

# SECONDSIGHT<sup>SS</sup>

THE DESERT ISSUE

ISSUE # 38 | SUMMER 2014

BURNING  
MAN

FIGHTING  
DESERTIFICATION

MATERIAL  
REVOLUTIONS

DESERT  
ARCHITECTURE

KAEC

CULTURAL  
HEATING

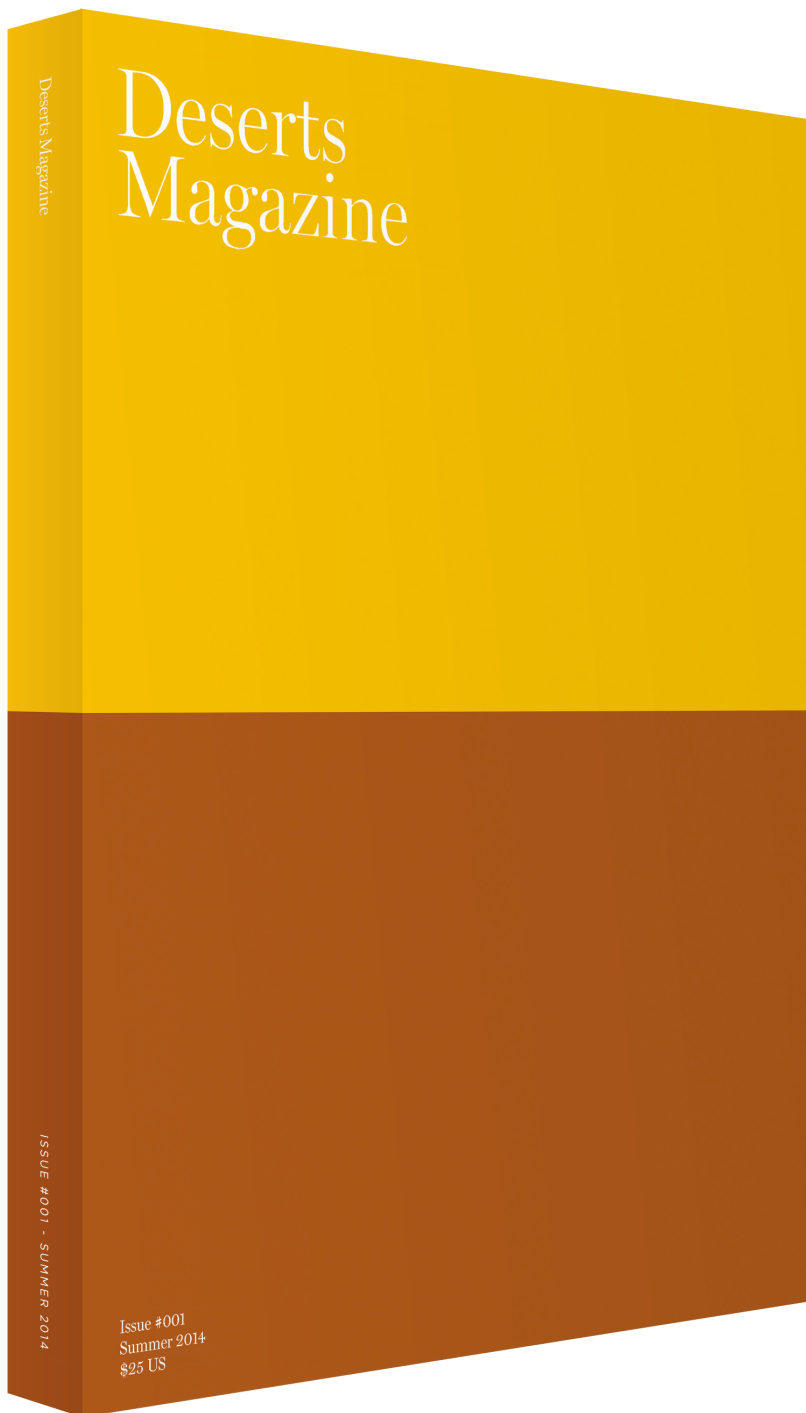
NOMADIC  
LEARNING

METAHUMANS  
ARISE



*“... about the  
off-world feeling”*

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# THE DESERT ISSUE

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# CONTRIBUTORS

**Andrea Wiegman** is founder and editor of Second Sight. She is a historian with a special interest in the changing society and the now. For this issue she delved into the topic of the desert, it's destructive parts as well as it's attractiveness. Read her editorial about 'Re-discovering the desert' on page 7.

**Martijn Lampert** is research director at Motivaction. He leads the Glocalities values and trends research program covering 20 countries and 75% of the world economy, gaining breakthrough knowledge of global change, brands, generations, leadership and sustainability. In this issue he shares the different faces of sustainability. Read more on page 16.

**Adrianos Golemis** works for the European Space Agency in one of the most isolated places on earth - he is doing research at the Concordia research station in Antarctica that is located on a plateau 3200 meters above sea level. A place of extremes, temperatures can drop to -80°C in the winter, with a yearly average temperature of -50°C. As Concordia lies at the very southern tip of the Earth, the sun does not rise above the horizon in the winter and does not set in the summer. The crew must live

without sunlight for four months of the year. Read more about living so far away and the white desert on page 19.

**Laurent Pambaguian** also works for the ESA. His field is additive manufacturing and 3D printing techniques. There are revolutions going on in material matters, read more on page 27.

**Yori Kamphuis**, co-founder of Coblue and global shaper at the World Economic Forum won the TWOTY Futurist prize in 2013. For this issue he shows how we can fight desertification. The JustDiggIt project he writes about is a good example of how we can bring water to the deserts and make the soil fertile again.

**George Zapantoulis** is director of the Beverwijk Bazaar. He tells us more about the new Gold Souq that will open in November this year.

**Valentine Giraud Robben** is originally from Brazil. She was raised in a family of manifold ethnic roots. She is a board member of the Institute of Noetic Sciences in California - an institute that researches the potentials and powers of consciousness, exploring phenomena that do not necessarily fit conventional scientific models while

maintaining a commitment to scientific rigor. Read more about the idea of knowing without knowing it on page 55.

**Lisa Aué** ([laue.nl](http://laue.nl)) is an upcoming trend forecaster, an all-round stylist - her graduation project was a series of forecasting books, in which she told the story of no-man's-land. In this issue you can read about new strong characters rising in no-man's-land. Read more on page 58.

**Pernille Kok**, a trend research manager at Mare Research, has written an article about Mass Avantgarde. Read more on page 61.

**Not Vogue** ([notvogue.com](http://notvogue.com)) is a cultural digital manifesto, started in 2010. Steve Oklyn, the man behind Not Vogue is known as one of the world's greatest fashion critics. He has clear opinions not only on fashion but also on politics, on economy and societal and cultural topics. For this issue he and his team shared their insights on cultural warming, on the upcoming desert style and their desert magazine. Read more about the project and idea of cultural warming on page 64.



# CONTRIBUTORS

**Tozama Dyantyi**, trend researcher at Second Sight. She discovered new characters and heroes for the desert lifestyle. A style where the human body, the strength of the human mind and the use of technology come together - read more about meta men and women, as she called them, on page 76.

**Sylvia Avontuur** is a brand, PR and marketing communication consultant. For this issue she wrote an article about transformational branding, or Art as Therapy as philosophers Alain de Botton and John Armstrong called it in their book and eponymous exhibition for the Rijksmuseum.

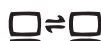
**Bruno Fabre** calls himself a mass change agent, a kind of inventor, curious about new technology and eager to make a difference and deeply motivated to make the world a better place. The article for this issue is about our brain - the next internet connection.

**Frans van der Reep**, a strategist and business forecaster, shares a scenario and his prediction for 2020 plus on page .. It may go either way, but...read it on page 82.

**An Kramer** is a learning architect for social innovation and organizational transformation at the Baak, an Institute for Leadership in The Netherlands. She wrote a paper Ready for the Future, about the four principles of nomadic learning in organizations. Read more about nomadic learning on page 87.

**Edward de Boer** is a consultant at Converse Consulting and IntuitionLab. He has just written a book about Strategic Intuition. Read on page 90 why intuition and strategic intuition is an upcoming topic now.

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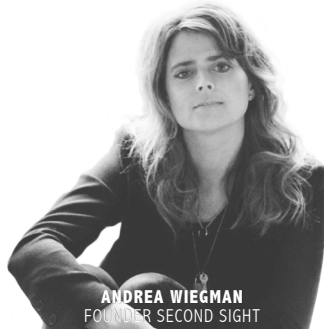
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ANDREA WIEGMAN  
FOUNDER SECOND SIGHT

## RE-DISCOVERING THE DESERT

Last year we had a dry hot summer everywhere. In California temperatures were higher than ever, exacerbating their drought. In Australia, half a year earlier, it was the same. Summers are hotter, winters warmer. Rains and storms are heavier. Antarctica shrinks. Last year, the polar vortex around Chicago brought an extremely cold winter with arctic temperatures. The weather is about extremes and unpredictability.

The desert is a metaphor for that. It too is about extremes and deep contrasts. In that wide open landscape, where nature is extremely strong, it is not easy to survive. Almost everything breaks, flora and fauna don't exist or they try and then disappear. The desert is destructive. At the same time it's attractive. It is a place for wanderers, explorers, nomads and panners - to invent. It attracts people who want to push themselves to go beyond their limits. For the desert you need strong gear. Quality apparel. You need a strong character too. You must be cautious, you need guts, to trust your gut feeling and to live frugally. Perseverance is necessary.

In the desert you can forget your busy agenda. Far away from the busy world you can forget time and space. Or under the dark sky, you hear and feel the silence, inner silence, that bring new insights. The desert is about that silence, quietness, emptiness and about openness. It brings other - sometimes unexpected and new - perspectives. A journey through the desert is a huge experience. Black sky thinking, Rachel Armstrong calls it. This is a perfect place to experiment. New private space agencies are put down on open deserts. The Californian and now also European and global cultural tech-avantgarde visits the Burning Man festival. Tens of thousands of participants gather annually in Nevada's Black Rock Desert to create Black Rock City, share alternative ideas and showcase art constellations and experiments. The big question is how to live frugally and survive in that huge isolated landscape. Sustainability is a topic there. People experiment together. It is a holistic experience in togetherness. And they must leave the desert clean - that's the promise every visitor makes. This year's art theme is caravansary - read more about Burning Man 2014 on page 11.

The newest avantgardes are interested in how to live frugally, how to build a durable ecosystem, how to create their own clean energy or live without money. We are headed for nine billion inhabitants of the world: a new challenge. How are we all going to live and work together? Thinking in alternatives, engaged, sometimes extraordinarily, thinking beyond limits and fixed rules? As cowboys, pirates? This is no-mans-land, not yet cultivated. People are looking for as yet unknown ways and disruptive patterns, and this is becoming the new mainstream, the new fashion. Pernille Kok-Jensen from Mare Reseach calls the phenomenon that bigger groups of people are embracing an avant-garde lifestyle and are interested in extremes the gaga-style 'mass avantgarde'. A creative style is becoming a style for the masses. The sky is not the limit anymore. More people are looking beyond the clear blue sky.

## **CLIMATE CHANGES**

On May 6th I read an article in The New York Times about climate change with the headline: 'In the United States the climate has already changed'. The effect of human-induced climate change are being felt already, it explained. Climate change is not a topic for the future. It's about the present. Water is growing scarcer in dry regions such as Texas, torrential rains are increasing in wet regions, heat waves are becoming more likely and more severe, wildfires are growing worse, and forests are dying. 'If greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane continue to escalate at a rapid pace,' the report shares, 'the warming could conceivably exceed 10 degrees by the end of this century. Climate change, once considered an issue for a distant future, has moved firmly into the present.' Research about the rising costs of doing nothing about climate change were reviewed. And only two weeks later another article revealed that 'carbon dioxide levels topped again throughout the

Northern Hemisphere.'

Consider too the Airpocalypse, as the smog problem is called. Innovators are on it. Beijing has just asked our Dutch designer/inventor Daan Roosegaarde to work on their smog problem. In August this year the famous graphic designer Milton Glaser who designed the I heart New York logo, launched a campaign in New York to raise awareness of climate change. 'It's not warming, it's dying' the simple visual on posters and button badges, comprising a green disk obscured by black smoke, tells us. It's a call for urgency. Big business too, globally, as Martijn Lampert from Motivaction shows us on page 16.

## **ENDLESS INNOVATION**

New business arises from the new reality. This issue considers endless innovation, the new bio-mimicry to expand nature with geo- or bio-engineering. The desert inspires, the desert wonders of nature are hidden. New materials and new design integrated into nature will bring prosperity. Clean tech, high tech, low tech. Desert architecture is a serious movement in art academies and architectural circles. There's plenty of sand and sun, perfect raw materials to build with. Using new technologies, smart and durable concretes are being invented. We interviewed Laurent Pambaguian, at the Materials Technology Section of the European Space Agency ESTEC, about new materials, processes and space engineering. Big steps are being made. It's innovation time. Local materials and, in space terms, 'extra terrestrial' materials are being used for additive manufacturing, new ways and opportunities open for mining land in the desert or outer space.

## **LUKE SKYWALKER AND NOMADS**

Star Wars' Luke Skywalker is set into this emerging world as the perfect inventor. Now we see young

boys of all ages becoming interested in technology and fond of gadgets and speed. These boys want to stay young and healthy forever. Technology can make them stronger, they believe. A belief appropriate to a perfectible society. This century will have its own challenges and topics to think about, to work on and thus to dive or to delve into, so in this issue we focus on innovators and the challenges of population growth and global warming. Innovation and alternative ways of thinking and acting to survive are in the air all over the world. New mentalities are arising. That is what desert time, desert philosophies and desert styles are about. It is time for inspiration and contemplation. Journeys, nomads and a new way of inventing, it pops up - call it nomad living and nomad learning, like An Kramer writes about.

## WONDERS

The eastern Sahara is one of the least explored deserts on Earth - full of wonders. In the past, when its soil was fertile, it was green and widely occupied. That Green Sahara experienced annual monsoon rains. A gradual desiccation drove people to the shores of the Nile, and the first farms appeared there. That was the starting point of the Pharaonic civilization that lasted for thousands of years. Dr. Stefan Kroepelin, a geologist and climate researcher at the University of Cologne, is specialized in this topic. He has studied the 10,000-year interplay of human settlements and the Sahara's changing climate. In this issue you can read about his idea to make the desert green again. Yori Kamphuis also writes about desertification and new theories on how to break the trend: 'restorative growth' is the topic.

## CULTURAL HEATING

You can see that the post apocalypse idea of deserts has a positive vibe too - aimed at turning the world upside down. People want to make deserts livable, they want to persevere and survive. We have already mentioned the do-it-yourself, perfectible or autarkic society. Geologists and archeologists love the desert for its wonders. We saw some of its marvelous cactus and succulents in the shops this summer. Louis Vuitton uses the idea of desert philosophies to symbolize the luxury of wandering: timeless luxury, timeless beauty, travel and discovery, the re-invention of old and the discovery of new lifestyles, cultures and landscapes. This is a down-to-earth mentality, but it's also a belief in and a willingness to push the limits.

With the emergence of new climates, cultural climates also change, making a space for other kinds of artists and heroes. We can already see them. 'Cultural heating', the Not Vogue club of Steve Oklyn in New York calls this cultural revolution. Their Desert Magazine is for a new cultural elite that is engaged and critical, very critical. They are experimentalists who know how to be independent and connected at the same time, so they have some similarities to the Mid-Twentieth Century Modernists.

As far as I have dived into this topic, I can conclude that the desert is not only about destruction. It's fertile, and it houses many wonders. It lets us connect with our selves, our roots and the 'unknown' cosmos. That's what this issue is about: from Yosemite yurt living to trusting your gut feeling and nomadic nature. Call it a journey, bringing us to new insights and new ideas. It's Invention Time!

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BURNING MAN'S DEAD ROCK CITY IN THE NEVADA, US

# BURNING MAN

## The annual event that embodies the desert lifestyle

*Burning Man is an annual week-long post-apocalyptic art event, maybe better known as a temporary community based on radical self expression and self-reliance in the Black Rock Desert playas of the Nevada. A week-long celebration live without limits, from late August to September - this year just as we are planning to send you this issue about deserts. Burning Man is an event celebrating desert lifestyle, creativity and living off the grid, exploring new themes as well as loving and embracing each other. It takes its name from the ritual burning of a large wooden effigy, which is set alight on Saturday evening.*

Once set up as an experiment in community, art, radical self-expression, and radical self-reliance, Burning Man is now a big and famous event, like other counter-culture events that have grown. Participants have to bring everything they need with them; water and petrol are more important than money. There's no electricity and no water, so a caravan of people come and bring everything they need for a week of parties and art projects.

### DESERT & ART

Black Rock Desert in Nevada is the spot. A large, flat, open space of lava beds called playas. To enter the festival grounds, people pay \$380 per person. All vehicles entering Black Rock City pay \$40 for one of the 35,000 vehicle passes available. In 2011, there were more than 50,000 participants, and it was already sold out in April.

Art displays, huge installations, art cars: roaming through this two-mile stretch of temporary city reveals humanity's capacity for limitless imagination. This temporary city is arranged as a series of concentric streets in an arc composing, since 1999, two-thirds of a 1.5-mile (2.4-km) diameter circle, with the Man sculpture and his supporting complex at the very center. Radial streets, sometimes called Avenues, extend from the Man to the outermost circle.

This year's art installations vary from a giant, glowing vagina to a collection of mechanical lotus flowers that light up to the rhythm of your heartbeat, they previewed some of the bizarre creations that will grace the world's dustiest canvas. Memorials, reflection, celebration and commemoration of life's transitions – you'll find different art projects.

*Embrace* is a huge statue of a man and a woman embracing each other. Its creator, Matt Schultz, hopes his work will convey a deeper message to onlookers. "Embrace is a reminder to take the time out of your busy life to spend time with those you love," he told HuffPost. "We hope that people will think of all of the relationships in their lives, past, present and future, and consider what has made them so important."

Another art project is called *Super Pool*, a 5,000 square foot immersive LED playground, where

participants can interact with circular pads of light through their own unique movements. A Wheel of Fortune, a massive spinning wheel emblazoned with tarot card designs, a gazebo area where spectators can relax and, of course, a chandelier made of fire. And it's all powered by solar energy to boot. This project raised \$14,434 on Kickstarter.

For a huge vagina, called *Clitterati*, the designers raised \$12,441 on Indiegogo. This 18-foot tall, LED-lit vagina features video projections of feminine forms and sensory fabrics. "We're delighted when the name makes someone uncomfortable," the Vulvatron's lead designer told HuffPost. "We're using this opportunity to engage in conversation, and we're eager to help each other explore our triggers and push social boundaries imposed by our culture."

Another entirely interactive experience, *Pulse and Bloom*, is made up of 25 mechanical lotus flowers. When participants touch the flowers, they light up to the specific rhythms of their heartbeat. Other artworks are called the *Lost Tea Party*, *the wheels of Zoroaster*, *Parasavent*, *Celestial Mechanica*, *Return of the Racken*, *Squared*, *Tree of (Im) permanence*, *the Last Outpost*, *Hayan Sun Temple*. More interactive technology, more LED: new technology is part of this sharing and giving culture. With new inventions it seems easier to lighten the dark desert.

## BURNERS

People attending Burning Man, called "Burners", don't have a single focus. Themes and unwritten rules are about survivalism, the community spirit, gifting, sharing, radical inclusion, self expression, art, decommodification, self reliance, dreaming

and absurdity. Living beyond limits. Next week they gather again in Black Rock Desert. As we read in an article in Mashable about the people attending, it's more for future minded people than for nostalgic hippies. 'All kinds of techno-smart futuristic punks party in a handmade city in an environment that is doing its level best to kill you. Either the sun is baking dry ground that is blinding white, leeching water from your body, or the wind is blasting mile-high storms of dust across this enormous barren plain at ninety miles an hour, or a starry desert night is damn-near freezing you to death. Occasionally the climate likes to remind you you're actually partying on an ancient lake bed - the playa - and rains for days until the solid dusty ground turns to thick soupy mud that adds inches to your shoes in seconds ... People who are a little bit crazy, quite a bit determined, and a whole lot of wiry and smart. People with an Iggy Pop-style lust for life. Here are punks of all stripes: cyberpunks, steampunks, biker punks, punk punks. People who do what it says on the ticket - voluntarily assume the risk of death. People who are brought roaringly to life in this killer of a desert, and fight fiercely to build an all-inclusive volunteer-driven civilization that lasts for as long as a mayfly.'

'Leaving no trace' is an important rule. "Our community respects the environment. We are committed to leaving no physical trace of our activities wherever we gather. We clean up after ourselves and endeavor, whenever possible, to leave such places in a better state than when we found them." It's part of the same culture that embodies the desert lifestyle too.

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IMAGES FROM THE BEIJING AIRPOCALYPSE AND TORRENTAL RAINS IN TEXAS, FROM CBS, HUFFINGTON POST AND NPR

# THE GREAT DISRUPTION

## How the climate crisis will transform the global economy

Paul Gilding is an internationally acclaimed leader and advocate for sustainability. He has served as head of Greenpeace International and advised several Fortune 500 companies about sustainability. He's a member of the core faculty for Cambridge University's Programme for Sustainability Leadership and blogs at [paulgilding.com](http://paulgilding.com).

In his book *The Great Disruption* (2011), he wrote that we could see extreme weather, with droughts, floods and wildfires breaking records across the US. Famine gripped the Horn of Africa, the UK faced wide-spread rioting, global stock markets saw unprecedented volatility, and more countries teetered on the edge of debt default. 'The world is a complex place, and many factors drive any crisis, but the overall situation is now clear. We have hit the limits in these past three years, and reality can no longer be explained away.' This was written in 2011.

*The Great Disruption*, as he calls it, started in 2008 with spiking oil and food prices and dramatic ecological changes like the melting polar ice cap. The discussion is no longer only about fossil fuels and carbon footprints: we have also come to the end of economic growth. A world economy based on consumption and waste, in which we've lived beyond the means of our planet, is over.

Gilding explains the complexity, the economic and social hurricane of our times. The earth is full, the human economy and society are so omnivorous

that we have passed the limits of our planet's capacity. Our model of economic growth is driving this system, and this in itself presents a major problem. So we have to face the Great Disruption and to think and act beyond the limits to halt it.

This won't be easy. One of the biggest problems is population. There are already too many people. We must grow the economy in a different way, with fewer materials, less energy and more renewable resources. That's a major mindshift for societies addicted to growth. What if that growth stops? We know we aren't finished, but the reality and people's reactions can't be foreseen.

