meaning than just being aesthetically pleasing.

She states that the beauty industry's investment in the shade represents 'a collective exhale' from the previous years of overstimulation.

'As a response to that, the ascent of lilac is the result of both cultural timing and emotional resonance,' says Omamuli Emiko.

'It is soft and fresh without being saccharine or too loud.

'It is a welcome counterbalance to the chaos. It is soothing and triggers feelings of escapism, and this is completely aligned with the industry's pivot toward wellness, ritual and emotional intelligence.'



Huda Beauty has launched Easy Bake Loose Baking & Setting Powder in lilac shade Ube Birthday Cake

The pastel hue's rise to the forefront was no happy accident either, with lead times in the industry long, with many products taking at least a year to bring to market.

'This means that a lot of the light purple beauty products currently flooding the market began being developed early last year in the midst of a tumultuous US election,' adds Shekhawat.

Mauve, and the many variations of the pastel hue that exist, have also grown in popularity over the past few years in other sectors, which no doubt caught the cosmetics sphere's eye.

I think we will soon see lilac evolve beyond just a colour trend into a broader tone for how brands communicate

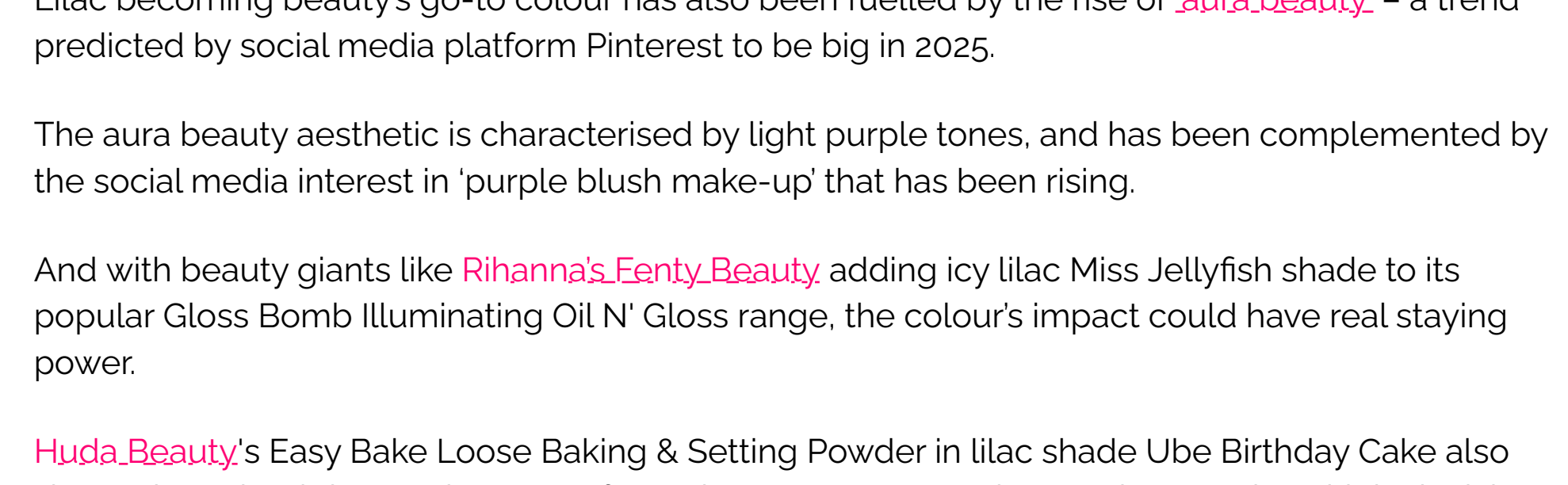
'Lilac has been slowly seeping into fashion, wellness and even technology,' explains Dugar Bajoria.

'Think [fashion designer] Jacquemus runway looks, [electronics company] Samsung's Galaxy phone in lavender and countless meditation apps with purple tones.

'Interiors have also welcomed muted mauves in the form of 'dopamine décor', adding colour that comforts rather than overwhelms.

'We have also seen a rise in the 'soft girl' aesthetic on TikTok, a trend that mainly consists of soft pastel colours, Y2K, K-pop and 1990s-inspired clothing], and lilac has practically become its signature colour.

'So, it was only a matter of time before beauty brands picked up on that visual language and aligned themselves with this emotional softness.'



Pleasing's Beauty Sleep Mask has a core mauve aesthetic

How lilac rose to the top

Lilac becoming beauty's go-to colour has also been fuelled by the rise of 'aura beauty' – a trend predicted by social media platform Pinterest to be big in 2025.

The aura beauty aesthetic is characterised by light purple tones, and has been complemented by the social media interest in 'purple blush make-up' that has been rising.

And with beauty giants like Rihanna's Fenty Beauty adding icy lilac Miss Jellyfish shade to its popular Gloss Bomb Illuminating Oil N' Gloss range, the colour's impact could have real staying power.

Huda Beauty's Easy Bake Loose Baking & Setting Powder in lilac shade Ube Birthday Cake also shows the colour's impact in terms of meeting consumer needs, merging novelty with inclusivity.

'Purple setting powders are not new, but they definitely are not mainstream. In the beauty space on social media, novelty is often the key to virality,' says Shekhawat.

'Does your product make people stop scrolling and react?

'The popularity of Huda Beauty's Ube powder is not just due to novelty, however.

'The powder has been championed by several Black and brown [skin] content creators for its inclusivity.



