

The Visualization of the Future

A Study in the Image of Futureness

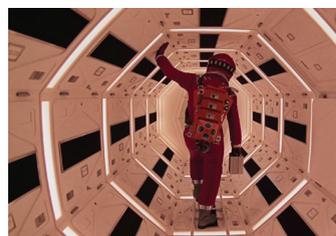
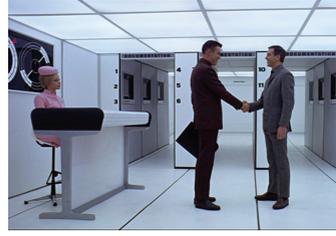
Research Brief by Design Made
October 2023/2013

Topic:

How do you design a space that is suggestive “of the future,” a space that is speaks to conditions of a futuristic nature.

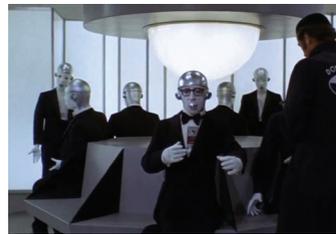
Premise:

While developing a new retail branch concept for a client they asked us to design a small showcase branch that would communicate their investments in digital technologies and other emerging solutions to offer better and more relevant services to their customers. They specifically wanted to the branch to be, “of the future,” suggestive of innovation and new/futuristic technologies and experiences. It was in the language of the *branch of the future* but seeking to be a platform for the introduction and education of new customer solutions. One of our research paths was to determine how something is perceived as “of the future” or “futuristic” and so we analyzed set design in film. It is through films that we are most visually influenced on perceiving something as beyond our current conditions. We quickly identified a series of common characteristics across almost all Utopian film depiction. We focused on Utopian, or positive future environments, rather than the dystopian, even though they are more prolific, for obvious reasons.



2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY
(1968)

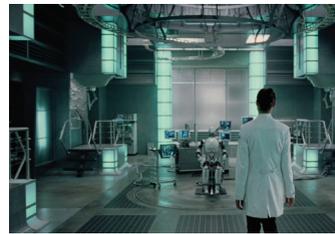
SOLARIS
(1972)



SLEEPER
(1973)

LOGAN'S RUN
(1976)

STAR WARS
(1977)



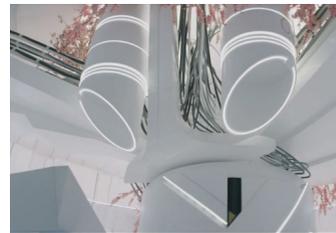
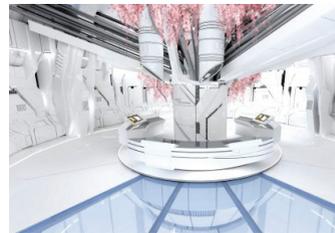
TRON
(1982)

GATTACA
(1997)

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
(2001)

IROBOT
(2004)

AEON FLUX
(2005)



