

Preferable Worlds: Design and Alternative Futures

Preferable Worlds

1972

Jorge Camacho



The Blue Marvel - Photo by NASA (1972)





Preferable Worlds

**Look back
to look forward**

Jorge Camacho

**Go back at least twice
as far as we want to
look forward.**

Preferable Worlds

2050

Jorge Camacho

Preferable Worlds

Agenda —



- Futures of Design

- Challenges, Opportunities and Responsibilities

- Design Futures

- *The Great Imagination: Histories of the Future*

The Great Imagination Histories of the Future

**Today, our culture is
full of images like
these...**



The Last of Us — Craig Mazin y Neil Druckmann (2023)



The Handmaid's Tale - Bruce Miller (2017)



Black Mirror - Charlie Brooker (2017)

**Have we always imagined, as we do
now, radically different futures?**

**How has our idea of the future
changed at different historical
moments?**

LA

GRAN

IMAGINACIÓN

HISTO
RIAS
DEL

FU
TU
RO



James Dator

“For most of human history humans lived in societies where there was very little social or environmental change. Past, present, and future seemed exactly the same.”

— James Dator



We have to jump to the second half of the 18th century to find the first images of the future.



L'An Deux Mille - Louis Sebastien Mercier (1771)

From then on, and particularly from the 19th century onwards, stories with images of the future began to increase in quantity and quality.



