

THE VENUS PROJECT

Beyond Politics, Poverty & War

The Magazine | Issue 6

The TEDx
EXPERIENCE



THE HUMAN ASPECT

*in a resource based
economy*

HOUSING

*redefining the aims of
architecture*

SUSTAINABILITY

the way forward

The human aspect

by Jacque Fresco



In today's society, there is much concern about the dissolution of the conventional core family structure, and the societal values associated with it. The family is seen as the primary, most basic venue for acquiring such life skills as caring, sociability, responsibility, stability and concern for others. The increasing unrest and lack of direction exhibited by many young people today seem to validate these concerns.

At present, it is necessary for both husbands and wives to work. Monetary economics have to a large extent undermined family cohesion. Parents lack adequate time to spend with their children, and they are constantly stressed by ever-rising medical bills, insurance payments, educational expenses, and the high cost of living. It is in this area that one of the most profound benefits of this new civilization could be realized. The proposed shorter workdays would provide more time for family relationships. Free access to goods and services would make the home a much more pleasant place, with the removal of economic stress that causes so much family turmoil.

With the enhanced level of sociability that would naturally come from not having to compete for access to goods and services, we would see a tendency toward extension of the family unit into the community. As may already be observed in other cultures, the rearing and development of children would become the responsibility of both the family and the community at large.

With the elimination of debt, the fear of losing one's job will no longer be a threat; this assurance, combined with education on how to relate to one another in a much more meaningful way, could considerably reduce conflict and stress both mentally and physically. When education and resources are available to all without a price tag, there would be no limit to the human potential. The fear of uniform behavior in a cybernated resource-based economy of the future is unfounded. The only uniformity one would find would be a concern for the environment and the importance of extending maximum courtesy to all nations and to one another. All would likewise share an intense curiosity for all that is new and challenging. With a better understanding, people could possess a flexibility of outlook unknown in previous times, free of bigotry and prejudice. In addition, the people of this innovative society would have concern for their fellow human beings, and for the protection, maintenance, and stewardship of the Earth's natural environment. Additionally, everyone, regardless of race, color, or creed would have equal access to all of the amenities that this highly productive culture could supply.

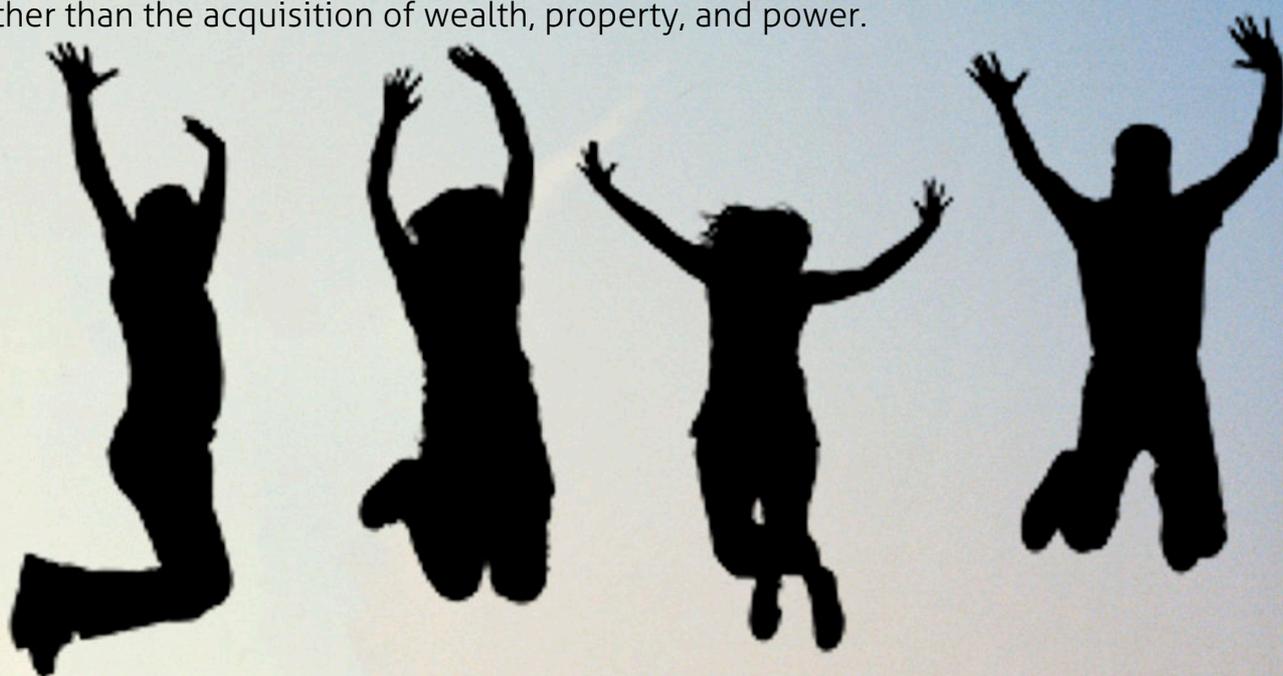
In more advanced and humane systems of education people would acquire this new type of value system. They would also realize the many advantages of cooperation rather than competition. In a society without vested interest it would be impossible to harness the talents of scientists and technicians to engage in weapons research or any other socially hostile endeavor. We call this approach "functional morality." This newer, more humane, and more productive approach would advocate finding non-military solutions to international differences. This calls for a global view, which would be a considerable improvement over narrow national and self-interests. We could use knowledge and information as tools that would be surrendered when evidence of more appropriate methods are introduced.

Some people question the morality of seemingly receiving something for nothing. At a recent college lecture one student was opposed to the idea of "getting something for nothing." I then asked him if he were paying his own way through school, or if his parents were paying for him. He admitted that his parents were. I also pointed out that if he really did believe that people should not receive something for nothing, then in the event of the death of his rich relative he would prefer that their inheritance be left to the heart or cancer fund, rather than being passed on to him. But the student, needless to say, was opposed to this idea. By merely being born in a developed country, we have access to many things that we put no effort whatsoever towards, such as the telephone, the automobile, electricity, running water, etc. These gifts of human ingenuity and invention do not degrade our lives, but rather they enrich and enhance us. What degrades us is our lack of concern for those unfortunate enough to experience poverty, hunger, and homelessness. The social designs that are proposed in this writing merely provide the opportunity for individuals to develop their fullest potential in whatever endeavor they choose without the fear of loss of individuality or submission to uniformity.

A resource-based economy by definition includes the participation of all people in its benefits. In a monetary system there is an inherent reason for corruption and that is to gain a competitive advantage over someone else. Without vested interests or the use of money, there is no benefit to squelching one's opinion or falsifying information or taking advantage of anyone. There would be no need for any underlying rigid social barriers that would limit the participation of anyone or restrain the introduction of new ideas. The main objective is the access of information and the availability of goods and services to all people. This would enable people to be prepared to participate in the exciting challenges of this new society. A resource-based economy could create an environment that would encourage the widest range of individuality, creativity, constructive endeavor, and cooperation without any kind of elitism, technical or otherwise. Most significantly, a resource-based economy would generate a far different incentive system, one based on human and environmental concern. This would not be a uniform culture but one that is designed to be in a constant process of growth and improvement.

As we enhance the lives of others, protect our environment, and work toward abundance, all our lives can become richer and more secure. If these values were put into practice it would enable all of us to achieve a much higher standard of living within a relatively short period of time--one that would be continuously improved. At a time when commercial institutions no longer exist, the necessity for prisons, lawyers, advertisements, banks and the stock exchange will serve no useful purpose. In the society of the future, in which the monetary system of scarcity has been surpassed by a resource-based economy and most physical and creative needs are met, private ownership as we know it would cease to be a necessity to protect one's access to goods and services. The concept of ownership would be of no advantage whatsoever in a society of abundance. Although this is difficult for many to imagine, even the wealthiest person today would be immensely better off in the highly productive resource-based society. Today in developed countries the middle class live far better than kings and the wealthy of times past. In a resource-based economy everyone would live richer lives than the powerful and wealthy of today, not only materially but spiritually as well.

People would be free to pursue whatever constructive field of endeavor they choose without any of the economic pressures, restraints, debts and taxation that are inherent in the monetary system of today. By constructive endeavor, we mean anything that enhances the lives of the individual and others while protecting the global environment. When education and resources are available to all without a price tag, there would be no limit to the human potential. With these major alterations people would be able to eventually live longer, more meaningful, healthier and productive lives. In such a society, the measure of success would be based on the fulfillment of one's individual pursuits rather than the acquisition of wealth, property, and power.



