

Front Lines

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Home of the Future

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Have you ever seen those 1950s black-and-white films of what we could expect the homes of the future to be like? (Where's my dishwasher that cleans dishes using sound waves, I'd like to know?) Turns out that living quarters of the future will be more like the dwellings in "Fifth Element" than something you'd see in a 1952 issue of *Good Housekeeping*.

Furniture giant Ikea is predicting what the home of the future will be like during its "Democratic Design Days." In a nutshell, they have good reason to believe that the future home will most likely be urban with kitchens, hallways and dining areas shared by multiple families. Oh, and the furniture will be robotic!

Ikea believes that, because 70% of the world's population will want to live in cities by 2050, we'll end up having to share much more of our stuff. Homes will range between two-family households to hotel-like complexes with joint kitchens, dining areas and recreational areas (residences like this are already being built in some cities, such as here in Boston). The purpose of robotic furniture is to save space in these smaller-footprint living quarters.

That's all very well and good, but what does this say about our relationships to plants? Will we have less room for

plants in these smaller spaces? Or, because these living units will be clutter-free and efficient, will we need more plants to help connect us with nature? **GP**