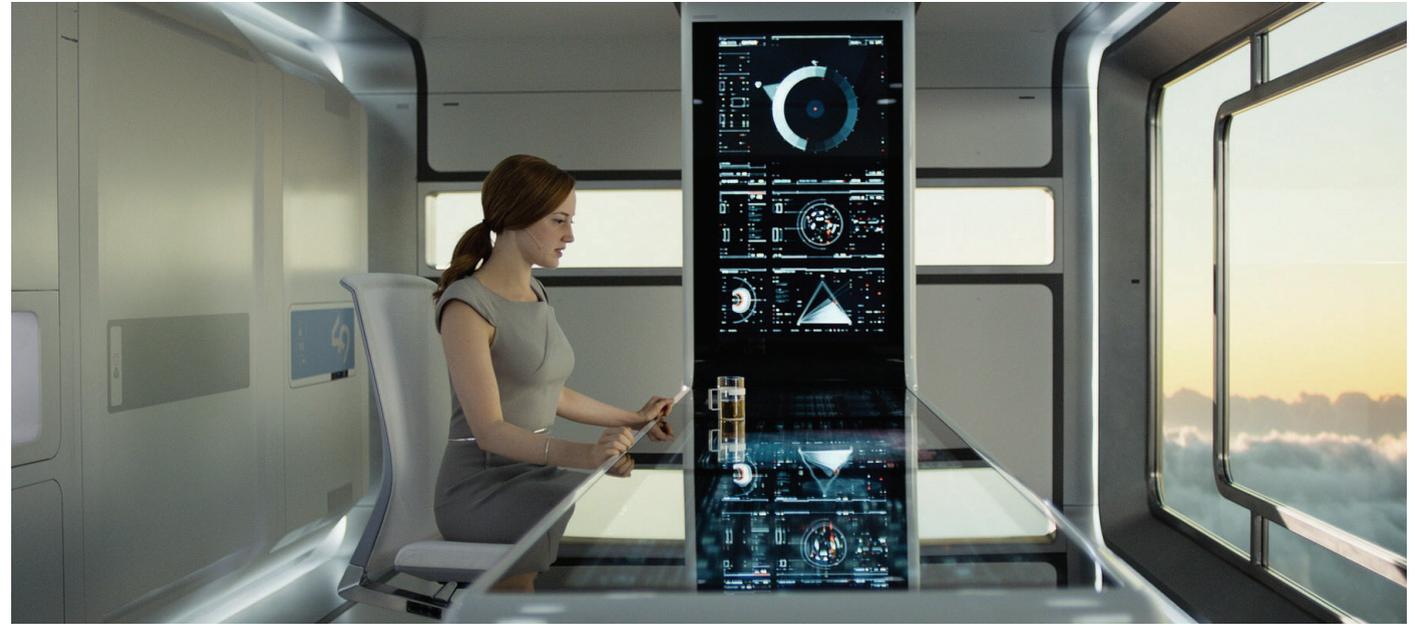
TRON
(2010) FLYNN'S HIDEOUT

OBLIVION
(2013)

ELYSIUM
(2013)



A



C

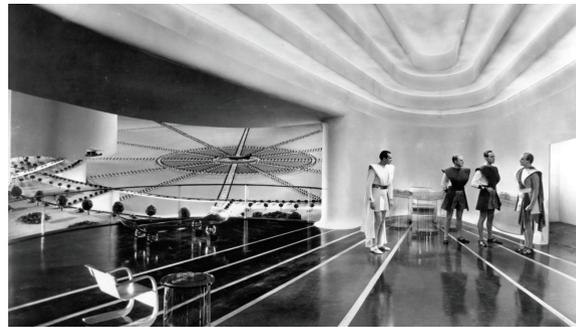
**1968
2001: A Space Odyssey**

Stanley Kubrick's *2001* film seems to have been the first film set in the future that defined the path, influenced, and is referenced by nearly every Utopian or dystopian film since. The 1936, British film *Things to Come* (image B) might have influenced Kubrick with some its scene features, but the intimacy of spaces within Kubrick's film offers the first significant depiction of a truly futuristic environment, in the positive sense. While the film does not depict a fully positive future experience, the environments represent a evolution of human existence where space travel is as common train travel is today.

**2013
Oblivion**

Our research took place in 2013, and the most recent films set in the future at that time were *Oblivion* directed by Joseph Kosinski and *Elysium* directed by Neil Blomkamp. These three films and their set design book-ended our research and it is interesting the similarity of the design of the spaces in the two films.

We focused on ideal futuristic environments, those representative of an advanced condition of living, but we identified that dystopian films also have many common characteristics seemingly rooted in Terry Gilman's *Brazil* film released in 1985. The positive depictions have a high attention to detail with flush and smooth surfaces whereas the negative depictions are often of fragmentation and deterioration with chaotic environments seemingly in a state of falling apart.



B



B



B



C



D

