

Superblue

Superblue is a multi-disciplinary design consultancy that creates nurturing, engaging and communicative products and spaces. Through the use of innovative and strategic design we are hands-on, involved and committed to our clients and their communities. We treat each project as unique.

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Novel Materials

- 'New space age materials from the realm of science fiction.'

'Novel Materials' is an exhibition of fictional materials which were envisaged by writers, artists and scientists over the last 100 years some of them have become reality some are still science fiction and some exist in the exciting boundary in-between the two.

Through the narratives of a piece of fiction the materials meet the demands of the characters, from whatever time they may come. How can we apply and find uses and new contexts for our Space Age materials? How can these new materials benefit us in the objects we use and the spaces we inhabit everyday? By exploring possibilities in fiction we can test applications and focus research to benefit us all.

By thinking of the concept we can then strive to realise it. A beer which gives us all the happy effects and non of the anti-social behaviour. A building which can grow and adapt to its environment over time. A building made from local materials on the Moon or on Earth. Ideas from science fiction and advances made in modern Space Age materials can provide solutions to the problems posed in contemporary life.

WARNING these materials **DON'T EXIST** or do they?

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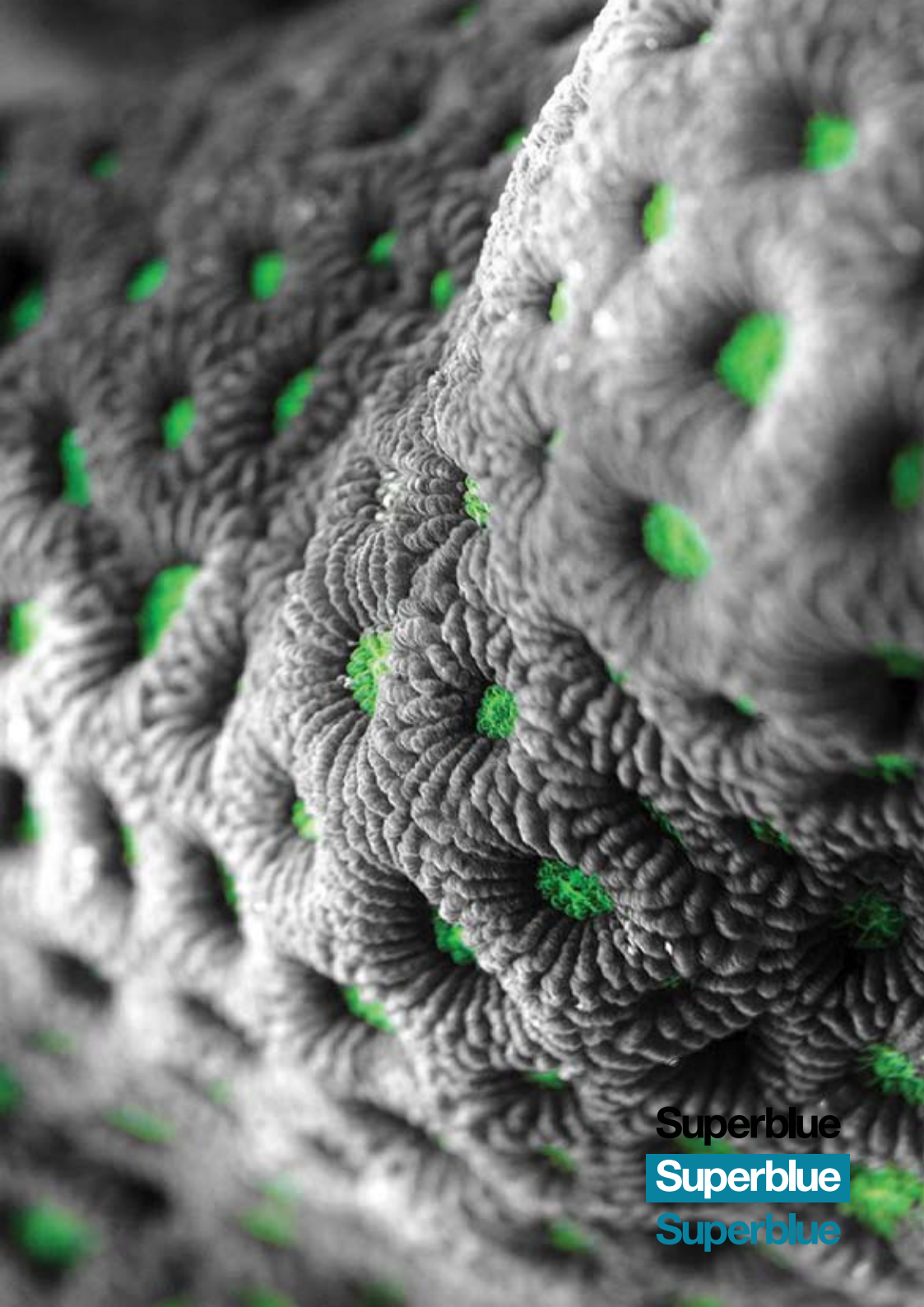
Architectural Coral

