

The Principles of Solarpunk

Many years ago, the dark prophecy/warning of a cyberpunk future entered the public consciousness. Propelled by the increasing trend towards grittiness in Sci Fi (Illustrated in other popular works such as Star Wars, itself a shift away from the clean aluminum rockets of past sci-fi works) the works have embedded themselves into the public eye. Works such as Blade Runner and Neuromancer are staples. And yet, our culture has, in a way, collectively misintepreted these books, as new interpretations of those works (Such as the much-hyped Cyperpunk 2077) now highlight Cyberpunk not as a warning, but something *cool* that is strived for. It is time for a new movement and a new genre, a new depiction of the future, espieccally as our reality begins to veer off towards this dark prophecies. Solarpunk is that movement.

Why Solarpunk Exists

Much of the sci-fi works or futuristic prophecies in our mainstream, even the aspiritonal ones, are both so far off as to not cause any excitement/movement towards them. In addition, they are often devoid of plants, DIY, architecure, and aesthetics, presenting instead an utterly in-human living environment. (As much as Star Trek TNG presents a utopian aspiration, living on the Enterprise for longer than a week would probably be painful to the average human). This is indicitave of a larger trend, that **THE FUTURE** is austere, white/sleek, and clean. Solarpunk exists to combat these tendencies of cleanliness and to provide a realistic (if optimistic) vision of the future we can all work towards, be it by writing open-source software, building your own furniture and technology rather than buying them, growing food and vegetables, or by something as simple as planting native plants in the garden. It is a vision of and a movement towards a future where giant skyscrapers don't blot out the sun hulkingly, but rather are vertical gardens, lush with life, with beautiful intricate glass and designs, a world where equality and justice and rationalism prevail, a world where no human is better than another due to skin color, gender, or sexual orientation. It is optimistic- but it is also acheivable.

The Social Components of Solarpunk

The world we think of when we think of the future in a solarpunk context- the world of soaring vertical gardens and clean air and food- is not merely a technological and design challenge. It is also a social one. *Note to future contributors, I am not the most qualified in this field, please fix any mistakes i have made.* Today, social injustices and divides are, in many places, a fact of life. In America, cops can shoot black men or women while they are sleeping for as little reason as “*We felt we were threatened*”. In many, even developed, nations, there exist not only systemic racism and sexism, but also a deep, pervasive culural attitude of male/straight supremacy. And even aside from these social justice struggles, a deeper, more fundamental conflict is raging- that between

the rest of society, and the 1%. Jeff Bezos, the richest man in the world, owns five houses and three yachts, and *still* pays his workers as close to minimum wage as he can and works them till one of them drops of a heart attack on the warehouse floor. The top 1% own 44% of the worlds' wealth, both on paper- and materially. The 10 richest billionaires alone own 801 *billion* dollars. 3 billion people are in sever poverty world-wide. These billionaires could afford to give each and every one of them 267 dollars- an amount that, to middle-class people, doesn't sound like much, until you realize that in these under-developed regions, you can often buy a car, or even live for well over a year, on that much money. We cannot acheive that glittering utopia of equality until we acheive economic and social parity and justice, until we acheive a world where no man can be killed due to their skin tone, no woman assaulted for her past gender, and no worker can be paid minimum wages and left for dead on the warehouse floor.