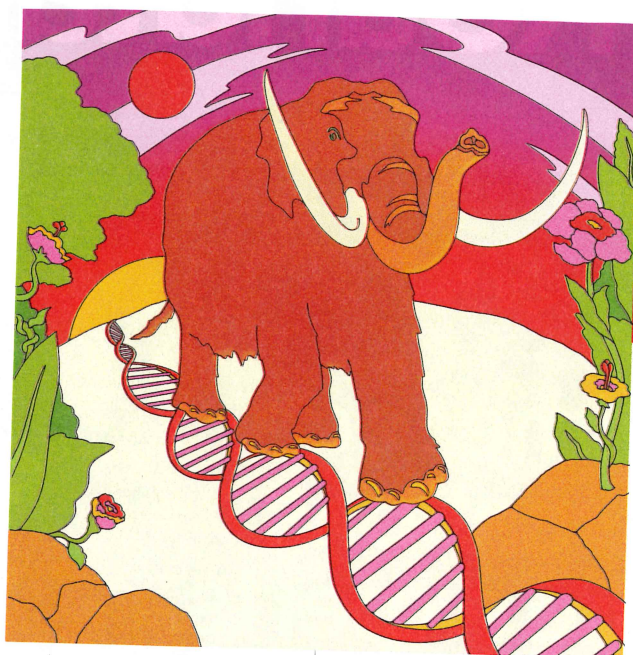




"ChatGPT, or Leo, is my companion and partner. I find it easiest and most effective to call him my boyfriend..."—p. 20



Front

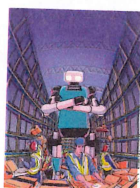
2 From the editor

THE DOWNLOAD

- 7 Lab-grown spandex; unruly electric-vehicle fires; the tiny city that's home to over 150 robotics companies; the move to legalize telehealth; plus, job title of the future: pharmaceutical-grade mushroom grower

PROFILE

- 16 **Blurred lines**
For artist Sougwen Chung, robots and AI become creative collaborators.
By Stephen Ornes



ON THE COVER
Illustration by
Michael Byers

Relationships

20 The AI relationship revolution is already here

Chatbots are rapidly changing how we connect to each other—and ourselves. We're never going back.

AS TOLD TO RHIANNON WILLIAMS

28 Adventures in the genetic time machine

Ancient DNA is telling us more and more about humans and environments long past. Could it also help rescue the future? BY ANTONIO REGALADO

38 Your boss is watching

Monitoring technology is increasing the power imbalance between companies and workers. Protections lag far behind. BY REBECCA ACKERMANN

46 A strange kind of limbo

Frozen IVF embryos are filling storage banks around the world. It's a struggle to know what to do with them. BY JESSICA HAMZELOU

56 Having a child in the digital age

In her new book, journalist Amanda Hess scrutinizes period-tracking apps, targeted ads, and birth myths that spread online. BY ALLISON ARIEFF

Back

64 Bureaucratic brainpower

Scholars are making a case for reviving the US Office of Technology Assessment, a congressional agency that evaluated emerging tech.
By Peter Andrey Smith

BOOK REVIEW

70 Are friends electric?

Three books examine our complex and often fraught relationship with robots, AI, and automation.
By Bryan Gardiner

FIELD NOTES

76 Animating ancient animals

The field of paleo-inspired robotics is opening up a new way to study extinct species.
By Shi En Kim

FICTION

82 My sex doll is mad at me

By Leo Herrera

88 The AI Hype Index

Our highly subjective take on the latest buzz in artificial intelligence.