- 'A structure grown to a specific shape using small coral-like organisms.'

It was a great sprawling bungalow, laid out in a rough cross, with the bulging walls typical of architectural coral. No attempt had been made to disguise its origin. Matt had never before seen a house which was not painted, but he had to admire the effect. The remnants of the shaping balloon, which gave all architectural coral buildings their telltale bulge, had been carefully scraped away. The exposed walls had been polished to a shining pink sheen. Even after sunset the house glowed softly...

Architectural coral was another gift of the ram-robots. A genetic manipulation of ordinary sea coral, it was the cheapest building material known. The only real cost was in the plastic balloon that guided the growth of the coral and enclosed the coral's special air-borne food.

From A Gift From Earth, by Larry Niven.
Published by Del Rey in 1968



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Eadhamite

- 'Synthetic material that creates extremely smooth roads.'

"a solitary man without children, who made a big fortune speculating in roads -- the first Eadhamite roads. But surely you've heard? No? Why? He bought all the patent rights and made a big company. In those days there were grosses of grosses of separate businesses and business companies. Grosses of grosses! His roads killed the railroads -- the old things -- in two dozen years; he bought up and Eadhamited' the tracks. And to the south over the hills, came vast aqueducts with sea water for the sewers and in three separate directions, ran pallid lines -- the roads, stippled with moving grey specks. On the first occasion that offered he was determined to go out and see these roads. That would come after the flying ship he was presently to try. His attendant officer described them as a pair of gently curving surfaces a hundred yards wide, each one for the traffic going in one direction, and made of a substance called Eadhamite -- an artificial substance, so far as he could gather, resembling toughened glass. Along this shot a strange traffic of narrow rubber-shod vehicles, great single wheels, two and four wheeled vehicles, sweeping along at velocities of from one to six miles a minute. Railroads had vanished; a few embankments remained as rust-crowned trenches here and there. Some few formed the cores of Eadhamite ways."

