

THE FUTURE LOOKS LIKE THIS

These renderings may look like something out of a sci-fi movie, but if their designers have their way, these might well be a reality in a matter of years

BY SASHA GONZALES



Solar helium balloons

VERTICAL + HORIZONTAL FARM TOWER

By Kevin Chu of FabLab

In the future, city-dwellers might not have to go far to experience life on a farm. "Farming is generally looked down upon as low-paid and labour-intensive. This is why more and more rural youths are leaving their homes for higher-paid, less physical jobs in the cities. By 2050, nearly 80 percent of the world's population will reside in urban centres," says architect Chu, who describes his design as the essence of 21st-century agriculture. "With my Vertical + Horizontal Farm Tower, which uses London as a base city, I wanted to bring farming to the city and make it cool again."

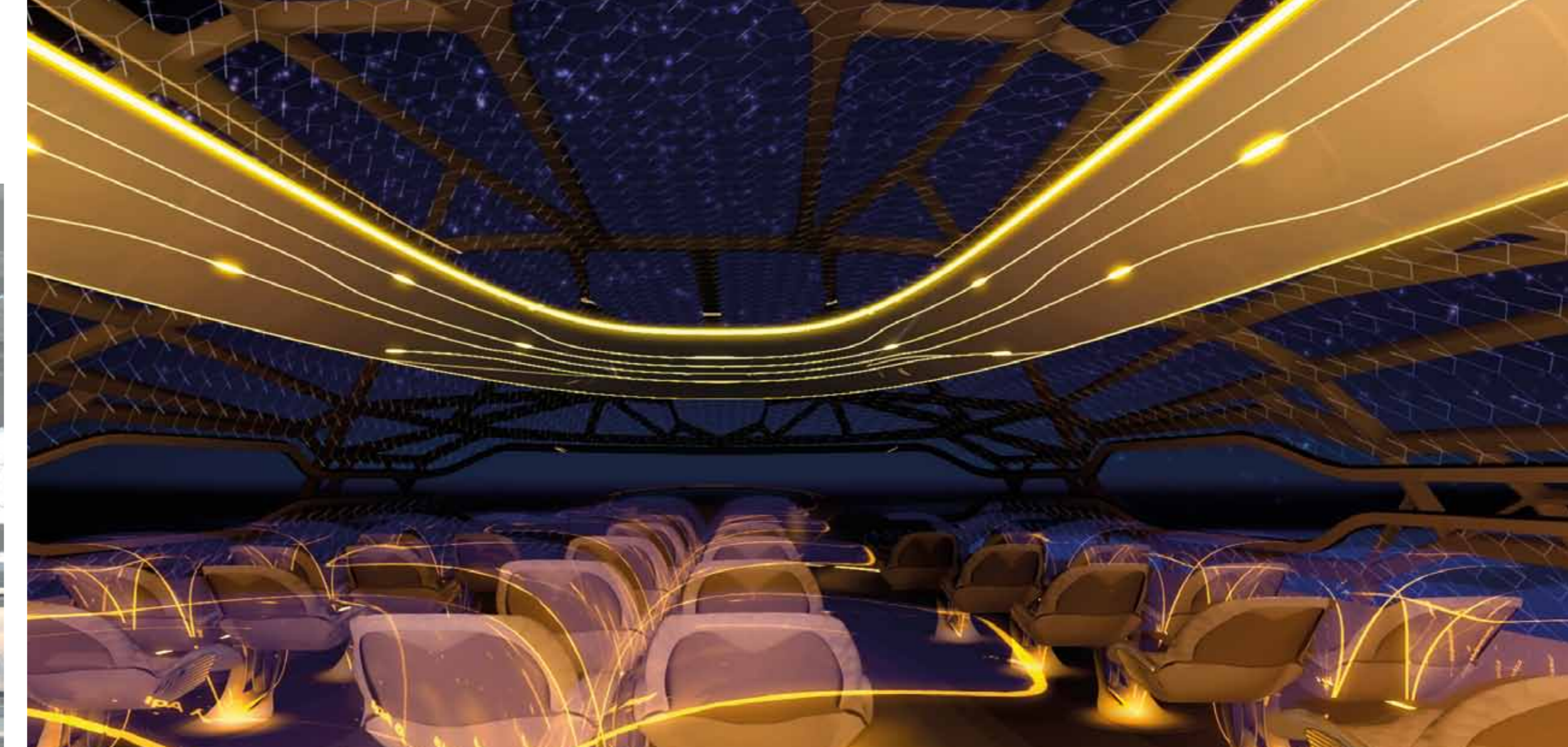
Chu, who is from Hong Kong, insists that today's environmentally friendly buildings do not do enough for their surroundings. They are self-sufficient and that's about it. His residential and farming tower, on the other hand, is designed to benefit the environment in several ways: By serving as an education and experimental laboratory on agriculture, creating renewable energy through its dragonfly-inspired rotating wings and solar helium balloons, acting as a green

zone by way of its plant-covered facade, and giving urbanites access to fresher agricultural products.

