

## **Science fiction exhibition in London takes visitors on a journey into space**

Science Museum show lets visitors take part in an interactive sci-fi story involving an extra-terrestrial spaceship. Science fiction often taps into preoccupations of the day, from the existential threat of nuclear war to the rise of advanced AI. But when it comes to climate change, humanity is on such a clear trajectory that dystopian fiction is no longer required to picture where we might be heading, according to one of the world's most celebrated science fiction writers.

Speaking before the opening of a science fiction exhibition at London's Science Museum, Kim Stanley Robinson said now that climate change is a reality rather than a hypothetical "what if?" scenario, writers should turn their imaginations to the question of how a better, fairer world might emerge on the other side.

Robinson, a veteran of the science fiction genre, has increasingly focused on climate change and his 2017 novel, *New York 2140*, features in the exhibition, *Science Fiction: Voyage to the Edge of Imagination*. The book is set in the next century when cataclysmic climate change has wreaked havoc and destruction on the world. Sea levels have risen 50ft and New York has become SuperVenice, with residents commuting between half-drowned buildings on boats or along "skybridges".

But life is not all bad – a surprisingly utopian society has emerged with free universities, flourishing cooperatives and economic innovation. He hopes that the genre will inspire today's teenagers, many of whom are gripped by "climate dread", to stand up for change.

"I feel that once you've acknowledged the [implications of climate change] you have to devote a fair bit of your life to working to avoid it," he said. "Every job can be trained on good results rather than bad. There's hardly any field where you couldn't be working against the disaster and against the mass extinction event."

"Scientists are telling us we could still make it through, but we have to change fast and we have to change profoundly and we're not good at that."

This change will centre on reshaping the economy, rather than new futuristic technologies, the US author argues. "We need to pay ourselves to do work that isn't immediately profitable and isn't immediately on the wishlist of people at Christmas time," said Robinson.

"It's like building a big sewage system. It's not that nobody wants it, but it has to be paid for so the finance is the crucial."