From *When the Sleeper Wakes*, by H.G. Wells., 1899

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Helio-Beryllium

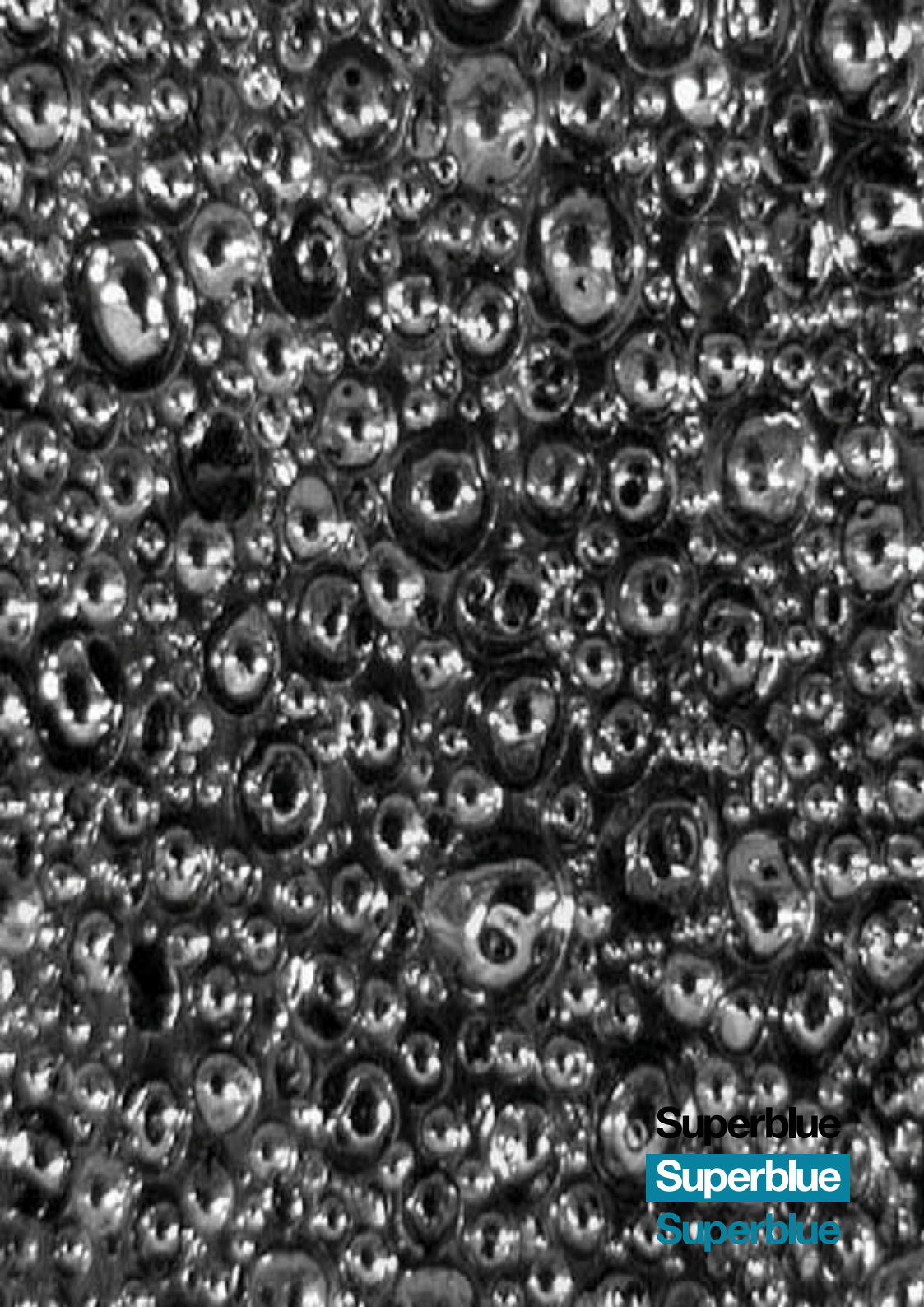
- 'Unusual alloy combines a metal and a gas. The amazing spaceship Comet is full of modern conveniences, but what of the ship itself?'

"I had seen the Comet before, but never so close. With a hull of helio-beryllium - the new light, inactive alloy of a metal and a gas - the ship was a cylinder about twenty feet long by fifteen in diameter, while a pointed nose stretched five feet farther at each end. Fixed in each point was a telescopic lens, while there were windows along the sides and at the top - all made, Garth informed us, of another form of the alloy almost as strong as the opaque variety."

From *Out Around Rigel*, by Robert H. Wilson.

