



National Technical University of Athens
School of Civil Engineering

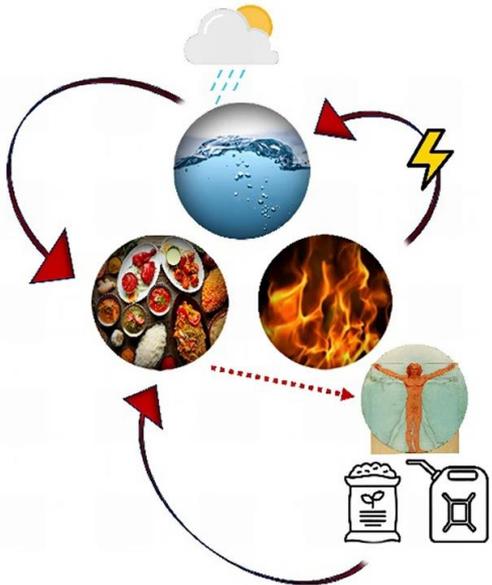
Art and Infrastructures

G.-Fivos Sargentis

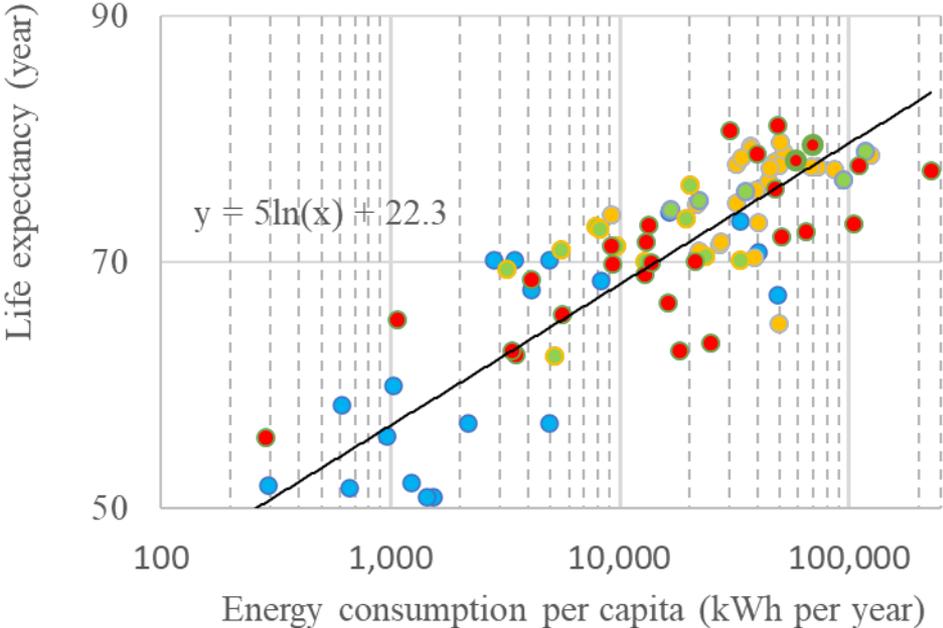
December 2025

Human needs

Pyramid of human needs (update)



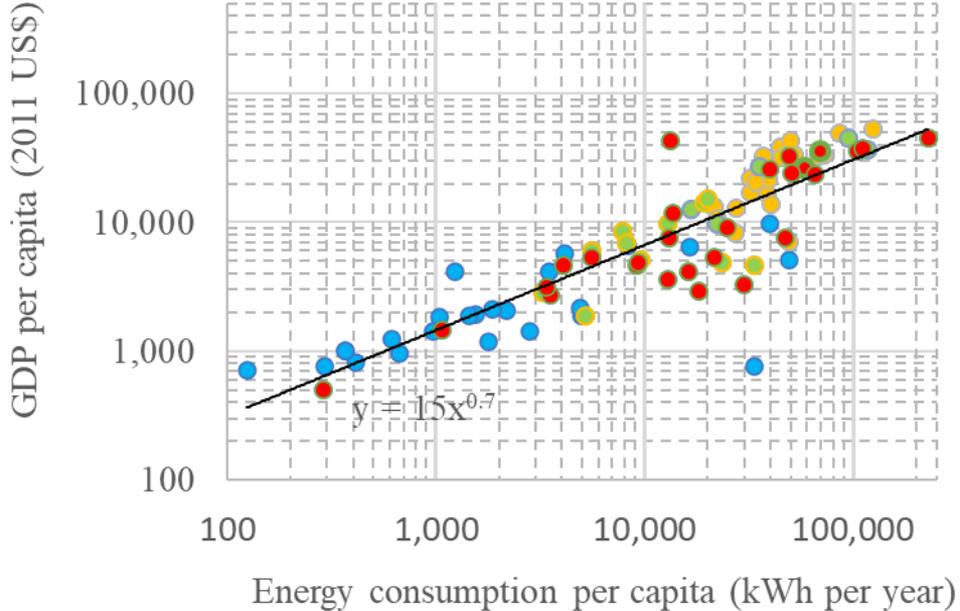
Energy and life expectancy(2020)