The farms sit on the protruded wings. Each wing farm can rotate 360° from the central axis in order to gain maximum sun exposure throughout the day, and underneath this wing, storage cocoons gather crops from the farmland above. "The cocoons are actually robots that utilise a VTOL (vertical take-off and landing) propulsion rotary engine. Once each cocoon is full, it can be guided around London for crop distribution using GPS (Global Positioning System) technology," Chu says of his award-winning design.

Chu's vision is still some time away from materialising, but environmental groups have already expressed an interest in incorporating some of his ideas into other buildings. "As an architect in the 21st century, it's my job to think about what a building can do for a city, instead of the other way around."

www.fablab1.com



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AIRBUS CONCEPT PLANE

By Airbus

Airbus's "plane of 2050" concept revolves around a see-through cabin with a plant-based wall membrane, personalised zones for relaxation, work and games, seats that mould to passengers' bodies, and an automatic bag-loading system. Many of these innovations — the result of evolving passenger trends and environmental demands — are still an engineer's dream (although some are currently in the development stage) but they will no doubt change the way we travel, if and when they come to fruition.

The partially transparent bionic shell offers panoramic views from the sides and front of the aircraft. Once settled in their ergonomic seats, travellers will hardly be aware that they are thousands of feet above ground, thanks to the unique cabin experience. Instead of economy and first-class sections, the cabin will be sectioned into areas according to function — the front for relaxation (where travellers will breathe in vitamin-enriched air and enjoy aromatherapy and mood lighting) the back for work and video conferencing, and the centre for socialising and interactive activities, like virtual golf and computer games that will be played via holographic pop-up displays.

The star-gazing plane is envisioned to function almost intuitively, identifying and responding to travellers' needs. The "intelligent" wall, for example, can control the air temperature, the seats can harness body heat to power the cabin features, and the aircraft's bionic shell provides strength where it is needed. And the magic doesn't stop there. The futuristic aircraft is also envisioned to have long, slim wings and a U-shaped tail for a smoother, more efficient flight.

How closely the airline will resemble its CGI renderings remains to be seen, but one thing is for sure — when this flight of fantasy finally takes off, there will be no battling for a window seat.

www.airbus.com





DUEL IOOM SUPERYACHT

By Alex McDiarmid of McDiarmid Design

This futuristic superyacht gets its inspiration from the past – specifically, the handcrafted duelling pistols that were used in combat between the 11th and 20th centuries, and in particular, the intricate 17th to 19th-century European versions. “I love visiting antique stores, auctions and markets. It’s an incredible opportunity to see the work of the master craftsmen of a bygone era,” says McDiarmid, who was born in London but now lives in France, where he heads a talented design team. “Back then, master gun makers and engravers displayed their craft, producing firearms through their metal work. These beautiful objects, with their inlaid precious stones and their

decorative polished woods and veneers, mixed the highest standards of craftsmanship and machine shop abilities of the times to give the owner a very personal product. In this regard, it is not unlike owning a yacht.”

McDiarmid is not a naval architect, but he is passionate about the yacht-building process and understands what owners of superyachts want. And although the yachting community is largely conservative, he believes that, in years to come, it will start to become more accepting of revolutionary designs like his. “People are split between two camps — those who are bored with traditional, white, tiered-wedding-cake yacht designs and those who are sceptical about

new concepts,” he explains. “Standout designs, that reflect the personalities of their commissioning owners, are catching on. Radical styling is still the exception rather than the rule, but with the economic recovery we will see a new generation of superyacht owners who will be more *avant garde* in their tastes. New materials and ever-advancing technology are also changing the game. Exterior yacht design allows me to combine art and science and blend fantasy with reality. We have the future to discover and if you cannot imagine it, you cannot build it.”

www.mcdiarmid-design.com



GALAXION

By Daniel Simon of Cosmic Motors

"The Cosmic Motors Galaxion is not a serious suggestion for future transport. It is part of a fantasy story set in a parallel universe, a universe with different limitations. Scale is not one of them. So I designed a Coupe that tickles our weakness for elegant shapes, organic flow and scale," says Simon, a passionate car designer who is deeply fascinated with speed, history and futurism.

With its glass-covered wheels and a glass-covered power train, Simon's Galaxion evokes memories of a streamline decade long gone. The dramatic scissor door reveals not only the interior, but also a luggage compartment in the doors.

Simon, who is also author of the fantasy book *Cosmic Motors*, certainly knows a thing or two about cars. He was previously a designer for Volkswagen and Bugatti, where he dreamt up vehicles of the future. In 2008, he moved to Hollywood where he designed advanced vehicles for movies. He was responsible for

many of the machines featured in the Disney film, *Tron: Legacy* and is currently working on designs for the next Tom Cruise movie, *Oblivion*. This year, he will be launching a limited-edition motorcycle for the luxury market. "We all need to move. We associate standing still with rest or no progress. And to move fast or far we need mechanical support — a vehicle. The combination of mechanical fantasies I have and the emotions that result from thinking of places to go create very powerful dreams. And I love to recreate those dreams," he says, in explaining his obsession with cars.

Simon's company, Cosmic Motors is his "emotional escape" from the thoughts he has about sustainability and the future of the planet. "We as designers have the job to saturate society with ideas and images of a happy future." ■

danielsimon.com