Document historique
Chemin de fer de Paris
Action définitive



Calendrier
Illustrations



Illustration
Globe central



Illustration
Scène circulaire



Titre du livre
Auteur



Titre du livre
Auteur



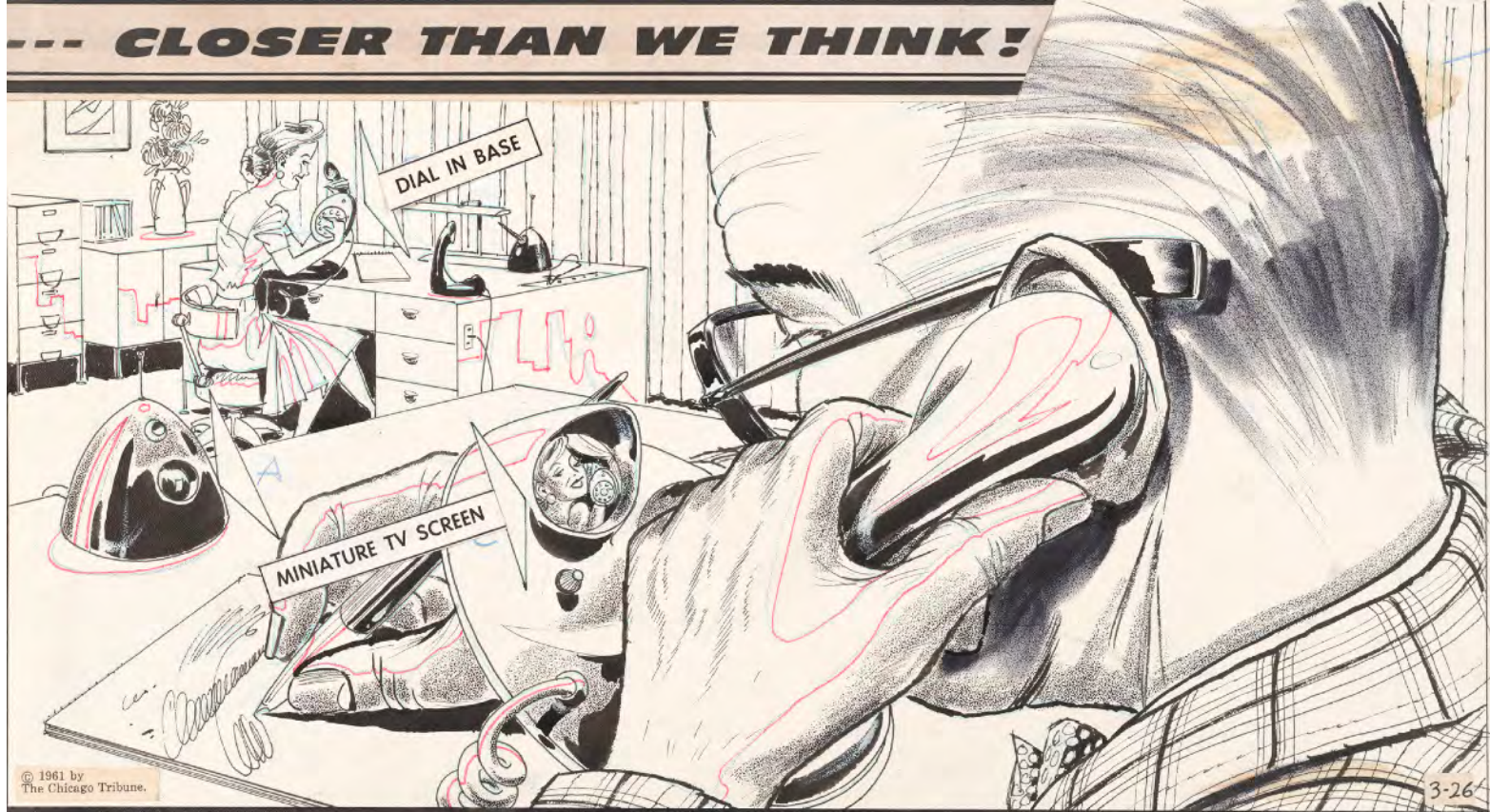
Titre du livre
Auteur



Titre du livre
Auteur



Calendrier



THE VISAPHONE

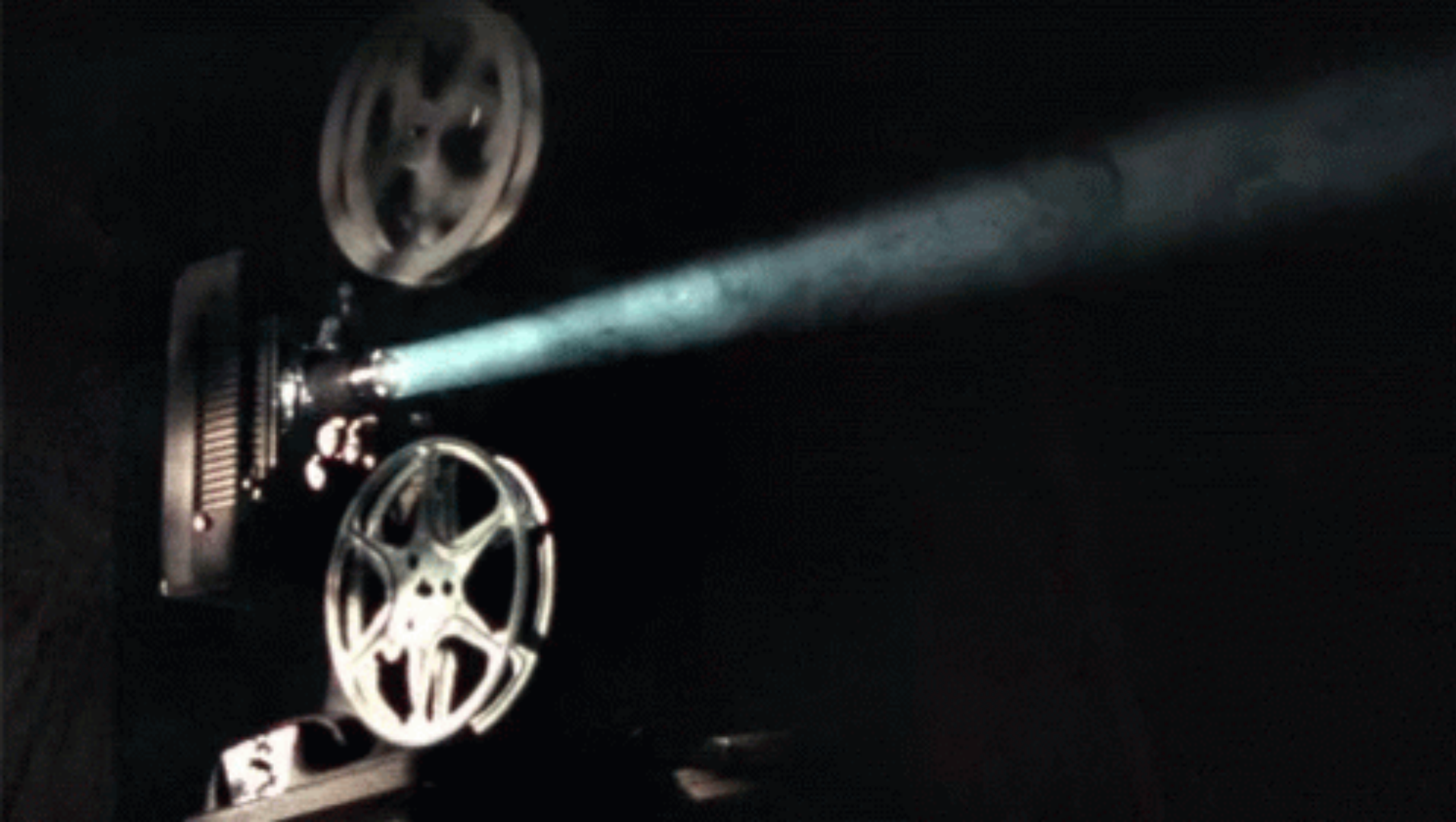
It won't be long before you'll be able to see as well as hear the person you're phoning. Recent Bell Telephone Lab patents point the way—and here's how it might work:

A picture screen about the size of a

silver dollar would be mounted on the phone stand, and a small portable camera, similar to those used in today's television, would be aimed at you—or anywhere in the room. As soon as you dialed your number and got an answer, your picture would be transmitted along the

wires, together with your voice; and of course you'd receive a picture from the other end, also. Either party would be able to switch off the image transmission if he desired; or either could avoid being pictured simply by leaning out of range of the camera.