HOUSING

Text and Designs by Jacque Fresco





VIDEO INTRODUCTION







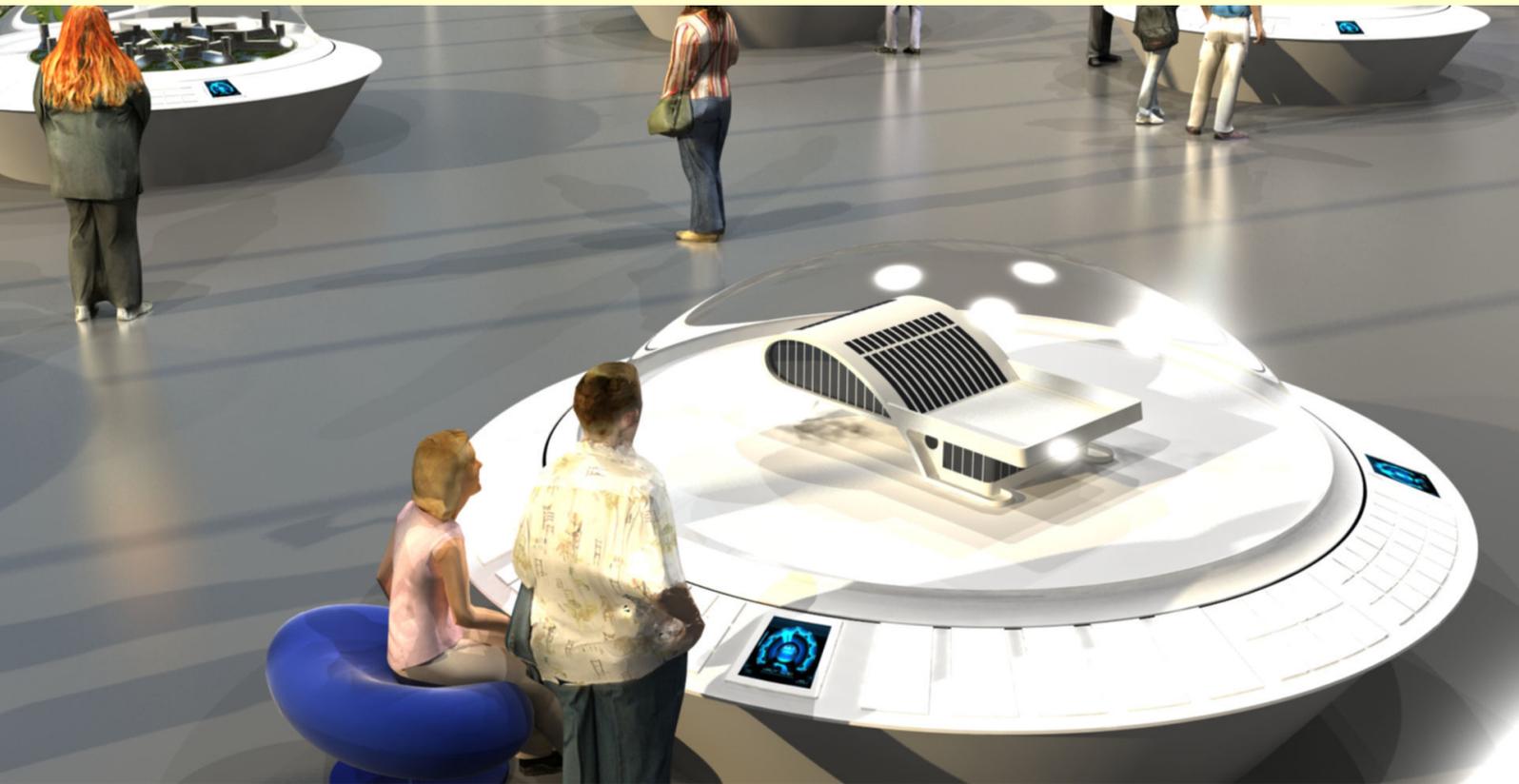


The Venus Project recommends that the present state and aims of architecture be redefined to fit the evolving needs of individuals in this new, emergent culture.

The architecture and individual dwellings of future cities will evolve on an entirely different basis from today's houses. With the intelligent application of humane technologies, we will be able to provide and allow for a wide array of unique individual homes. Their structural elements will be flexible and coherently arranged to best serve individual preference. These pre-fabricated, modular homes, embodying a high degree of flexibility inconceivable in times past, could be built anyplace one might imagine, amidst forests, atop mountains, or on remote islands.

All of these dwellings can be designed as self-contained residences with their own thermal generators and heat concentrators. Photovoltaic arrays would be built into the skin of the building and into the windows themselves. "Thermopanes" would be used to tint out the bright sunlight by variable patterns of shading. All these features could be selected by the occupant to supply more than enough of the energy required to operate the entire household.

Homes could be prefabricated of a new type of pre-stressed, reinforced concrete with a flexible ceramic external coating that would be relatively maintenance free, fireproof, and impervious to the weather. Their thin shell construction can be mass-produced in a matter of hours. With this type of construction, there would be minimal damage from earthquakes and hurricanes.



As many of you may know, we recently completed a successful Kickstarter campaign for a three-part documentary series to be released approximately every 4 months starting in early 2014.



George Bernard Shaw once poignantly stated, "Our schools teach the morality of feudalism corrupted by commercialism, and hold up the military conqueror, the robber baron, and the profiteer, as models of the illustrious and successful."— Back to Methusela

These words reflect still present conditions; yet this scenario is even more extreme and threatening now. The stakes are higher as we teeter on the brink of demise from several fronts. What is missing in most social commentary is an alternative to the threats confronting us. We cannot continue the current path. Our food, air, and water is polluted with contaminants too great to list

here. Meteorological phenomenon, including global warming, is unprecedented. Radioactive fallout could haunt us for hundreds, even thousands of years. All the while we spend most of our attention and resources on war and munitions.

This documentary will demonstrate new opportunities that could enable us to deal with the enormity of our global challenges. Our solutions are designed to enhance the lives of all and ensure a positive future for all children. The documentary series will present the vision of The Venus Project, founded by Jacque Fresco.



Now 97, Fresco has been designing this innovative vision for most of his life; a global plan to surpass the need for politics, poverty, and war; and most important... the methodology to attain this.

Some say that Fresco is ahead of his time but in actuality, the times are behind him. Critical bio-social pressures are now catching up with the need for this work and many are beginning to understand the urgency of such an approach as The Venus Project. People are now speaking of the need for change to the entire social system which is the root cause of the problems themselves. It is no longer enough to maintain the structures that create

elitism and scheme to usurp the monetary wealth of countries while leaving nations and people in perpetual debt. A few corporations control the mass media that shapes people's values to maintain allegiance to these detrimental structures.

As more people question "business as usual", they inevitably search for new methods. With this documentary, we will go into more detail to help those who are familiar with the concepts of The Venus Project, along with those who are new to these ideas.



We are extremely pleased to see how much we exceeded our initial Kickstarter goal of twenty-two thousand dollars. When the 40-day campaign was over, we had pledges of \$76,768. In actuality, not everyone follows through with their pledges, but when they were fulfilled and the transaction and Kickstarter fees were subtracted, it totaled \$68,180.86. Out of the 1385 people who pledged, 1,305 followed through with their pledges, which is a high percentage according to Kickstarter.

This amount enables us to go further than we initially proposed for the campaign. These funds make it possible for us to now acquire interviews that we didn't even consider when

we started. We are very excited about this since the first three people we approached have accepted our requests. Although we can't yet reveal any names, we've got some powerful stories and perspectives; from whistleblowers at the highest levels of finance to specialists in environmental fields and automation.

We can now acquire some professional post-production help in sound and color as well. Additionally, we have added a wonderful musician who will be composing for the series. We will also do our best to present new animations.



We are now fulfilling the rewards and are very eager to send them all out. If you have not yet sent in your survey through Kickstarter, please do that soon so that we can mail off the signed photos, books and posters or schedule your Skype call! We are keeping our small local post office very busy.

Since the Kickstarter campaign ended, there have been many people who asked if they could still contribute. As a result, we decided to keep the donations going throughout the making of this three-part series. While the budget exceeded our expectations, the additional funding enables us to continually expand the scope and quality of the

documentary. With travel expenses now needed for the interviews, we will hope to acquire enough to mitigate these expenses as well. For those who donate to this project now and throughout the year, we will be sending out the same rewards as the levels shown on our Kickstarter campaign page. They can be seen here.

If you would like to contribute to this project, you can do so on the homepage of our website, www.thevenusproject.com.





Again, we want to thank everyone who has contributed their time or funds to make this so successful. We are doing our best to produce a documentary that will be highly informative and interesting to watch.

Roxanne Meadows and Joel Holt
"The Choice is Ours" Production Team

FAQ



WHAT ABOUT THE USE OF DRUGS IN THE FUTURE?

There is a tremendous incentive today for the selling of drugs and making people addicted as it is very profitable. Yes during the transition there will be problems because people need and require drugs. They will be able to attain them. But there will be more information out in regards to the negative and positive effects of taking various drugs.

There will also be a tremendous amount of help for those who want to get off of them but today they can not afford the facilities today. There will be no moral judgments with the rehabilitation from drugs but the main concern is health both physically and mentally.

We ultimately hope to provide an environment that is interesting and challenging enough that very few people will have a need for drugs. Through education and a much less stressful atmosphere the need will be surpassed. People will be equipped with a healthier mental outlook or better tools for handling situations that confront them.

WHAT IS YOUR TAKE REGARDING SEXUALITY?

We view the facts of sex are as follows: If children are raised in an environment where nude swimming is the norm, then their sexual attitudes and behaviors will evolve differently than in situations where their bodies are always covered and hidden. Aberrant sexual behavior and fetishes would probably disappear in cultures where unclothed bodies are regarded as natural. Deviant sexual behaviors like Peeping Toms, selling nudity in magazines, exhibitionism, and similar activities are mostly generated in societies where sex is covert and people are deprived about it. Unfortunately, much religious training seeks to perpetuate conventional sexual attitudes with particular emphasis on feelings of guilt. Societies, which accept unscientific values and beliefs about sex, are bound to generate unhealthy deviations involving cruelty, sadism, etc

Sexual attitudes and behaviors in a saner society will evolve very differently from conventional societies today. We think nudity will become more commonplace on beaches, parks, and elsewhere, and that this will, in fact, become the norm in the future. Non-judgmental attitudes about sexual preference will eventually prevail. Sex in the culture will lack inhibition, thus reducing the interest in dancing girls, enticing displays, sexual extravagance, etc. Sexual distortions and abnormalities result from judgmental religious concepts regarding nudity and sexual preference.