● Africa ● Europe ● N. America ● S. America ● Australia ● Asia

Sargentis, G.F.; Lagaros, N.D.; Cascella, G.L.; Koutsoyiannis, D. Threats in Water–Energy–Food–Land Nexus by the 2022 Military and Economic Conflict. Land 2022, 11, 1569. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land11091569>

Energy and GDP per capita (2020)



● Africa ● Europe ● N. America ● S. America ● Australia ● Asia

Sargentis, G.F.; Lagaros, N.D.; Cascella, G.L.; Koutsoyiannis, D. Threats in Water–Energy–Food–Land Nexus by the 2022 Military and Economic Conflict. *Land* 2022, 11, 1569. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land11091569>

In order to cover the needs,
we need infrastructures

What form should these
infrastructure have?

Why beautiful?

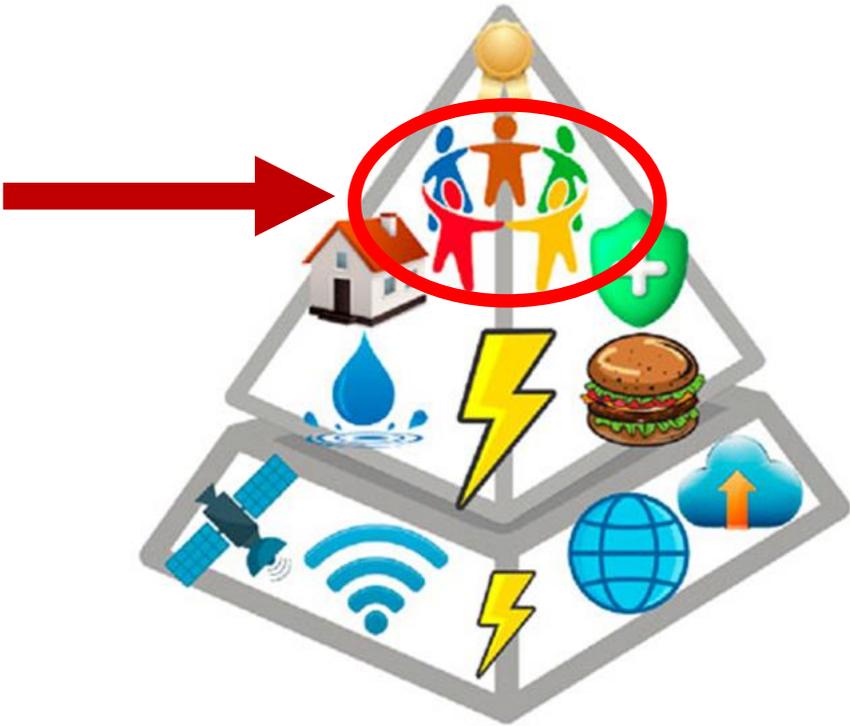
“The history of civilization has never valued a construction merely because it stands upright, but because it appears to stand beautifully.”