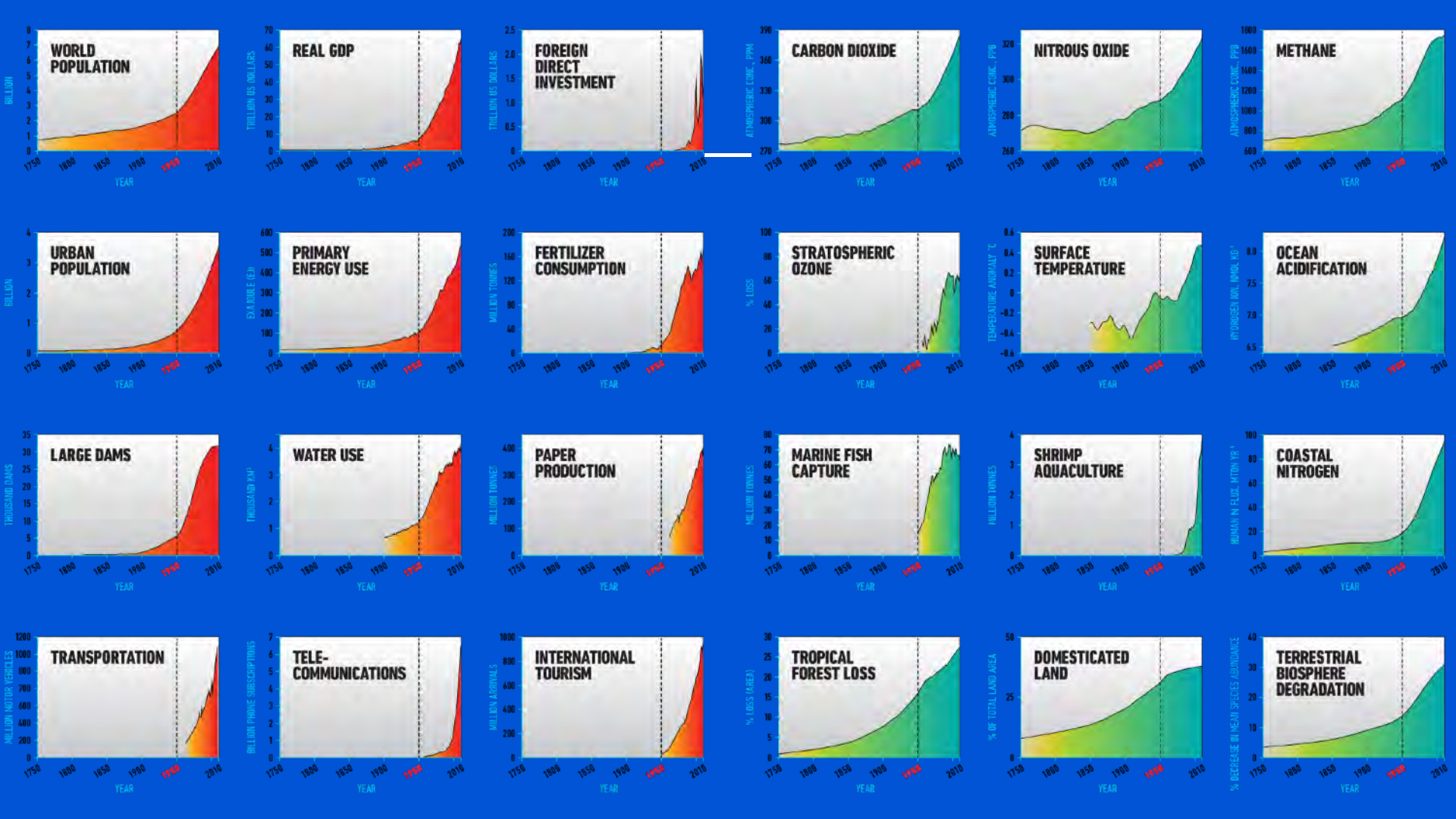
**What happened in that period?
Why does this interest in the
future explode?**



Preferable Worlds

The Great Acceleration

Jorge Camacho



LA GRAN ACCELERACIÓN

El mundo está cambiando a una velocidad sin precedentes. Desde la revolución digital hasta la crisis climática, los cambios se suceden a un ritmo vertiginoso. Este panel de gráficos ilustra cómo la Gran Aceleración ha transformado nuestra sociedad y el planeta en un tiempo récord.



LA GRAN IMAGINACIÓN

El mundo está cambiando a una velocidad sin precedentes. Desde la revolución digital hasta la crisis climática, los cambios se suceden a un ritmo vertiginoso. Este panel de gráficos ilustra cómo la Gran Aceleración ha transformado nuestra sociedad y el planeta en un tiempo récord.

El mundo está cambiando a una velocidad sin precedentes. Desde la revolución digital hasta la crisis climática, los cambios se suceden a un ritmo vertiginoso. Este panel de gráficos ilustra cómo la Gran Aceleración ha transformado nuestra sociedad y el planeta en un tiempo récord.

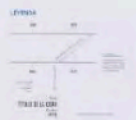
Gráficos de la Gran Aceleración - Prodigioso Volcán (2021)

Echoing the 'Great Acceleration' we can speak of a 'Great Imagination' that, like a feedback loop, accelerates from the 18th century to the present.

PROYECCION DE FUTURO

1830 1840 1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 2020 2030 2040 2050 2060 2070

FECHA DE PUBLICACION



1850

1850

2021

2021

Cronología del Futuro – Prodigioso Volcán (2021)