Published by Street and Smith in 1931

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Krimskell Fibre

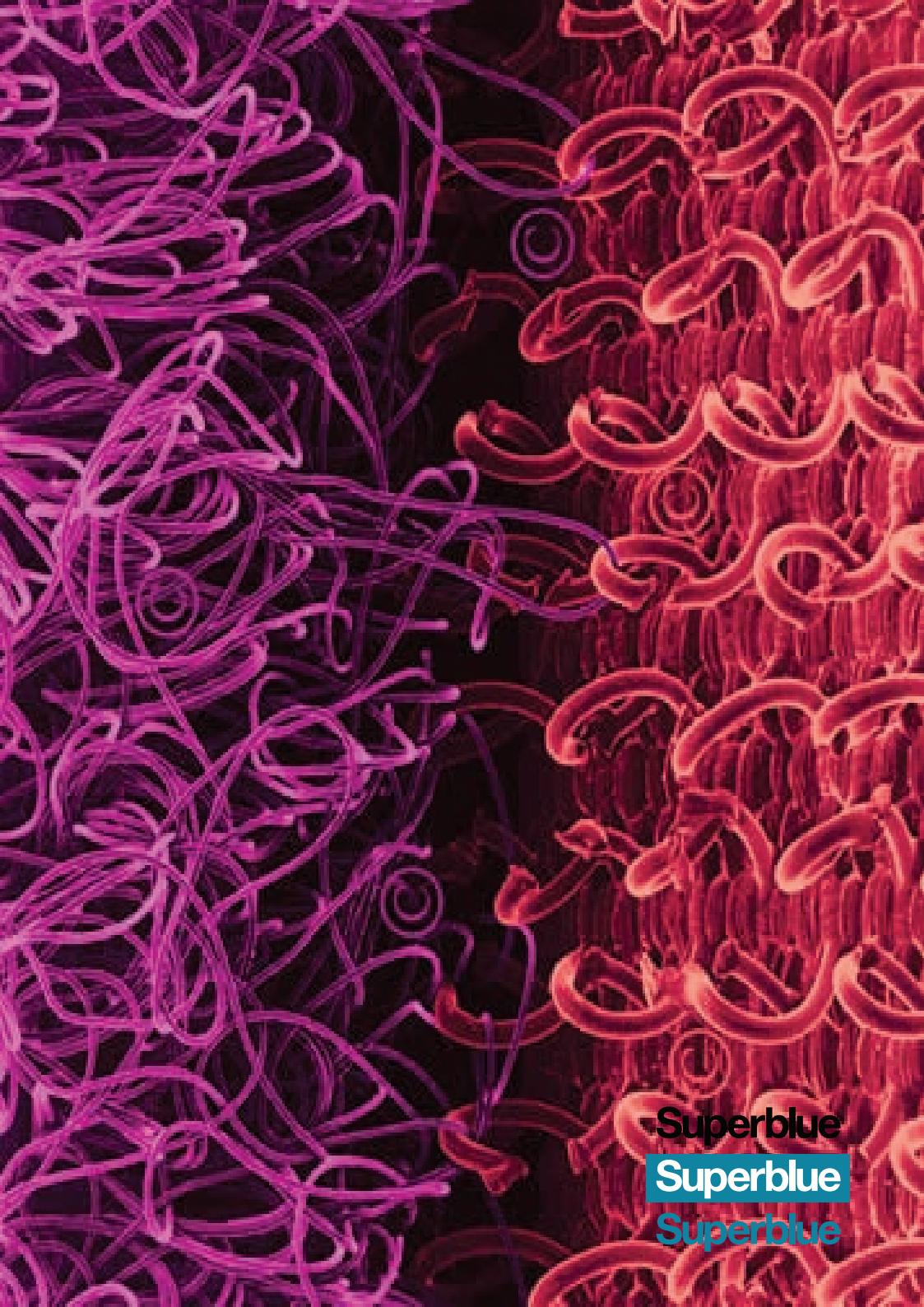
- 'A "claw" fiber which will rubs against itself in such a way that, the tighter the rope is pulled, the stronger the knot becomes. This is conceived of as a natural product; but it makes me think of the ties that are used in electronics (zip strips). They can be tightened by degrees; but they are impossible to loosen.'

"She began to feel her body, grew aware of bindings on wrists and ankles, a gag in her mouth. She was on her side, hands tied behind her. She tested the bindings, realized they were krimskell fiber, would only claw tighter as she pulled. Jessica felt herself lifted, the wing shadow spinning--stars. She was pushed into the rear of the 'thopter, her krimskell fiber bindings examined, and she was strapped down. Paul was jammed in beside her, strapped securely, and she noted his bonds were simple rope."