“Every construction is a means for creating an architectural form whose purpose is to serve the human being, not only practically, but also aesthetically.”
(P. Michelis, 1954)



Human needs

Pyramid of human needs (update)



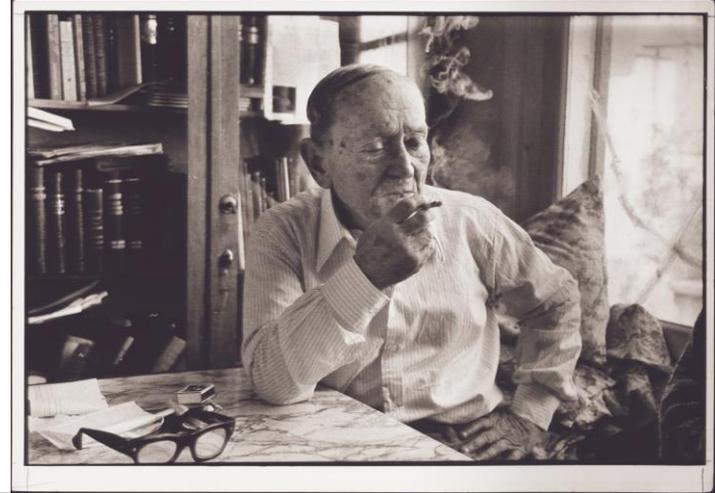
What is beautiful?

«... There can be no objective rule of taste which shall determine by means of concepts what is beautiful. ... To seek for a principle of taste which shall furnish, by means of definite concepts, a universal criterion of the beautiful, is fruitless trouble; because what is sought is impossible and intrinsically self-contradictory.»

Emanuel Kant (1724-1804)

«For everything there is a law, but not for the eyes... If there is one, it's illegal...»

Ioannis Skaribas (1893-1984)



The variability in the perception of the beauty



Ancient
Egypt

Ancient
Greece



Medieval
Japan



Renaissance
Italy



18th c.
W. Europe

Today



The variability in the perception of the beauty

Ancient
Greece



Today?



Renaissance
Italy

18th c.
W. Europe
N. America

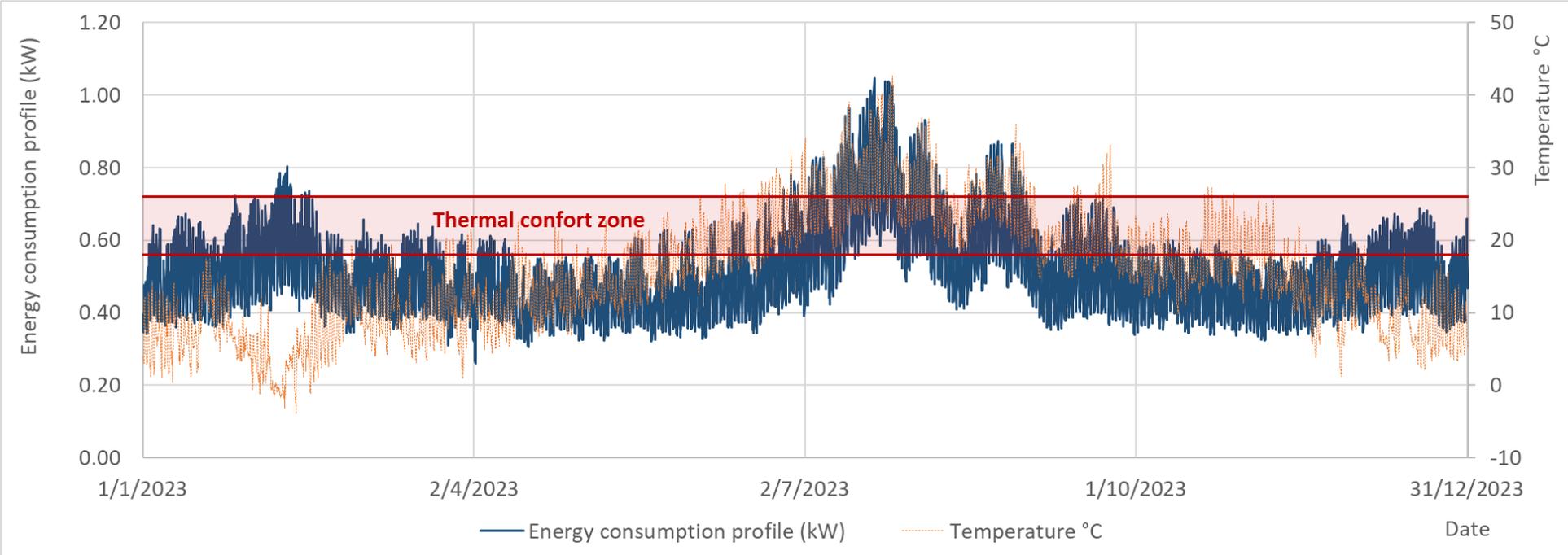


Production and consumption of energy



Markantonis, D.; Sargentis, G.-F.; Dimitriadis, P.; Iliopoulou, T.; Siganou, A.; Moraiti, K.; Nikolinakou, M.; Meletopoulos, I.T.; Mamassis, N.; Koutsoyiannis, D. Stochastic Evaluation of the Investment Risk by the Scale of Water Infrastructures—Case Study: The Municipality of West Mani (Greece). *World* 2023, 4, 1-20.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/world4010001>