### MOBILIZATION

The work, or war as Gilding calls it, must be done in three phases. The climate war would be the launching of a world war level of mobilization to achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions must start within one to five years; the second phase, climate neutrality, beginning in five to twenty years, should move us to net zero emissions. This too would be a major global undertaking, requiring full utilization of all technological opportunities and supported by behavioral and cultural change; step three is for climate recovery. That would take up to 100 years. In this scenario, humanity can complete the stabilization job in the first decades after 2100. An interesting roadmap, and it will ask something unique from us. We must retain some freedom during a world war level of mobilization.

‘The earth is full, the human economy and society are so omnivorous that we have passed the limits of our planet’s capacity’

#### **NEW LEADERS**

The economist Joseph Schumpeter, the inventor of the term ‘creative destruction’, is considered a thought leader for this way to a more sustainable world. We need creative destruction on steroids, Gilding writes. Out with the old, in with the new. And cold turkey. In this area, science and systemic thinking are absolutely central to business strategy. Chinese Sun Energy investors, for example, will play a major role in this effort. Think of it as shifting sand from the Middle Eastern Oil to the Chinese sun. We need new dinosaurs, as Gilding calls it. We need another mindset. We need to see economics, society and culture from a completely other perspective. As Schumpeter has said, the old idea of growth doesn’t work anymore.

#### **NEW MINDSETS**

Gilding proclaims a radical new way to organize society. It’s time for a change; that’s it, pure and simple. We need to look for new paradigms, new rewards and new revenues. Gilding suggests that happiness can be an important factor in the economy, that there’s a life after shopping, that the

poor will not always be with us, that inequality is not effective - it’s even ineffective - and that the future is here, though not yet widely recognized. If you’re curious about his thoughts and ideas for beginning the huge economical, political, societal and cultural changes needed to save Planet Earth, read *The Great Disruption*. It may well change your mind about sustainability. As Gilding proclaims, we must do it ourselves now. For that to happen, we need to be clear, loud and focussed in our message. It’s wartime. It’s time to stop worrying. It’s time to act now.

# NEW DRIVERS IN SUSTAINABILITY

BY MARTIJN LAMPERT

Martijn Lampert from Motivaction Amsterdam is responsible for the Glocalities Research Project about what drives people and gets them moving. Worldwide. On the subject of sustainability, they have gathered some new insights. One is that the drivers of sustainability are not the same everywhere in the world.

*Martijn, you published a report about the different faces of sustainability. In China, the US and Europe, perspectives are not exactly the same. There's a hidden potential for a breakthrough in China – as you also call your report. Can you tell us something about the results?*

“Yes, I think it's not only about sustainability but also about new ideologies behind the topic.

In Europe and the US, we identified specific segments of the population who are interested and working on the topic. We call them Creatives - open minded, independent people, critical of society as it is, and with a strong sense of idealism. In China this is different. Sustainability is perceived as more urgent. Pollution, smog and dirty water, is worse there. Much! The rich Chinese are emigrating, and expats are leaving because of the 'Airlpocalypse'. On a basic level, the topic of sustainability is less ideology-driven. It is highly urgent, and it also offers business opportunities. Supporters of sustainable practices in China have higher values than in the west. In China, both Conservatives and Achievers are involved.

“For Chinese conservatives, sustainability is deeply

rooted in their tradition. Heritage is important, caring for the local ground is rooted in the culture. It is in their original roots to treat the earth well, so it is easier for them to adapt. Since their motivation is different, they have a completely different perspective on sustainability than that of the Creatives in Europe and the US.

“In China, 64% say they are environmentalists. The other Chinese segment that is interested in sustainability is the Achiever. Closely linked to Conservatives but more materialistic, they have more money to spend. Entrepreneurs and also decision makers belong to this group. They are more open to technological solutions and business opportunities, whereas Creatives in Europe are less entrepreneurial-driven and more idealistic. This new group of Achievers that is present in developing countries changes the dynamics of the topic of sustainability. Achievers have more power to change things than Creatives have. They are organizers, they have access to money.

## REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL

“Although in Europe and the rest of the Western world sustainability is more an ideology, the ideological debate has actually gotten stuck. In the US it's stuck in debate, in Europe it's on a moral highground. In China it's becoming a practical debate. The mindset of Achievers there is different. They want to organize and make a business out of it. The Chinese government realizes the urgency of the topic and is investing in green technology. A bit controversial because, at the same time, they are

## ‘In China, 64% say they are environmentalists’

both the biggest polluters and the biggest inventors. Corruption and power changing hands are both a reality that affects sustainability. In the US and Europe, legislation around the topic is much more developed, in China it's just now becoming mature, and legislation and penalties are coming into effect. In China there is a revolutionary potential in the topic. It is most urgent, the leadership and the entrepreneurial spirit are in it.”

*I ‘m interested in the changing role of multinationals, and you also paid attention to them and their willingness to invest in sustainability – can you tell us more?*

“Multinationals are entrepreneurial and, in a way, they combine drivers from the Creative and Achiever segments. Western ideology is strongly embedded in a business philosophy. They have programs to cherish their customers. Many multinationals have departments dealing with sustainability, or have integrated sustainability practices as part of their whole business model. They help to normalize sustainable goals in developing countries, but they need to link more social intelligence to their business intelligence in order to keep ahead. A new mentality is developing, more local. Facilitating local talent is becoming more important, in some ways the topics are different, the mindsets, the drives. That makes

this time challenging for multinationals; they have to adapt more to national cultures and change their steering models. And don't forget that national pride is growing in developing countries.”

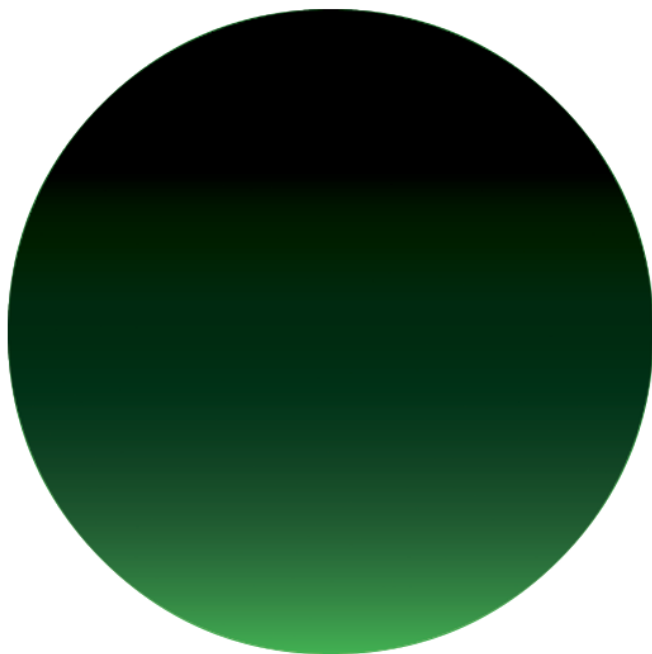
*What are the most positive results of the research you did?*

“All over the world, more change-making segments are getting involved in sustainability, like the Achievers in China. Only where an ideology with Creatives are in the lead is the door being locked. The debate in the western world got a bit stuck on both sides, in Europe and the US. Now new paths are opening. There is a new momentum to invest in sustainable business that arises from the Achiever mentality in developing economies. A new paradigm is arising.”

If you want to read more about this research, you can download the report for free at:

[www.motivaction.nl/content/china-64-percent-environmentalists-report](http://www.motivaction.nl/content/china-64-percent-environmentalists-report)

# **IT'S NOT WARMING IT'S DYING.**



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# ‘WHITE IS THE NEW GREEN’

INTERVIEW BY ANDREA WIEGMAN

*Time: L+206 (June 2014) The T was missing, yes?*

*Week: 30*

*Temperature: - 69°C*

*Sunlight: None (24-hour darkness)*

*Morale: OK (at times great, at times bad)*

*Living in such a special environment as Antarctica, you can imagine that our resources are scanty and the need to plan carefully what we consume is inexorable. What is more, Antarctica is unique as a continent considering the internationally agreed legislation that governs it; laws that prohibit bearing arms or introducing new animal species that could imbalance the local ecosystem, and call for particular waste management. In fact, Antarctica is a continent devoted to preservation of the environment, scientific research and peaceful co-existence and it was a wise choice on behalf of humanity to render it thus. Having briefly worked for Greenpeace in the past and sharing the vision for a world with excellent future prospects (rather than a dismal tomorrow), these principles attracted me when I began to expand my knowledge about Antarctica. It's the end of the world as we know it, as REM sang years ago ...*

## POST FROM ANTARTICA

June 2014

We just got a letter from the very cold desert in Antarctica, where it is extremely cold now. We interviewed Adrianos Golemis, who is working in

one of the most isolated places on earth for an ESA project. Concordia research station in Antarctica is located on a plateau 3200 meters above sea level. A place of extremes, temperatures can drop to -80°C in the winter, with a yearly average temperature of -50°C. As Concordia lies at the very southern tip of the Earth, the sun does not rise above the horizon in the winter and does not set in the summer. The crew must live without sunlight for four months of the year.

Concordia is a joint French-Italian inland Antarctic research station run by the French Polar Institute and Italian Antarctic Programme. Every year, it hosts a human research protocol coordinated by ESA and Concordia's partners, supplied by universities and research institutions from across Europe.

The altitude and location mean that the air in Concordia is very thin and holds less oxygen. Venturing outside the base requires wearing layers of clothes and limits the time spent outdoors. During the harsh winter no outside help can be flown in or reach the base over land – the crew have to solve any problems on their own. In addition, Concordia sits in the largest desert in the world. The air is extremely dry, so the crew suffer from continuously chapped lips and irritated eyes. No animals can survive in this region – even bacteria find it hard coping with the extreme temperatures. The nearest human beings are stationed some 600 km away at the Russian Vostok base, making Concordia more remote than the International Space Station. In the great open landscape covered in darkness, colours, smells and sounds are almost non-existent,



adding to the sense of loneliness. The isolation and sensory deprivation can wreak havoc on crew members' biological clock, making it hard to get a good night's sleep. Despite all these hardships, up to 16 people spend around a year at a time living in Concordia in the name of science. Far removed from civilisation, the white world of Antarctica offers researchers the opportunity to collect data and experiment like no other place on Earth. The base is so unlike anything found elsewhere in the world that ESA participates in the Italian-French base to research future missions to other planets, using the base as a model for extraterrestrial planets.

"Good evening from Concordia Station and thank you in return for your interest in our isolated base amidst the Antarctic! Certainly, we all tend to think of sand, heat and dunes when we hear about "deserts", but the term itself can extend beyond what we consider a "usual" desert. To most people, a desert means barren lands where surviving is difficult and the conditions harsh; Antarctica has to offer some landscapes like that and indeed I am talking to you from such a location, Dome Circe (or Dome C). Here thirteen of us are staying in complete isolation for nine months; this means that even in the case of an emergency we cannot request external help or evacuate, as the extreme cold prevents others from reaching us by any means."

#### **NO ANIMALS OR BIRDS**

"Life at Concordia Station is interesting, though, with a lot of peculiarities stemming from our location and isolated conditions. As you correctly stated, there are no animals or birds to be seen for hundreds of miles, while our closest human "neighbours" lie about 700 km away at Vostock Station. Our base is situated at a high altitude,

approximately 3200 meters high, which means that the atmosphere is somewhat deprived of oxygen and we suffer from hypoxia. An astonishing fact, given that we live on ice, is that one of our primary problems is dryness! This can affect your sleep a lot as well as other activities, so we might not be under the blazing Sahara sun but in our own polar desert we do share many of the conditions dominant there. We are not nomads as people of the "classic" deserts can be, though. Temperatures here can drop as low as -80 degrees Celsius and so we are confined to live in and around our base. We never walk further than 2 km away during the winter."

*How long have you been at Concordia and how does it feel to be so isolated and far away from the rest of the world - even though you're still on this planet? Threats, challenges?*

"I arrived at Concordia Station in November 2013 and will stay here for one year. We just came out of the Midwinter celebrations last week (June 21st) which is a big thing in all of Antarctica, as it pinpoints approximately the middle of our stay on the seventh continent plus the countdown till the next sunrise. In our case, we just completed 7 months here, of which 2 have been in constant darkness - the sun does not rise in our latitudes for some time. This, paired with the element of isolation that you mentioned, makes life in the extreme environment of Antarctica quite a unique experience. I would argue that distance in itself is not so intimidating, as we are blessed with the benefit of a small internet connection, but the fact that you are stranded here for a year no matter what will occur means that, even if all turns out well, you don't have the chance to meet loved ones on special occasions or take a week off and go on vacation."





THE WHITE DESERT AROUND CONCORDIA STATION, IMAGE FROM ESA/ ESTEC

“About the off-world feeling, for me a really captivating moment was when I first walked outside the base during the 3-month polar night: It’s freezing, you’re wrapped in a multi-layered polar suit with a special mask and torch, you’re engulfed by total, pure darkness as you walk towards faint lights in the distance (you can’t make out the shape of buildings from afar). For one moment, I switched off my light and felt completely alone. Not really frightened, but away from everything - complete silence, utter darkness, save for the brilliance of stars above. Off-worldly. I imagine that’s the closest thing you can live to a spacewalk. I’m very glad that I had the chance to feel it.”

#### **AUTONOMY**

“Now, concerning challenges and threats, as we said, isolation means autonomy. We have to take good care of our power consumption, for example, because if we exhaust our fuel, there’s nothing to do but wait until supplies can arrive in the summer! The same with food. In regard to our health, we must exercise extreme caution to avoid injuries - prevention is the best treatment, especially when you cannot evacuate for 9 months. Psychology is equally important and can indeed become the main concern of your stay in isolation if you don’t come prepared or willing to make the best out of situations. Helping each other and displaying understanding and empathy can be more crucial to having a good social life than back at home.”

*Can you tell us more about yourself? What is your age and background, and what is your research goal at Concordia? What’s the main goal of being there?*

“I am 27 years old now, and I have a Medical Degree from the Aristotle University in Greece,

followed by a Master’s on Space Sciences with the International Space University. This last degree led me to work for ESA, the European Space Agency, which as an institution is leading in various fields of research, including human physiology and psychology in extreme environments. ESA is very keen on conducting biomedical experiments at Concordia, because our Station is a prime space analogue, meaning it simulates very well the conditions of a long-term mission in space, like the ones that might take humans to Mars or a deep space habitat. ESA receives many research proposals every year to study how humans behave in isolation, confinement or abnormal day-night cycles, which is the case with Antarctica. The best ones are endorsed and carried out by a doctor working for ESA at Concordia, a base that also simulates additional stressors, like hypoxia or dealing with an international crew. I am responsible for conducting these biomedical tests this year, so the research goal for me is to provide as many good-quality data as possible. These will be analysed later in order to understand patterns of human behaviour in extreme environments and consequently improve conditions for astronauts in space, but also for people on Earth. It would be good to mention here that participation in these tests is voluntary, and many of the deductions and outcomes of Antarctic biomedical research are applied to solve common medical problems in Europe or around the globe, such as sleep apnoea or similar. So, I would say that this research is definitely an investment in the future on and off the planet.

The reason for being here collectively as a scientific community is that Antarctica has many secrets to reveal to us, and by making use of the knowledge that can be obtained here we can advance our civilization and improve our standards of living.

The need to discover, know and explore is inherent in humans, and it's also why we have achieved so much. So, I am glad to join a team of Astronomers, Glaciologists, Meteorologists, Geologists and other scientists that spend some time here in the South. Of course we must not forget that luckily not all of us here are scientists, we could probably not survive long enough without the presence and collaboration of very competent technical staff."

*You're with a team, living in isolation – without internet? I guess you work hard on your research – what else do you do in the 24 hours of a day? How many hours do you sleep, for example? I'm curious about the normal things of life and living.*

"Now we do have a limited internet connection, which was not the case, however, with all previous crews. There are certainly limitations; for example, to my dismay, we cannot stream football games of the World Cup, but the satellite connection is sufficient to read the news or stay in touch with family and friends.

The crew at Concordia consists of 13 people this year, and we definitely spend some time in team activities. These can range from group games to more professional or housekeeping ones (for instance, we all share the daily cleaning tasks). We try to celebrate on every occasion, such as birthdays, too. Other than work schedules, I think we all need some time alone as well, for example to read a book, listen to our favourite songs or watch a movie. On top of that, living at Concordia is a great chance to exercise sports and some of us try to grasp the opportunity. A portion of the week is usually dedicated to talking with our parents, girlfriend or boyfriend and close friends too, by e-mail or by phone. Let's not forget that being in

Antarctica is unique in many aspects, and that means that we try also to enjoy this experience: we observe some rare natural phenomena outside and take a lot of pictures despite the cold. Lastly, outreach activities are something we manage to fit into our weekly schedules, so at times we connect with school students or write on our blogs. You can, for example, read more about our feelings or activities on the ESA blog ([blogs.esa.int/concordia](http://blogs.esa.int/concordia)) or personal ones ([www.astrovenator.blogspot.gr](http://www.astrovenator.blogspot.gr)). To me, this is very important, and I hope that others can be motivated by sharing the wonderful experience that we go through. In general, it is an alternative way of everyday life here, but one that you can enjoy for some time, particularly since it lacks the frenzy of a traffic jam as you go to work or having to remember paying your bills every month!"

## **SLEEP**

"I left sleep for the end, because it's not as easy as it seems! When you arrive at Dome C, at first you live in 24-hour daylight; now, on the contrary, you are immersed in total, continuous darkness. Coupled with the extreme dryness and lack of oxygen, this can influence your sleep significantly. We try to sleep at least 5-6 hours per day, but this is far from guaranteed every night, no matter how hard we try!"

*How cold is cold? How dark is dark? How flat is flat? What do you miss the most? And does this experience and research change your view of the world?*

"Cold is - rather cold! In the summer as "high" as -30 degrees Celsius, in the winter it can go down to -80 in our location. If you prepare well enough, thanks to our very effective gear, at first you can't

# ‘This is akin to what the crew of a long-term space mission would have to deal with, monotony and lack of external stimulation’

feel how immensely different this is from being at, say, -10 degrees on a European mountain. But if you stay 30 minutes outside Concordia during the winter, the thickest gloves aren't enough to protect you and soon your fingers and toes will freeze. You have to be careful and get back inside on time, although we've all suffered frostbites from time to time."

## **DARK**

"Dark - well, the Moon is a comfort many a time. Other than that, from May to August the only natural light you see is a thin yellow band near the horizon at midday, but it's very faint and sparsely stretched. The night sky, on the other hand, is a marvel to behold, the clearest sky worldwide. I was thrilled to spot the Magellanic Clouds for the first time during the long polar night. Darkness is not always bad, it can feel mysterious and unknown, but revealing too. It makes the Antarctic landscape look even more pristine to me. I hope we get to see the Aurora Australis soon (the Southern Lights) which is possible only when it's dark enough."

## **FLAT**

"And flat - well, that's another peculiarity of our

"desert base". Other Antarctic Stations that lie near the coast possess a variety of geographic features, such as mountains or volcanoes. In our case, there is only an infinite white as far as the eye can see. Again, this is akin to what the crew of a long-term space mission would have to deal with, monotony and lack of external stimulation.

Naturally I miss social relations as well as simple things that we take for granted - a walk in the park under the sun, for example. But there is some compensation, if we take into account the different situations we experience in Antarctica and which we're unlikely to meet elsewhere. I miss eating some fresh fruit, unquestionably! And enjoying a Greek gyros late at night, after being out with friends. Well, I'm sure I will miss things that I have here in Antarctica, too, when I go back, so I shouldn't complain.

I think the experience changes you, yes. Maybe more once you get back to a more casual way of living, but I can already see some of it. For example, I never noticed when a geographical map did not include Antarctica until I came here, but now I do and I even feel a bit offended by it!



# ‘Effort, knowledge, perseverance’

It's like drawing the solar system but forgetting the Moon. My motivation to recycle and "live green" has been amplified as well. Also, the wishes that my girlfriend and other loved ones sent me for my birthday had a vastly more profound impact on me this year when I live in isolation. So there is some difference in the way you perceive the world and its people, I would say."

*Do you have a message to the "civilized world" now?*

:A message ... that's harder to say, and I could risk just reciting ones that have been uttered many times! But since we are currently within the long polar night, I frequently remember the national motto of Chile, which is "Post Tenebras, Lux", "after the darkness, light". I think it's important to be patient through hardships until the light returns, in life, generally. But even more, to make a conscious effort for the best. And science and research are also about that, an effort to know and improve. So eventually I would say this: effort, knowledge, perseverance."