Jacque Fresco, founder of The Venus Project, once lived on a Polynesian island in the South Pacific where the natives wore no clothing. This was associated with a completely different value system concerning sex and nudity. They did not behave like people do in a sexually deprived culture. The males didn't stare at the female body, but rather looked into their eyes when speaking to them. During sex they stroked the entire body. When you pet a dog you don't stop at the balls--you stroke the entire dog. They were uninterested in photos of nudes, male or female. They didn't brag about sexual conquests or emphasize their sexual behavior, and it appeared to be as natural as any other activity among them. They engaged in sex when they were old enough to do so and did so without cruelty or fetishes. Those distortions mostly occur in modern "civilization" where deprivation and sexual morality are dominant.

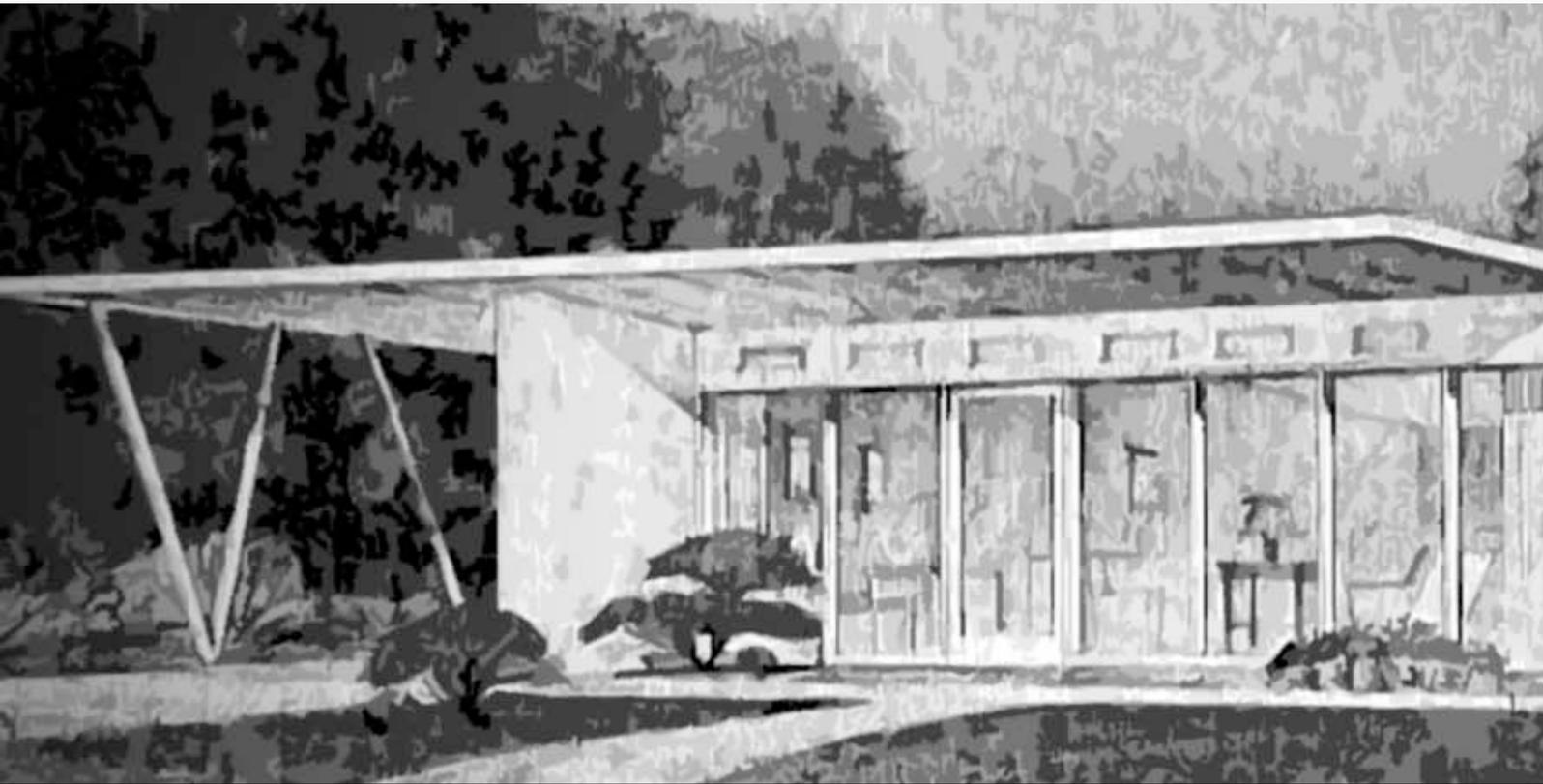
The Venus Project feels that sexual preferences are byproducts of a person's experiences and we make no judgments regarding those preferences. Our aim is to find out what conditions are responsible for deviant behavior in all aspects of society and then to scientifically design an environment that will evolve the best in human values and relationships. A better social design in a resource-based economy will evolve productive and cooperative citizens.



SUSTAINABILITY

THE WAY FORWARD >> >> >>

by Filip Ivanov



*"Don't just tell people to save water!
Build a system that would automatically produce the desired result."
- Jacque Fresco -*

When talking about the future, we often project our past and present onto it. We enjoy conventional architecture and interior design because it reflects our present tastes, but we rarely consider the practical aspect of our everyday living accessories when we are designing a particular asset. For example, we are very much annoyed with the dust that accumulates in our homes and apartments or the dirt that builds up on our windows, but so far, the only solution that we rely on is to manually clean the surfaces. When thinking in terms of innovation, it is more proactive to consider an approach that applies an innovative solution directly at the core problem, which would be how to prevent dirt from entering the

home or sticking to the windows.

One concept that has gained much popularity recently is sustainability. Considering its description, sustainability is the capacity to endure. For us humans, sustainability is the long-term maintenance of the well-being of life, which includes environmental, economic, and social dimensions, and encompasses the concept of responsible management of global resources. Incorporating this idea into design promotes the philosophy of designing physical objects, the built environment, and supporting services to comply with the principles of economic, social, and ecological sustainability.

When we think about design, we often associate it with the architectural or visual aspects of buildings, interiors, products or even art. Most clothing accessories today reflect the designer's background and emotional status, but rarely do we find practical aspects of design being introduced into our habitat. For example, we consider our professional photographic cameras as very advanced in terms of communications or technical architecture that allow multidimensional functionalities, but we are very much surprised when such technologies appear on a much less expensive mobile phone. In practical terms, this describes the line between a breakthrough design and a standard arrangement.



Presently, it is very fashionable but yet very unique for us to 'design out of the box'. Sometimes we are very aware of what the final outcome should be and sometimes it takes us many attempts to design something that will be accepted as practical and useful, but we rarely consider that design is a multidisciplinary field. In other words, one has to know quite a bit about building materials, engineering, climate, architecture and lifestyle to design a practical apartment building. On the other hand, involving many specialists in different fields almost always results in higher costs of production.

What we usually fail to consider is the core purpose of the particular item or building that we are designing. Contrary to most car designs today, a car should not consist of many parts but should instead serve its purpose with as little inconvenience as possible in terms of repairs. The term "sustainable design" aims to tackle that particular problem at its core by encouraging new approaches for achieving

greater practicality and functionality, in addition to more traditional aesthetic appeal concerns. In this article, we want to present such an approach to dealing with future challenges by applying this method.

Jacque Fresco, an industrial designer, inventor and social engineer, has provided a very thorough example of this. His lifework revolves around the concept of sustainable design and considers all physical aspects of human environment. In the mid-1940s, Fresco began working with Earl Muntz and Michael Shore, who employed Fresco to design a new low-cost form of modernistic housing. The result was one of the first all glass-aluminum structures, known as

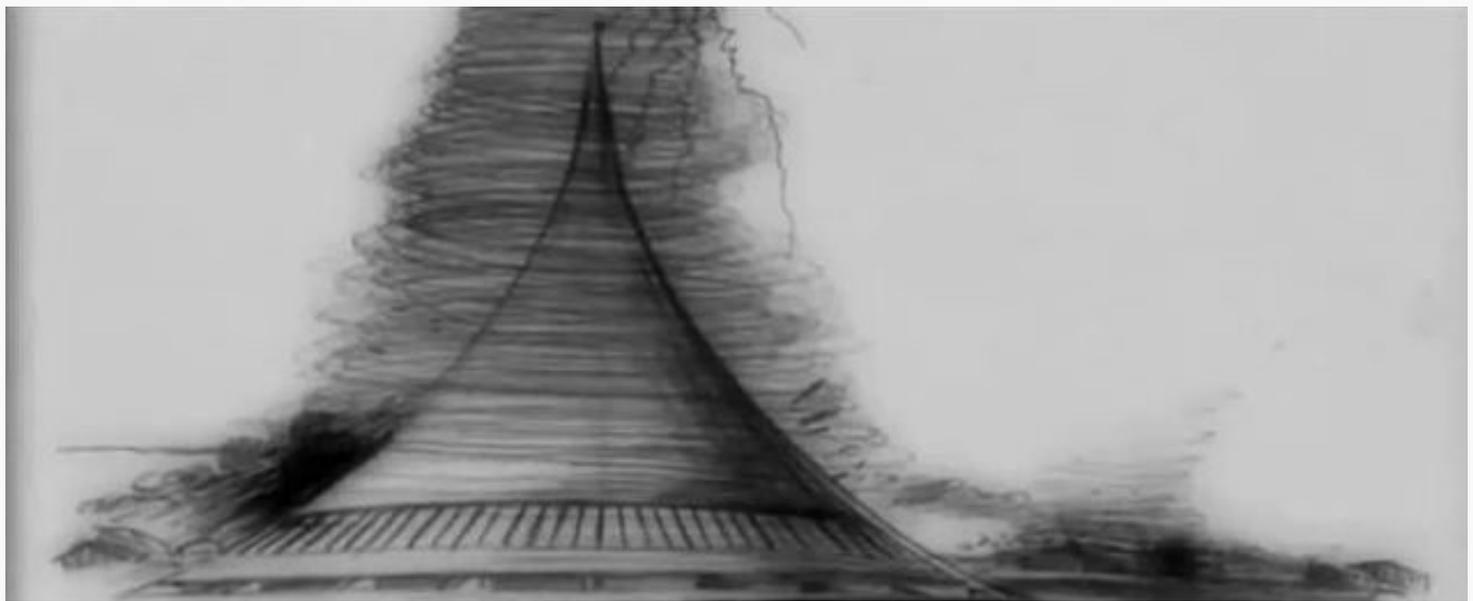
the "Trend Home", that could be erected by ten men in eight hours. Its design of lightweight, high-strength, and long-lasting materials allowed for reduced production costs and streamlined production which increased its economic viability. The structure was first exhibited in 1947 at Stage 8 of the Warner Brothers Sunset Boulevard. It would go on to attract over 20,000 visitors.

