

How to live in the future

By Illai Gescheit

The extraordinary demonstration of the Tesla Roadster demonstration of the car riding upside down and then flipping in the air and landing on 4 wheels using high pressure compressed air thrusters developed by SpaceX for most people was an amazing product prototype demonstration. However, for someone like me who researches, working, investing and teaching about outlier founders it was a demonstration of the type of founders all VCs seek to invest in - the founders that live in the future.

Most startup founders, even the good ones, will think about the future, but will focus on building the present or the near future. It's easy to talk about the future every once in a while, to say some high level statements about how AI will replace jobs in the future, but founders that live in the future, are deeper thinkers and doers towards their own story of how the future looks like.

They have a deep and comprehensive worldview about how the future looks like. This is one of the things that is common to leading founders of the big AI labs from Google Deepmind to Anthropic. Demis Hassabis, Sam Altman and Dario Amodei, all talk about, write about and build how they see the future of AGI. Dario Amodei in his latest essay wrote "I believe that AI could cure most major diseases in the next 5–10 years, greatly accelerate economic growth rates, create a world of abundance and empowerment, and usher in a renaissance of democracy and freedom." However he also talks a lot about the risk of AI being a bad actor that could destroy society as we know of. This is not just one essay, but a whole story about the future, his future of AI.

They are misunderstood yet still able to raise capital on their misunderstood vision. Philip Johnson, the Co-Founder and CEO of Starcloud is working to build and send data centers to space. Although they were accepted to Y Combinator, even people among the space community approached them with a lot of skepticism and misunderstanding. Influencers such as Scott Manley and others criticized them and others claimed they are burning cash for nothing. Many investors rejected their idea however, In August 2026, Starcloud raised an additional \$250M at a \$2.3Bn valuation, with NVIDIA, Cisco, and Benchmark investing in the round.

They are investing in engineering and building things that others think are sci-fi. In order to live in the future, you have to have that clear vision, raise capital based on it but also you must build something that paves that path towards that future. Many founders are apologetic of putting their investors money to build something like a Tesla that flies in the air, but a part of why those investors invested is just for that. Stretching the limits of today, and paving the path to their own view of the future. If you are bold enough to build parts of the future, it's just a matter of time until that future will become reality.