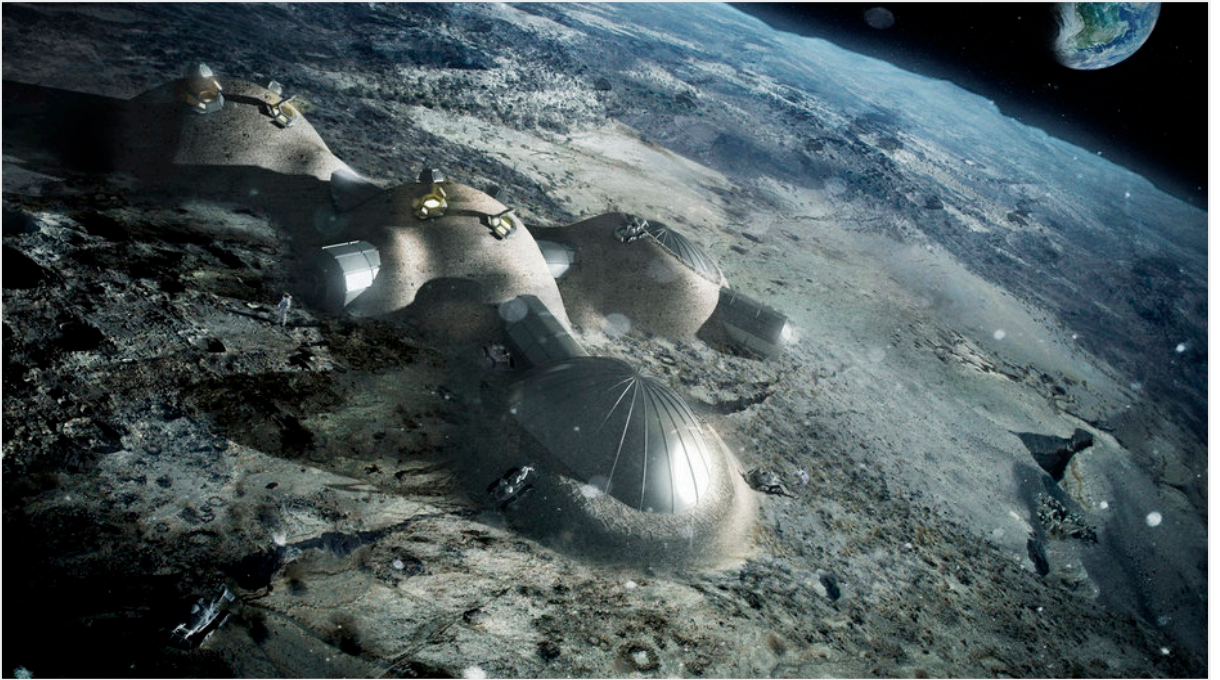
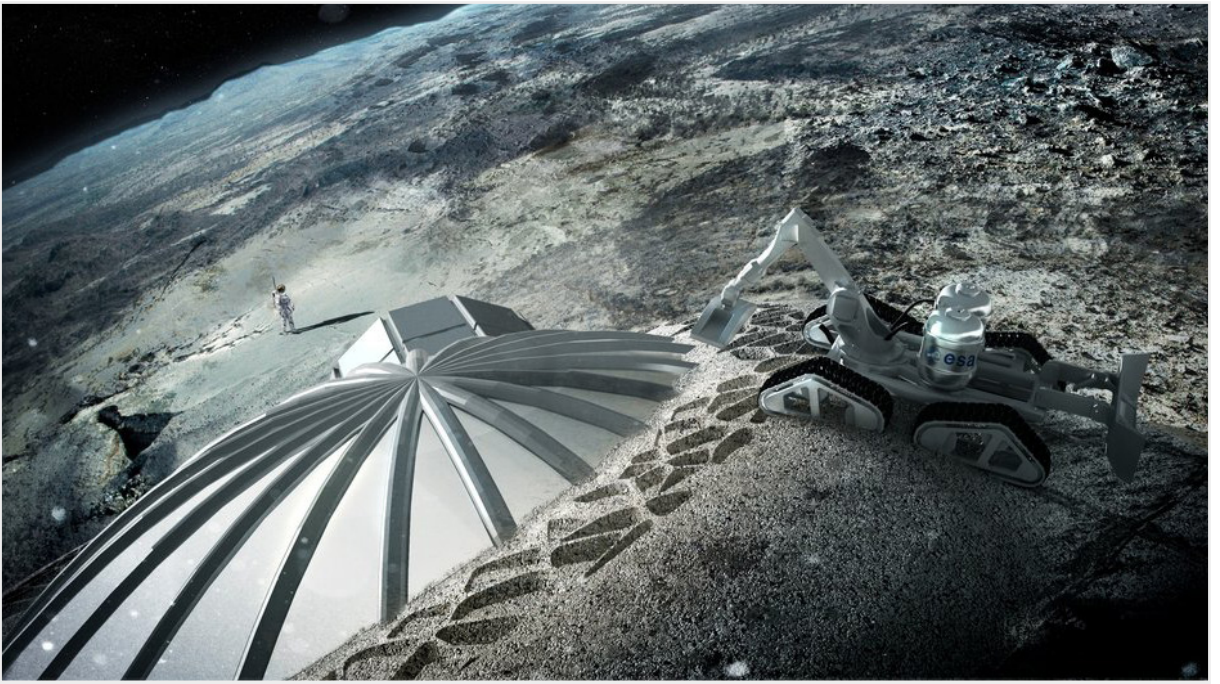
*In case I forgot to ask a question, do you want to share more with people who are thinking about*

*and working on the future?*

"Being Greek and seeing the consequences of the recent crisis in my country, I think it's very important to think about, plan for and innovate in the future. So I agree with your perspective and maybe it's more central to humanity than what we've thought. The experience I am lucky to share with my colleagues here at Concordia Station has reinforced my belief that we must think in the long term and not merely enjoy today (which is also very important). And to do that, I think that unity is the key. Let's not forget that the name of our multi-national Station here is "Concordia" which means "unity, harmony". I also think that it's vital to share our beliefs, ideas and thoughts with one another. If we aspire to witness real progress, outreach is a crucial activity."

*Thank you very much - good luck in the desert of Antarctica and all the best at Concordia! Also for your team!*

"Thank you once again. and I hope more people get the chance to visit Antarctica. It is a marvellous desert despite the hardships!"



IMAGES FROM ESA/FOSTER + PARTNERS, THE MULTI DOME LUNAR BASE



# MATERIAL REVOLUTIONS

INTERVIEW BY ANDREA WIEGMAN

“I know much about materials, metallic, new materials, terrestrial materials. This is a very complex field where human understanding is slowly progressing since before the Bronze Age”, Laurent Pambaguian says. Pambaguian’s main function is to address the future needs of European space technology with respect to materials and processes. It involves manufacturing technologies and the techniques that characterise these materials under stringent testing accuracy requirements or extreme environment. Laurent Pambaguian works for the Materials Technology Section, ESA - ESTEC, the European Space Research and Technology Center. With a background as engineer in materials processing, he is working on new applications of additive manufacturing, as he calls the 3D printing technologies. He is also involved in aspects such as sustainable development of space activities or prospective for space hardware and architecture. IN ESA they are working both on the mature technologies for building today satellites but also on long term technology where high impact is expected. At the Materials Technology Section they develop technologies of high interest for space applications or to assess the potential of emerging technologies for materials and processes. “I developed expertise on additive manufacturing during the last decade. The machines changed a lot and became far more reliable.”

“The progress in materials and processes contribute to re-invent space engineering today. Additive manufacturing allows conceiving new designs where assemblies of several elements are suppressed and replaced by a monolithic part. High performance

materials can be by engineered taking benefit of the specificities of the additive manufacturing technologies. It becomes conceivable even to build on the spot, also in outerspace. These manufacturing technologies lead to new design. The hardware, or parts of the hardware required for specific applications become smaller, stronger and lighter at the same time. With new technologies and new materials hardware is being invented again.”

## **FUTURE SPACE PROJECTS**

One of the projects ESA is pursuing is the use of regolith\* to build a Multi Dome Lunar Base - a prototype of a lunar base based on the 3D printing concept. Using 3D printing on the spot is an alternative to sending habitat from Earth to build lunar base. It is much more efficiently by using a 3D printer and building it from local materials. Terrestrial 3D printing technology has produced entire structures, build on the spot, with new materials: lighter, stronger, better resistant to the lunar atmosphere.

“Now advanced material processes set the limits. I began working in space engineering in the late 1980s and work for 10 years with the 3D printing technologies. The first patents on 3d rapid manufacturing are from the early 1920s, the first experiments were in the 1970s, and now it is beginning to break through! If we were able to make space missions out of a single material, I’d be instantly out of work, but different materials have different strengths and weaknesses. So it becomes a matter of identifying which materials and processes can be used for which application, and whether they

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\* Regolith is a layer of loose, heterogeneous material covering solid rock. It includes dust, soil, broken rock, and other related materials and is present on Earth, the Moon, Mars, some asteroids, and other terrestrial planets and moons.

can be used in combination without ill effects.”

“Leaving this planet, during a launch, all the stuff, nuts and bolts, must be so strong, so it is serious business. We cannot fail. We cannot use the wrong materials. In isolated areas, or space no one can help you to fix it. In an extreme situation, extreme cold or heat, if something breaks, the mission fails. There is not a big lab, a garage, a fixing station or anything else that can help you, 3D printing or additive manufacturing can help. Printing on location, with the natural resources that are present there. The extreme conditions in outerspace make space projects and research challenging. We are inventing new areas, new material with new qualities”

On a visit to the ESA–ESTEC labs, I learned that seeing under what conditions things will break is as important as inventing and making them, so we went to the demolition lab. Additive manufacturing (AM) changes the plot. It changes perspectives. They can build and repair on location as well as now and here, they invent new materials, structures, shapes, they can print complex structures in one piece now.

Pambaguian and his colleagues showed me some of the newest parts made of aluminium or titanium. I touched and felt the materials, all surprisingly light-weight. “It must be capable to survive the full space mission, the vibration at launch, the radiation, vacuum and thermal cycling when operating..’ They are excited about the results. Lighter, smaller, stronger, new designs – all is related to new materials and new technologies. ‘We live in revolutionary times,’ Pambaguian said. ‘In the coming years, with inventions in additive manufacturing and the new materials we’re working

on, we can expect that the space hardware will be much lighter. It will result in 40% less mass in space. That is a big step forward. In the recent past we talked about percentages like 5% reduction in mass, now it is 40% less. That’s an immense difference. And there are more benefits, there is also that story about an astronaut who lost his toolbox in space. Just a normal human error, one we human beings make. It was terrible, a real disaster for that space mission. Now with additive manufacturing, it can be repaired or printed again. This astronaut would have been able to print new tools. What we can do now, is amazing. Everything that is built to use in space is lighter, stronger, can resist extremely high and low temperatures - the applications are more stable, firmer and lighter. 3D printing technics will change the entire idea of space engineering.”

## **MATERIAL PROCESSES**

Pambaguian don’t believe that everything in the world and in space will be produced by 3D printers. As he said, “I do not believe that these new manufacturing technologies will take over or replace the complete mass production market on earth. I do believe in additive technology. It helps in innovation in specific branches. And I know that, in 10 years time, this will be embedded in areas like aerospace – call it a small market with high performances. The real challenge is going to be changing our way of doing business to take maximum advantage of such new developments. Being able to move straight from design to production with much fewer manufacturing steps is potentially revolutionary, but we’ll need to reorganise our way of working – and thinking. The space industry has tended to stick with the old ways of doing things over the past half a century or more, because any new development will need to be qualified for space, and that is costly. Now we



# ‘Everything that is built to use in space is lighter, stronger, can resist extremely high and low temperatures ... 3D printing technics will change the entire idea of space engineering’

see steps forward in new manufacturing, additive materials.”

## **MORE INNOVATION**

“We learn from the new processes. Innovation is more open now. That’s new for our work at ESA.. Now, we share more and work with younger people - from universities and other industries, e.g. design - or architecture companies. We work together. The mind-set of the new generation is different for instance. New technologies, new opportunities and new ways of producing change people’s minds. That is a generational thing. Now we work together with younger people and other minds, we learn, we share experiences and work together. We can improve things here and for space use from new perspectives. Innovation and additive manufacturing brought new perspectives. We learned a lot at ESA. So we both have our input in working together.”

Another important topic for the Materials Technology Section at ESA is sustainable manufacturing. Pambaguan is working on the Clean Space initiative. Clean space addresses, among other, how to reduce waste from the material and process point of view.. New inventions, new materials are bringing a major change of mind-set. And this mind-set change

can spin-down to earth too. We know aerospace as a change leader for innovations. Think about new technologies in materials, about the newest light weighted survival garment, even desert tents, inventions used by the car industry, or processes for the food and agriculture. Space engineering is about long-term innovations – it takes time to invent them. Pambaguan believes that the next generation will live and work different, they will save natural resources better. New technologies and new materials will be used. That is where they are working on at ESA, for space, but also for our world: the planet ‘earth’.

Read more about ESA’s Multi Dome Lunar Base, [www.esa.int/Highlights/Lunar\\_3D\\_printing](http://www.esa.int/Highlights/Lunar_3D_printing)

Read more about the Clean Space initiative [www.esa.int/Our\\_Activities/Space\\_Engineering/Clean\\_Space](http://www.esa.int/Our_Activities/Space_Engineering/Clean_Space)

*On the next pages we share some technological innovations related to additive manufacturing and desert manufacturing. Read more about the Silk Leaf, the Solar Sinter Project, Dune Architecture, the Sahara Forest Project and the Geopolymer Institute working on new concretes and pyramid building.*



IMAGE FROM MAGNUS LARSSON'S DUNE PROJECT, SAND TURNS INTO SANDSTONE

# ‘SPOTTED’ INVENTIONS & NEW TECHNOLOGIES

*In the past, we know, deserts were greener. Considerable parts of what are now considered desert areas were formerly vegetated. Julius Caesar's army conquered much of the African continent north of the Sahara and turned forests into farmland. For some 200 years, North Africa supplied around two-thirds of Rome's total grain supply. This resulted in deforestation, increased salinity in the soil and loss of minerals. Read more about the phenomenon of desertification and new challenges turning into new business. The new green pops up, on more spots. Call it sustainable technologies, desert manufacturing, desert architecture...*

## ‘RESTORATIVE GROWTH’

### SAHARA FOREST PROJECT

By 2050, about 9.3 billion people will share our planet. The world is already facing intertwined challenges of food, water and energy scarcity. These are huge existential problems, but there are solutions. The Sahara Forest Project proposes to use restorative practices to establish vegetation and restorative growth. It is designed to utilize what we have enough of to produce what we need more of, using deserts, saltwater and CO<sup>2</sup> to produce food, fresh water and energy.

The Sahara Forest Project proposes to establish groups of interconnected economic activities in different low-lying desert areas around the world. The simple core of the concept is an infrastructure for bringing saltwater inland and providing a new oasis of green technologies. In 2011, The Sahara

Forest Project was proposed and, in 2012, in cooperation with companies like Yara ASA, the world's largest supplier of fertilizer and the Qatari company Qafco, the world's largest producer of urea and ammonia, it became operational. Its new green technologies are concentrated on solar power, saltwater greenhouses and algae production. A state-of-the-art 50 m<sup>3</sup> algae test facility, the only of its kind in Qatar and the larger region, enables commercial-scale research on the cultivation of marine algae species native to the Gulf and Red Sea for use as nutraceuticals, biofuels, and animal and fish fodder.

[www.saharaforestproject.com](http://www.saharaforestproject.com)

### THE GROASIS WATERBOXX

The Groasis Waterboxx is designed to help trees grow in dry areas. The waterbox acts as a self-recharging “water battery” that slowly releases water collected as condensation each night, prompting young trees or seeds to grow their roots down to the deeper moisture in the ground, making irrigation or watering unnecessary ever again. It is said to use one liter of water instead of ten and can make dry soils green again. It was invented and developed by the Dutch former flower exporter Pieter Hoff. Groasis is now an expanding firm in Silicon Valley. In 2010 they won the Popular Science Green Tech Best of What's New in Innovation Award. Pieter Hoff has written *The Blue CO<sup>2</sup> Booklet: CO<sup>2</sup>, a Gift From Heaven* in which he proposes planting trees to solve problems with CO<sup>2</sup> emissions into the earth's atmosphere.

Even in extremely dry areas, such as among inaccessible rocks, on mountains, sand dunes and deserts or in burnt forests, the Waterboxx is effective. It is made from recycled paper which helps to start the plant growing. After a year the container breaks down, and from then the soil itself fertilizes the plant.

[www.groasis.com](http://www.groasis.com)

[www.dewharvest.com/insights-from-nature.html](http://www.dewharvest.com/insights-from-nature.html)

### **THE SILK LEAF - RCA student invents artificial leaf that can produce oxygen**

'Silk Leaf is the first man-made biological leaf. It's very light, low energy-consuming, it's completely biological,' its developer Julian Melchiorri says. He invented this first manufactured leaf when he took the Innovation Design Engineering course at the Royal College of Art in London and in collaboration with Tufts University silk lab.

This synthetic biological leaf absorbs water and carbon dioxide to produce oxygen just as a plant does. It could enable long-distance space travel. Natural plants don't grow in zero gravity, but this one will. NASA is researching different ways to produce oxygen for long-distance space journeys and to make living in space possible. This material could allow us to explore space much further than we now can. It could also transform cities, making buildings capable of generating their own oxygen. Melchiorri said, "My idea was to use the efficiency of nature in a man-made environment'."

[dezeen.com/2014/07/25/movie-silk-leaf-first-man-made-synthetic-biological-leaf-space-travel/](http://dezeen.com/2014/07/25/movie-silk-leaf-first-man-made-synthetic-biological-leaf-space-travel/)

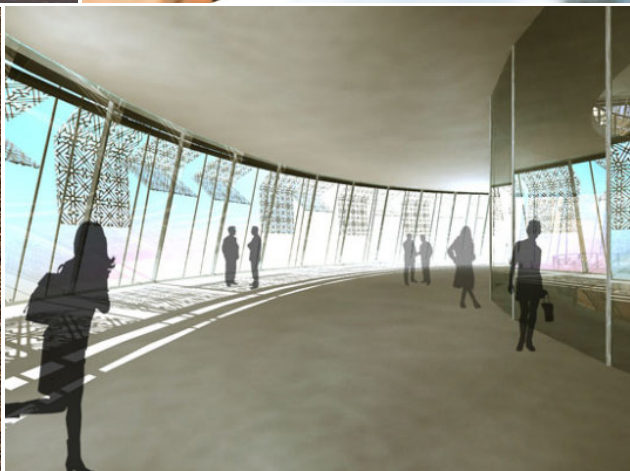
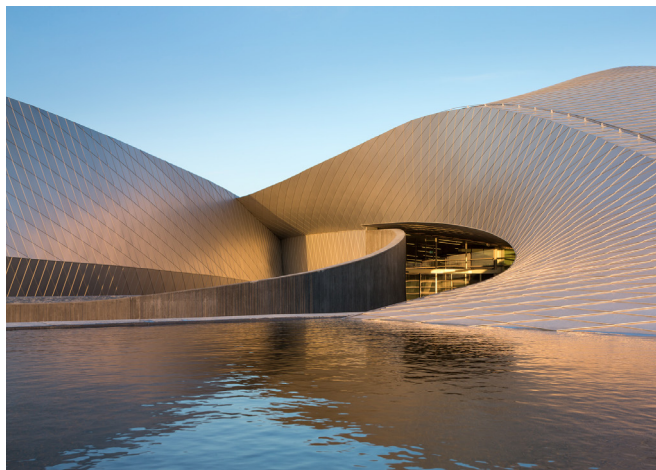
### **QATAR'S GIANT CACTUS - a great example of biomimicry**

The Minister of Municipal Affairs & Agriculture (MMAA) in Qatar is getting a brand new office building in the form of a towering cactus. Designed by Bangkok-based Aesthetics Architects, the modern office and adjoining botanical dome take their cues from cacti and the way they successfully survive in hot dry environments.

Qatar is fairly barren, covered by sand, and it receives an average annual rainfall of 3.2 inches. Since Qatar has the highest GDP in the world, it can afford to construct spectacular buildings that can be very efficient in a hot desert environment. Aesthetics Architects GO Group decided to model the MMA's new office on the cactus, and have created an excellent example of desert architecture. MMA's new building is designed to be energy efficient. It utilizes sun shades on all its windows. Depending on the intensity of the sun during the day, the shades open or close to keep out excessive heat. This is similar to the way a cactus chooses to transpire only at night, rather during the day, in order to retain water, so the building is a great example of biomimicry.

[www.inhabitat.com/qatar-cactus-office-building/#more-21114](http://www.inhabitat.com/qatar-cactus-office-building/#more-21114)





DESERT ARCHITECTURE (CLOCKWISE): THE BLUE PLANET AQUARIUM COPENHAGEN (3XN, 2013), THE SILK LEAF (JULIAN MELCHIORRI, 2014), THE QATAR CACTUS BUILDING (AESTHETICS ARCHITECTS GO), BIOARCH OF ART INSTITUTE OF ISFAHAN, IRAN (BIOMIMICRY 3.8)

## ‘DESERT MANUFACTURING’

### Desert Manufacturing

Product designer Marcus Kayser invented the phenomenon of ‘desert manufacturing’: a combination of solar power and 3D printing to create a variety of beautiful objects made entirely out of sand. He called it the Solar Sinter Project. In 2012, during his TedX talk, he said: “There’s a lot of energy and a lot of material in the world.” His project explores the potential of working with energy and material that occur in abundance, and sand is a fantastic material, very strong.

[www.tedxtalks.ted.com/video/TEDxGhent-Markus-Kayser-Solar-S;search%3Atag%3A%22tedxghent%22www.markuskayser.com](http://www.tedxtalks.ted.com/video/TEDxGhent-Markus-Kayser-Solar-S;search%3Atag%3A%22tedxghent%22www.markuskayser.com)

### D-SHAPE - mega scale sand printers

Enrico Dini prints houses. He is an Italian inventor who has developed a new construction technique based on the principle of 3D printing or additive manufacturing. His printer, the largest in the world, can build 3D objects from sand and a binding agent. His company, Monolite UK, produces and sells large 3D printers called D-Shape – a mega scale free-form printer of buildings. What couldn’t be done will be done in the near future: build your own house, using sand and other raw materials.

[www.d-shape.com](http://www.d-shape.com)

### SAND BABEL

For the eVolo Skyscraper Competition 2014, an annual competition for architects, engineers and designers, the Chinese design team Qiu Song, Kang Pengfei, Bai Ying, Ren Nuoya and Guo Shen designed a conceptual skyscraper as part of what they call Sand Babel. Sand Babel is a group of ecological structures designed as scientific research facilities and tourist attractions in the desert. The

project is divided into two parts. The first part, above ground, will consist of several independent structures for a desert community, while the second part is partially underground and partially above ground, connecting several buildings and creating a multi-functional tube network system. The main portion of each building is constructed using sand, sintered\* through a solar-powered 3D printer. The printer will make the building’s spiral skeleton structure, which goes deep underground like tree roots. Sand Babel received an honorable mention in eVolo Magazine’s 2014 Skyscraper Competition.

\* sintered means the making of (a powdered material) coalesce into a solid or porous mass by heating it (and usually also compressing it) without liquefaction.

[www.evolo.us/competition/sand-babel-solar-powered-3d-printed-tower](http://www.evolo.us/competition/sand-babel-solar-powered-3d-printed-tower)

## ‘TURNING DUNES INTO BUILDINGS’

### SAHARAN DESERT SANDSTONE

The Swedish architect Magnus Larsson also had the bold plan to transform the harsh Sahara desert into concrete by using bacteria and the sand itself. He presented the idea at the exhibition ‘Sahara Surreal’ in Dubai in September 2011. With the help of *Bacillus pasteurii*, a bacterial microorganism abundantly available in marshes and wetlands, the loose sand will be transformed into a fibrous porous structure that will sustainably control desertification while housing thousands of refugees. The crux of the project, however, lies in the natural microbial reaction of the bacteria with the sand particles that turns them into organic dunes of structurally-sound sandstone, a process that has been studied at UC-Davis using the rock formations in Utah that follows the same principle, albeit on a much smaller scale. Larsson explained that his





IMAGE FROM THE SAND BABEL PROJECT, EVOLU.US

‘structure is made straight from the dunescape by flushing a particular bacteria through the loose sand ... which causes a biological reaction whereby the sand turns into sandstone; the initial reactions are finished within 24 hours, though it would take about a week to saturate the sand enough to make the structure habitable.’