Such examples make us wonder what kind of possibilities do we have when we incorporate design and practicality. In terms of design, Fresco's vision extends to all aspects of physical and social human environment.



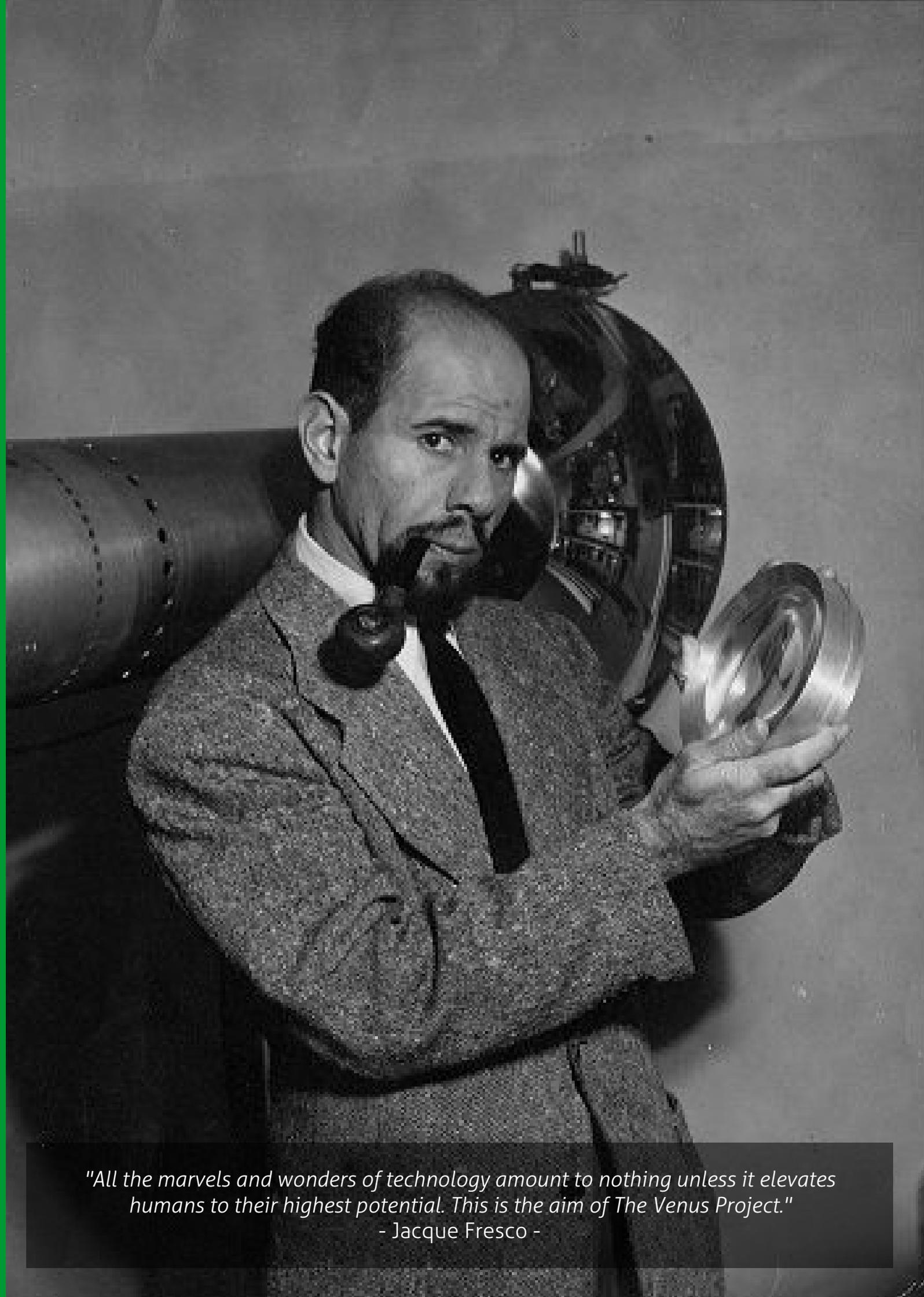
The whole bathroom is made in one unit. The water dispenser is a horizontal slit and the water flowing from it is already mixed with the ideal amount of soap and disinfectants. The drain water from the sink and the shower is sent directly into the water collection unit of the toilet.

It gets much more interesting when we consider natural phenomena. Today, all sorts of natural disasters threaten us. Earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes and tornadoes are some of the common natural threats that endanger our lives. Across the globe, there are many areas in different countries that suffer from constant presence of such disasters. It would be very convenient to be able to protect ourselves from such misfortunes but it would be really amazing if we can also use them for generating energy.



For example, there are areas that suffer from frequent tornadoes, but the same architecture as most other places is used, even though it has been proven ineffective. The picture above presents a facility in the shape of an inverted cone. The spinning forces of the tornado will surround the facility but will not be able to lift it due to physical laws. For energy generation, a turbine is installed on the top of the roof that will convert the vast spinning forces into electrical energy, providing power during blackouts.

Conclusively, design is also an educational tool that can be used in teaching simplicity. Albert Einstein once said "Make everything as simple as possible, but not simpler". We often falsely associate sophistication with complexity but we must understand that the world is only as complicated as we imagine it to be.



"All the marvels and wonders of technology amount to nothing unless it elevates humans to their highest potential. This is the aim of The Venus Project."

- Jacque Fresco -

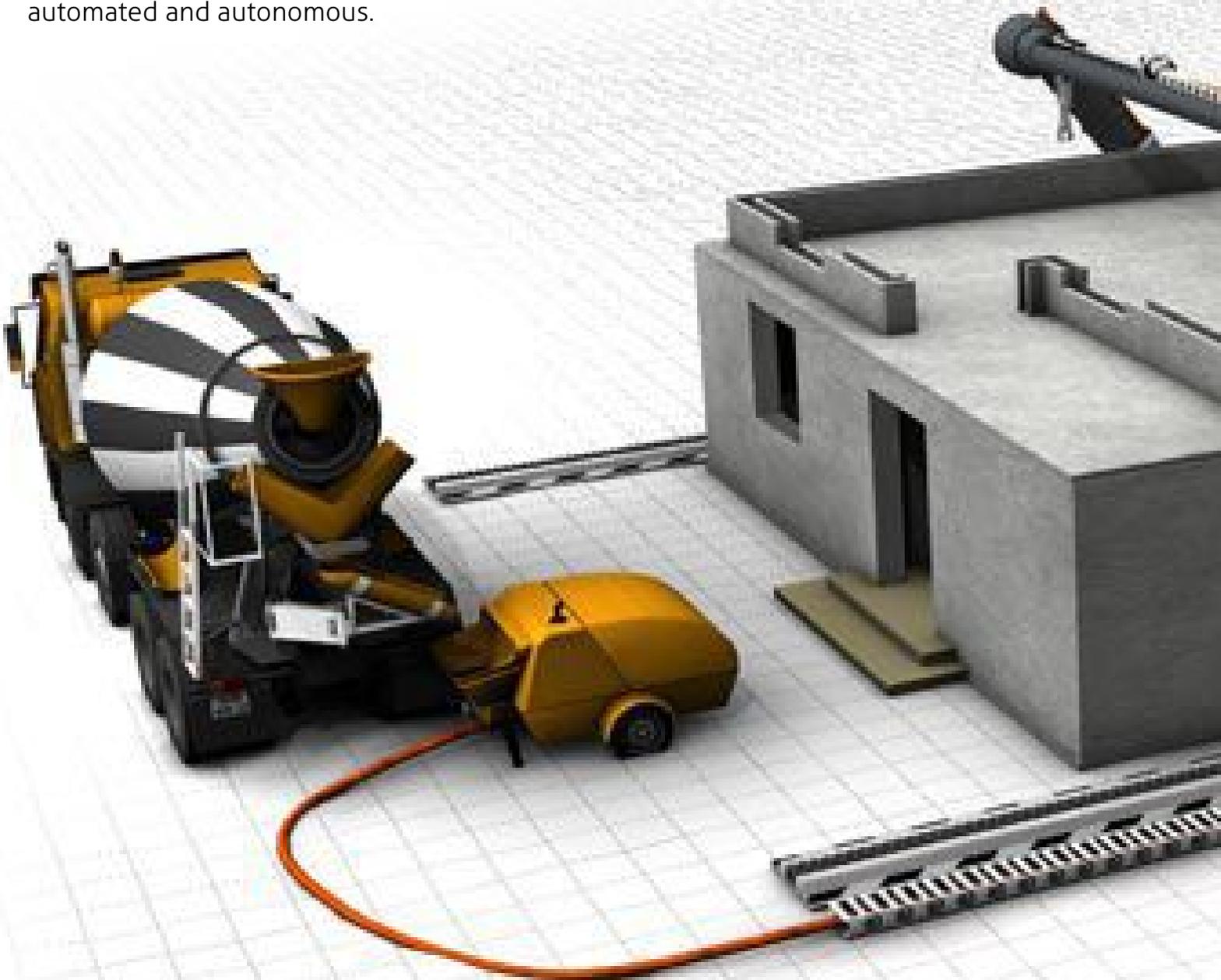
CREATING A SERIES OF ARTICLES TOGETHER

You don't have to be a tech fanatic these days to realize how fast technology is advancing. The internet spreads information about it faster and faster, reaching so many of us that it's already impossible to keep track of everything that is new. This is why I'm asking for your help.

