

# Hemispheres

MAY 2017

UNITED   
A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 



“The tango, in all its complexity and sensuality, has become a global symbol for this city.”

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This month, New York's Morgan Library and Museum unveils *Noah's Beasts: Sculpted Animals from Ancient Mesopotamia*, a collection of artworks that date as far back as 3300 B.C. and depict an early version of the story of Noah and the Flood. How old are these works? Woolly mammoths would still roam the Earth for about 1,000 years after they were created. (MAY 26)

# Oranges Are the New Black

A Dutch design company finds a stylish new use for old fruit



**ECOLOGY** When life gives you lemons, make lemon ... leather? That's the idea behind Dutch startup Fruit Leather Rotterdam. Founded by recently graduated design students Hugo de Boon and Koen Meerkerk, the company transforms spoiled and blemished fruits into a leatherlike material, addressing sustainable fashion and food waste in one fell swoop.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, roughly one-third of the produce grown for human consumption worldwide ends up in the trash. Over 10.5 million tons of used clothing and textiles are disposed of in the U.S. alone. These issues have various companies experimenting with materials made from pineapple leaves, banana stems, and coconut husks, but Fruit Leather Rotterdam appears to be the first one to recycle the whole fruit. The secret process involves removing seeds, mashing the fruit into a paste, boiling it to kill bacteria, spreading it into a thin layer, and letting it dry.

Fruit Leather Rotterdam sources its fruit from companies that import to the Netherlands. "During the trip, a lot of the food goes rotten, or the cosmetic standard isn't good enough for supermarkets," de Boon says. So far, the company has turned squished and malformed produce into prototype purses and stylish lampshades, and last year it debuted a mango-leather chair at Dutch Design Week.

The company recently relocated to BlueCity, a former indoor water park that now serves as a hub for businesses and social entrepreneurs, where it is continuing to develop fruit leather in the hope of one day selling it to fashion designers. "We'll supply the material to the professionals," de Boon says. "What it will eventually become, that's up to them." —TIFFANY R. JANSEN



## You Compute Me

Your gadgets can tell how you're feeling just by looking at you



You look skeptical

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Forget voice or face recognition—the latest advance to excite techies is emotion recognition. This year, Hubble Connected launches Hugo, its “social and emotional smart camera,” which reads facial features to see if you're happy, angry, sad, scared, surprised, or disgusted, and then converses with other devices to, say, turn on a movie to cheer up sullen kids or adjust lighting levels and check locks if it suspects they're nervous about being home alone. “Maybe one day,” says Hubble publicist Margit Malacrida, “Hugo will be able to tell you your favorite joke to cheer you up when you're feeling blue.”

At this March's South by Southwest festival, British innovation firm Uniform displayed Solo (pictured above), an “emotional radio” that translates your expressions into a score and then uses Spotify's track valence ratings to play songs it thinks you'll like. “We saw an opportunity to translate this new technology into AI that gets people's individuality,” says Uniform research and insight manager Erika Shorter. “The possibilities for designing AI through human characteristics, such as emotion, are endless.”

Emotion recognition is set to take off outside the home, too. “Human-centric” design firm IDEO teamed with Hyundai to develop smart dashboards that blast drowsy drivers with cold air or spray a calming scent at ones with road rage—at least until self-driving cars remove the problem altogether. —BOYD FARROW

SHUTTERSTOCK (MAMMOTH); THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM (ELEPHANT AND RAM FLANKING PLANT WITH A GATEPOST); MESOPOTAMIA, LATE URUK PERIOD, CA. 3,500-3,100 B.C.; (MODERN IMPRESSION OF A SERPENTINE CYLINDER SEAL)