From Dune, by Frank Herbert.

Published by Putnam in 1965

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Lunar Concrete

- 'A building material using lunar dust or similar surface material as a main ingredient.'

One of the basic problems of creating orbital cities or environments is the necessity of dragging everything you need out of the "gravity well" of Earth. A well-known solution proposed by various science fiction authors is to use materials from places other than Earth, where the energy cost of acquisition is not as large.

"Tessier-Ashpool ascended to high orbit's archipelago to find the ecliptic sparsely marked with military stations and the first automated factories of the cartels. And here they began to build. Their combined wealth, initially, would barely have matched Ono-Sendai's outlay for a single process-module of that multinational's orbital semiconductor operation, but Marie-France demonstrated an unexpected entrepreneurial flare, establishing a highly profitable data haven serving the needs of less reputable sectors of the international banking community. This in turn generated links with the banks themselves, and with their clients. Ashpool borrowed heavily and the wall of lunar concrete that would be Freeside grew and curved, enclosing its creators."

From *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, by William Gibson.

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Scop

- 'Protein grown in
bacteria-filled vats'
- Bruce Sterling

Okay, you don't eat cows, chickens or fish. How about a smaller creature - really small? Single Cell Protein (SCP) is making competitive inroads on soybean and fishmeal for feed supplementation.

"David was a health-food nut, a great devotee of unnatural foods. After eight years of marriage, Laura was used to it. At least the scop was improving. Even the scop, single-cell protein, was better these days. It tasted all right, if you could forget the image of protein vats crammed with swarming bacteria."

From *Islands in the Net*, by Bruce Sterling.

Published by William Morrow in 1988

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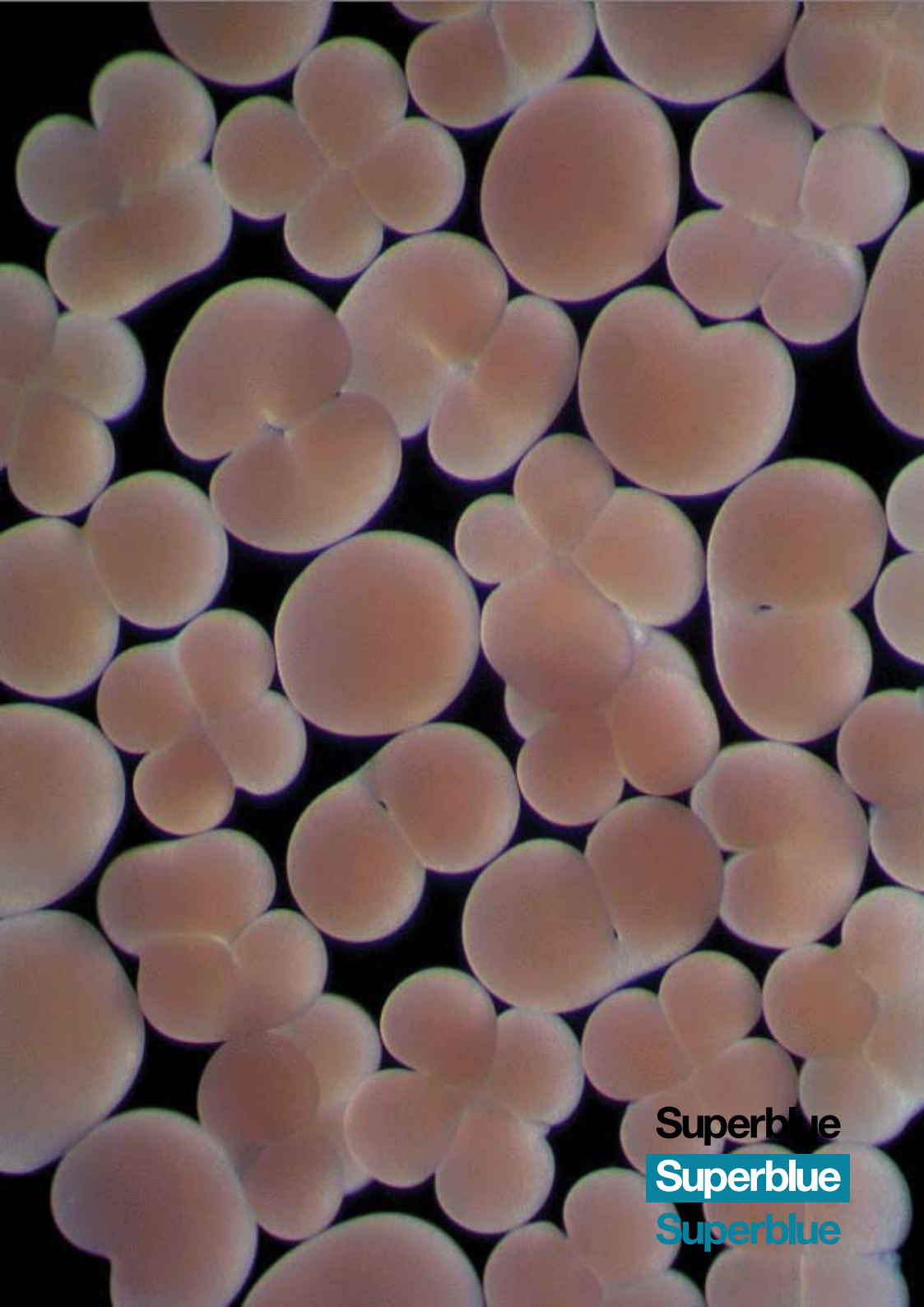
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Silicon Clover