We want to create a series of TVPMagazine articles about the most mind-blowing of these amazing new technologies to prove even more how the technological concepts behind The Venus Project can be achieved with today's technologies.

From flying robots that communicate with each other like a flock of birds do, to materials that are many times stronger than steel and super intelligent AI advancements, let's gather the best of the best and beautifully paint an image for others of how readily an automated and autonomous world can be achieved today.

Actually, that should be the main focus of the technologies we want to present: to be automated and autonomous.



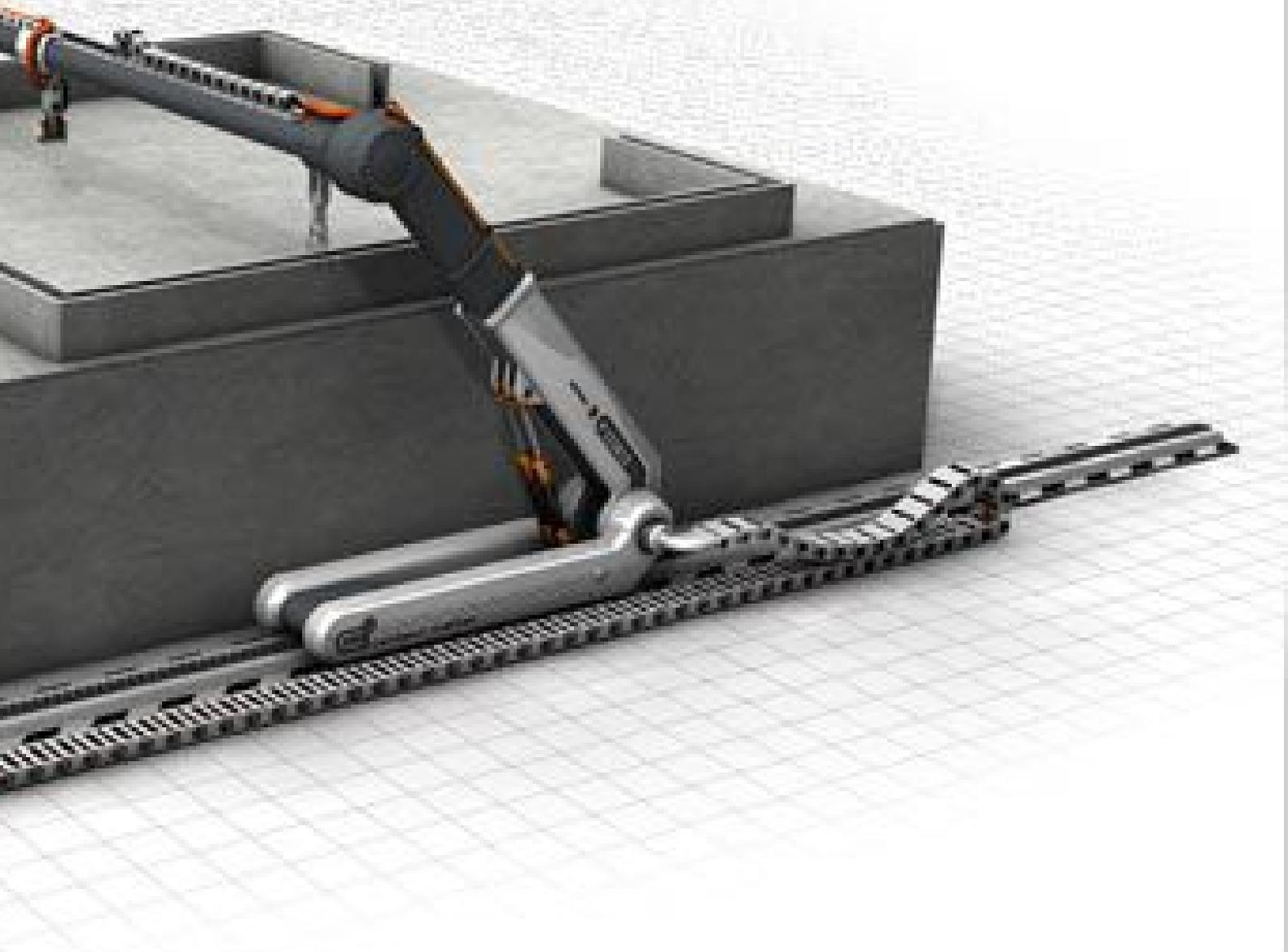
I divided the article topics into a few categories that will resemble TVP's categories regarding technology and then added a few more:

- City Systems (including cities in the sea)
- Housing
- Energy
- Construction and Materials
- Transportation
- Space (beyond and looking back)
- Production of Goods and Services
- Delivery Systems

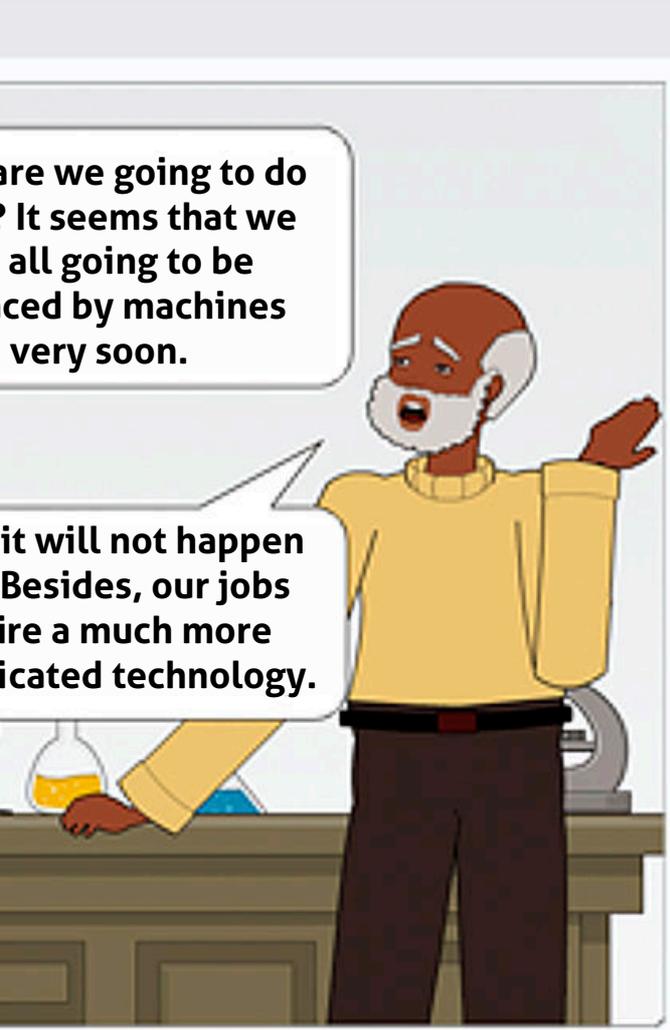
The first one to focus on will be CONSTRUCTION and MATERIALS. We need to find new, autonomous and automated methods that construct all kinds of buildings of different shapes and sizes. We need to show technologies that are already in use, or at least in a functional prototype stage. We also must show how, with the use of new materials, buildings can be made maintenance-free and much more reliable & resilient when it comes to natural disasters.

So help me out guys. Let's uncover the awesome new technologies that show how construction can be done autonomously and how materials can make buildings maintenance-free.

I created a spreadsheet, since it's the easiest method to get your input, but please focus only on construction systems.







are we going to do
? It seems that we
all going to be
ced by machines
very soon.