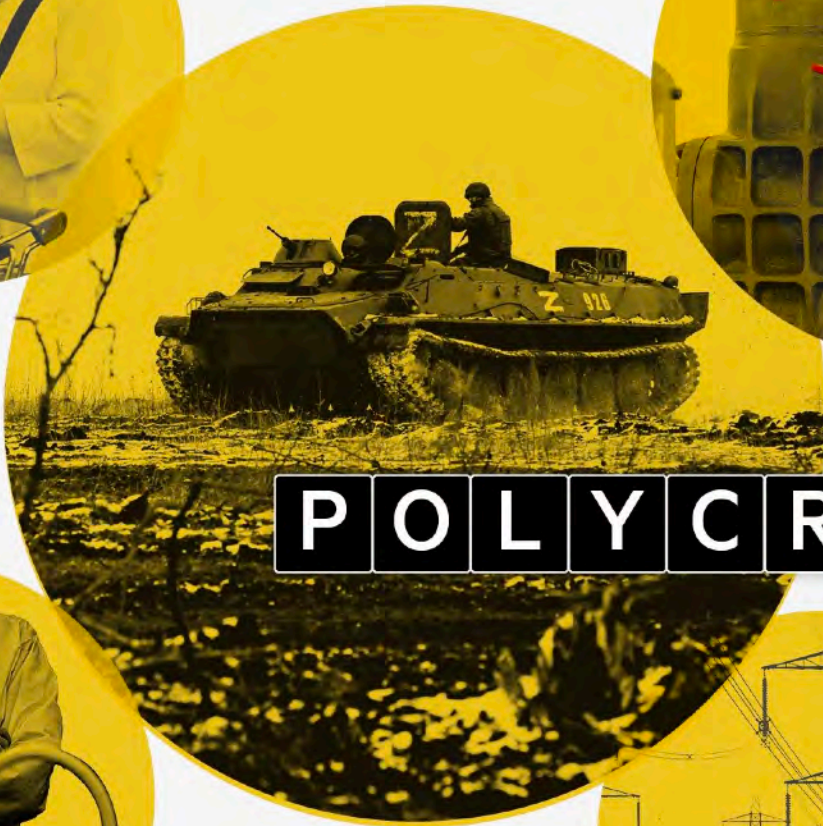
Preferable Worlds

Now what?

Jorge Camacho



Foto de Hu Chen en Unsplash



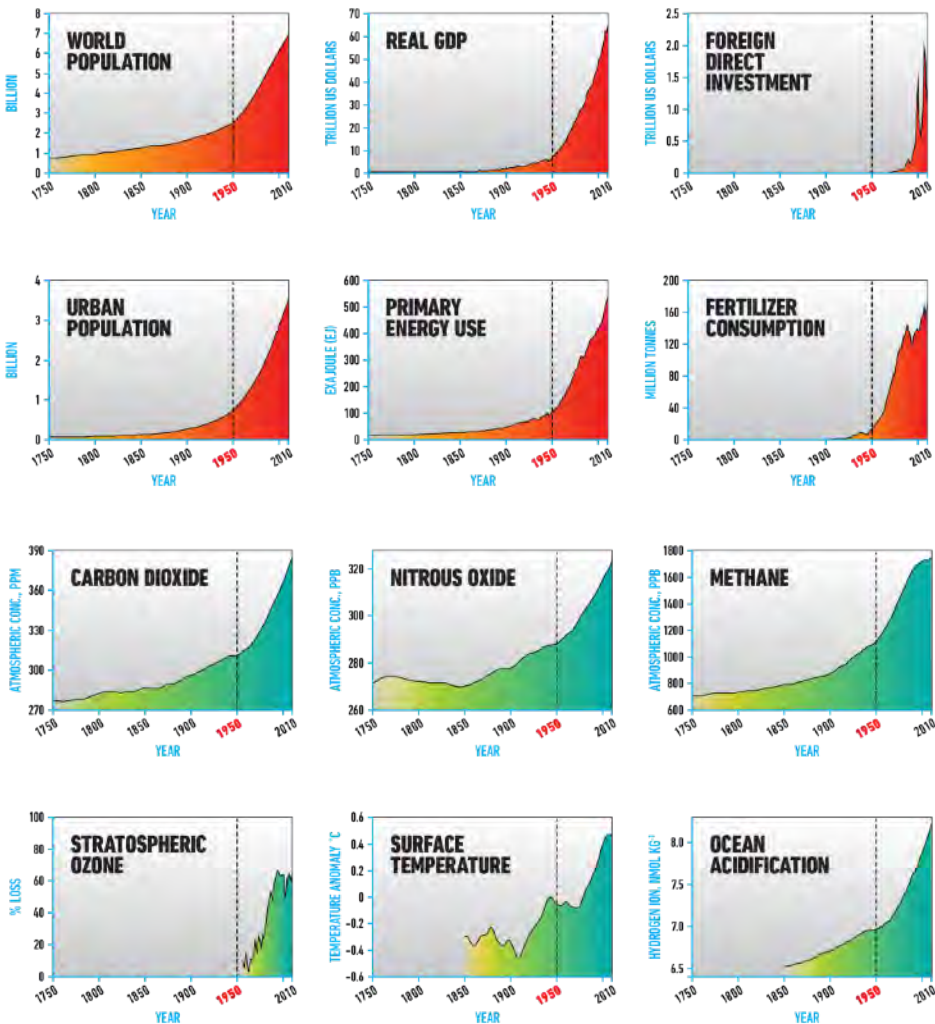
POLYCRISIS



**We live in a polycrisis whose
resolution may be crucial for the
history of our planet.**

**What we do in the coming decades
will decide what happens in the next
centuries and beyond.**

**What alternative futures can we
imagine to respond to the challenges
we face?**



How many ways
are there to
continue these
curves?

Preferable Worlds

Design and --- Futures

Jorge Camacho

Preferable Worlds

Futures?

Jorge Camacho

Futurists do not try to predict the future. Rather we study, create and use “images of the future.”

We can't predict the future, but we can...

1. Imagine or forecast **possible futures**.
2. Ask and reflect on which ones are **preferable**.
3. **Plan, innovate and design** towards preferable futures.

What possible futures can we imagine now?



James Dator

“Each of the millions of images of the futures are variations of one of four generic and fundamentally-different images.”