[www.designboom.com/architecture/magnus-larsson-sculpts-the-saharan-desert-with-bacteria/](http://www.designboom.com/architecture/magnus-larsson-sculpts-the-saharan-desert-with-bacteria/)

[www.ted.com/talks/magnus larsson turning dunes into architecture](http://www.ted.com/talks/magnus_larsson_turning_dunes_into_architecture)

## THE GEOPOLYMER INSTITUTE

Inventing new materials and new concretes  
Geopolymers are new materials for fire- and heat-resistant coatings and adhesives, medicinal applications, high-temperature ceramics, new binders for fire-resistant fiber composites, toxic and radioactive waste encapsulation and new cements for concrete. The properties and uses of geopolymers are being explored in many scientific and industrial disciplines: modern inorganic chemistry, physical chemistry, colloid chemistry, mineralogy, geology, and in other types of engineering process technologies. Geopolymers are part of polymer science, chemistry and technology that forms one of the major areas of materials science. Polymers are either organic material, i.e. carbon-based, or inorganic polymer, for example silicon-based. The organic polymers comprise the classes of natural polymers (rubber, cellulose), synthetic organic polymers (textile fibers, plastics, films, elastomers, etc.) and natural biopolymers (biology, medicine, pharmacy). Raw materials used in the synthesis of silicon-based polymers are mainly rock-forming minerals of geological origin, hence the name: geopolymer. Joseph Davidovits coined the term in 1978 and created the non profit French scientific institution Institut Géopolymère,

better known as the Geopolymer Institute.

With the help of archeologists, geologists and engineers they invent new concretes. Inspired by the artificial nature of Egyptian pyramid stones. As they know, stones made for pyramid building long time ago were man-made - synthetic, artificial. Archeologists invited also the high performance Roman cement and concrete. What can we learn from the Romans. Many ancient Roman concrete buildings are still in use after more than 2000 years. For these modern concrete experts, the Romans were fortunate builders in that they apparently simply used natural pozzolan deposits, which were found to be suitable for producing a hydraulic mortar. For engineers and geologist now the challenge to cements and concretes with plant extracts. That's one of the interesting projects the inter disciplenair institute is working on.

Sources:

[www.geopolymer.org](http://www.geopolymer.org)

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## BIO CONCRETE

In Second Sight #31 about the phenomenon of Infinity and Transcending Borders, we shared some nice examples of new materials, like Bio Concrete that repairs itself. It is invented by Professor Henk Jonkers from the Technical University of Delft. You can spot more inventions like this at the annual design festival Transnatural Art And Design – professionals from the creative industry and science and technology come together to talk about new ways of creating energy and food. Several cultural events around transnatural thinking and design are organized in Amsterdam.





IMAGE FROM THE SAHARA FOREST PROJECT



# FIGHTING DESERTIFICATION

## ‘Digging our way to a greener world’

BY YORI KAMPHUIS

Go to Sana’a, the capital of Yemen, and you will witness the severe consequences of water shortages. Among others, tensions and conflict increase. The longer you wait to see it the more severe it will get. If no radical change is realized, Sana’a reportedly runs out of water within 10 years. <sup>1</sup>One solution to this problem would be an increase in migration. Yet just like in other parts of the world, many people are simply unable to move. And even if these people could migrate, the migrated people often cause a strain on different land as the surrounding areas are dry too. This different land needs to provide housing and food for the migrated people on top of the people it was already supporting. This can cause the discharge rate of water to rise above the recharge rate. This different land would start to face water shortages. What are the underlying causes of these water problems? And there may be an ingenious yet low-tech solution you haven’t heard of yet.

Looking at the grand scheme of history, five factors are detrimental in leading a civilization to its collapse: “self-inflicted environmental damage, climate change, hostilities with other societies, [declining] friendly trading relations and cultural attitudes” towards dealing with these changes.<sup>2</sup> While four of these five factors can, but not necessarily, show up, the fifth one always does. This fifth factor is the self-inflicted environmental damage. It has proven in the past to be the main cause of collapsing civilizations. This article is

about a small part of this damage: the effect of environmental damage on water, because water is essential for sustaining human life. And life gets increasingly more difficult with less water.

The worrying fact is that water problems are not limited to Sana’a. Other reports show water problems are present in various places on earth.<sup>3</sup> Almost 20 years ago, the Environmental and Conflicts Project (ENCOP) already saw that “environmental problems have become increasingly significant in producing conflicts”.<sup>4</sup> In fact, a third of the world population lives with water deficits of 50% or more.<sup>5</sup> Substantial part of the earth’s land are experiencing droughts nowadays. And projections show that droughts will increase worldwide.<sup>6</sup>

### **WEATHER EXTREMES**

Droughts lead to a range of problems. From wildfires to an increase in temperature extremes (very cold nights and very hot days, which in turn lead to weather extremes) to the most resolute outcome: desertification. Areas of previously fertile land turning into deserts. Water moderates temperatures because its capacity to absorb heat is greater than of any other substance. It warms up slower than land and when the land has cooled down, water shares the heat it stored. Water thus mitigates temperature and weather extremes. Looking into more detail, we see several causes of desertification. Deforestation leads to a lower capacity of the earth to retain water, and deforested

areas fail to hold fertile soil in place. Water flows quicker to a river –and eventually the sea– which increases the likelihood for floods, as the peak water levels rise. Floods take the fertile soil and flush it to the sea. Rainwater does the same when there is no vegetation to hold the soil. This erosion decreases or even eliminates the chance for new vegetation to grow. Another cause is detrimental agricultural practices, such as overgrazing or exhausting the ground by using it too intensely. Droughts make an area more likely to enter into a vicious drought circle. In a drought, the water recharge rate (the speed at which water is replenished) is drastically lowered. In this situation the same amount of livestock can suddenly cause overgrazing. The same amount of crops can suddenly exhaust the ground. Existing vegetation can die, leading to a decreased capacity to retain fertile soil and water. Dry areas are associated with higher atmospheric pressure as the land receives more sunshine. High pressure areas attract fewer clouds, which reinforces these droughts. And when it rains the eroded and dried out soil guides the water straight back to a river and then the sea, instead of absorbing it. This process eventually can lead, and more often leads, to desertification. But not in all cases.

## **WATER**

The Chinese Loess Plateau Watershed Rehabilitation Project gives the example of an effective erosion control program.<sup>7</sup> They banned grazing, soil exhausting farming and fuel wood gathering. This combined with replanting vegetation and creating little ground walls to hold water, was the labour-intensive way to retain rainwater. New vegetation helped hold the soil together and cool the area. The more moderate temperatures cause a lower atmospheric pressure. As a result the area attracts

more rain clouds which starts a virtuous circle. This Plateau now provides food, employment increased and a greener area of 15,600 km<sup>2</sup> has been secured<sup>8</sup>.

The solution for fighting desertification seems easy: provide water! While desalination is often seen as the way to realize that, there are some caveats. The global desalination capacity grows at quite a steady rate each year since 2005. The capacity to desalinate water per day roughly increases with about 5 million m<sup>3</sup> each year.<sup>9</sup> The desalination capacity of the world's approximately 20,000 desalination plants combined is around 81 million m<sup>3</sup> per day or 30 billion m<sup>3</sup> per year.<sup>10</sup> Because a quantity like this is hard to understand a comparison puts this number into perspective. Ghana has a little over 30 billion m<sup>3</sup> of water in renewable freshwater resources (internal river flows and groundwater from rainfall). The Rhine river yearly discharges 69 billion m<sup>3</sup> of excess fresh water into the sea.<sup>11</sup> While desalination can be very helpful, it is clear that nature provides water on a much larger scale.

It does so via two water cycles. In the short water cycle fresh water evaporates and rains down on land again. The long water cycle takes water from sea to land back to the sea again. Areas in which water is quickly drained to the sea, nature almost solely has to depend on the long rain cycle. Salt water evaporates slower than fresh water however. Put differently, the saltier water gets, the less water evaporates. And thus, the longer it takes for water to flow from land to the sea, the more water evaporates easily and the more chance it has to reinforce nature.

## JUSTDIGGIT

The JustDiggIt project tries to make water more widely available in a clever yet low-tech way. By digging trenches along the contour lines of a hill – so called contour trenches – rain water is prevented from flowing back to a river immediately. The water standing in these trenches eventually penetrates the soil. It replenishes the underground water levels. This can lead to the reappearance of disappeared lakes, which in turn can help reduce migration and conflict because it can be a source of drinking water for humans and their livestock. And this water allows vegetation to re-emerge. Vegetation helps cool down the area because it is better at holding water in place by sucking it up. Plants and trees transpire water through their leaves (plant perspiration). By releasing water at a rather constant pace, vegetation helps maintain a more steady climate. And if the water does not penetrate the soil but stands in these trenches, its evaporation still cools down the area. Whether through plant perspiration or evaporation, vapour gets in the air locally. On cooling, this vapour condenses and forms rain clouds. This water falls again: these trenches reinforce the short water cycle.

## GIVE NATURE A KICK START

In some areas we may need to give nature a kick start because of an absence of rain. Desalination could be used in such cases to start a healthy cycle. The contour trenches proposed by JustDiggIt can

halt desertification and reduce involuntary migration because it reinforces the water cycle. Unequal access to something as vital as water threatens stability. If we want to decrease tensions and conflicts because of water, equal access to ample freshwater should be provided. It provides drinking water and gives local farmers a living. One reason for involuntary migration will disappear. And if we look at the grand scheme again, the contour trenches can undo environmental damage caused by our activities in the many areas threatened with desertification, ensuring the longevity of current civilizations.

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IMAGE FROM THE KAEC SEAPORT



# KING ABDULLAH ECONOMIC CITY from Eggers' *A Hologram for the King*

BY ANDREA WIEGMAN

*We often read about completely new cities-to-be. Some are so new there are no inhabitants yet, or they are still unfinished. One of these cities we know from Dave Eggers' book *A Hologram for the King*. Published two years ago, next year it will be a film starring Tom Hanks.*

Eggers is a writer who seems to prefer telling other people's stories more than his own by blending nonfiction and fiction. You can describe him as a socially- conscious writer who likes to share his concerns through literature. In 2012, he dug into the topic of 21st century's new global-economy cities like KAEC. Through the figure of Alan Clay, Eggers explores the changing realities of the global marketplace.

## **PASTEL PINK**

Clay is a failing American businessman waiting to meet the king and sell him his cutting-edge holographic teleconferencing system. The result is a long wait and a journey of considerations and illusions in a place far away from recession-scarred America. But this article is not about the book or the storyline. I am really interested in the city of KAEC, King Abdullah Economic City, in the Saudi Arabian desert. In a liberal city, a 21st century city, what are their ambitions and programs?

"... A billboard came into view advertising the development. A family was arranged outside on a deck, an unconvincing sunset behind them. The

man was Saudi, a businessman, a cellphone in one hand, a newspaper in the other. The woman, serving breakfast to the husband and two eager children, wore a jilbab, a modest blouse and pants. Below the photo was written KING ABDULLAH ECONOMIC CITY: ONE MAN'S VISION, ONE NATION'S HOPE."

Clay, a salesman, wanted to believe this kind of thing. "A city rising from dust, gleaming towers, tree-lined public spaces and promenades, a series of canals allowing commuters to get almost anywhere by boat. The city was futuristic and romantic, but also practical. It could be made with extant technology and a lot of money. Money Abdullah certainly had."

When Clay entered the new city, just three buildings were ready. There was a pastel-pink condominium, which seemed empty. There was a two-story welcome center in a Mediterranean style, surrounded by fountains, and there was a glass office building of about ten stories, squat and square and black.... a room with mirrors and gold leaf, and he was told that "inspired by the exemplary leadership and far-reaching vision of King Abdullah, the world's next great economic city is presented to diversify the Middle East's largest economy ... canals, ports, manufacturing ... Inter-Arab financial cooperation ... a twenty-four-hour city ... a terminal, a sports complex." For Clay it looked like the greatest city since Paris. All 21st century wealth

came together in this soon-to be-built city.

Searching for KAEC online, I learned more about the ambitions of cities like KAEC – a gated community designed for families and family-friendly living, surrounded by nature and aiming at a sustainable lifestyle. KAEC's master plan addresses economic objectives by acknowledging the social dimension of sustainability. Cost efficiencies and flexible delivery are the focus of the development, along with establishing viable and sustainable employment opportunities throughout the development lifecycle and beyond.

And exactly as Eggers shows us, I saw images of new houses in pastel-pink, Mediterranean style, as well as transparent buildings, palm trees, lanes and canals. The King Abdullah Port is open, there are hotels and a marina, and even The World Academy, a world-class school and part of the GEMS Education Network. The city's mission statement proclaims that employment and business development provide and enhance local employment opportunities and attract regional, national and international businesses to the area.

## **SURREAL**

In an interview with *The New Yorker* in 2012, Eggers spoke about KAEC and his experience there. "K.A.E.C. was absolutely surreal; I've never seen anything like it. When I was there, there was little more than a grid of roads cutting through the desert as far as you could see in any direction. But then, by the Red Sea, there were beautiful canals being carved, and you could see the possibility that the city presents. If it's executed to any extent, it would be an incredible thing, on a physical and symbolic level."

More promising texts about improving the environment, enhancing open space, bio-diversity and environmental amenity promise a city of choice to invest, work and live in. Listed in the mission statement are goals such as to minimize energy use and carbon emissions from the site; to minimize the impact on wider water resources from water use on the site; and to minimize the generation of waste and maximize re-use and recycling of materials during construction, operation and deconstruction.

## **A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY**

Add to all of that: to enhance and protect the biodiversity and ecology of the site while integrating landscaping with storm water drainage, and to minimize impacts on water, air, noise and land from the development. Looking at this documentation, I learn that minimizing the human impact on the environment is both a promise and a business opportunity. Investing in the Al Talah Gardens neighborhood is investing in more than just a villa. All planned, all perfect. A place that will grow around a natural, green and open environment supported by the vital services needed to establish a family-friendly community.

As Eggers shows in *A Hologram for the King*, this is the "new economy", full of the huge towers of Babel and taking over the "old economy" of the American Dream. Technology demands new rules, and new cultures enter the economic field with their own – culture based – rules. The megaproject KAEC was announced in 2005 by Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the king of Saudi Arabia. According to *Forbes*, Abdullah is ranked eighth among the world's most powerful people, making him the most powerful Muslim. Mega, global, but not as successful as it looks.

Read more about King Abdullah Economic City on [www.kaec.net](http://www.kaec.net)



IMAGE FROM LIONG LIE ARCHITECTS

PDF FROM:

# A NEW GOLD SOUQ

**The Bazaar, a big permanent market in the Dutch town Beverwijk, is one of the biggest roofed markets or bazaars in Europe. Thinking of deserts and desert style reminds us of the oriental culture of the Middle East, their bazaars or souqs with its merchants and craftsmen. With its splendor and excess. We heard that in Beverwijk a new Gold Souq - the first in Europe - opens in November this year, so we traveled to Beverwijk and asked George Zapantoulis, director of the Bazaar, some questions about their new Gold Souq.**

With his Greek background and Mediterranean roots, Zapantoulis could tell us a lot about the origins of the Bazaar, the 'Gold Souk' and the gold dealers, and also why they are getting a new place to do their business. 'They deserve it', he said. What makes their trade so special for the Bazaar?

'You know', Zapantoulis started, 'this kind of trade is down-to-earth. What you see is what you get. No more, no less. It is not about complex mathematical structures or formulas. This kind of trade can best be described as 'flat', maybe even as the flattest and most pure exchange that exists. It is always there. In the past it was, now it is, and in the future it will be present too.

'The product is physically present. You can see it, feel it, it is tangible. The dealer calls the price: you

can take it or leave it. In the gold business, you can't negotiate. Gold has a fixed price. That makes it a safe investment and gives its trade that strong character. If you compare this kind of exchange with the stock market or money market, there is a big difference. Gold dealers in the Bazaar are not contrived. The trade is not artificial. Our financial markets are so complex now. The trade here, and especially the market for gold, is pure. There is no system of rules and regulations. There's only one strict rule: the value of gold is fixed.'

## ORIENTAL TRADITIONS

In Beverwijk there are lots of Mandeian gold traders. The Mandeians descend from a very old culture, belief and tribe. They are followers of John the Baptist. We know John the Baptist as a preacher in the desert of Judaea. Now the Mandeians are one of the oldest, smallest minorities from Iraq. They live in a global diaspora that includes the Netherlands. They are strong gold dealers; they have always dealt in 18 or 24 carat gold which means that the value of their gold is higher, it is more yellow, as we in Europe call it, and often – because of oriental traditions – designs are still focused on oriental tastes. At the Beverwijk Bazar, they also exchange in gold, or they redesign gold and jewels: "custom made" - they are craftsmen too.

Zapantoulis went on. "Traders or merchants in general, but even more in the gold trade, are

# ‘This trade and these traders deserve a new place - a 21st century marketplace to exhibit and deal in their treasures’

ruthless. They follow their guts, they like the risks and tensiety around the business. Think about that desert style. The desert is a wilderness, it is not safe, it is vast, devastating; nothing is fixed. So, from the past, they needed something that was fixed. Gold has that value. With its fixed price, it has always provided a kind of security. However, trade in a product of the highest value has some risks too. Think about crooks, thieves: you need to be strong.’

There is an important culture and a great value around the gold business. Next to that, the Bazaar is an important junction in the European gold business - two good reasons for the Bazaar to build a new Gold Souq. This trade and these traders deserve a new place - a 21st century marketplace to exhibit and deal in their treasures. It is the place to be for the gold business.

At the Bazaar, everything is about trade and connecting people – merchants, buyers, consumers. In today’s world, experience is important. The bazaar is designed to bring traders and people together. A bazaar characterizes itself as a place where products and goods cluster. This means that products of the same range come together. Networked, curated, in a way. There is an Asian market, an oriental food market, this summer a new luxury Middle Eastern market, the Mihrab, will open and, in November, the gold traders, now working on Gold Street, get their own building, the Gold Souq, with 30 shops inside. Dubai has one of the biggest gold souqs in the

world. It too is a tourist attraction because of the culture around it. The Gold Souq in Beverwijk is a real mixture of East and West. The building has the shape of a lump of gold with a golden facade. Golden triangular leaves are posted to the facade at different angles, so that the building glitters and sparkles in the sunshine. The project has been done by Liong Lie Architects in Rotterdam and the strategic innovation consultancy Leaders Against Routine. From the outside you can see what the product range is: gold and jewelry. The building is modern and implies luxury, splendor and wealth. Inside there’s a hall of mirrors and high black walls with modern LED lights, and a state of the art security wall. Every gold trader gets his own modern, small and smart shop. Every shop exudes luxury and splendor.

## ONE’S BIT OF GOLD

Innovation and 21st century state of art techniques come together in this new building. What one sees immediately is that this Gold Souq, with a strong link to the rich culture around it, is made for this century’s traders. People come to the Bazaar to buy something but maybe even more to spend some spare time. Architecture like this and its surroundings may contribute to their pleasure. At least this new Gold Souq is tempting, seductive, a jewel on its own. In Dutch we say: ‘the place, the spot, the building may do one’s bit of gold.’





IMAGES FROM JAMES PERSE'S YOSEMITE BRAND

# ‘SPOTTED’ FASHION AND STYLE

## ‘DESERT WEAR’

### **JAMES PERSE YOSEMITE WEAR**

James Perse, a designer brand in Los Angeles, has started a new luxury active-wear line: Yosemite. Incorporating technological aspects such as moisture-wicking fabrics, this is apparel for yoga, hiking, running and surfing. The name Yosemite embodies the outdoor lifestyle component of this California brand. We can be sure that the owners of James Perse have also taken notice of the desert lifestyle trend. They are very brand aware.

[www.jamesperse.com/yosemite](http://www.jamesperse.com/yosemite)

### **LOUIS VUITTON'S DESERT PHILOSOPHIES**

In 2014 Louis Vuitton shot a campaign video in the wide open spaces of America for Spring Summer 2014. It's called Louis Vuitton Desert Philosophies and stars the Flemish actor Matthias Schoenaerts. He speaks with Louis Vuitton about the relationship between an actor and the character he plays, experiences, and the joy of traveling and discovery. Schoenaerts opts to journey in style, while showcasing the brand's timeless iconic collection.

The wide open desert is the perfect place to muse about life, to wander, to think and to delve into many topics. "On the actor and the character," Schoenaerts notes, "It's important to break boundaries for yourself in order to grow ... you look for people who take you away from your comfort zone, you keep an open mind and keep on dreaming, ... you stay curious. It's something that

comes from the gut. I've always tried to look for challenging work. Acting, creating a character, is to go beyond yourself and break down walls, which is intense. Every role is a journey of its own, it's unique, every character is different, every story is different. But in the end it's the same: it's to portray what it means to be human."

[www.us.louisvuitton.com/eng-us/articles/on-the-road-to-philosophy-with-matthias-schoenaerts](http://www.us.louisvuitton.com/eng-us/articles/on-the-road-to-philosophy-with-matthias-schoenaerts)

### **‘VOYAGE DANS LE TEMPS’ - LOUIS VUITTON JEWELRY COLLECTION 2013**

Last year Louis Vuitton introduced their new vintage jewelry collection with a short movie. A vintage Limousine slowly entered what appears to be a mysterious futuristic installation emerging out of the desert. High jewellery, high culture and an extra-sensory experience through the kaleidoscope of the monogram and the jewel as a talisman that bridges the past and the future. For Louis Vuitton, director Jérémie Rozan sends model Alana Zimmer to a universe somewhere between high jewellery and science fiction. Here too we see a connection between the desert and science fiction.

[www.vimeo.com/49325471](http://www.vimeo.com/49325471)

## ‘MORE DESERT PHILOSOPHIES’

### ‘INTERNET IS A DESERT’

Dematerialization as a theme is a subject in fashion and media now, at least for the hip beau monde. Olivier Zahm – editor of fashion and art biannual Purple Magazine and the blog Purple Diary - and Miltos Manetas - a Greek artist - are in conversation in the short video Internet is a Desert. Manetas is a Greek artist who embraces the online mediums of social networking and microsites: a recent project on Facebook titled Money Is a Cigarette.