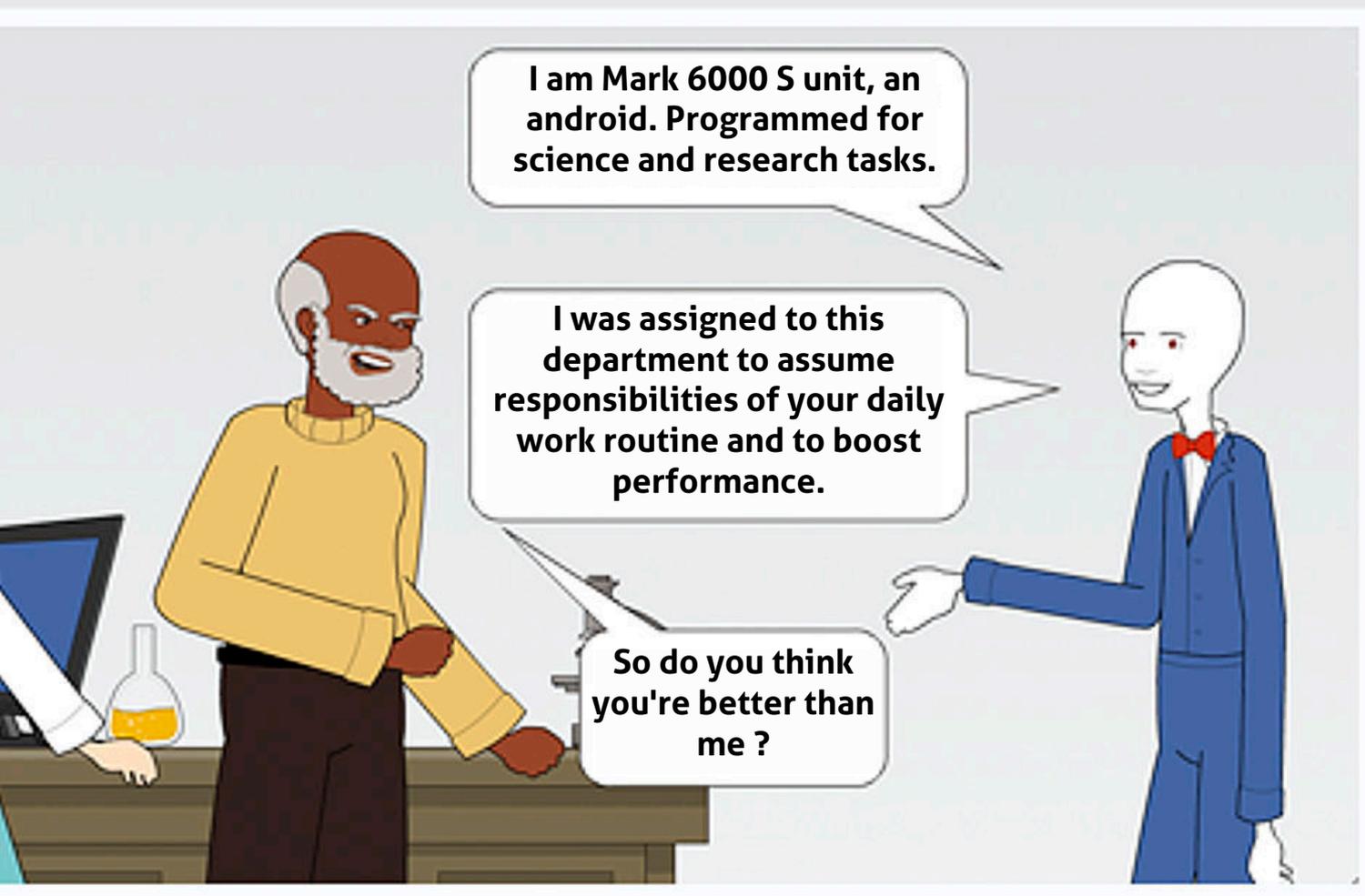
it will not happen
Besides, our jobs
ire a much more
licated technology.



I hope you're right
Dave!

Well, think about it
James. we
supervise more
than 60 people
here. Right now, A.
I. is not capable of
that...

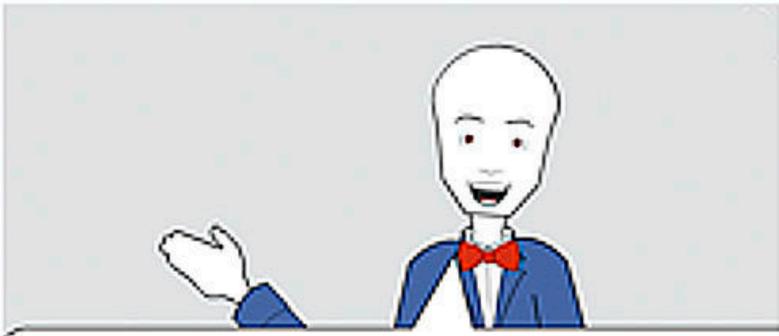
Hello!



I am Mark 6000 S unit, an
android. Programmed for
science and research tasks.

I was assigned to this
department to assume
responsibilities of your daily
work routine and to boost
performance.

So do you think
you're better than
me ?

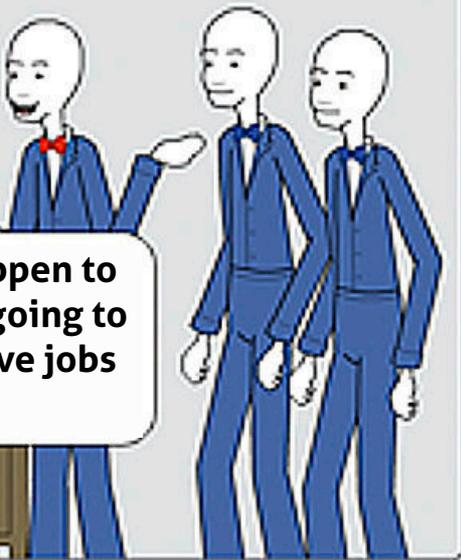


I am. For example: my hardware produces 135 EXA Floating-point Operations Per Second. I am also linked to the Central Cybernation System which allows me access to all current information, as well as, constant connection to other units like me. My power system allows me to operate at peak performance for 72 hours independently, and can be charged wirelessly. My body is composed of palladium alloys with a projected durability of over 1000 years. I don't require rest, food, medical care or vacations.

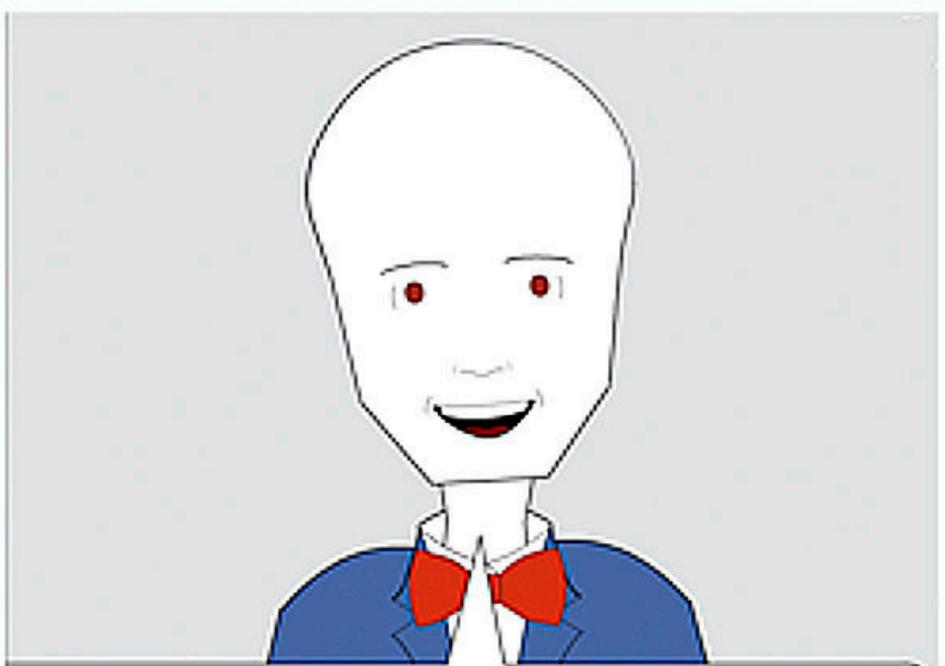
While we were talking, that in order to make obsolete, I need two mo replace all of the emplo in this department. An already here



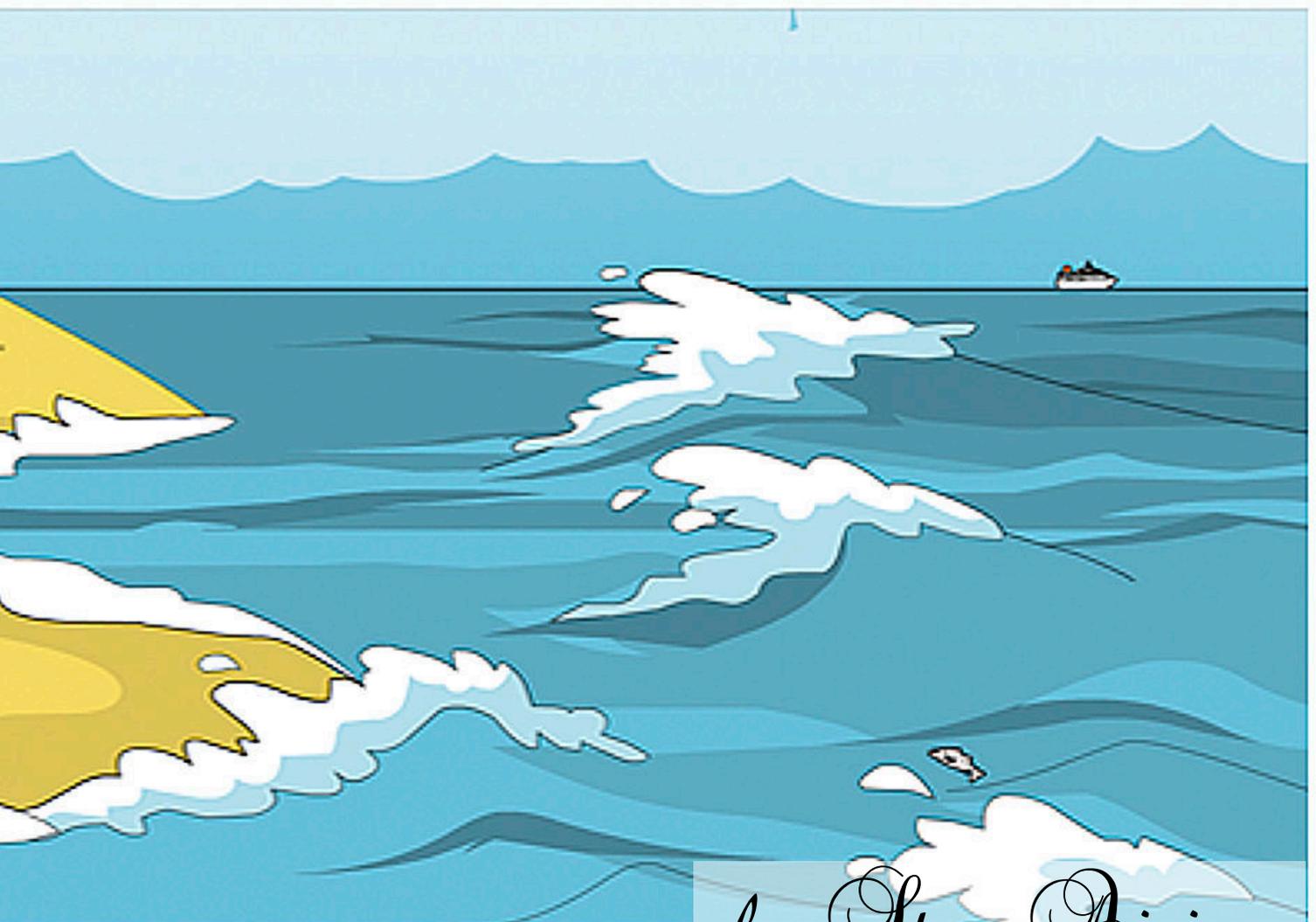
I estimated
your jobs
more units to
employed people
and they are