— James Dator

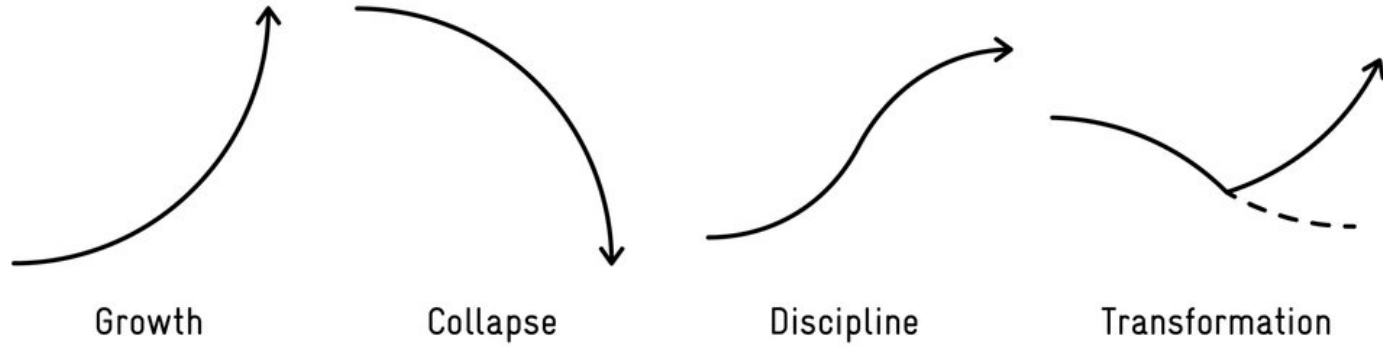




Foto de Denise Jans en Unsplash

Preferable Worlds

Four Alternatives: The World in 2050

Jorge Camacho

4 global thought leaders + 4 design futures pioneers

Preferable Worlds

Design Futures?

Jorge Camacho

ANALYSIS OF THE FUTURE: THE DELPHI METHOD

Olaf Helmer*

The RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, California

The decade of the Sixties has brought with it an important change in the intellectual climate throughout many parts of the world, evidenced by a new attitude toward the future that has become apparent in public and private planning agencies as well as in the research community. The effect has been to extend customary planning horizons into a more distant future and to replace haphazard intuitive gambles, as a basis for planning, by sober and craftsmanlike analysis of the opportunities the future has to offer.

The change in attitude toward the future is manifesting itself in several ways: Philosophically, in that there is a new understanding of what it means to talk about the future; pragmatically, in that there is a growing recognition that it is important to do something about the future; and methodologically, in that there are new and more effective ways of in fact doing something about the future.

Let me expand a little regarding these three aspects of our thinking about the future.

*Any views expressed in this paper are those of the author. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of The RAND Corporation or the official opinion or policy of any of its governmental or private research sponsors. Papers are reproduced by The RAND Corporation as a courtesy to members of its staff.

This paper was prepared to be published this year in Italian in Rivista Italiana di Amministrazione Industriale.

Preferable Worlds

Experiential futures
Design fiction
Speculative design

Jorge Camacho

The use of design processes, methods, and artifacts (graphics, objects, experiences, etc.) to develop and communicate images of the future.