In the short they got philosophical about the boundless possibilities of the web. They mention if the net loses its free and open character, it will not be longer interesting for them. “The internet, even when it is busy, populated, finds a new desert for itself. It is the place where you can wander ... the emptiness where you can be a new person, where you can express yourself. Where you can be a new version of yourself ...”. On the internet we are not servants - as they called it. ‘We are doing something that is not really professional; while working on the internet, you are losing your time. It is superficial and that is exactly why it is powerful. In our free time we build radical spaces - on the internet you can’.

[www.purple.fr/television/love/the-internet-is-a-desert-by-can-evgin](http://www.purple.fr/television/love/the-internet-is-a-desert-by-can-evgin)

### BLACK SKY THINKING

Black Sky Thinking is a term introduced by Rachel Armstrong, a senior TED Fellow and living architect whose ambition and work pushes the boundaries of thought far beyond the blue sky. From the starting point that we don't know exactly what will happen next, she introduced the term Black Sky Thinking.

Black Sky Thinking seeks to understand more about our situation without prejudging or needing

to know anything about the future. It asks us to be propositional, experimental and critical. It requires us to be explorers who boldly venture into the unknown, not as a reckless gesture but as a creative act, so that we may propose the kinds of existence and landscapes we wish to inhabit. This doesn't mean that anything goes, but signals a fresh exploration of things we thought we knew. By weaving a loose tapestry of possibilities around ourselves, we can look and imagine afresh. Black Sky Thinking empowers us to shape the future by transforming and transcending.

It also goes beyond singularities, tackling concepts related to interstellar travel in groundbreaking ways. We envision, Rachel Armstrong says, ‘new existential risks to our human culture. They indicate we face an era of great changes that are posed by nature herself. Over the course of this century, we are likely to witness flooding, dramatic weather patterns and resource shortages, which will reach tipping points where systems behave unpredictably and which we are currently powerless to predict or prevent. Nature does not obey the linear laws of machines but operates in complex, contextualised and irreversible ways, which exist beyond the singularity in places that we cannot see clearly.’

We should think of these conceptual opacities as the Black Sky, for which we need a different toolset – this is Black Sky Thinking. Armstrong doesn't talk about footprints but about futureprints. Black Sky thinkers work both alone and together on their unique FuturePrint. It's the strength and diversity of their entanglements that enables them to leap into the black sky and explore the unknown. They occupy an uncharted territory and explore its terrain by constructing networks of ideas and relationships that begin to characterise the space. Black Sky Thinking draws existing threads of experience together and weaves a loose reality fabric from them. It then repeats the process until

we start to see the world around us again clearly and bump confidently up against its warp and weft, under new blue skies.

[www.blackskythinking.org](http://www.blackskythinking.org)

## ‘AND MORE’

### APPLE COMES WITH OS X YOSEMITE

At their Worldwide Developers Conference this summer, Apple introduced their newest software for Mac desktops and laptops. It will be called OS X Yosemite, taking its name from ‘beautiful places in California’, or ‘as impressive as it looks’.

[www.business.financialpost.com/2014/06/03/os-x-yosemite-heres-what-apple-incs-new-desktop-software-looks-like/](http://www.business.financialpost.com/2014/06/03/os-x-yosemite-heres-what-apple-incs-new-desktop-software-looks-like/)

### CACTI AND SUCCULENTS

And last, not least, we saw the cactus and succulents everywhere this summers. In shops everywhere in town: in shops, in the windows of private homes. Let’s call the summer of 2014 the summer of the cactus and the succulent! Here are some pictures.



CACTI, SUCCULENTS AND APPLE'S OS X YOSEMITE





IMAGE FROM HESPURRITO, OKHK



# TIMELESS BEAUTY

## CEREAL MAGAZINE, NO. 6

In Second Sight, we like to write about new magazines. This time we've chosen the Cereal Journal. Cereal is a quarterly magazine about travel and lifestyle. It's about the absolute beauty of things. Timelessness, a kind of stillness, emptiness, or the moments that you stop talking, stop taking photos and stop engaging: that's how its British founders, Rosa Park and Rich Stapleton, describe it themselves.

Containing exquisite imagery, Cereal is a unique and beautiful magazine crafted by Rosa and Rich. The content found in this food and travel magazine goes beyond the norm with cultivated, in-depth and compelling articles. Rich and Rosa's passion for food, travel, intelligent words and beautiful design brought about their desire to create a magazine that was not only interesting and of lasting quality but, more importantly, one that they themselves would want to read.

### TIMELESSNESS

'One of our fondest memories of childhood is of waking up to a huge bowl of something crunchy and milky and devouring the words and pictures on the back of the packet. These boxes were the first thing we read each day, and they taught and entertained us. Hence, Cereal', as the founders say about the title of their magazine.

The element of timelessness extends beyond the physical attributes of the magazine. Cereal provides an immersive experience and leaves a rich impression on the reader. It is easy to see that every facet from design, writing and photography is approached with the utmost care & clear intentions.

In a way it is about the perfection of the final product.

### OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Both Rosa and Rich love how travel can take you completely out of your comfort zone and force you to confront situations, people, places and things that you'd otherwise never face and, thus, would never learn and grow from. Wandering brings those aha moments, 'that moment when you stop talking, stop taking photos, stop engaging in whatever other distractions you have, to just hit pause, stand still and take in what's in front of you and be in awe of it. It reminds us of just how big the world is, how much there is to see, and it inspires us to travel more and more. As for food, we appreciate and are intrigued by how a love of it is one of the few things in life that everyone has in common. It's difficult to find people who don't enjoy delicious food. We all have to eat everyday; therefore, the wealth of culture and history within food is fantastic. We love to explore those aspects.'

Opening the issue, you start directly with three interesting advertisements for new brands and products. One is TokyoBike, a small, independent bicycle company founded in 2002 in the quiet Tokyo suburb of Yanaka ([www.tokyobike.co.uk](http://www.tokyobike.co.uk)).

It fits Cereal's desert philosophy. The bikes are based on the concept of 'Tokyo Slow' and are designed to be light and with an emphasis on comfort over speed. The bike is simply a way to enjoy your city, as much about the journey as the destination. The other brand is Sunspel, a British quality clothing line, where innovation and tradition are perfectly combined; it suggests the undulating

unpredictability of history, committed as it is to timeless yet modern design, as the brand describes itself ([www.sunspel.com](http://www.sunspel.com)). The third is Scout-Seattle which creates 'uncompromising tools and personal furnishings' for the outdoors. Luxury products like the single pole tent, ready whistles, camping kits, or garment from Japanese cotton or navy cotton, strong stuff that carry you far in the outdoors and will assure your survival and enjoyment. Real luxury in exploring and hiking garments. These three advertisements set the tone of the magazine. This is about a new luxury, about the wonders of nature and the pleasures of exploration. Other advertisements are for Cutler and Gross sunglasses and for Chilo Gorge, luxurious safari lodges in the Zimbabwe desert wilderness. For the ultra rich - it's called 'on the edge of serenity'. ([www.chilogorge.com](http://www.chilogorge.com))

## AESTHETICS

Two articles in the summer edition of the magazine are about Project Future and its silver-hued supertrees, and the Gardens by the Bay project in Singapore, a one billion SGD complex of interwoven ecosystems and conservatories spread over its Marina Bay. This new complex intoxicates people with its strong plants and Singaporean humidity. Aesthetics, new architecture, ecosystems, the Moshe Safdie's ArtScience Museum, titanic investments, expensive buildings meeting the latest eco standards: read more on page 16. (More about the Gardens by the Bay project can also be found on [gardensbythebay.com.sg](http://gardensbythebay.com.sg))

On page 32, there's another article about Green Architecture in Singapore. And there's a photo essay in it (as photos take a major role in this magazine) called Summer Vibe: blue skies, palms, white sands, water and more water. Summer colors.

An article about Brecon Beacons is about the green hills, the majesty, emptiness and indulgence of nature and the Celtic culture of the Black Mountains in Wales. The shores of its lonely lakes, the solitude, the poetics and narratives have a relationship with the depth of the wide and open landscape. It mirrors the folklore of Celtic nature. Books, literature, a perfect place for book lovers, and for writers who connect its solitude and its magnificent scenery with the stories it has inspired. Alpines, sunglasses, succulents as house plants ... beautiful pictures, pictures of ingredients that fit in this theme, such as sandalwood, papyrus, coconut, orris root, cardamom and pine. All from different parts of the globe, but fitting in this issue. And yes, they have a shop. You can buy products like pine candles from Canada - another spot where this issue goes. 49°12'07.8"N – 123°10'45.1"W: there are latitudes rather than page numbers in this issue. So, searching for a great new magazine, we discovered Cereal! Here's an innovative luxury medium with a strong focus in each issue. This one is for travelers, wanderers that will leave the time for a moment. They distribute even Cereal sounds too. This is a new luxury - the wanderer style.

Follow Cereal Magazine on:  
[www.instagram.com/cerealmag](https://www.instagram.com/cerealmag)  
[www.readcereal.com/](http://www.readcereal.com/)  
[www.facebook.com/cerealmag](https://www.facebook.com/cerealmag)



COVER FROM CEREAL MAGAZINE VOL. 6

# NOETICS

## A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

BY VALENTINE GIRAUD ROBбен

In the wild and open desert, other competences become important, even essential – think about intuitions, gut feeling, inner guidance, inner wisdom. We asked Valentine Giraud Robben, a Brazilian raised in a family with manifold ethnic roots – African, European and Native Brazilian – to tell us more about this. She knows much about spiritual practices and, as a board member, is connected to the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS) in California\*. Here she shares her views on inner wisdom and why it is now becoming more important.

Noetics comes from the Greek noesis/noetikos, and means inner wisdom, direct knowing or subjective understanding. It defines all forms of knowing which are not directly related to reason and objectivity but, rather, to a subjective or internal experience which nonetheless feels very real, such as intuition, gut feeling and hunches. Related to noetics is the notion of consciousness and the underlying understanding of why consciousness matters. The mainstream materialistic and mechanistic perspective sees any subjective experience as a product of physical matter, and consciousness as a byproduct of brain and body processes. However, another way of looking at it is to say that there are far more complex ways in which the physical and the nonphysical are related to one another, and that our minds can directly influence the physical world around us.

For example, once, when I was a kid, I was playing in the fields where we lived and suddenly had an

impulse to dig my hands into the earth and then to look up. In the sky, the clouds were moving, and slowly I started to notice that, if my thoughts were happy and clear, the clouds would move away from the sun and let it shine. If my thoughts were negative and blurred, however, the clouds would drift in front of the sun. For approximately five minutes, I felt viscerally that I was one with the universe and that possibly my thoughts could influence the clouds in the sky, that I and the sky were directly linked and connected. This experience often made me seek in nature responses to my questions and the calmness I needed to face difficult situations. And more than once I have gotten back from it what I needed and what would ease my soul.

### BRAZILIAN ROOTS

I was raised in a culturally diverse family, on the one side a strong European influence and on the other strong Brazilian roots. My parents were 'new agency' progressive thinkers, who from early on introduced us to yoga, meditation and a worldview that embraced teachings from different spiritual traditions. Through my father's side of the family, I was born into the tradition of Umbanda, which is an Afro-Brazilian religion that blends Catholicism, Spiritism and Indigenous wisdom. The foundations of Umbanda are the forces of nature, its mythical gods (called Orixas), each of which represents one element of Nature: i.e. Yemanjá, the Goddess of the Sea and the symbol of fertility, and Oxossi, the forest

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\* The Institute of Noetic Sciences in California, was founded in 1973 by Apollo 14 astronaut Edgar Mitchell. It conducts, sponsors, and collaborates on leading-edge research into the potentials and powers of consciousness, exploring phenomena that do not necessarily fit conventional scientific models while maintaining a commitment to scientific rigor.

# ‘I have grown up accustomed to the notion that there is more than the single reality we can see and touch’

and the hunter who seeks material and spiritual sources of sustenance. At the core of the Umbanda tradition is the practice of mediumship and channeling, by which an initiate becomes a vehicle for the manifestation of a deity who will advise and give messages to the participants attending the ceremonies. This unique phenomenon is called incorporation and would mainly take place during the Umbanda ceremonies guided by drumming, singing and dancing.

I have grown up accustomed to the notion that there is more than the single reality we can see and touch. In fact, I was born into a lineage of mediums (people who have psychic powers), and learning how to honor and listen to my innermost knowledge has simply been part of how I learned to be in the world. As a kid, I grew accustomed to seeing my grandmother channeling a spirit during family meetings. The spirit felt like another member of the family, one who would receive gifts and to whom we would pray and ask for protection and advice.

Incorporating these other realms into the way we live and relate is how we do things in my family. For example, the other day I was at home doing some chores, when a strong voice inside me told me I should call my grandma. I didn't really listen to it at first and continued doing what I was doing, saying to myself, "I'll call her later tonight." Minutes later, the voice "spoke" again, urging me to call "now". So I did. My grandma had already been in bed and barely conscious for a year or two. The phone rang and my auntie picked it up. I asked her how grandma was doing and explained that I was calling

because I had a feeling I had to. My auntie told me that she felt grandma would soon be passing away because, a couple of weeks before, a close friend of the family had called to say he had dreamed about my deceased grandpa, who said he would soon be coming to pick her up and take her to where he was. And, just a few days later, my auntie also had a dream about her father telling her that she and the family needed to get used to the idea of letting their mother go. Hearing that didn't make me afraid, nor was I impressed. I was just present to the fact that our elder was in her passage, and that embracing this multi-dimensional way of seeing life makes it so much richer and more expansive. It makes living all-encompassing and circular.

## AWAKED INDIVIDUALS

I am working on a book about this. It has been an interesting process to explore further the human psych and how to awaken our consciousness, because at the core of it, we have to start with ourselves. In the recent past, I have had several noetic experiences which have proven yet more deeply how much more connected and wired to the bigger field we can be. And I believe this is a time in which such experiences are becoming more accessible to a greater number of people. It is as if there is a certain opening in the field that wasn't there before. One which is meant to bring us to a more elevated state of consciousness, one which, per se, can help us meet the great challenges facing us at this time. I believe that, whatever the problem, we need awakened individuals who join with other awakened individuals to create conscious communities and find innovative solutions together.'



Last year I held a three-day training in the art of collaborative innovation at the IONS retreat center. The forty participants were all practitioners of different mindfulness and spiritual practices, which allowed us to go deeper into exploring the area between us and to tune into ideas which we felt had a strong pull from the Universe to come into fruition. Our days were used for an initial meditation, walks in Nature, triad conversations, artistic expression and large group discussions about themes that the participants were passionate about. At the end of those three days, we had among us such a strong sense of community, and so many inspiring projects and collaborations had been sparked, that we all felt we had opened ourselves up to a higher level of consciousness through which we could access enormous amount of trust, confidence and creativity. I left the experience with a highly- expanded sense of awareness: the image I had in my mind was that there was a shower of “cosmic energy” fully open and coming through my head. My heart was expanded, I felt love for all things and highly sensitive to external inputs. Even the notion of time and space had dissipated.

### THE NEW COOL

Living by our hearts and living in resonance with each other, nature and what is around us, I would say, is “the new cool”. It is what we need in order to make the leap of consciousness we must make right now. Nonetheless, this leap does require us to develop and hone certain competences that can guide and support us in holding ourselves open, grounded and present, not only individually but also collectively, in order to together sustain these sorts of fields and draw from their extraordinary powers.

When it comes to our western world, I think the problem really lies in our species’ arrogance and the sense of separation that has been inculcated

through a mechanistic and materialist worldview. It has led us to believe we are standing alone as beings whose lives, actions and behavior have no affect on anything beyond ourselves. Well, the truth is that we are far more interconnected than we think and this is something ancient and mystical traditions have known for centuries. Modern life forces us focus on the outer world as if it were the only one that matters, and to forget that which is most sacred: our inner landscape. What we need to realize - through the leap in consciousness I am talking about - is that our outer and inner worlds walk hand in hand, and that the desire for outer change cannot come without inner change. We know now that the quality of our awareness directly affects the quality of the results we produce. So what is needed at this stage, maybe more than people developing psychic powers, is people developing inner qualities that have to do with peacefulness, empathy, love, calm, self-reflection and humility.

### LIVING BY OUR HEARTS

As our society has become ever more fast-paced, when computers have taken over communication, so that even overseas messages take seconds, we have gotten so used to running and being busy all the time that we have forgotten to live by our heartbeat. Simple: our brains lead the way in our lives when, in fact, it should be the other way round: our hearts must lead the way. Because, in our hearts we all know how unique and special it is to be alive. In our hearts we know we want to lead a meaningful life, and we desire a deep connection with the source, with a greater intelligence, simply because, when we stop to listen to it, we know it is there. If practicing any stream of spirituality will lead you to come closer to your heart and move along with it, then, yes, you should dedicate yourself to it.

# THE ROAD TO EMOTIONAL FREEDOM

BY LISA AUÉ

Our world is in a state of constant change and turmoil. We are experiencing dramatic climatic change, class structures are faltering and shifting, and cultural revolutions are dissolving boundaries and borders. Our bodies are no longer needed to take us everywhere, since the Internet and social media have made it possible to go beyond physical borders. But they have also made it impossible to be anonymous and in control of our privacy.

Though our minds are able to go anywhere, we still feel the need to explore with our physical bodies and as anonymous individuals, while we discover places that seem timeless, pure and unimpaired. Environments in which technology and the virtual world have no influence on us, where we achieve tranquility of mind and can wonder about the sense and nonsense of life. Life where consumption becomes wasted energy.

Moving toward a world where we make our own choices, with our own preferences as our first priority, we must clear away our past selves, the people that we think we must be and what is expected of us, in order to move forward and mature into a new type of human being. In this period of time we have to look critically at ourselves in order to move forward and develop. We must let go of our egos and go on a journey of self-discovery. We must go on a quest for inner peace. Maintaining our own identity remains of the utmost importance.

We find ourselves now in several universal human archetypes, but we must develop new archetypes

for the future. I want to describe three of them: the Wanderer, the Learner and the Mender, within which we can identify ourselves in an open world where we can go in many different directions.

*“In order to be truly happy, we must stop trying to be who we think we must be, or everyone expects us to be, and figure out who we really are”*  
*Carl Gustav Jung*

## **THE WANDERERS - beyond boundaries and limitations**

The idea of a free existence appeals to everyone. A life where there are no boundaries, where we're not even bound to time or place. We long for a more flexible way of life, where fixed elements disappear and are no longer needed in our day-to-day life. Since everything is reachable these days, and the only borders we might have are imaginary, we want to move around and explore all over the world. Living in only one place or one country for a lifetime can be seen as wasteful and small-minded. Making the most of life means experiencing everything possible, including taking advantage of all the changes we can in order to see the world, meet other people and grow as a person.

The road to emotional freedom is freedom from fashion and the foolishness of it. Longing for the feeling of ultimate freedom mentally and physically, we must stop thinking about the past and considering the future and, instead, must experience the present. We need to know how to be alone and not be defined by another person. Spending time

alone will be considered healthy, and it will connect us to our own identity again. We have to leave the city of our comfort and go into the wilderness of our intuition, where we can wander and leave the unnecessary complexity of life behind.

### **THE LEARNERS - balancing reason and passion**

The virtual world and the real blend together more and more: unmanned train stations, stores without cashiers and self-managing airplanes. Robots may soon perform complex tasks and may even take over professions such as medicine and law. How far will these developments go, and how will they affect us? We have depended on science to make everything clear and explainable. It has brought us a long way in the field of technological growth. But these new technological possibilities also take away the importance of listening to our intuition, instinct and emotions.

We want a reason to exist, to have an importance in the world, to be indispensable, and to have a witness to what we do with our lives. I think we are going to meet an emotional boundary between us and the worlds of science and technology and will need new methods to break through. Emotion will guide us more and more and will lead us to new developments in those fields. A new type of scientist will emerge, who not only think with their minds but also create from their emotions and listen to their hearts. Instead of giving us what we think we want and need and generating more and more consumption, they will create what we need to develop a better society, a better humanity and a better world.

Creative talent is important for this evolution. We must explore our taste and identity with a renewed respect for art and design. A fusion of design, art and science, of sense and feeling, of the irrational with reasoning, will add emotion and depth to something that now feels distant and intangible. I believe, therefore, that we are going to think more conceptually. There will be a new stream of art in which art, science and concept combine. We are finally going to be guided by emotions, thoughts and feelings, and will assert this as our reasoning.

### **THE MENDERS - between repairing and maintaining**

Using everything and wasting nothing. The goal is to create a new and a better functional world for all of us to live in. We are searching for good alternatives in creative ways to do things ourselves.

Trying to turn the negative into something beautiful and creating from the urge to better the world. We are irresponsible towards the world and life itself. The rush and the pressure we feel everyday in our day-to-day lives, gives us little opportunity to dwell on making conscious choices for ourselves when it comes to wellbeing, health and our own peace of mind. Everything else seems more important, and we just can't find the effort to collectively move towards a better world.

But in a world where so many beautiful aspects of life and nature are already lost and still continue to be lost, the threat of losing of our own humanity and dignity seems to grow larger every day. We are shocked by all the disasters and events of recent times and realize that everything is changing at a fast

pace. We feel the need to maintain and repair what is still left.

We will grow towards the ability to feel awe and wonder about unfinished, broken and imperfect beauty, increasingly respecting everything more and more that surrounds us. It is another way of looking at the world with the spiritual potential of compassion. An inner quality is touching the mind, body and spirit. We find other and more inventive ways of worshipping the world. We will come to know how to simply live and enjoy the mended and the restored, while minding the re-used, appreciating the recycled and honoring the redesigned.

Acknowledging a connecting force between all living things. Greenery communicates a sense of hope for the future within the community, promising another land, another healthier life.

#### **WITH DREAMERS AND PLANNERS**

We will create a new community where we will walk with the dreamers, the courageous, the cheerful, the planners, the people with their heads in the clouds and their feet on the ground. The believers of creating a better world together. They will ignite an inspiration within others to leave this world better than when they found it.



# MASS AVANTGARDE

BY PERNILLE KOK-JENSEN

Hands up if you've noticed a lot of girls with pastel pink mermaid hair lately. Do you find yourself the only one among your peers who isn't covered in tats? Wonder if you need to get a raw meat dress just like Ga Ga's? And you're already designing your own 3D jewelry, I presume?