Energy consumption profile (per capita)



Production and consumption of energy

Energy needs per capita 30 000 kWh/year (electricity ~1/6)

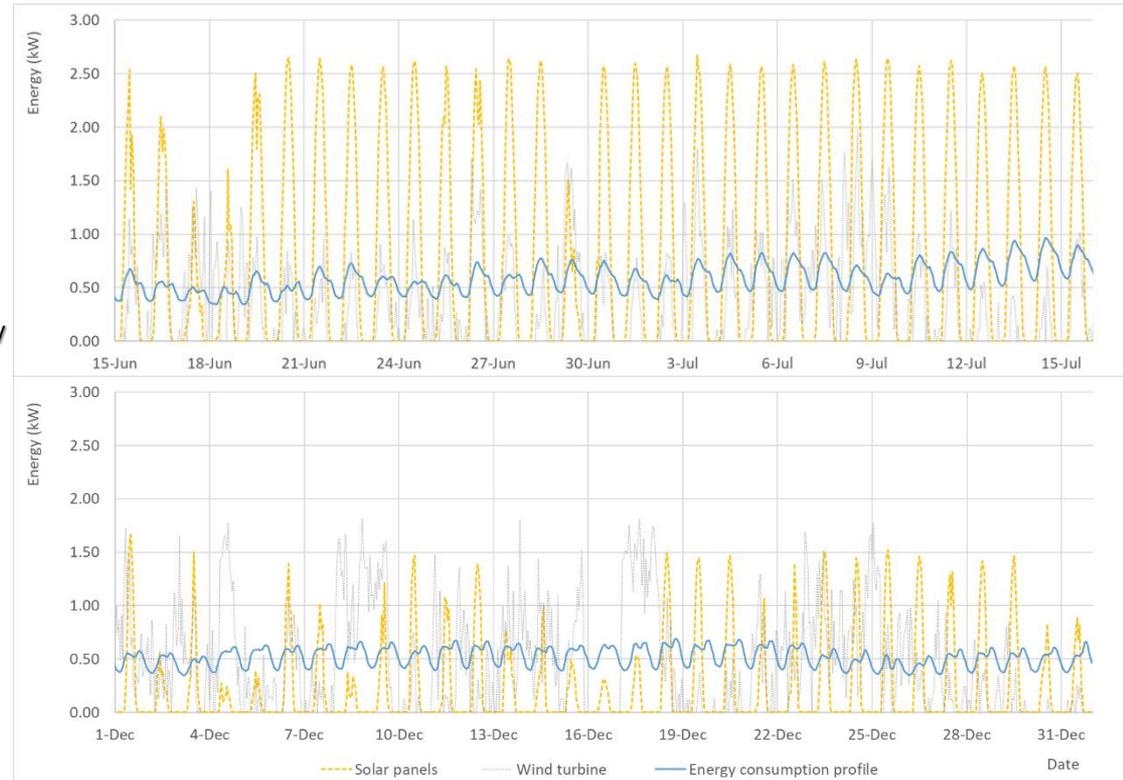
Energy needs per capita: 4,567 kWh

Solar panels annual production 4,567 kWh corresponds to 13.7 m²

- No battery: 32% reliability
- Battery 6 kWh (half of the daily energy production): 71% reliability

Wind turbine 3 MW annual production 8,359,826 kWh corresponds to energy needs of 1,830 capita