Preferable Worlds

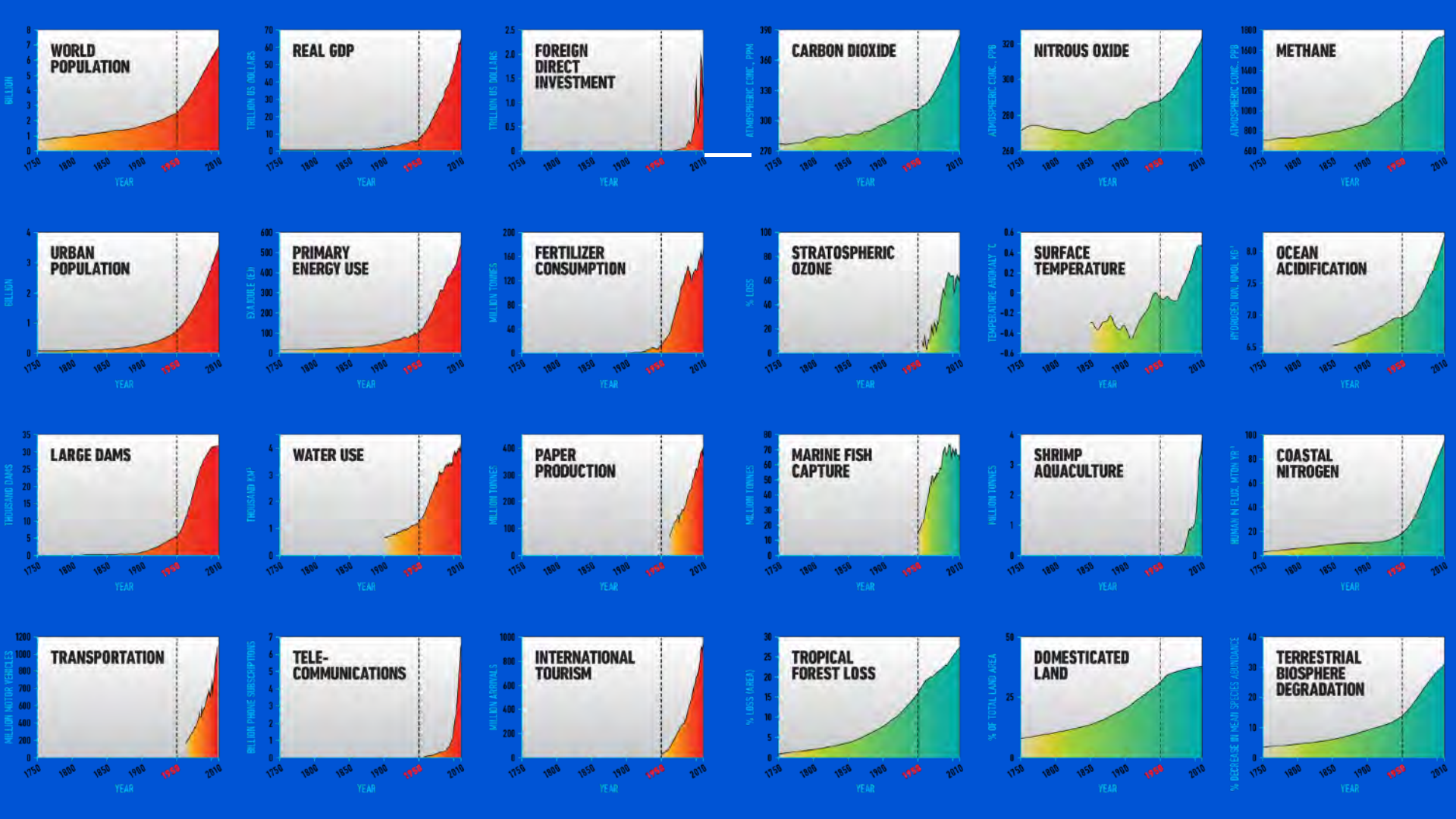
Growth

Jorge Camacho

Growth

“Continued growth is the "official" view of the future of all modern governments, educational systems, and organizations.” — Jim Dator





Preferable Worlds

Green growth?

Jorge Camacho



Technological Revolutions and Financial Capital

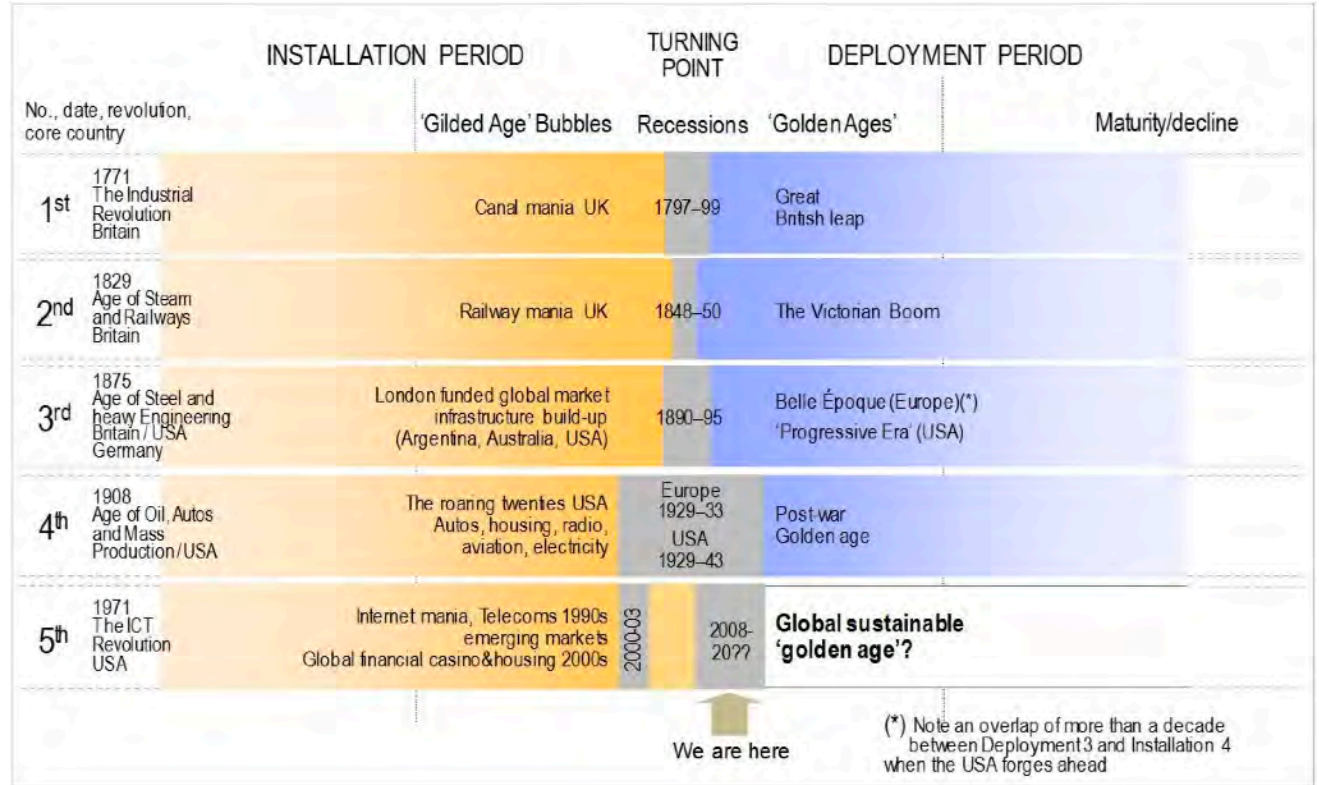
The Dynamics
of Bubbles
and Golden Ages



Carlota
Perez



Carlota Pérez



“The conjunction of post-pandemic reconstruction, with the climate emergency at this midpoint of the current technological wave, indicates the possibility of directing the economy towards digital, green, equitable and global growth.”

— Carlota Pérez

A future of green growth:

1. Innovative and entrepreneurial **governments**.
2. **Renewable energy** and circular economy.
3. **Dematerialization** of the economy through digital services and products.



VERDE Y ORO FC
 A DEL CLUB
 25-2050

2025

Un grupo de treinta universitarios del extranjero, inmigrantes colombianos y Básico Universal para formar el AMIGOS DEL VERDE FÚTBOL CLUB.