- '...mix some silicon and metal bits and have them spontaneously assemble themselves into electronic components.' - Discover

On a tabletop in Kazuo Hosokawa's lab is a small dish of water. Sprinkled on the water's surface are a hundred or so small, flat pieces of silicon. When Hosokawa shakes the dish, some of the little pieces begin to clump together into shapes that look something like four-leaf clovers.

This humble-looking experiment is a step toward an ambitious goal. It would be nice, says Hosokawa, a mechanical engineer at the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research in Saitama, Japan, to be able to mix some silicon and metal bits and have them spontaneously assemble themselves into electronic components.



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Synthenol

- 'is a science-fictional substitute for alcohol that appears on the Star Trek: The Next Generation television series. It allows drinkers to experience all of the enjoyable, intoxicating effects of alcohol without unpleasant side-effects like hang-overs'

- And that was definitely 'not' synthenol we were drinking last night," she accused.

- Mark sat back and gave her a confused look. "I warned you at the time," he said.

- "You did not!" she countered, then winced at the pain her raised voice produced.

- "I most certainly did. I specifically told you Brazilians were used to having ethanol. I pointed that out when you started accepting free drinks from the street vendors."

- Janeway turned her face into the pillow. "Noooo... I thought you said the Brazilians used to have ethanol," she moaned. "Remember? I joked back, 'certainly no synthenol here!'"

- "I didn't realize you were joking," he explained. Janeway moaned again. "Sorry," he added.