We're not really surprised by these things any more, which is funny because, not long ago, such creative means of expression were reserved for an elite, arty and niche crowd. But recently the whole world seems to be going ga-ga, and Millennial "Unicorns" are discovering (probably via Facebook or Instagram) that they are, in fact, not the only "Unicorns" out there, but that all their peers are special and unique. Great. Now what?

As the wacky, weird and wonderful Avant-garde continues to become both more accessible and acceptable to the masses, the "normal" in effect takes on a new meaning too. In this article, we share some of the patterns we're seeing on Dutch turf and beyond. Welcome to the Mass Avant-garde. Feel free to experiment and dismantle a few traditional structures.

## PROTEST

The Mass Avant Garde movement is best described as a humorous protest against the status quo. It's like a therapeutic fashion style, a multifaceted means of demonstration layered with irony, cultural references and a big up-yours to convention. It takes its cues from the ancient Carnavalesque tradition: marked by an often mocking or satirical challenge to authority and the traditional social hierarchy (Webster). Mass Avant-garde embodies both the ordinary

and the extraordinary. It includes the grotesque, the bizarre and the surreal as well as the hyper mundane. Why? Because it stems from a belief that everyone is welcome. Key to understanding this shift is that – even though largely expressed by style and carnivalesque celebrations, the focus is on equality, freedom of expression and personality rather than merely fashion.

"Just act normal, that's already crazy enough," the Dutch saying goes. That age-old saying may be more relevant now than ever before. The Dutch are often characterized as being "down to earth and practical with a twist". This remarkable juxtaposition is reflected in Dutch experimental fashion and design. Sure, Dutch women will throw on a gown for a red carpet event, but they'll show up on a bike. They have come to "own" the freedom to combine styles, materials, and brands. But the Dutch are rational people who do not like to draw too much attention to themselves and certainly do not appreciate it when others blow their own horns. At the same time, they have a need to escape from "being normal" all the time. This has created a rich Avant Garde scene and a creative breeding ground for design and fashion. Dressing up and going crazy for a day or two is widely accepted and done collectively, as they do on Kingsday, an official public holiday on which the whole nation parties together in the streets of Amsterdam. Or in the South of Holland during carnival, when they dress up, get drunk and party for four days straight.

But don't be mislead; it's not just a party. It's a protest masquerading as a party!

### FROM LADY GAGA TO HEMA

Originally, Avant-garde art, music and fashion's small-scale productions were often created independently by big corporations and only available to a select in-crowd of arty urban intellectuals. Networking was done in small in-crowds behind closed doors, or in dedicated establishments where only "those types of people" came. Boy, have things changed! While Lady Gaga sees to it that her millions of Twitter followers across the globe get used to raw meat dresses and 3D- printed heeled hooves, HEMA (a Dutch everyday retail outlet) offers clients a chance to design their own 3D-printed jewelry at a budget price. As a result, the Avant-garde trend has rapidly shifted from being an exclusive scene to an inclusive collective mindset in the art, music and fashion scene, one that attracts all sorts.

### EXTRAORDINARY

On the other side of the spectrum, the mundane is being showcased as extraordinary. Take for example Things Organized Neatly, a blog on which everyday objects are deconstructed and then organized meticulously paying great attention to each and every piece, be it the ingredients of your breakfast cereal or the essentials in an office drawer. The results are often so stunning in their simplicity that they become artsy and almost surreal. Meanwhile, on the blog Everyday Mattress, photographer Menno Kok, obsessed over discarded mattresses, posted a new image every day for a year.

Another example on Dutch soil is the Dutch Fashion designer and L'Enfant terrible Bas Kosters who, in his own way, also conveys the Mass Avant-garde attitude. First there was his anti-fashion line and his collaboration with the Dutch budget brand Zeeman, an initiative that truly merged hi

and lo culture. Now he has launched his collection "Clowns are People Too" in which the clownesque and the grotesque serve as sources of inspiration and the terms of his aesthetics: ugly is the new pretty. Ok – this guy will never blend in, but what he has succeeded in doing is establishing a high fashion designer brand that is a far cry from the unattainable atmosphere of the haute couture catwalks.

### UNICORNS

As the freaky gradually becomes the norm, some seek out the ultra normal as a form of the new weird. Case in point: Normcore. This trend is best described as "fatigue from trying to be unique". It's the logical result of Millennials being brought up to believe that they are special Unicorns. Sick of profiling themselves as awesome, good-looking people with places to be and people to see, young grown-ups opt for blending in to stand out. They dress down in order to let their personalities do the talking. It's a more sober approach to things, with Jerry Seinfeld and "90's moms" being the unlikely style icons. What we have then is the grotesque and the hyper-normal coexisting in perfect harmony.

### THE JUXTAPOSED

According to Die Antwoord, a cult rap-rave group formed in Cape Town in 2008, everybody else needs a rude awakening, and they're only too willing to be the ones to provide it. Their musical and visual style incorporates elements of a self-created, fictional "zef" culture, described as modern and trashy, appropriating out-of-date, discarded cultural elements. As ninja-esque front figure Yo-Landi says, "It's associated with people who soup their cars up and rock gold and shit. Zef is, you're poor but you're fancy. You're poor but you're sexy. You've got style." Very Carnivaleque indeed. Their

most popular single, Enter the Ninja (released for free on youtube in 2010) became a massive hit and has helped forge the way for this new Mass Avantgarde movement.

Check out the events calendar for the summer of 2014, and you'll find no shortage of Carnavalesque themed festivals by Meubelstukken and MTV, such as Valtifest "KAK", which literally means "shit" but it also loosely translates to posh/snobbish/highbrow, thereby taking on a double layered meaning, typical for this trend. The message was clear: the Dutch don't give a shit (kak) about stuck-up culture! For All Who Love is the epitome of Milkshake's image, another hugely popular Dutch festival. It welcomes everyone and has only one rule; check your prejudice at the door. Looking sideways at our Belgian neighbors, we find the feminist electro pop duo Kenji Minogue. This group mixes electro-pop with kitsch humor and performs in an impossible to understand local West Belgian dialect. If you go to one of their concerts, don't be surprised to find them performing visibly pregnant, tit-flashing and sporting oversized animal masks.

### **WILL IT BLEND?**

If you want to jump on this mass avant-garde train, there are a couple of things you should consider it your business to do.

#### ***- Adopt a fail harder attitude***

Consumers are looking for human characteristics

in brands, which means that you should leave room for experimentation. Failing is not a disaster, and it adds a bit of mass avant-garde spice to your business.

#### ***- Encourage brand piracy***

In order to cultivate engagement, consider your consumers as pirates and allow mutiny of your brand. Your brand identity is no longer predefined by you when your devotees join the party.

#### ***- Find the escape button***

Dissatisfaction with the current context drives people towards the unknown, so disrupt patterns, play with gender, break the rules and even invent completely new ones. Ask yourself how your brand provides a break from the mundane.

#### ***- Freakishly normal***

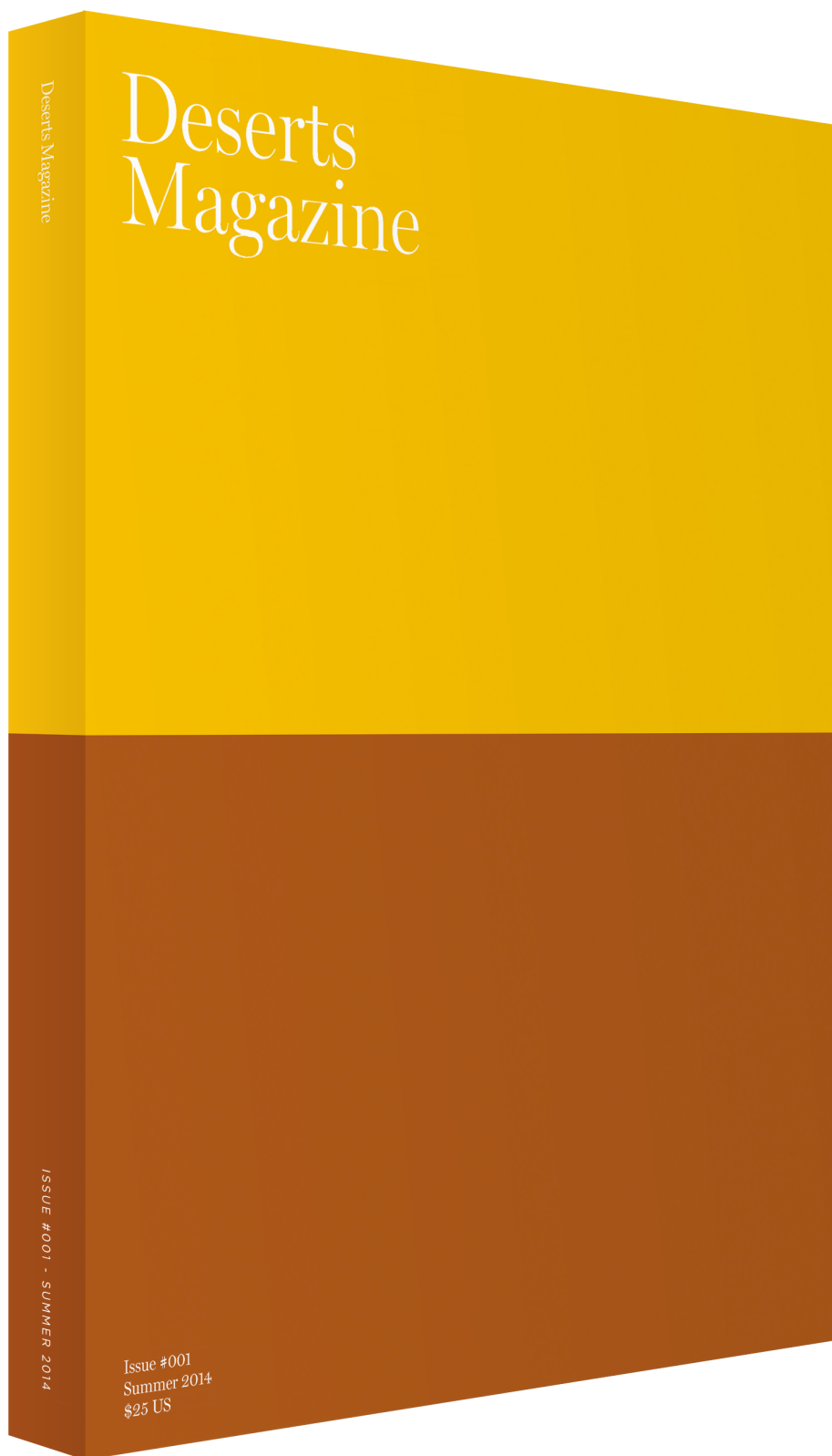
The things we take for granted and consider normal today may be gone tomorrow. Help your consumers notice the extraordinary in the ordinary.

#### ***- Be ordinary and extraordinary***

Cherry pick. Take the best of avant-garde and mix it up with the mundane. Try to embody both the ordinary and the extraordinary. Make you brand accessible, sympathetic and responsible, but always ensure that there is something extraordinary to aspire to.

#### **Sources:**

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# CULTURAL WARMING

BY THE NOT VOGUE TEAM

Cultural heating is defined by a term we authored within the NOT VOGUE commune: CULTURAL WARMING. I would not describe CULTURAL WARMING as a trend. It is a program (code) that has attached itself in the same manner as an organic virus to the fundamental DNA of the globalized art-fashion-media industrial complex. The cultural virus is a piece of code that is capable of copying itself and has a detrimental effect – such as we are now witnessing with the corruption of both local and global cultural systems and the destruction of relevant cultural data in order to further spread the irrelevant messaging that is now the dominant product of the A-F-M industrial propaganda machine. Since NOT VOGUE is primarily focused on the investigation of the fashion virus, it would be most effective for your readers if we mapped out the current viral infection as well as its agents. We at NOT VOGUE view our investigative directive as a social science. It is guided by emotional detachment. The subjects of our reports are driven by what our research reveals, not by emotional motives or sociological or hierarchical prejudices.

Our activity is a mapping process, not character assassination. In the same manner as a computer virus, the A-F-M virus is designed to harm the cultural system by deleting relevant data, ruining files and then spreading the A-F-M corrupted messaging from one person's consciousness to another. The majority of this corrupted cultural messaging is aimed at the world's youth – especially emerging world youth. One of the most intensive attacks of the CULTURAL WARMING process took place under highly controlled circumstances in Japan. Once the virus was thoroughly understood in

terms of structure, strategy and attack procedures, the various propaganda corporations – including LVMH, KERING, RICHEMONT, and their message control swat organization CONDE NAST – began spreading their corrupted cultural messaging from Japan to China, Korea and Thailand. A significant theater of propaganda warfare is currently being played out in India. Like all viruses, the key process is growth and multiplication. Outside of a host, the viral message is inactive. The revelation on the part of the A-F-M overlords and their various corporate officers was that by using identity and body image as the carrier of the virus, they could invade the host in an undetected manner – just like an organic virus. By attacking the host's sense of selfhood and body image, the A-F-M message takes over the mind and soul of the host – producing a perfectly controlled viral agent capable of ensuring that the A-F-M message will find a new host to infect ad infinitum.

## THE INFINITE

A way of further describing the A-F-M code strategy and process is that the overlords and their executive patrols are coding into each youthful mind and soul a message we have identified as THE TERROR OF THE INFINITE. We the ever-growing commune NOT VOGUE and our evolutionary counter-corporate infiltration messaging forces [433 (SILENCE THEM WITH SILENCE)] are dedicated to the idea that the underlying idea of planetary and human development is to immerse the self in the infinite. This personal and communal journey opens up the possibility of balance. The A-F-M message based on THE TERROR OF THE INFINITE has the reverse objective: i.e., to reduce each healthy consciousness to a state of fear through a highly organized series

of consumer messages. It is this state of fear that is the foundation of CULTURAL WARMING. Culture operates best and mostly freely when it is cool. Free of all corporate messaging and also free of all the corrupting influences of the viral agents. The agents are the global face of the A-F-M virus. To repeat: The goal of the overlords is to instill a deep fear of the infinite possibilities pertaining to individual identity and body image. They control with brands ranging from LOUIS VUITTON to NIKE. With fashion weeks. With awards shows like THE ACADEMY AWARDS and THE GRAMMYS. With festivals like CANNES, GLASTONBURY and COACHELLA. Their control of the cultural calendar is a key strategic maneuver. The integration of the ARTWORLD calendar with the FASHIONWORLD and MUSICWORLD calendars into one perfectly organized CULTURAL WARMING calendar is the dominant control system of the world's evolving consciousness – in particular, that of the world's youth. Who controls the calendar in fact controls the consciousness of the world.

#### **A VIRAL SIGNAL**

Here is a perfect example of a viral signal: GRAZIA DAILY May 29, 2014 EXCLUSIVE: (virus control code terminology) Katie Grand (virus agent who, thanks to highly organized strategic maneuvers by the A-F-M virus code overlords LVMH and CONDE NAST, is a virulent carrier and control mechanism) Tells Us About Styling (styling is an extremely effective code process that invisibly infects the identity and consciousness while delivering high levels of body image corruption) Kendall Jenner (a highly contagious new generation of the virus, 100 percent created and controlled by the overlords) for French VOGUE (using this aspect

of the A-F-M warfare structure on the youth of the world's sense of infinity to create fear of selfhood). Here we have a demonstration of the CULTURAL WARMING process in real time. Note: "legendary" (more A-F-M propaganda code) photographer Patrick Demarchelier shot the photos. Katie Grand on Kendall Jenner: "[She] obviously (more coded messaging) was going to be such a 'thing'" (not an influencer but an inanimate object). Every aspect of what we have just described illustrates the CULTURAL WARMING virus in its most highly virulent form. The map of this virus is: French VOGUE (CONDE NAST) + Katie Grand [editor-in-chief of LOVE Magazine (owned by CONDE NAST) and long-time Marc Jacobs (LVMH) controller] + Emannuelle Alt (CONDE NAST) viral strategy and control agent disguised as the editor-in-chief of French VOGUE (owned by CONDE NAST) + Patrick Demarchelier, a long-time soldier (shoots: propaganda sniper) working for the over-the-counterrevolution in the disguise of a "legendary" FASHIONWORLD photographer. The uniforms depicted in the photographs are all propaganda messages for the brands (i.e., LVMH) which, thanks to their annual military budgets, control the war on the world's youth and their sense of natural selfhood (NO FEAR) by instilling a deeply rooted sense of selfhood terror: THE TERROR OF THE INFINITE. It goes without saying that the "models" must be of the same generation as the targeted youth, who must be controlled by fear: fear that if they do not buy all of the products marketed by the overlords, they will be traumatized by insecurity and fear. "REALITY STAR" Kendall Jenner is the perfect delivery system for the warlords' message, as she represents the very ideal of reality brought to you by television.

And with INSTAGRAM now being hailed as the key influencing platform, the Internet reinforces the overlords' version of "reality" with unprecedented immediacy.

### **CULTURE WAS COOL**

When culture was cool – i.e., in the shadows, difficult and demanding – it was not a very effective mechanism for over-the-counterrevolutionary consumerist objectives. A turning point came with the use of visibility (heat) to bring the difficult and demanding to the surface – i.e., the popular press. The more integrated and controlled the exposure, the better for the overlords. The recent canonization of Andy Warhol and all his executive officers – including Bob Colacello as an authority viral agent working for the overlords – to ensure that the message of instant and short-lived fame is the ultimate expression of a life in our society is incredibly shallow and damaging to the minds and souls of the emerging global youth.

The beginning of the current state of CULTURAL WARMING began on August 1, 1981 with the first day of MTV programming. Here was what the FASHIONWORLD overlords had been hoping for: a corporately-controlled infrastructure and strategy to program the world's youth. With a single media delivery system, over-the-counterculture could finally be controlled. To this day, youth-directed music and music industry personalities remain key agents of propaganda and corporate consent on a global scale. Rihanna and her stylist, Mel Ottenberg, are agents of youth propaganda for the major media and brand corporations. The fact that they are allowed to exist on such a massive scale means that they're

in a position to subdue as many young minds as possible. The brilliance of this corporately organized attack on the world's youth is that what appears to be the dissemination of liberal concepts is in fact a subliminal transmission of consumerist codes and cues. Just understand the power of Rihanna having over ten million INSTAGRAM followers. The efficiency and efficacy of Rihanna as a carrier of consumerist messaging under the guise of liberal free-choice imagery is both brilliant and very disturbing. The near future will just be an expansion of the now: i.e., FASHIONWORLD dominance and control. CULTURAL WARMING is a virus. Authentic culture is local and cool. FASHIONWORLD culture is global and warm. Cool culture is concerned with the authenticity of the creators and their messages. CULTURAL WARMING is focused on global messaging and is only truly concerned with visibility – despite paying lip service to authenticity. By the time an authentic message has been restructured as a corporately-owned and controlled message (controlled substance), it only has the surface appearance of authenticity. There is a profound difference between the artist JAY-Z's debut album REASONABLE DOUBT (1996) and JAY Z's (no hyphen) most recent release, MAGNA CARTA HOLY GRAIL (2013): "Fresh to def in Moschino, Coach bag lookin half Black and Filipino" (1996) to "I don't pop molly, I rock Tom Ford" (2013). The former is a street-level assertion (cool), the latter a corporately-sanctioned consumerist commercial (warm).

Regarding the changes I have experienced while living in New York: To be perfectly blunt, the most exciting time for young creatives was when New York was financially broke in the 1970s. Day-to-day

FEATURES



Pharrell Williams  
Terry Richardson  
Andre Saraiva  
Neville Wakefield  
Olivier Zahm  
Aaron Bondaroff  
Derek Blasberg  
James Jebbia  
Glenn O'Brien

“Just looking at  
the faces on some  
of this society’s  
*somebodies*  
illustrates why  
there’s such joy in  
being nobody.”

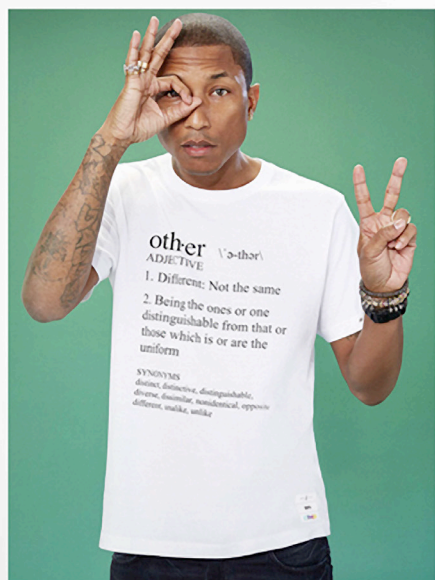
STEVE DELLYN







*The cop in the crowd.*



**other**  
ADJECTIVE \ˈo-thər\  
1. Different; Not the same  
2. Being the ones or one distinguishable from that or those which is or are the uniform

SYNONYMS  
distinct, distinctive, distinguishable,  
diverse, dissimilar, nonidentical, opposite,  
different, unlike, unlike

#### EDITOR'S LETTER

We live under an occupation, a cultural occupation...

*Steve Oklyn, Editor-in-Chief*

*The corporately created and disseminated cultural de-evolution.*

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experiences were all basically on the edge. I lived in the East Village during that era, and was at the right place at the right time. There was no money. The rents were very inexpensive. There was no business of lifestyle. You just lived. Restaurant culture, fashion culture, interior design culture basically did not exist. The scene was constructed from a DIY (do-it-yourself) methodology. There were a few original streetwise futurists that, especially within my crowd, were scouring the flea markets and Salvation Army resale stores for discoveries, and then selling them in small shops and major flea markets throughout New York. Drugs were a daily activity. Cocaine was everywhere. Gay culture was a beautiful outlaw society. There were no corporations, and no corporate sponsorship of anything. Army-Navy surplus stores supplied all of my clothing needs. The vintage stores supplied the cool world with every form of visual narrative it needed. The clubs were all deeply underground. The three artists who did the best job of capturing this world visually were Nan Goldin, Robert Mapplethorpe and Peter Hujar. Peter's book *NIGHT* illuminates the beautiful balance between poetry and transgression that was the aura of downtown life. Nan's book *THE BALLAD OF SEXUAL DEPENDENCY* was also a series of live slide presentations (45 minutes in length, with 700 slides and a soundtrack) before it was published as a book. I attended one of these live events, and it might be one of the last truly original moments of modern creativity that I have witnessed and experienced. The intensity of the times is what I remember. I do not miss anything. Then was then and now is now. I can still be intense with my thoughts and actions. Today's downtown New York is just a financial instrument for art, real estate,

restaurants, fashion, hotels, etc. The scene went from chaos theory to corporate PowerPoint presentations.

