

Aris Patrinos: The Greek Scientist behind the Creation of Artificial Life



It took years of research and millions of dollars for the scientists at Craig Venter Institute in Maryland to create life by activating a cell with a lab made chromosome. The Greek scientist behind this great scientific achievement is Mr. Aris Patrinos (photo). A few years ago, Mr. Aris Patrinos left his position as director of the US Department of Energy's Human Genome Program to become president of Synthetic Genomics (a company founded by Craig Venter, a major participant in the US Human Genome Project) and decided to become active in Greece as well.

Mr. Patrinos, explained that with this new process, scientists have managed to chemically create a synthetic chromosome, which in turn activates a cell. They had managed to create the chromosome earlier, but were not able, until very recently, to use it to activate a cell, in other words, breathe life into a cell. This new technology uses the DNA of plants and bacteria to produce cheap, environmentally friendly energy. The applications of this discovery are endless, as Mr. Patrinos explains. It can be used in the production of biofuels, new "living" vaccines, food and clean water. It is a technology expected to bring about an energy revolution in the next few years. On the other hand, its potential misuse could be very dangerous and poses ethical and moral questions. According to Mr. Patrinos, however, creating a synthetic human DNA is not the intention of the scientific team at Craig Venter Institute.

ANDREAS ZAPATINAS:

The talented automobile designer

As a child, he was enthralled by the sight of the powerful, fast cars competing in the Acropolis rally speeding by him like colorful arrows, stirring up the dust in the small provincial town he lived in. Afterwards he would go home and take out his metal toy cars and design, on the margins of his copybooks, new, futuristic cars and dream of one day making his own cars.

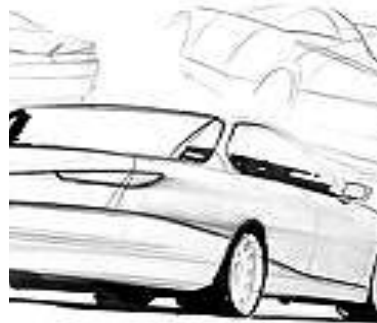
Andreas Zapatinas, the talented automobile designer whose name has for years figured in the international automobile industry, having worked as chief designer with Subaru, Alfa Romeo, BMW and Fiat, told ANA-MPA in an interview that he has been designing cars as far back as he can remember, from his childhood years.

"Federico Fellini, too, appears to have been influenced by a similar scene in his childhood, because he uses it in his (1937 semi-biographical coming-of-age) film 'Amarcord' ('I Remember'), with a group of young boys dreaming of being racing drivers in car rallies," Zapatinas spoke in Thessaloniki, where he attended an event on "Competitiveness through Design" hosted by the Federation of Northern Greece Industries and the Auto Business Review.

"The automobile interested me as a means of autonomy but also as an object, impressively large in space, that gives you the sense that you can travel everywhere," says Zapatinas, depicting the car as the horse of the modern era, as it is also a "living and breathing" means of transportation

that also heats up and grows cold.

"When I begin a design, the hand draws the first line, which is not necessarily straight, and gradually, with the collaboration of the mind and the senses, I progress, having a challenge before me to create something new. Sometimes you have to break with the facts and re-design objects that have remained the same for years, simply because it just happens," he says, citing as an example his



collaboration with Kleemann, where he designed an avant-garde curvilinear elevator cabin, giving users a different feeling.

Zapatinas observed there has been a decline in the automotive industry, chiefly in the western world, over the past decade, but opined that this is only a transitional stage for the next five years and predicted that the Chinese automobile industry will play an important role in the future.

"The car has started to be seen now as the 'bad boy', due to cost and environmental pollution, and the people in the Western coun-

tries are seeing it with a 'different eye'," he explains, noting that the changes in society are already reflected in the industries, which are gradually changing the same product to serve the needs of the future.

"So long as the basic use and relationship of the product are changing, so, too, will the product itself change," he predicts.

Andreas Zapatinas, a world-renowned automobile and industrial designer, was born in Athens in 1957, and studied at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena California, from where he graduated in 1986.

He worked as a designer at the Fiat Centro Stile from 1988 until 1994, where he met BMW chief designer Chris Bangle and followed him to BMW. At Fiat, Zapatinas was chief exterior designer of the Fiat Barchetta and

contributed to the design of the Fiat Coupe, and also contributed to the design of the Fiat Bravo.

Four years later, in 1998, he became chief designer at the Alfa Romeo Centro Stile, contributing to the design of the Alfa Romeo 145, 156 sports wagon, 159 and Brera, while he also has been credited for the unique for its time rear end design of the Alfa Romeo 147.

In 2002, Zapatinas moved to Subaru in Japan as Head of Advanced Design.

His pioneering work has put its mark on the BMW 1 series, particularly in the coupe and cabrio models, and the 5 and 3 series, as well as the newly-circulated X5 and X6 series. Zapatinas has also contributed to the design of a variety of showcase models such as the Subaru B9 sc, R1e and B5tph.

He also contributed to the external, internal and general design of automobiles depending on the needs in each case, and was a major contributor to the design of the Alfa Romeo GTA, its accessories and promotional material, as well as in designing the Subaru stands at major automobile salons (Geneva, Frankfurt, Tokyo).

Zapatinas has further taught at design at Schools in Italy and Switzerland and, since September 2006, shortly after his departure from Subaru, he has been designing and acting as consultant for automotive industries and other branches of industry.

(source: ana-mpa)

