

Glow-in-the-Dark Trees Could Replace Street Lights

By: Katherine Brooks

According to Daan Roosegaarde, the future of art and design is full of amazing inventions filled with new things that could change our lives in wonderful ways.



A Dutch designer is working with scientists to create glow-in-the-dark trees, hoping to one day use them in place of street lights.

From giant vacuum cleaning systems aimed at destroying/ permanently removing smog to "smart" clothing that becomes partially clear (like lightly frosted glass) when the wearer feels warm, the Dutch artist/designer/architect has helped imagine some scary projects that could push us into a new time in history.

His newest effort -- a plan to replace light fixtures with light from animals or plants -- is no letdown in comparison.

Taking a hint/signal from biomimicry, Roosegaarde is hoping to change your average street-side trees into guiding lights of light for passersby. Like the glowing abilities of jellyfish, mushrooms or fireflies, Roosegaarde, scientist Alexander Krichevsky and the State University of New York are all on the case, joining together DNA from glowing marine bacteria with the chloroplast of a houseplant. "If it works, tree leaves and branches would emit a glow similar to a firefly or a jellyfish in water." Roosegaarde claims.

The smaller-scale, glow-in-the-dark specimens would act as the basis for a project of greater proportions — light-emitting installations that look like trees. "What happens when technology jumps out of the computer screen and becomes part of the things that we wear and the roads that we drive on?" Roosegaarde muses.