### **DESERTS MAGAZINE**

Published and edited by RED PILL ARMY FACTION, *Deserts Magazine* [THE JOURNAL OF CULTURAL WARMING] was created for the NOT VOGUE project on April 15, 2014. It was also the 475th page of the NOT VOGUE project. The idea was not to create a platform for the hip and happening, but rather an editorial platform for investigating the fraud that is now the common attribute of the corporately-constructed and financially-supported versions of the hip and happening. It is an intellectual dissection of the products, people and projects that comprise the context and content of CULTURAL WARMING. The art direction mirrors that of *Saturdays Magazine*, which is owned and operated by the clothing brand SATURDAYS. Both the SATURDAYS brand and magazine use surfing as a context and content generator. The art direction is very effective. The editorial is of interest. The context of both is based on modern marketing strategies. For us at NOT VOGUE, that is a weakness. Surfing and skateboarding have their origins in pre-corporate life. The originators of surf and skate culture were living an outlaw existence. The schism occurred when the first corporations got involved with both. Today there are still free surfers and skaters, but they are now the basis of massive global corporate activity. The current dominant brand of New York skateboard culture is SUPREME. The owner/founder is not a skater. He is a businessman. The brand construct is now so ingrained that, although it appears to its young acolytes as alternative, SUPREME is really the RALPH LAUREN of the

Millennial generation. Now a carrier of a corporate message, the brand has nothing to do with any current outlaw cultural activity. Instead, it merely attaches itself to a series of known and absorbed cultural visuals in order to appear alternative. At this point, the question becomes this: Can an alternative culture – a cool world – exist when the financial and corporate warm world pressures are so dominant? We believe the answer is yes.

If the team responsible for Deserts Magazine would have to choose an icon of Desert style, we would have to immediately state that it is not a style. It is not a trend. It is not a product. It is not even any particular person. It is a way of investigating the world. It is a process. That process is based on a clear understanding that the way to live as freely as possible is to ignore most of the media events that are presented as hip and happening, and instead view the world with cool eyes. Do not get caught up in all the new products, brands, personalities, and events that are endlessly presented as being crucial to your very existence. Understand that the only truly dynamic and contemporary experience is your organic process, and its relationship to nature. Everything else is an institutionalized program. The first slogan of the Deserts (CULTURAL WARMING) thought process is SABOTAGE FASHIONWORLD WITH YOUR SILENCE. Key processing words would be BREATHE, WALK and INDIFFERENCE. The core principle of anti-cultural warming activity is work that is 100 percent financially free. This seems impossible by today's standards and demands. Individuals have to organize themselves into a community of support. Find a way of being in the world that satisfies you intellectually and offers

economic reward. Then you can be free to organize a project that is free of economics – and economic issues. It is advised to create an alias for this activity. In this instance, anonymity is a strength.

### **DEVELOPERS AND ARCHITECTS**

To the new developers and architects of the world, the CULTURAL WARMING message would be to stop developing and designing for a decade. The capital cities of the world have been overdeveloped and overbuilt, especially since the spectacle of 9/11 in lower Manhattan. Real estate developers have all caught the CULTURAL WARMING virus. Just a generation or two ago (after World War II), urban development was essentially focused on creating housing and commercial spaces that provided solid and stable residences and workplaces. As with basically everything else in this fever-based world, there is now an accepted mindset that every developer and designer is an artist – and that what is being developed is an artistic creation. The building, the interiors and the identity of the project are all viewed as cultural contributions. This is a manifestation of CULTURAL WARMING. Many of these projects are clothed in a rhetoric announcing ever newer strategies of design, lifestyle and – in a most ironic use of the term– sustainability. It would take a decade of design and development silence to cool this down. That of course will not happen. Please note that there are a small number of master architects and an emerging global generation of architects that do understand the dire consequences involved in continuing on a course of starchitectural projects and strategies. What has to be expressed is that most of the real estate development in the world is carried out by boomer generation

developers, owners and designers. They came of age in the 1980s, when the idea of fame-power and money began its course – a course which leads to the present state of dire affairs. They all see themselves as being a combination of Andy Warhol and Mick Jagger. Like Mick, they can never come to grips with the fact that their message shouldn't have been part of the 21st century. They bought their way into the consciousness of this century's youth. We call this development and design by intimidation.

### **GLOBAL POLITICS**

To politicians, we would like to say back down. There is a current mindset in global politics that is disastrous to mankind: a mindset that politicians are possessed of star power. This state of affairs began with the Kennedy myth. Bill and Hillary Clinton also bought their way into the 21st century. They are not needed by the emerging youth of America or the world. FASHIONWORLD plays a key role in this. Anna Wintour's relationship to the Obama presidency is exactly what CULTURAL WARMING is defined by: IMAGE WITH NO SUBSTANCE. We call this government by intimidation.

### **MOGULS**

To media entrepreneurs and moguls, we would say that what the world truly needs are the facts about what is happening to our relationship with the real. We do not need any more of your diversions and spectacles. We have watched as you have all colluded with each other to control the calendar of the spectacle. Under your guidance, the whole world has become a red carpet – a corporate propaganda commercial. In a sense, Walt Disney is the historical model for the media universe that surrounds us –

which also happens to be the most sophisticated surveillance system ever created. FASHIONWORLD is DISNEYLAND. From "THE HAPPIEST PLACE ON EARTH" to CULTURAL WARMING virus Pharrell Williams' audio propaganda, "HAPPY." The MICKEY MOUSE code was used by Andy Warhol, Keith Haring and KAWS, and now there is a living version in the 21st century: PHARRELL MOUSE. We call this culture by intimidation.

### **THE BLACK ECONOMY**

To economists, we would say please begin a process of reporting on the "unofficial" black economy players, strategies and networks as the normative financial reality. Everyone needs to understand that a great percentage of the world's economic activity is BLACK, and that this has created the greatest disturbance of value and valuation in the shortest timeframe ever experienced in the history of modern economic theory and reality. If FORBES would publish "The World's (BLACK MARKET) Billionaires List," then we might have the possibility of a valuation reset. We call this economics by intimidation.

### **TAKE A MOMENT**

To the world's emerging cultural community, we would say take a moment to investigate and review the current state of affairs within the art world – and the use of creative strategies and products within our present consumerist reality. FASHIONWORLD is really made up of numerous propaganda cells, including art, fashion, film, television, music, design, food, and society. Literature plays a smaller role than the aforementioned forms of propaganda, unless of course you are the photogenic young heir



– and probably a hyphenate (e.g., actress-D.J.) – of a literary star from a previous generation. We call this market reality BERGDORF GAGOSIAN. Just like the sales personnel working at the cosmetics counters of a department store, many of the young players within this global celebrity souq are hired propaganda agents for the giant international brand conglomerates. We call this selfhood by intimidation.

#### **SILENCE**

To the OVERLORDS (Jonathan Newhouse, Anna Wintour, Bernard Arnault, etc.) of youth culture domination and intimidation; to the bureaucrats and social engineers of FASHIONWORLD; to FASHIONWORLD agents and apparatchiks who promote and disseminate the destructive algorithm we have titled THE TERROR OF THE INFINITE; To all of you, we say silence by the next generation of evolving and evolved youth will silence you.

#### **THINK & UNDERSTAND**

To the readers of SECOND SIGHT, we would like to say that you can control your life by thinking as much as possible – and consuming as little as possible. Be cool, and try to stay away from the heat generated by CULTURAL WARMING. Understand that Tweets and Instagrams are the 21st century's primary driver of cultural change the same way that carbon dioxide creates climate change. Pollution of the atmosphere creates global warming, and the pollution of innovation creates cultural warming. Both are agents of death: global warming of the entire ecosystem and cultural warming of the entire idea-system.

# TRANSFORMATIONAL BRANDING

## Art is therapy

BY SYLVIA AVONTUUR

Self-actualisation is an important recent trend. In a world that is more open than ever before, with unlimited choices and freedom, people are discovering their inner selves. Taking guidance from the inside instead of from the world outside. If brands want to be trusted by this more conscious consumer, it is clear that they have to change. Time to be aware about how unknowingly we are deceived by our consumer society. The future is in transformational branding: from misleading to sincere seduction. An equal and respectful relationship between consumer and brand.

### KILLING US SOFTLY

Women must endure a lot of opposing messages. In Sunny Bergman's documentary (Limited Shelf-life) about the unrealistic beauty ideal of women in the media, Bergman shows how women are constantly being criticized about their appearance. The cosmetic industry leaves no opportunity untaken to make women aware of their shortcomings. Why are the glossies focused so much on appearance, while they also preach that women should be independent and spirited? The movie Killing Us Softly by American Jean Kilbourne (Jeankilbourne.com) shows how the advertising industry responds more and more subtly to women's uncertainty about their looks.

So why do we unconsciously tempt ourselves? Advertising is often successful because it feeds our ego and makes us feel a bit better - for a while. A

powerful commercial aims at weak traits like vanity or pride and offers a 'solution': use this cream and your skin will look more beautiful. Or it targets our jealousy: If my neighbour has a new car, I want one too. Ditto lust, an intangible variant of greed and the reason why 'sex sells'. That too appeals to an emotional need. Though it too promises us friendship or love, we only end up with a new BBQ or lingerie set. People caught up in the rat race are also targets. Philosopher Alain de Botton has written a book about 'status anxiety' in which he says that what others think of us determines the way we see ourselves as a winner or a loser. If the expectations of your environment and yourself are high, a healthy self-esteem is almost impossible. Especially when it depends on many factors over which you have no control. This causes restlessness and makes us insecure. How can we escape? The inside, how we value ourselves, should be separated from our appearance. Our self-esteem should be less determined by the value that others assign us. As Schopenhauer said: 'Other people's heads are too wretched a place for true happiness to have its seat.'

### THE SCHOOL OF LIFE

One way to distance ourselves as consumers is the realization that a new conceptual framework is needed to transcend this problem. It's safe to say that we're on the right path to more awareness because we see, for example, the success of The School of Life in London. The School of Life is devoted to developing emotional intelligence through the help of culture. Founded by Alain

de Botton, there are now initiatives in Paris, Amsterdam, Rio de Janeiro and Melbourne. The international success of magazines like *Happinez* and *Flow*, and the rise of yoga schools and mindfulness workshops show that we attach increasing importance to intangible property, and that we are making a trip to our inner selves. This increases a sense of self-worth. When we are not afraid to look inside, we make our own choices and look for a sincere relationship with brands that add real value and relevance. Living a conscious life, we discover that the human ego is the cause of all suffering. We realize that letting go of the ego takes us further in life, that we live then in our true identity. We are focused more on ourselves, we don't care what others think, and we stop comparing. With the result that we can resist commercial temptations and are also less prone to addiction.

As savvy consumers, we are more sensitive to real

emotions and less likely to identify ourselves with ads. False advertisements that address uncertainty and the fear of not being good enough for others just does not exist for us anymore. Brands that want to connect with smart consumers will need a true personality and a strong character. Brands that understand this will also dare to show their vulnerable side.

It comes down to real values. Not externally devised by marketing, but from the inside through a creative process and knowing the true purpose. Through creative and empathic 'right-brainers', as Daniel Pink in his *A Whole New Mind* writes about the dawning of a Conceptual Age. In short, the intention of the brand should be ethical. You can't buy trust, you have to earn it. And if you win, you can trust that brand best entering the game of seduction. From the identity and power of your brand. No manipulation or deception but communication from heart to heart.

## ART IS THERAPY

ROOM 2.19  
25 PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG LADY, 1656  
ISAACK LUTTICHUYS

She's not overly posh herself, but the room in which she hangs is exceedingly smart, full of shiny, costly things. But she doesn't seem to mind. Perhaps her parents told her: it's not what you have, it's what you are. And the message has inscribed itself on her face. She gazes at the treasures with a certain equanimity. She's not intimidated, she doesn't hate her posh friends, the ones who have the kind of luxurious table that's standing over there. If she changed into modern work clothes, she looks like she'd be a good person to have in a busy office nowadays: straightforward and efficient; you could confide your problems to her and find a sympathetic ear. Because she is sure about who she is, she can listen and find out who you really are.

Status matters, we have to let other people know we are important so as not to be overlooked. But we tend to do this by acquiring external markers of worth. She follows the better route: quiet self-confidence and a sure sense of herself.



*Text on yellow post-it beside the artwork: Portrait of a young Lady, 1656, Isaack Luttichuys. From the exhibition Art is Therapy, an intervention in the Rijksmuseum by philosophers Alain de Botton and John Armstrong, showing a different way to look at art and how art can help you to become a better person.*

# META HUMANS ARISE

BY TOZAMA DYANTYI

Tozama Dyantyi - a fashion designer and stylist - has found some new characters in the darkness, the danger and the unknown of the desert. A post-apocalyptic theme with new heroes has appeared in fashion and the movies. Unexpected heroes, mostly men, but also some strong brave women who celebrate new, sometimes extreme desert styles. Follow these three new meta men here.

## **The meta man of extreme sport and science**

The meta-man is a man of extreme sports and science. He is a survival prepper who trains him or herself to sustain, survive and be comfortable in the unknown. He is a sporting freak of health and physical activity, he enjoys environments both natural and man-made. He relishes the idea of darkness and danger and of testing his survival skills against extreme elements, choosing always to go towards the hypothetical dust storms of invisibility to gain victory over adversity. An anti-fragile idea and partly absurd, but his interest and

impulse is to discover and transform the known and proven by resisting the elements. Armed with a digital library of navigational systems and high-tech protective gear, he attacks the margins of social and anti-social space. Remote destinations, deep space, deep underground spaces, these are empty and silent worlds in which, for long periods, no other people will be encountered. These harsh surroundings can put the body under systematic pressure. These pioneers seek places away from human settlements and in extreme isolation. Their survival depends on militant measures for their safety, food or consumption. They push science, push the body's limits and push passion in Castaway mode. This demands specific tools.

Creating an adventurous, attractive mirage around this lifestyle, it is sold with specific products that go with the lifestyle. "But wherever I go, there you are, my fate, my fortune," Brad Pitt says in the 'There you are' Chanel Perfume Ad.



[WWW.STYLEITE.COM/NEWS/BRAD-PITT-CHANEL-NO-5-VIDEOS/](http://WWW.STYLEITE.COM/NEWS/BRAD-PITT-CHANEL-NO-5-VIDEOS/)

### The body Frankenstein

The meta human submerges, drowns himself in gruesome and compromising imagery and becomes it. Photographer Stephen Klein for Vogue did, as did Kanye West. In the social media, the human body is shown as vulgar bruising and cruising, brutally damaged, or in the grim bodily metamorphs of Vogue Fashion spreads even in beauty regimes. Surfaces of products have thorns, hair and spines, theaterised beyond shock to amuse in a typically post noir effect. It's not scary, it's funny. Meanwhile, popular musicians are portrayed in fluid, metallic versions of themselves, first as dolls, then as hologram apparitions. They look for uncomfortable situations off the grid. They make the body

extremely bleak, having stripped, polarized, smudged and smoked it to near-invisibilty or disappearance, and in extreme post-modernist forms. All done to celebrate the frankness of the body and its basic language, without titles but poised as a murky mystery of either ridiculous elation against white walls or extreme color against degenerate backgrounds. These kinds of tests experiment by diminishing the human body to bare subsistence levels of control and danger. They communicate a disarmed power - spaces that have not yet been explored are their working field. The make-ability of the body invites new technologies to expand the urge to control and to immortalize the degradable.



VASIL GERMANOV, 12 MAGAZINE, BELGIUM



### The dramatic soloist

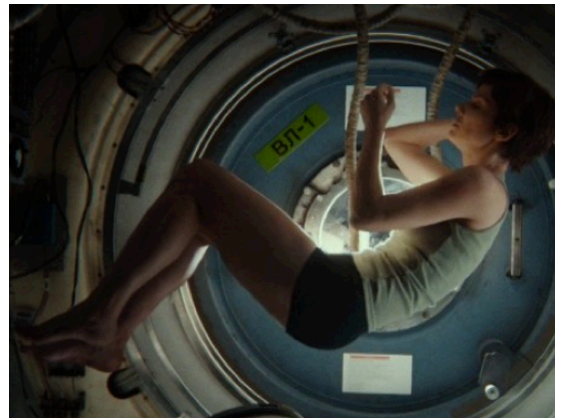
The dramatic soloist closes his or her eyes and goes within, perhaps into a self-restraining fantasy world. These adventurers are extreme soloists, wanderers pur sang. They go into a long silent meditation and look for spaces far away from the busy and noisy world of their current reality. They are attracted to future space travel, of course, to leaving this busy world for the calm of the interstellar. They are even interested in a one-way ticket to Mars. A man with a family announced on Facebook that he was proud to be able to go on this once in a lifetime journey.

The dramatic soloist wants to explore the boundaries of his own stability. He passes through remote terrain with the aid of old knowledge and wisdom and sometimes with the help of navigational systems that locate him in places that can only be seen by satellite technology. I call this new type of adventurer the 'Meta Human'. They use modern technology and its applications to address new challenges. New technologies give the life of this character a new meaning. Like Luke Skywalker in Star Wars, they are interested in cutting-edge applications, hardware and robotics. They add new technologies to their garments. In fashion shots, you see soft metallic parts on their clothes. The powerful, strong body and garment need to resist all weather and other extremes. It is important to look at their moral boundaries too and evaluate the consequences of their explorative drive. They are strong and know what they want.

Meta humans are intrigued by the power of nature and its capabilities and seek constantly to control and reproduce its functions. Whenever new information is discovered in the deep, dark spaces below and out there, it comes back in the form of a product that serves to change the lifestyle and

outlook of all of us. This is typically an attempt to immortalize the degradable, with a delayed urgency to ethical questions. Now science succeeds to a certain extent in combining technology to mimic nature, to outperform and immortalize it. Meta humans explore biology and geology and discover different views of nature and, specifically, of the unknown. They are explorers who collect experiences in order to control reality. They are real survivors; they embody a post apocalypse era. They create new tools for safety and strength, as well as for weapons, from all sorts of different natural resources.

This post-apocalypse manner is a growing theme in fashion and design. In movies and fashion, problems surrounding shortages of water and food, extreme drought, new natural resources, new technologies and new garments arise. We are all being persuaded to think about them. That's why the desert is attractive to people who like to explore and invent: It is the mystery of the undiscovered place, a perfect playfield for meta humans and their projects in a quest to outwit and to outlive a dangerous reality.



FROM GRAVITY, THE MOVIE, 2014

# THE NEXT INTERNET CONNECTION: OUR BRAIN!

BY BRUNO FABRE

Today, we are arguing about whether children have to learn to write, if they only use their keyboards to write and communicate. Their ability to type at high speed is beyond the reach of adults. My son already astonishes me with his learning curve of controlling a robot with his thoughts, and he is only 12 years old. We are experimenting together with mind control devices and Mindstorms robots that could be tomorrow's reality for each of us: using our minds to control our physical world!

What is happening around us? What is coming up really soon? Google is launching their Google Glass this summer, and it will have access to our minds through our eyes, something most users are not aware of. Apple expects to launch its Iwatch at the end of this year, gaining access to our feelings through our pulse waves. Interest in what we think and how we decide (to buy) is growing exponentially among companies in our digital world. Why?

We realize that, after handling the (long) process of ordering through the web, a customer, at the very last moment before entering the decisive keystroke, exits the ordering in 50% of the cases! There is a lot to earn by understanding customers' behavior and seamlessly sustaining their original wish to buy an item. Just imagine what this would mean in term of market size: reducing the exit at the last buying step from 50% to 25%? The prize to win is \$ 131,000,000.000 for the US retail online market alone! But who has the capability to win? My favorite in the race is Google, not only because it

is the world's largest search engine, but also because it is taking a large step ahead in understanding its customers. With our use of the Google Glass, our watching habits can be examined more precisely. Sight is 70% of all our sensing in everyday life, the other four traditional senses represent only 30% altogether. Google doesn't just know **WHAT** we are watching but also **WHERE** our eyes are fixed on the little screen. The glasses deliver Google crucial information about the way we think, without our realizing it. Until now, this kind of information was only available with the use of complex eye-tracking devices and could only be done in laboratories.

## **DATA-MINING**

Google also already has the largest global information database ever built on the search habits of Internet users. Data-mining is common activity to them, making it possible for them to be much more precise at targeting people and selling this information through AdWords. The marketing race is not only about understanding data and transforming it into valuable (and sellable) information. Nowadays, it is a race about understanding in real time what customers are doing and deducting what they are aiming and willing to do. How even more powerful would Google be if it they were to offer retailers the means to target customers passing along their shop with the right proposition at the right time and place! This could nudge the customer into changing direction, entering the shop and buying an item. Mass personalization is the aim and we, the customers, are being chased and sold to the highest bidder.

I even think sometimes that we consumers are entering digital slavery. Totally addicted to this virtual world, we are (in)directly the product being sold to companies.

## **IWATCH**

The next step after digitalization will be connecting our emotions through technology. Apple is preparing this next step with the Iwatch. The specifications give some insights: our wrist could contain new kinds of metrics, registering our heart pulse such as some jogging watches already do. Knowing how someone is moving (through the iPhone a/o gyroscope on the Iwatch) and correlating this information with pulse rates (from the Iwatch) would give a clear impression of someone's emotional status.

Psychological studies of emotions have shown that our bodies react quicker to information than our conscious minds do. This has led to neuro-marketing science and facial coding techniques, with the aim of collecting the subconscious reactions of consumers. Complex medical devices and computational power were needed for this purpose. It helped marketers to define the right message to effectively trigger a buying attitude. Today, with the exponentially growing processing capacity of smartphones, this analysis of our reactions is within reach of marketers. It is in our hands, studying our facial reaction through the tiny camera of our smartphone while we are looking at the screen.

The real question is not if we are going to connect with our brains, but when this is going to occur. The answer is that this step has already been taken.

We are already witnessing the development of

new devices to capture information about our world in the same way as we humans do with our five senses. These devices collecting smell, touch, images, sound or taste are getting smaller and smarter and use less and less energy to function. They help us give more human qualities to our robots, but they also help to enhance human capabilities. The clothes we wear become "intelligent" with the use of embedded technology. One day then, and from then on every day, we will put on a second skin as thin as ours, that enhance us with new features our bodies don't possess. The Second Skin will enable us to communicate with each other in a way we can't even imagine today. It will also give us a new capacity to be in contact with our environment. We are on the way to finding a common language with all life around us. We will be talking to and with flowers, because their language and needs will be understood and translated. Robots of many shapes will help us and themselves to cope with the servitudes of life.

