



Tech Talk

Death Pods ©

by Max Farrington

As humanity has progressed, many things have changed, such as rituals or traditions and even more in recent times thanks to technology, even the most sacred ones such as death. From mummification, to cremation and of course burial, these are all very ancient ways and we haven't seen any changes in this for a long time.

But Italian designers Anna Citelli and Raoul Bretzel have invented the "Capsula Mundi" a new kind of burial project. The idea is to put the body in a biodegradable pod, buried with tree seeds. To grow, the tree will have to gather nutrients from our decomposing corpses in the pods. This turns our dead bodies into a living tree.

There could even be many pods all together to create a memorial forest and even mark the trees with the name of the person it represents. There aren't any kickstarter campaigns just yet as it is just an idea on the creator's website. But it is a very interesting way to preserve our world.

There are more and more people populating the planet, therefore, there will be more and more deaths and funerals. At some point it will be difficult finding space to bury people. Some graveyards in the larger cities are already full. It is only a matter of time before families have to travel hours to pay their respects to their lost loved ones. While cremation is a good way to dispose of a body, it is not necessarily the most sensitive approach. Mummification no longer exists and giving our body to science remains very much a minority choice.

So what are the other ways dealing with the deceased? Well there is Aquamarine, the most environment friendly option. The process involves the rapid disintegration of the human body into high quality fertilizer, which avoids any form of pollution. Another way to transform the body is to ash it through dissolution. Although this might be reminiscent of the Breaking Bad television series, dissolution is a clean way to dispose of a corpse. In the United States this method has been legal for twenty years. The process is called alkaline hydrolyses. It uses 300 degree heat, a liquid called lye and 60 pounds of pressure. The bones and teeth left are also destroyed and transformed into ashes. The problem with this is that it is not environment friendly because there is an oily residue left that is simply flushed down the drain.

The biodegradable pods seem to be the most environmental friendly and natural way to handle our dead bodies. It is also much more romantic; imagine perhaps an elderly couple, bio-podded together, turning into beautiful strong trees!