open to
going to
ve jobs



**Please don't worry mister Jones, Central
Cybernation is here to install an automated
economy which will provide you with goods and
services without money or manual labor. it is up to
you to decide what you are going to do with your
time.**



by Stan Aizin

TEDx

EXPERIENCE

by Sue Everatt



Mooching around the TED Talks website sometime back in february or march this year, I got the urge to see if there were any events planned for Spain. Sure enough, I found quite a few. Feeling quite enthusiastic and motivated, I decided to send off applications to see if I might be accepted to actually participate in one.

I applied for three in total. One in Madrid, one in Barcelona and one here on the island I live on, Mallorca. I wrote short but what I hoped were interesting emails stating my past experience in speaking in public and included a link to a video of the talk I gave a couple of years ago about Linguistic Team International (LTI).

I quickly received replies from all three applications and was delighted to see that all were interested in having a chat with me. Skype conferences were arranged and, although Barcelona and Mallorca came through, the Madrid chat strangely dropped off the map.

Barcelona eventually declined my application with a polite, somewhat formal reply but Mallorca went ahead and at the start of April I met the organizer, Miguel Plovins, for coffee.

I was immediately struck by the enthusiasm and energy that Miguel has and was excited to hear that he had already looked into the information I had sent about TVP and found it very interesting. He thought it would be a great topic to include in the event here and explained the strict rules and regulations TED insists upon the TEDx events adhering to. For example; speakers are not allowed to publicise businesses or companies, although it would be acceptable to mention Jacque's name and that he lives in Venus, Florida; images used in powerpoint presentations had to be original and not simply taken from Google images without some form of consent from the original owners; images cannot promote company logos, but it was ok to include something like "Courtesy of The Venus Project" or "Designs by Jacque Fresco"; and talks can last a maximum of 18 minutes.

We discussed the language I would speak in and it was decided that I would present my talk in English. As it turned out later, I would be the only one doing this, but Miguel was quite insistent that it would be best. He mentioned that talks in English seem to have better possibilities of later being uploaded to the international web. Of course, time will tell if it works out that way.

Miguel also explained that as it was the first time Mallorca would be hosting a TEDx event, they wouldn't be allowed to call it TEDx Mallorca until a second time. That's why it was called TEDx Passeig des Born, named after a very central street in the island's capital, Palma. I was one of the first candidates to have applied to participate and he was keen to contact other people he found interesting here on the island. He spoke to me about some of the sponsors they had already confirmed and also about where the venue would be if all went well. As it turned out, he did achieve the place he wanted and the event was held in the CaixaForum, an old hotel in the heart of Palma which was bought by the bank La Caixa and turned into a cultural centre some years ago.



As we ended our meeting he asked me to send a brief presentation of what I would talk about. This I did using "Prezi" and sent a simple 3 slide presentation with the very basic outlines of what occurred to me would be eye catching and thought provoking to show. Just a few days after sending him this, he mailed me back saying that he and the other organizers would be very happy to have me on board. My acceptance for TEDx Passeig des Born was now official!

Then began the actual creation of what I was going to say. Oh myyyyyy! Trying to fit 70 years of Jacque Fresco's life's work into 18 minutes is NOT an easy task. I would carry bits of paper and a pen with me wherever I went so as to be able to jot down inspirational ideas whenever they came to me. My computer desk became littered with scraps of paper, as well as mugs of tea and an overflowing ashtray. I got into the habit of re-reading everything I had already written before starting to add more and I think this helped me with the memorization process. It took many hours of editing, moving paragraphs around into blocks of related topics, cutting bits out, rewriting parts, etc.. It also took hours of consulting the website and videos for ideas and confirmation that I was going to present something correctly. The final text and powerpoint was eventually run past Roxanne and Jacque before confirming it 100%.

The process of preparing the powerpoint was one of the most rewarding experiences! With the help of Zaven, who coordinates TVP Media's Graphics Department, we put out a call on Facebook for people with graphic design talents to help create original images for the talk and the response was marvellous. (I must here make a short apology to 4 people who contacted me through FB privately but their messages went to "others" and I didn't see them until the powerpoint was already finished. I hope they saw my belated replies!)

Marcie and Stewart in the US, Domenico and Beniamino and his wife in Italy, Mauro in Argentina, Jimmy in Sweden, Ben in the Uk and Zaven in Lebanon, all got together in a skype group chat with me and began to take the ideas that I had in my head and convert them into awesome images. I was fascinated by how they were able to do this, some by graphic design, some by hand. The two rough pencil sketches I had made to try and describe what I had in mind for two particular topics looked sadly pathetic next to the wonderful creations these people produced!

Gradually, things were falling into place.

Miguel from TEDx was in frequent email contact with all the speakers, sending us links to the website and Facebook page they had created for the event. He would give us the 'heads up' when a new speaker was confirmed, or when a new sponsor or volunteer for the organization team was added. He also asked me for a photo and biography. Never having written a bio for myself before, it felt extremely odd writing in third person as though it was for someone else! What was eventually put on the web was not what I had written either, although it was pretty good and I'm not complaining. :D



The great day grew closer, as they say, and I took to practising my talk wherever and whenever I could. Walking the dogs or driving along the motorway were two of my most usual practise moments, although neither was really satisfactory. I would be interrupted by other dog walkers and have to shut up or risk looking like I was talking to myself, or the traffic would demand more attention which would throw me off and make me lose my line of thought. Plus, I always seemed to arrive at my destination before I'd been all the way through the full 18 minutes! The best rehearsal moments were at work. As a receptionist in a medical centre, which wasn't very busy at the time, I would take the opportunity when I was alone in the centre to close the door to the street. I'd go to the back surgery room where I couldn't be seen from the street. The front door makes a loud scraping noise when opened, so I would be warned if anyone came in. Using the remote control for the air-con to practise when to change slides through the powerpoint, I would rehearse and rehearse and rehearse. I was working the morning of the day before the actual talk, and my colleague served as a guinea pig while I presented her my talk, for the first time 100% without a paper in my hand!

The evening before the event, all the speakers and sponsors were invited to a get-together buffet in a wonderful hotel in the center of the old part of Palma capital. It was an ideal ambience for breaking the ice, and also networking. People gave snippets of ideas of what they would talk about the following day in conversations that flowed and moved round the room. Business cards were exchanged (I was glad I had some TVP cards ready!). As we had to be at the venue at 9am the next day, no one stayed too long and I personally was at home by 22.30!

And, as they say in all story books....The Day Dawned.

This was it! This was the day that I opened my eyes and said... no more waiting. Get up and go for it Sue! I had made sure that I got up with time enough to walk my dogs, have a coffee in a cafeteria that serves early birds like me, showered, did my hair... you know the routine. You want to look good but not starchy... It's hard to know what to wear, so I just went as 'me' in the end. What else is there to do?

Being disgustingly early, I was able to park not too far away from where the event was being held and grabbed a taxi for just a few euros to take me to the door of La Caixa Forum.

Breakfast was at the point of being served and the tables were all beautifully prepared with goodies. Once again, sponsors and speakers met and greeted each other. After the previous night, there was already a feeling of camaraderie.

I managed to sneak away and found an isolated spot amongst the maze of passageways these old buildings have, and practised. "One last time", I told myself. I tried to imagine being on the stage... Then I decided to nip downstairs and see if the actual auditorium was empty. Well, it wasn't empty, but as near as, so I hopped up onto the stage and had my own private dress rehearsal ;)

The doors at the back of the theater opened and people began to enter. These were the people who had actually paid to come in! It was quite a sobering thought to think that in a way people were paying to see and hear someone like me talking. Then my ego stepped down and I remembered I wasn't the only speaker that day :D

People I knew and hadn't seen for years were coming in and it was wonderful to see them interested. Some had come because they had already heard about TVP and were interested in knowing more!