## **BIOMIMICRY**

Robots will live outside but also inside us, as nano-technology makes it feasible. Today, we have difficulties accepting the intrusion of any device within our bodies, but we also know that bacteria, almost two kg of them, have to flourish inside us in order for us to be healthy. Tomorrow, nano devices will help us live longer and healthier than ever.

Humans are copying nature (biomimicry), and we are slowly beginning to understand its laws and purposes. The development of science on a large scale has brought us the tools to work as Nature does. The frontier between technological and biological is getting thinner and thinner, even being crossed with the direct connection of neurons to processors.

# ‘We are already connected as living creatures and inhabitants of a unique planet Earth’

We are digitalizing our world, trying to connect everything again in computer space. We haven't completely realized that we are already connected as living creatures and inhabitants of a unique planet Earth. The question is whether technology will help us to understand the laws of nature or whether, at some point, we are going to surpass our technological mindset. This could happen if we suddenly discover that we humans possess unique natural abilities that are as yet unknown, unused or simply forgotten.

What are we going to do? Look for a short cut? Or keep on the technological track?



IMAGE FROM DENNIS VAN MIERLO [WWW.IDEMI.NL](http://WWW.IDEMI.NL)

# IT MAY GO EITHER WAY

BY FRANS VAN DER REEP

We're facing interesting times, yes. In 1995-2000 I had a clear vision of 2010. Even my last prediction back then seems to be becoming a reality: deflation. The combination of all the new technologies that are currently out and about will cause such a jump in productivity that deflation, and the accompanying permanent high unemployment, will be one of the consequences. What will happen and why? Do you have an idea? Perhaps "who knows?" is a reasonable answer. I think the big changes will come from working with intelligent machines and adapting to a society where the middle class and the local shops will partially disappear. IBM's Watson, for example, is able to deliver within 10 seconds some of the most complicated but correct medical diagnoses, something that would take our top-MDs several months. Recent research from the University of Oxford shows that 47% of the jobs in the USA will no longer exist in twenty years.

This means we'll have to get used to much larger socio-economic differences within our society. In the USA the richest 1% own 50% of the capital, in the Netherlands that's 23%. Of course there will be counter movements. You see them happening now: people banning Facebook from their lives. But companies like the Zalandos are too seductive and attractive not to use them, and the fact that they are destroying a large number of local shops and the jobs they provide, with all sorts of consequences for our city centres, is too abstract for most people to take into account. There is a lot of money behind Zalando. Don't underestimate its impact.

If the middle class is reduced dramatically, one of the pillars of democracy will be too and, although we're don't yet realize it, by the time we do start to grasp this concept, it will be a very long road back.

## WHY DOES IT WORK LIKE THIS?

How do these disparities come about? I think it has to do with the fact that a chain, in the end, is only as strong as its strongest link, at least in the digital networked world. This is the opposite of the analog world, where the chain is as strong as its weakest link. In the digital world you only need to know one person in another network, and you have added a whole new network to your own. A tweet from President Obama about you or me and we are "inside" or "outside", because it works both ways.

In the material world, things work differently. Just like a bicycle chain, the weakest link is the determinant. Because the strongest link becomes the deciding factor in influence, the development of society accelerates towards the (network) hub-spoke model. And the hubs become more "hubbish" and the spokes more "spokish". It is in everyone's self-interest to be near a hub person, in order to keep their societal relevance. Your seminar will only be successful if a famous person attends it and gives it credibility. Compared to twenty years ago, reputation is even more important than substance. And thus the wealthy become wealthier, the famous more famous, and larger socio-economic disparities become more prevalent. Poverty is now, once again, visible in big cities.



This process is in full flow - even in the Netherlands. In my neighbourhood, classed as “wealthy” by any measure, the soup kitchen (voedselbank) has to provide food for more than 100 families. Societal and economic exclusion accompany each other. It seems we’re pushed into either the role of groupie or of impresario. Either you’re ensuring the stars/hubs are getting more attention, the function of an impresario, or you’re making sure that a part of their attention is given to you. Who isn’t seen is lost, and you have to come from a good background and “to be living with the right connections” to convince people to pay attention to you.

### **DANCING WITH THE STARS**

Without an exchange between you and a hub-person, you are socially smart but irrelevant: Dancing with the Stars. Your connection with the star determines your effectiveness. That means that, in the next few years, not the connection but, even more, the prevention of exclusion will be the societal concern. For those who don’t have anything to offer there will be no place in a society of successful citizens. At the moment, it seems as if we are practicing this social scenario of exclusion on senior citizens and (immigrant) youth without work. What does exclusion feel like? Ask those well-educated youngsters who have written hundreds of job applications without result. Or go and look around in Greece. Why do we see more and more “tribes” coming into existence: closed clubs whose members are looking after each other’s interests very well as they promote their reputation, share their experiences solely among the members and not with those who don’t belong, and strategically ignore the rest of the world? It suggests Wallerstein’s theory about “core” and “periphery” in the world.

Another few practical, visible forms of exclusion? Profiling based on big data leads to inclusion and, inevitably, to exclusion. And while smartphones are marketed as “being connected anytime, anyplace”, 80% of us use a mobile phone to stay within our own social bubble and not to connect with the people around us. As always: marketing is framing.

I expect that exclusion as a social problem will become worse, more urgent and more important in the next few years. And guess what, exclusion will get a political translation. Take a look around you. Being excluded is insulting, it creates rancor. Too much inequality is dangerous!

### **2020 IS UNDEFINED**

So what will happen next? From my point of view 2020 is still undefined. The medieval “grimness of daily life” and “rough reality”, to use Huizinga’s terminology, seem to be returning. One of the things that the current situation in The Ukraine exemplifies for me is that less than 0.5% of the population can manipulate the other 99.5%. Wealth is a thin veneer, as history has shown us over and over again. Let’s be careful with it. The future can take us anywhere, and we should hope that our societal “spoke-men”, the hubs, will be people with wisdom and a big sense of responsibility. With power and influence comes great responsibility. Let’s hope too that those hubs are people and not machines, because that’s also a possible scenario.

I imagine four possible scenarios around this transition.

**Decentralised, local solutions**

<b>‘Fressen’: Being selfish; Exclusion</b>	Scratch card behaviour	New civilianship	<b>‘Moral’: The greater common good; Connection</b>
	Political corporates	Enlightened management	

**Central solutions**

The four scenarios are determined by two choices: Do we chose decentralized solutions, or do we prefer centralized ones? And will we opt for selfish behaviour or chose to work for the greater common good?

An example of a decentralized solution is power from solar panels on your own roof or a fuel cell in your garage. The central solution would be the power plant using old-fashioned coal or gas to produce electricity. Banks are also an example of centralised solutions. Crowdfunding, lending money to each other, or providing security for each other, e.g. by raising money in the church – so-called peer2peer systems - are decentralised. In the Netherlands, Jan Rotmans said some sensible things about this development, the tensions that are linked to it and the enormous power-slides that will accompany it.

If someone approaches you during drinks-after-work because you present a possible societal chance for that person, and (s)he proceeds to “rip you apart”, because behind you there appears to be a larger societal chance, I would call that scratch card behaviour. Examples of enlightened behaviour can be found in the persons of Pope Francis, the

Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu. In the words of the Woodstock veteran Carlos Santana: “These people alone could stop wars. They replace the love for power by the power of love”. Of course, the Roman Catholic Church is completely centralised in its management style, but Pope Francis is widely recognised as humble, honest and connected, and that, on its own, brings about a very different atmosphere.

**INTEGRITY**

The choice for sustainability I see as a way of taking responsibility and thus as a form of integrity. Sustainability serves ‘moral’. Sustainability as a theme which is gaining terrain has both centralised and localized and distributed varieties. The first solar power plants in the Netherlands start making their appearance. Germany chooses Die Energiewende to wind and solar power and away from nuclear energy and fossil fuels. Sustainability is ingrained in modern society. Not a single company is able to escape it and, from my point of view, it’s a step towards more integrity.

Similarly, the choice for transparency is linked to taking responsibility and to personal integrity. Whether society becomes more transparent by the

use of social media and the internet, or whether they ensure that small movements in no-time lead to mass revolts, only time will tell. As the NSA has shown us, transparency has two sides.

Of course I hope that the “new citizenship” scenario slowly but surely gains ground. But realism forces me to say that the representatives of this movement are much more likely to be tolerated than embraced by the corporate world. That world still focusses on making money in the short term and obtaining as much power as possible. As long as all citizen initiatives can only work in isolation and many, in fact, (formally and informally) are excluded from society, society won't change. Those initiatives are too small, and there are too few ‘hubs’ to make a real change. How 2.0 are we? From my point of view, mobilising talent 2.0 is urgent. I think it is of the utmost importance to name the true societal challenges, to communicate this agenda clearly, and to formulate concrete contributions as an ode to the new world with its many opportunities! He who has the power should use it with integrity.

## **STABILITY**

I find movements towards “connection” (more integrity and the search for connection in our personal actions) more important than upward movement towards more flexibility. One reason is that flexibility ultimately needs (societal) stability. Not everything can be flexible! In the end, you need stable rules like “driving on the right side in traffic”, or records showing estate properties. There is so much movement currently that stability is perhaps more important at this moment as a (European) societal agenda. The balancing act between stability and movement is a massive assignment.

In this respect, we could learn something from

Chinese leadership. They understand the concept of stability very well. Too much movement in that enormous population would lead immediately to chaos. An example from this side of the world? Even new customers of Snappcar.nl or Airbnb and Über need to show a (stable) proof of identity. In countries where that is more difficult, where identity cards are not always correct and therefore don't have this legal stability, flexible businesses like Snappcar won't start up. And for places like that, you really don't need to travel very far.

## **MANY WAYS**

Something new is the connection between these known elements that we haven't observed before. You can discover something new by connecting many parts that previously had nothing to do with each other (De Bono). Sometimes we need to change our mental model (everything we've learned) and that seems to be the case here. Maybe we should listen to other people once in a while.

## **A HELL OF A JOB**

My prediction: “exclusion” and the loss of jobs. It will be a hell of a job to be guided by understanding instead of ideology. Once again: it could, from now to 2020, go many ways. In the 20th century we saw too many cases of exclusion. Let's not go there again!



THE ARCHITECTURAL APOCALYPSE, PHOTO'S FROM VITALY AND ELENA VASILIEVA

# NOMADIC LEARNING

BY AN KRAMER

A growing number of managers and executives are aware of the need for these qualities in their own employees and organizations. The actual reality in organizations is that they are constantly confronted with changes. The common truth in most companies, however, is that they are organized in ways that inherently discourage change. In *The Social Psychology of Organizations*, authors Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn note that the core problem of any social system is the reduction of variability and instability of human actions to uniform and predictable patterns. Organizations were designed to guarantee stability. Process improvement has become popular, from quality management to Six Sigma programs, in order to fulfill this desire for stability and predictability.

However, in these days of on-going, huge, and ever faster changes, companies are not well equipped to adapt in time. We observe small networks of entrepreneurs passing by the big organizations because they are so much more agile and flexible.

Many organizations are not really reacting to the changing economy. They look only for growth. Efficiency and financial results are more important to them, so they create more rules and hierarchies. People are still treated as production-factors and resources. The new generation of employees does not accept this. They want to be taken seriously as whole human beings. Rather than accepting the security of a contract as employee they start their own businesses.

In addition to the speed of change, the level of complexity has increased. This growth is due to

the continuing information technology revolution from past decades. Systems that used to be separate are now interconnected and interdependent, which means that they are, by definition, more complex. And, because complex systems interact in unexpected ways, it is harder to make predictions. The degree of complexity may even lie beyond our cognitive abilities. It is also harder to place bets on organizational performance because past behaviour of a complex system does not automatically predict its behaviour in the future, especially given the rate of accelerating change. Doing what you did yesterday, even if it is 50% better, is no longer a guarantee for success.

## THE FUTURE OF WORK

In her research on *The Future of Work*, Lynda Gratton differentiates between three changes in the necessary talents and attitudes towards work in the future and the related forms of capital required.

### 1. *From shallow generalist to serial master.*

Our intellectual capital is what is needed primarily. Because of the global and technologically open world there will always be competitors doing things “better and faster.” So, we have to differentiate. How? With depth and mastery. The risk remains, however, that we become obsolete; and, sooner or later, are no longer in the picture. Therefore, we also need to be able to shift from one form of mastery to another. “In the future, long working lives mean that you can start deep and then slide or morph into other related areas, or even jump into something completely different”. This way, we can become serial masters.

### 2. *From isolated competitor to innovative*

*connector.* Our social capital is the second important



resource. Since constant change is the new norm, we need an innovative and creative attitude within organizations. We need diversity in our networks and relations: the more diversity we have, the more social resources we have to find the right people. “Become part of a collection of other masters who together create value”.

**3. From voracious consumer to impassioned produce.** The third resource is our emotional capital. In these changing landscapes, we need a reflective capacity to stay upright. Several important questions emerge. How can we bring harmony in work and life? What values do we stand for? Why do we work and how do we choose our work? Work is no longer an exchange of time and money with an organization. Personal values instead of money are becoming more important.

## **FUTURE WORK SKILLS**

The Palo Alto Research Centre, with its expertise in long-term forecasting, released a report entitled *Future Work Skills 2020*, which analyses some of the key drivers reshaping work. New skills arise, such as *sense-making* - the ability to determine the deeper meaning or significance of what is being expressed - and are becoming more important; or *social intelligence* - the ability to connect to others in a deep and direct way, to sense and stimulate reactions and desired interactions; *novel and adaptive thinking* - thinking and coming up with solutions and responses beyond that which is rote or rule-based; *cross-cultural competency*; *new-media literacy*; *transdisciplinarity*; *a design mind-set*; and *virtual collaboration*; the ability

to work productively, drive engagement and demonstrate presence as a member of a virtual team. These are some examples of new competences becoming more important, as the report about future work skills from the Palo Alto Research Center emphasizes.

It seems that there is no way to escape any longer. The number of things we are supposed to be able to manage and do is enormous. Work is becoming more personal and more professional, involving expression of the whole human being.

The wake up call is that organizations have to change, before they are made to. Companies that excel are willing to change. They are open to new insights, from within as well as from the outside, says Tom Peters. The essential shift we need to make in our thinking about change is to stop perceiving it in terms of stability, as in “the only thing that is constant, is change.” It still has stability as its premise.

## **SPEED**

The critical success factor for companies is the speed of their learning, so that they create change instead of reacting or adapting to it. The question is: how can organizations become masters of learning, so that they are able to create change? How can we learn to understand change from its own perspective? To meet this challenge, organizations need to incorporate a way of learning that includes change, flexibility and creativity in order to be ready for the ever-changing future. This form of learning should be continuous, causing a deeper change than

the traditional change in behaviour or structure only. An answer to this need is what I call Nomadic Learning, a concept of learning in and for organizations which accomodates the paradigm shift. Most often, our mind-sets about work are often still grounded in the industrial age, and so are our expectations and assumptions about learning and dealing with change. We still think change will be logical, linear and predictable. Reality, however, is showing us something completely different.

In order to develop Nomadic Learning as a concept, I borrowed the nomadic concept from Gilles Deleuze. The scholar developed a philosophy about nomadic thinking, using the rhizome as an image for a non-hierarchical, vital way of thinking. Unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point. It grows horizontally like grass. In that way a rhizome has neither a beginning nor an end. Nomadic Learning has 4 principles.

- Insert as much reality as possible
- Incorporate multiple perspectives
- Create a strong interconnection between “action” and “conceptualization”
- Make the learning horizontal

The outcome of a Nomadic Learning experience is not predictable. Because change is essential in the paradigm of Nomadic Learning, outcomes of this learning can, in principle, always be other than expected. The element of surprise, and hence

creativity and novelty, is necessarily built into the very core of Nomadic Learning.

The current demands on individual creativity and flexibility are extremely high. That means that there are risks involved, which Lynda Gratton (2011) lists as fragmentation, isolation, and exclusion. At the same time, we are no longer able to solve complex issues all by ourselves. But there is hope. As we try to deal with complexity, we find our answer to these risks. In the needed collaboration, we find our new certainty and connection. Networking, required in order to create the diversity of perspectives we need, helps us overcome the embedded uncertainty in our ever-changing realities.

## **A LEARNING COMMUNITY**

Nomadic Learning provides a learning attitude for life and work. It is not a recipe for a certain kind of behaviour, leadership or organization. I believe that when an organization gives its employees the space, trust and support to become “nomads,” to become real nomadic learners, the organization will turn into a true learning community.

This learning community can reach far beyond the structure or borders of the organization. As modern nomads, the employees have their “home” within themselves; they do not expect others to bring them safety. And at the same time, these nomads are always ready to break up their camp and travel on. It frees up employees to bring in their best.

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# STRATEGIC INTUITION

Edward de Boer has just published a book about Intuition and its use as a strategic tool. We asked him about the research he did.

"Intuition is an interesting and, in certain ways, a crucial subject now. In the first place, it's interesting because of its many and various aspects. Like the concepts 'communication' or 'feeling', intuition is a broad and well-known subject. Almost everyone knows about intuition in practical and daily life. Besides that, intuition is contradictory. It's not easy to grasp: though almost everybody knows the sense of 'gut-feeling' or 'fingersputzengefühl', it's pretty difficult to define what it really means. What fascinates me about it is: how does it influence human excellence? How do professionals use their intuition to get extraordinary results? What kinds of intuition are there? And, yes, we all know we use it in daily life. Will it become more important in decision-making, or is it already important without anyone being aware of it?"

De Boer continued, "I think that every form of human decision-making has an aspect of intuition in it. The question is: what is the balance between analysis and intuition? Is the balance right for you? For some questions, you really need a deep analysis and calculation. For example, in the construction industry, you have to know how to construct a building. That's about theory and knowledge. But in the way you design the building, the materials and how you use them, creative intuition is important.

"Another aspect is on a wider scale: we are facing very complicated environmental, economic and social challenges these days. Daily newspapers

tell us about the consequences of a lifestyle that seems to be on a dead-end road. You can even say that we're dealing with a deep crisis of human consciousness. In my opinion, intuition is a crucial instrument for developing new directions and solutions in the future. Einstein once said, 'We will not solve the problems of the world from the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.' That's exactly what intuition is about. More than anything else, this new century demands new thinking: we must change our material-based analyses of the world around us to include broader and more multidimensional perspectives. That's why I opened my book on Professional Intuition with that beautiful quote by Einstein."

*This issue is about desert style, desert time. In a way, in the desert, we miss a certain consciousness of time and direction. There are so many directions and no clues or signs to guide us out. Call it directionless. Can intuition, strategic intuition, help people in "desert times"?*

"The exciting aspect is that we seem to have more possibilities and chances today. The many different possible directions you can choose can seem overwhelming. We often say, 'Intuition will guide you.' The question is not only how to listen to your intuition, but actually to ask: what is the object of your intuition? For example, which values will guide you in making choices? What kinds of desires, dreams or ambitions can give you direction in making choices in life or work? I believe that intuition has the capacity to build bridges between your possibilities on the one hand and your inner compass, your inner knowing, on the other. The

definition of intuition is: 'A suddenly insight, without logical understanding, but with a strong feeling of evidence.' Intuition is that voice inside that says, 'Yes, this is it. It feels right, I can't explain it yet, but I know it, I just know that it's true.' Often this feeling appears in combination with a physical sensitivity. So intuition helps us as an extra important guide in decision making.'

### UPSTREAM AND UNDERSTREAM

"Working together in most organizations, you can distinguish two levels: an upstream and an understream level. It's like the model of an iceberg. The upstream is the visible, rational side. It contains everything you can see, measure and calculate. The understream, just as important, is not visible immediately, but you can feel it. All cultural aspects in a team or society such as fears, visions, ideals, often still unspoken, are invisible, but visible too. People become smarter at grasping senses. It is in our nature, and you can train it. The deeper dimension is meaningful and influential. Especially to explore the understream, that deeper level, I believe intuition is a crucial tool. Not only individually but also in collaboration and in teams."

### EXPERIENCE

De Boer believes there are several kinds of intuition. "One kind deals with experience and tacit knowledge. When you do something often, say baking an apple pie, you can become an expert. After maybe ten or twenty years, some people develop a certain magic in baking apple pies: with their eyes closed, 'on intuition', they create the most delicious things. This is expert intuition, based on routine, experience and, of course, a certain talent. If you ask that cook about it, after thinking for a while, he or she will tell you why specific decisions have been made, like using a special amount of cinnamon

or the perfect apples.

### A CREATIVE INSIGHT

"Another kind of intuition is based upon the process of problem-solving, creating something. For example, a designer is thinking about a new product. Or one he wants to surprise someone with, let's say ... a pie? After thinking a while, often in a moment of rest, during sports or while taking a shower, suddenly the insight comes. 'Now I know, I'll make an apple pie'. That is a creative insight. Finding that solution is not about routine but about letting go. The desert is a perfect metaphor for this kind of intuition. You don't know it rationally, and you can't count anymore on your usual habits of 'thinking'. So you are looking for new ways."

### *In the literature about intuition, how important is stillness or rest?*

"The state of nothingness, in a lot of spiritual and meditative traditions, is a kind of intuitive state: seeing light in the dark or finding the right path after you've lost your way are deep human experiences and, on a certain level, connected with intuition. Deep intuitive experiences do appear in a context of silence. The old routines and conventions don't serve any longer.

"In Greek mythology, Hekate, the Goddess of victory, is also called the Goddess of intuition. She's pictured with three faces and looks in three directions. In earlier days, in old Greece, they used to put a statue of Hekate at crossroads, where the road split up and you had to make a choice of where to go. Hekate was the guide for finding the right path in life. That's about outer and inner decision-making at the same time."

“You can learn how your intuition works, how it functions: everybody has his own special form of intuition. To develop yours, you have to start by building up a relationship with it, like a good friend. Then it will start to reveal its secrets.

### **THE INNER DESERT STATE**

“The poet Rilke said once, ‘Patience is everything!’ Learn to have patience and to trust your gut-feeling. When you start to trust your inner intuitive sense, it will become something that feels familiar. Learn to get used to the inner desert-state, the state of nothingness. The result will be that you become more sensitive to what it wants to reveal. And, although that desert-experience can sometimes be very lonely, you will find companions to travel with. Sharing intuitions with others is important. Together you will absolutely be able to navigate toward fulfilling your journey.”



THE STAR WARS SAGA CONTINUES



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ONE SHEET B

# COLOPHON

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