2029

AMIGOS DEL VERDE GANA LA COPA FEDERACIÓN ESPAÑOLA INFANTIL. El club se convierte en el primer equipo más importante de fútbol en redes sociales, con los tweets de sus seguidores leyendo de 10 años.

2030

AMIGOS DEL VERDE COMIENZA SU PROYECTO DE TRANSFORMACIÓN DEL ESTADIO DE LA CIUDAD DE VERDE Y ORO EN UN COMPLEJO DEPORTIVO Y CULTURAL PARA LA COMUNIDAD. El estadio se convierte en un espacio de encuentro y de ocio para la comunidad.

2031

2032

2033

2034

2035

2036

2037

2038

2039

2040

2041

2042

2043

2044

2045

2046

2047

2048

2049

2050

NOTICIAS

EL PARLAMENTO DE LAS CIUDADES AMPLIARÁ LA ZONA DE INGRESO BÁSICO UNIVERSAL



IBU

FEFA

FAIR + EQUITABLE
 football association

Desde 2036 promoviendo la equidad y la justicia a través del deporte deportivo y la economía.



Verde y Oro - Jake Dunagan y Jacques Barcia (IFTF) with Carlota Pérez (2021)



Verde y Oro - Jake Dunagan y Jacques Barcia (IFTF) with Carlota Pérez (2021)

How might design evolve in this alternative future?

Evolution of design:

1. Greater importance of **design in the public sector**.
2. Expansion of the design of **digital services and products**.
3. Design of **circular products**: recyclable, repairable, etc.

Preferable Worlds

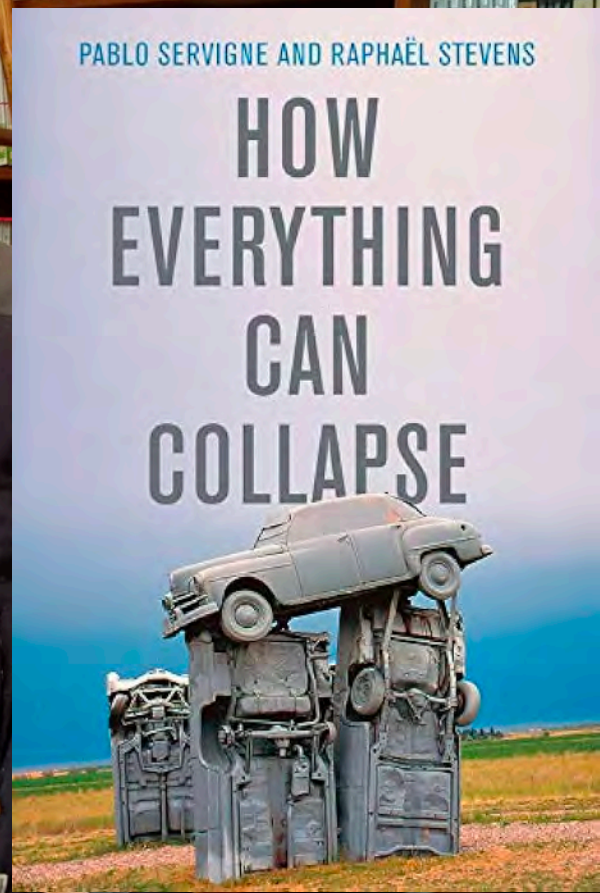
Collapse

Jorge Camacho

Collapse

“There may be many and different reasons that people fear (or hope for?) collapse.” — Jim Dator





Raphaël Stevens y Pablo Servigne

“Collapse is the horizon of our generation. But collapse is not the end – it’s the beginning of our future. We will reinvent new ways of living in the world...”

— Raphaël Stevens y Pablo Servigne

A future of collapse:

1. A rapid and radical **energy decline**.
2. Reduction of **social complexity** (“Failed States”).
3. The opportunity to **start again**.



Grasias, The Good Collapse - N O R M A L S with Raphaël Stevens (2021)



Gracias, The Good Collapse - N O R M A L S with Raphaël Stevens (2021)



DISCIPLINA

La Compostadora

Este sistema para todos

Etapa	Nombre
1	Etapa 1
2	Etapa 2
3	Etapa 3
4	Etapa 4
5	Etapa 5

FUTUROS

Gracias, The Good Collapse - NORMALS with Raphaël Stevens (2021)

Evolution of design:

1. **Frugal design**, design for **resilience** and **disaster relief**.
2. Reduction of professional design: **everyone designs**.
3. **Social, local and community** (re)design.

Preferable Worlds

Discipline

Jorge Camacho

**“Yes, green growth is a fantasy but
collapse is not inevitable.”**

Discipline

“Some people feel that precious places, processes, and values are threatened or destroyed by allowing continuous economic growth.”
— Jim Dator





Giacomo D'Alisa

UNIVERSITÄT LEIPZIG



the case for

DEGROWTH

GIORGOS KALLIS

SUSAN PAULSON

GIACOMO D'ALISA

FEDERICO DEMARIA

#Degrowth14

“Degrowth advocates promote the common sense that ‘people should live simply so that others, human and non-human, can simply live.’”