YSL Beauty's Loveshine Plumping Lip Oil Gloss collection comprises a new lilac shade

'For context, blush-like under-eye looks have been very popular over the past year, but pink-toned brightening powders are often just not bright enough on Black and brown skin.

'Purple-toned powders and blushes often provide a more wearable pink-toned look for Black and brown skin than the pink-toned products that have been mainstays for so long.'

Lilac's surprising rise marks a significant tonal shift in brand marketing, especially as Pantone had bet on brown Mocha Mousse to be the colour of choice this year for new launches and campaigns.

The next phase might see deeper lavender-greys or mauve-taupes as brands seek to mature the aesthetic

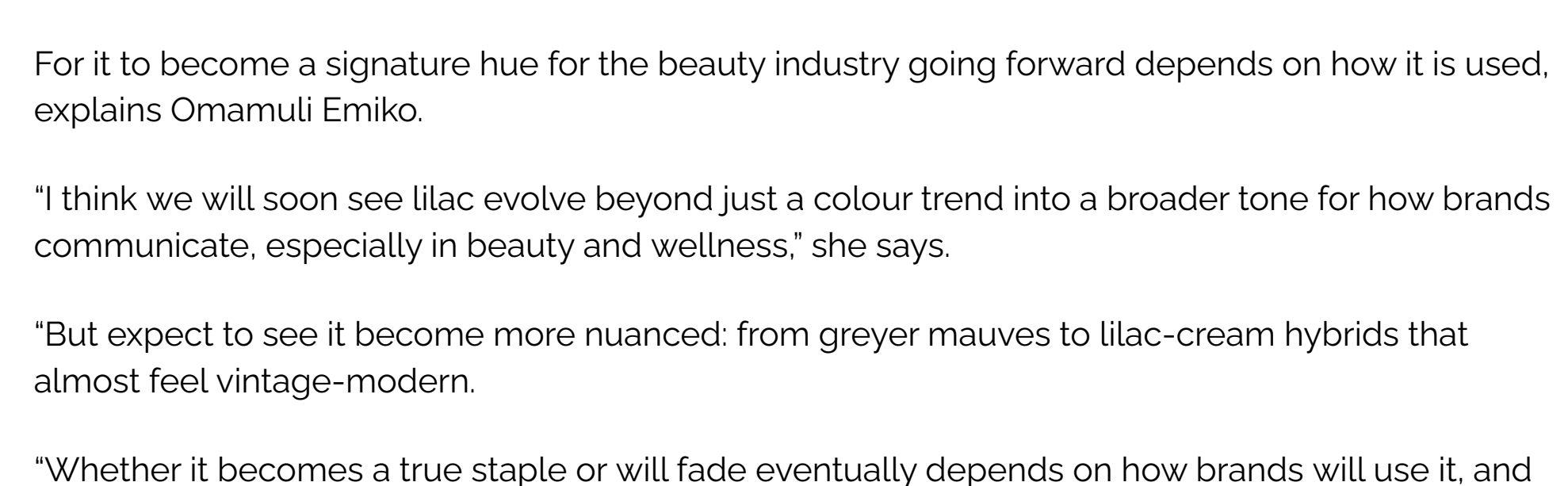
But mauve's unlikely trend adoption has been driven by cultural and emotional needs.

'Pantone's Mocha Mousse is warm, grounding and steeped in tactility, but it also reads as traditional and safe,' says Omamuli Emiko.

'It offers a sense of nostalgia, but one that does not quite speak to the soft evolution that consumers are craving.

'Lilac wins here as it offers a progressive softness.

'And if we have a closer look at symbolism, we can spot a significant contrast – mocha belongs to the earth, lilac to the ether. Mocha is rooted, while lilac is expansive.'



New ZILP Dot facial device comes in a very on-trend purple shade

Moving from fad to timeless classic

The big question is: can lilac maintain its stronghold and crossover into cult colour status, which can surpass just one season?

For it to become a signature hue for the beauty industry going forward depends on how it is used, explains Omamuli Emiko.

'I think we will soon see lilac evolve beyond just a colour trend into a broader tone for how brands communicate, especially in beauty and wellness,' she says.

'But expect to see it become more nuanced: from greyer mauves to lilac-cream hybrids that almost feel vintage-modern.

'Whether it becomes a true staple or will fade eventually depends on how brands will use it, and this is where storytelling comes into play.

'If brands lean into emotional undertones and tie it to storytelling beyond just surface aesthetics, it will definitely have staying power.'

Shekhawat, however, thinks the hue could become too much after a certain amount of time, following in the wake of other shades that ruled the roost and then faded in popularity.

Purple setting powders are not new, but they definitely are not mainstream

'Given the way that it has already been strongly tied to Gen Z, I think lilac is here to stay,' she says.

'Like millennial pink, a lot of brands have made Gen Z purple a key part of their brand identity, or the identity of their popular products.

'Inevitably, its popularity will fade and people will begin to despise it, just like millennial pink.'

Lilac is versatile though, as it easily pairs with nudes, metallics, creams and deeper purple hues easily, and this adaptability could help it transition into a long-term player.

It is a simple way for brands to refresh their look without alienating loyal customers, and in a world of social-first marketing it stands out without being blatant.

'While the current wave may peak this year, I see lilac evolving into a staple accent especially in soft wellness, skin care and fragrance branding,' explains Dugar Bajoria.

'It may not dominate every season, but it has certainly carved out a space as a 'new neutral' in modern packaging and product design.

'The next phase might see deeper lavender-greys or mauve-taupes as brands seek to mature the aesthetic, but overall, lilac has staying power because of how emotionally versatile it is.'

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