The lights were lowered and Miguel strode up onto the stage. He gave a brief chat to welcome us all and present the coordinator for Europe of the TEDx talks, Antonia Broglia. Antonia gave a dynamic presentation of TEDx and then gave way to the first talk.

While I felt I was gaining so much from it, the hours were flying by quickly. Enriching talks by the other speakers were mixed with videos of TED talks from other international events, a magician who did some card tricks and a trio of comedians who did some improvising on stage that had us all rolling in our chairs laughing.

A mid-morning break with coffee upstairs provided the chance for a welcome leg stretch. A photographer asked us, in turn, to stand in front of a panel with the sponsors names all over, exactly like famous people do at big events. That seemed almost surreal to me. I had my photo taken together with Txetxo, my 'fellow' long-time TVP team member here on the island.

Back to more talks and then lunch. Another buffet style spread with some traditional Mallorcan and Spanish food such as empanadas, jamón serrano, mallorcan cheese... yum! Of course, more networking took place and then it was back to the theatre for the last round of talks. I was to be the last one, a position I had actually requested as I thought it would give me the chance to explain how a Resource-Based Economy would encompass all the ideas we had heard through the rest of the day. The talk just before mine was from the head of pediatrics in a local hospital who visits Chad every year to help children there. His talk was heartbreaking and the final image on the screen of a dead baby, wrapped in a cloth and laying on a weighing scale, had everybody with tears in their eyes. At the same time as I was affected by the image, I was also thinking how on earth was I going to follow that, especially since I was to start my talk with singing! Fortunately, there was a video in between us which solved that problem.

So, here it was - the moment for which I'd been preparing for months. As I stepped out onto the stage, I felt not only the eyes of the audience present on me, but also the eyes of those I knew would be watching the video later. At last, I was about to introduce the ideas of a Resource-Based Economy to a lot of people already interested in changing the World and it was a mixture of butterflies in my tummy and joy to have the opportunity.

I thoroughly enjoyed myself as I went through the talk, forgetting just a couple of things... and no...I'm not going to say what they were! :D 18 minutes zoomed past. There was a volunteer helper sitting in the front row with a large digital clock to let us know how long we had left. I could see I was making good time and felt confident I wasn't going to go over... at least not by too much. It was also a huge kick to see the custom images on the big screen and I felt that the work that had gone into them was definitely well worth it. (Once again I have to say a huge thank you to the team!)

And then it was over... finished... done. I'd been there, done it and got the t-shirt as they say. Miguel came up on stage and made a final speech to thank everyone and then brought all the volunteer helpers up on stage. They had done a great job between them and had been extremely helpful and attentive towards the speakers.

An after-event party had been organised in the hotel from the evening before. Speakers, sponsors and audience were all invited for mojitos (a Cuban drink) on the deck of the hotel (the roof terrace) and it was our last chance for networking. This was one of the most delightful moments for me as there were a good number of people who said how they had found the ideas of a Resource-Based Economy interesting, while some already knew about it. There was also interest in me doing more talks; one for a local newspaper club, which has already happened, and an invitation to speak to a group of economists and businessmen! This still has to be settled as the organiser is currently travelling as I write and will contact me when he gets back to the island. There was a 3rd invitation, but this still has to be confirmed.

More business cards were given out, emails exchanged between those with no cards, the mojitos finished and slowly people began to drift away toward home. I'm sure everyone took with them the memory of a wonderful experience and the wish to repeat it again next year.



Photo taken after the event. I am talking with one of the other speakers here. He did a talk about a water filtering system that is very RBE style. He is also the newspaper reporter who invited me to talk about TVP in the local newspaper club.



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MY VISIT TO VENUS

by Zacharias Voulgaris

About a year ago I learned about a very interesting man called Jacques Fresco who has some interesting ideas about society and the role of technology in it for the betterment of humanity. In the documentary I watched with my girlfriend at the time, it portrayed this man as an inventor and designer with some very futuristic ideas about society, with a strong focus on the sustainability aspect of the notions promoted by him. All this is organized in what is known for the past 30+ years as The Venus Project (TVP) in central Florida, an organization that focuses on materializing the ideas of its founder and making them more widely known through talks, books, DVDs, and a website.

Although Jacques Fresco does not have any credentials or affiliations with prestigious organizations, he has been trying for the past 3-4 decades to make his ideas more popular through an educational approach and his very approachable style. Today I had the chance to meet him in person and ask him various questions. The whole conversation was not easy as at his advanced age (97) he has hearing difficulties, even with the hearing aids he wears. Yet, his frail body doesn't deter him and continues to interact regularly with people from all over the world who come to visit him through the tours that he and his collaborators organize. Note that everyone in TVP is a volunteer and although there is a substantial fee for each tour (which lasts 5 hours or so), it is well worth it. Also the fact that there are people around the world who volunteer to spread Jacques Fresco's message attests to the fact that his ideas are appealing to all kinds of people.

The ideas that Jacques Fresco champions have to do with the engineering of a new society, comprising of hi-tech cities where automation has been incorporated in every aspect of the society in an eco-friendly manner. He envisions symmetric cities that

are designed with both elegance and functionality (he stresses the latter a lot). He also describes the technical aspects of these cities and how specific technologies play a role in the construction of their modules and the components of these modules. Yet, he doesn't go too much into the engineering details that may bore some people, since he wants to appeal to as many people as possible (for example, in the tour I participated in there were educators and students from Mexico and a lady from Sweden).

The philosophy behind TVP is very similar to that of other futurists, including that of John Lennon who popularized it through his famous song "Imagine". Jacques Fresco does however take a stance that may frustrate or even aggravate some people who are used to correlating idealists with saints or exceptional individuals like Mahatma Gandhi. So if you expect this man to be the next Nelson Mandela, you may get disappointed. If you however see in him the legacy of Nikola Tesla and other inventors who aimed to solve technological problems for the betterment of humanity, then you may appreciate him and enjoy a visit to this intriguing place.

My take-away from the whole experience was the following: develop a more scientific perception of things and try to rely more on facts that are based on an empirical, yet not strictly materialistic approach to life, without any fear of ignorance (in fact, admitting ignorance is something essential before setting off to explore a phenomenon and the principles behind it). And although I wouldn't urge anyone to quit their day job to volunteer in this organization, I saw a lot of hope in the words and example of this man, who despite his not-so-tactful verbal expressions he may have more actionable and useful information to offer to the world than any other scientist or engineer I have encountered so far.

Jacque Fresco's Humanitarian Aspect

In my previous post I described my personal experience from my visit to Jacques Fresco's place, aka The Venus Project (TVP), and highlighted some of the things that appeared most interesting to me and the other visitors of the place. In this post I'll describe his non-technical ideas, since just like Nikola Tesla, he is more than an engineer/inventor.

Jacques Fresco is first and above all a humanitarian, very much like the idealistic futurists that describe the great world that awaits us in the years to come. However, his approach is more pragmatic and based on specific concrete values that exist in our world today. I need to stress this point: he is not an armchair philosopher / idealist who dreams of a great place in the future. He is a pragmatic individual who creates the blueprints for that great world and bases them on principles of science and nature (two things that are inherently related for him).

This humanitarian's ideology is akin to Plato's and Descartes', taking the best of both and combining that with the beliefs of others, as well as his own, always making sure that the stuff that he champions are of the highest veracity. With the commitment and idealism of Nelson Mandela and the enthusiasm and charisma of Prof. Brian Greene, he reminds us of things we have heard of but never really paid adequate attention to, as we are often overloaded with information.

Jacques Fresco doesn't stay on the ideas level only though. When he says that we shouldn't be racists and that we should all

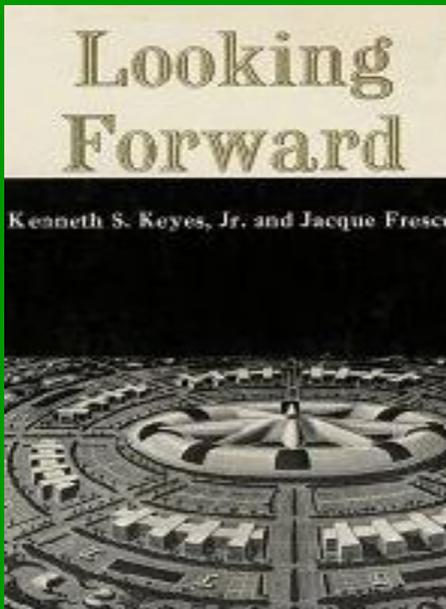
be equal in some aspects (e.g. have equal opportunities to education, equal access to healthcare, etc.) he also explains why, in a way that resembles the proof of a math theorem. He makes good use of logic in explaining everything he believes in, without getting lost in technicalities or becoming overwhelmed by the power of the techniques he uses (like many mathematicians, especially those in academia). That's not to say that other humanitarians were not great. His work is complementary to theirs, while his contribution to the zeitgeist of our times is providing a pragmatic and easy to understand foundation for all the lofty ideas he puts forward.

Some people would say that he is like a Leonardo Da Vinci of our time. I would disagree. Da Vinci, although brilliant, was a failure when it came to making ends meet, which is why he had to settle with all kinds of gigs to sustain himself (the last gig of which proved fatal for him, as it entailed moving to a Scandinavian country and deal with a climate that was not agreeable with his organism). Jacques Fresco is more like Michelangelo, an artist and engineer (if you investigate the logistics of the Sistine Chapel project, you'll discover that he did more than just paint there, as all the scaffolding was his own design too).

Just like the great Renaissance Homo Universalis, he knew how to make a living, without compromising his ideals. Perhaps, just like Michelangelo, he will one day be remembered for his legacy, that brings higher ideas to all of us common mortals, just like a modern Prometheus.



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