— Giacomo D’Alisa

A future of discipline (degrowth):

1. Planned and selective **reduction of production and consumption.**
2. “Public luxury and private sufficiency.” (George Monbiot)
3. Reorientation of life towards **well-being and care.**

XI PEDISSCOUJED EPRTU XI PEDISSCOUJED



Las Erres - Becoming with Giacomo D'Alisa (2021)



LAS ERRES

reproducir
No hay bienestar en la acumulación individual

RESTITUIR

LA VIDA
RESTITUIR

LA VIDA
RESTITUIR

Las Erres - Becoming with Giacomo D'Alisa (2021)

Evolution of design:

1. Design for **social innovation** (solving problems through social reorganization).
2. Design of **public spaces and experiences**.
3. Design so that **efficiency and sufficiency are desirable**.

Preferable Worlds

Transformation

Jorge Camacho

Transformation

“... welcomes the transformation of all life, including humanity from its present form into a new "posthuman" form, on an entirely artificial Earth” — Jim Dator






After
Geoengineering

—
Climate Tragedy,
Repair, and
Restoration

—
Holly Jean Buck

"This book is required reading for how to navigate the crisis ahead."
—Matthew Huber, author of *Lifeblood*



Holly Jean Buck

THE
WORLD
AROUND

REDISCOVER EARTH REDISCOVER



ORIGI DE LA 141 AVIATION SAUVERIE ENVALEU NOTRE SAURICIA



REDISCOVER EARTH



BLUE MARBLE TRAVELS.

Blue Marble Travels - OIO Studio with Holly Jean Buck (2021)

RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA

LA ESPAÑA CONSCIENTE

Nuestras ciudades, reimagnadas

BLUË MARBLE TRAVELS.

2020

RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA

PIFA YIMCOCA EN EL ÁRTICO

SMALL EN LAS FRONTERAS DE FANTASÍA

RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA

RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA

ARCHIPIÉLAGO BOREAL

El Ártico creado por el hombre

OCTUBRE

BLUË MARBLE TRAVELS.

2020

RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA

BOVENA ARÁNTICA

GRAMMAS DE ALCAS

RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA

RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA

COSTAS CIRCULARES

Sol y playa de verano

OCTUBRE

BLUË MARBLE TRAVELS.

2020

RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA

SEDA DE CAPTURA EN CARBONO

REPLANTAMIENTO GENERAL

RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA

RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA

EL AMAZONAS AUTÓNOMO

Una selva dueña de sí misma

JULIO

BLUË MARBLE TRAVELS.

2020

RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA

CAMPAMENTO ESPECIAL DE PRO YING

CAMPUS ESPECIAL

RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA

RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA | RECICLOSAR LATHA

NUEVOS HORIZONTES

Sumérgete en la gravedad cero

OCTUBRE

BLUË MARBLE TRAVELS.

2020

Blue Marble Travels - OIO Studio with Holly Jean Buck (2021)

A future of transformation:

1. **Technological evolution** determines social, political and cultural structures.
2. **Abundance of energy** (nuclear fission and fusion).
3. Restoration and total control of the planet (**intentional Anthropocene**).

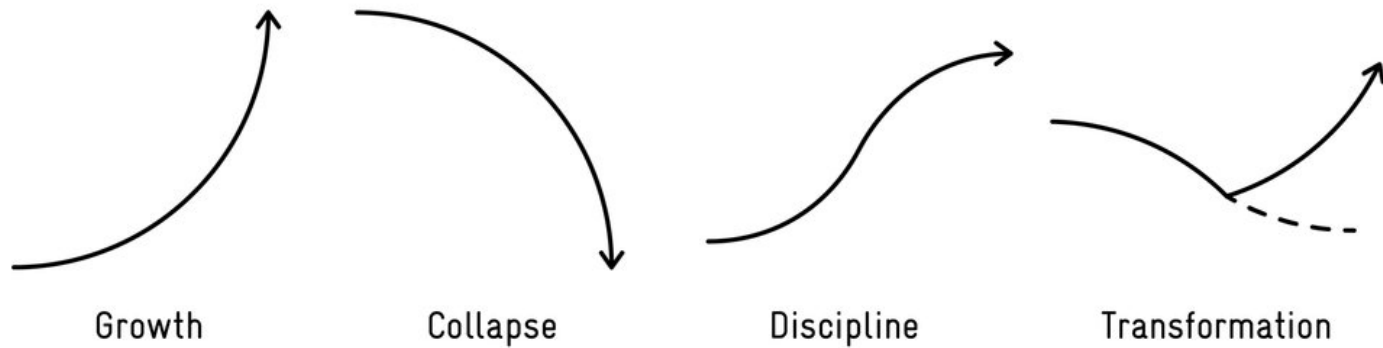
“What about a world in which fusion has made clean energy abundant for all... where precision agriculture and robotic harvesting is guided by smallholders and land collectives? ”

— Holly Jean Buck

Evolution of design:

1. Expansion of **design and the artificial on a planetary scale**.
2. Design subordinated to **technological development**: artificial intelligence, robots, drones, etc.
3. **Transcendence** of the human: posthumanism, singularity, etc.





**These four futures
represent the horizon of
possibilities towards 2050.**

How can we prepare for those possibilities?

Which of those — or what aspects of all of them — do we find preferable?

How can we, as citizens and professionals, contribute to achieving that preferable future?

**What will design disciplines
and practices look like in 2050?
How can design contribute to
directing us towards one of
these alternative futures?**

As designers, these alternative futures:

1. They can help them forecast the **evolution** of the design to better prepare.
2. These are options you can **work toward today**: do you prefer growth, discipline, transformation, or even collapse?
3. They can be **combined**: what things should grow? Which ones should collapse? What do we want to preserve or transform?

Mundos Preferibles



- More info about *The Great Imagination*

- Texts about Alternative Futures

- Take a survey about preferable futures

- Complete activity: “Your future self”

Thank you!