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Twing

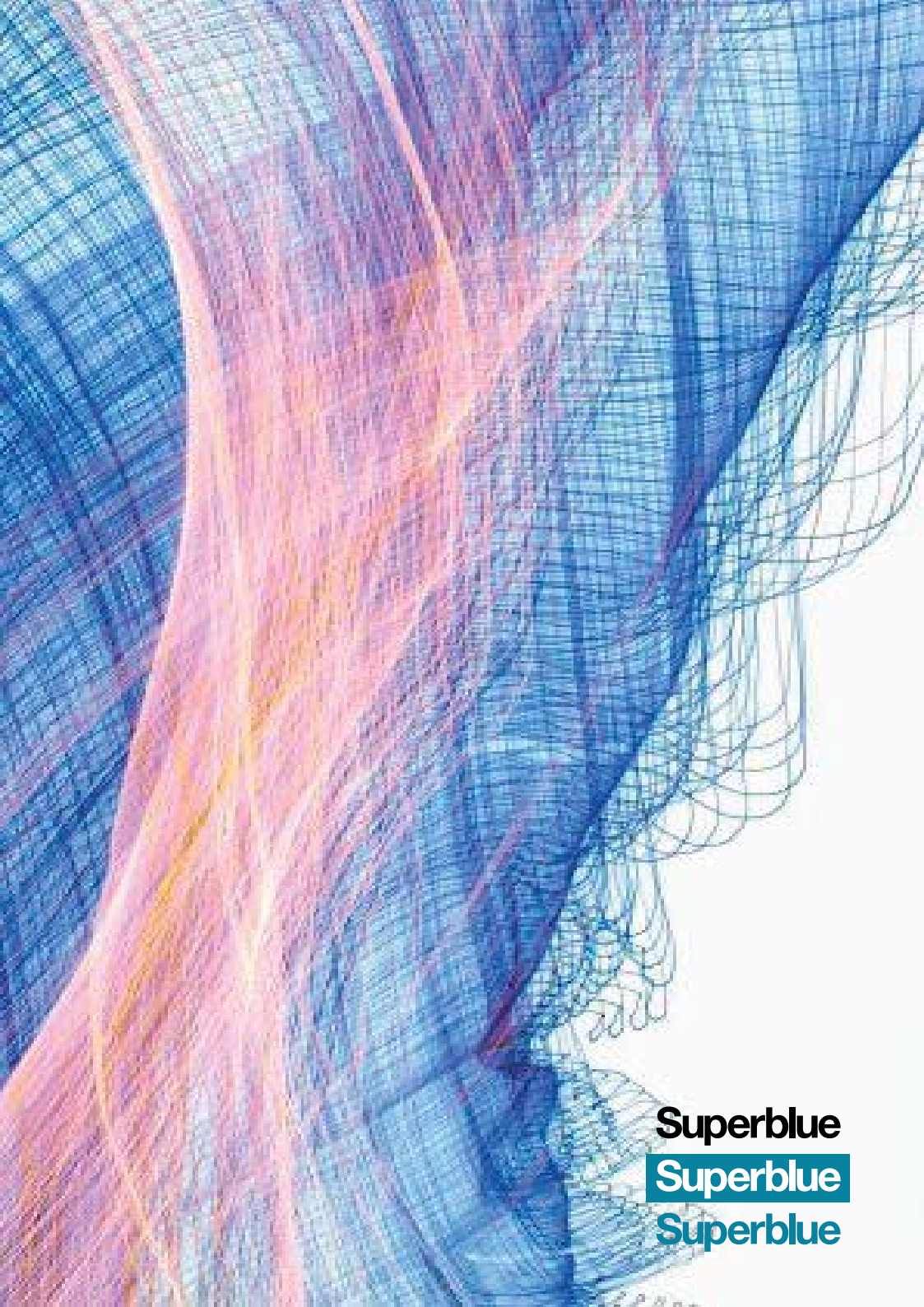
- 'Used in the hold of spaceships to keep articles all together, and to prevent them from floating around in free fall, or falling during periods of acceleration.'

NASA worked hard on the problem of what to do with loose items in space ships. They float around when you are in free fall, and they might hurt someone (or damage something else) while you are accelerating. The answer? Twing! It's kind of like a string netting that keeps everything in its place, but can easily be released for access.

"Twing was tough, but not invulnerable... Phssthpok applied the softener key to the twing. Thump - and a foot of crude glass rod slammed through the twing."

From Protector, by Larry Niven.

Published by Del Rey in 1973



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VAZ

- 'A universal lubricant useable in many forms, expedate the incompatable meeting of objects.' - Jeff Noon

"There's many ways of being. Nobody's quite sure what they are. So individuality has started to die. Society's started to mingle a lot more. The vaseline [used by characters in Vurt] and the snot [ever-present in the hay fever world of Pollen] is like the grease that makes the world so slippery," says Noon, going on to quote a key line from Vurt: "Sometimes it feels like the whole world is smeared with vaz."

- Jeff Noon interview by Jay Babcock, 1996



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