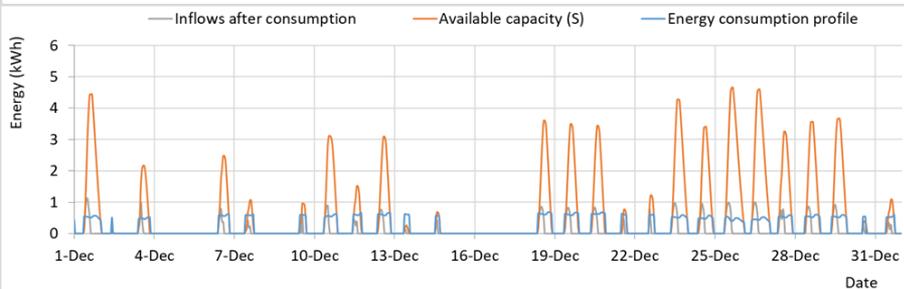
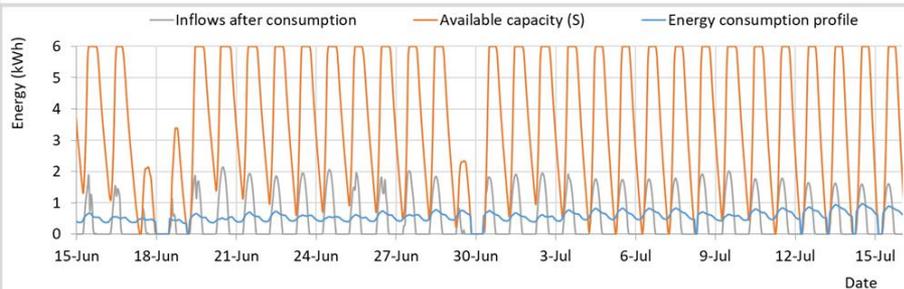
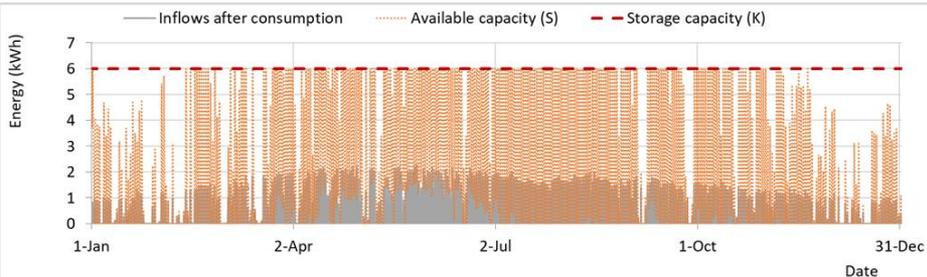
- No battery: 44% reliability
- Battery (half of the daily energy production): 70% reliability



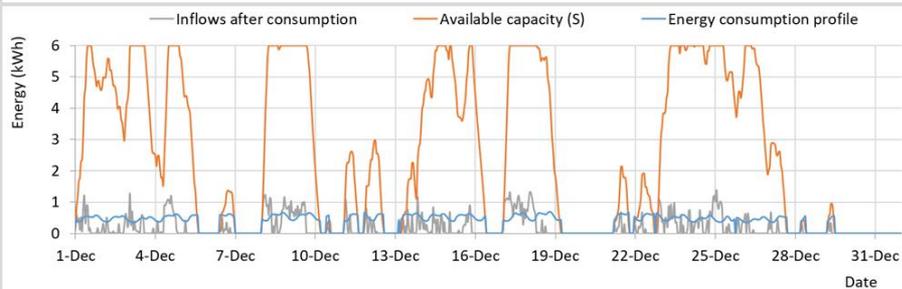
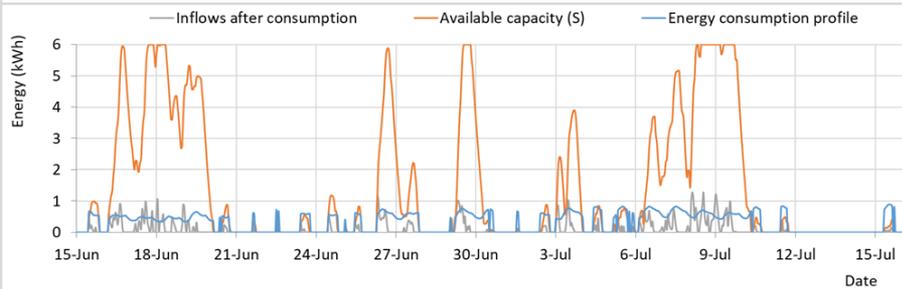
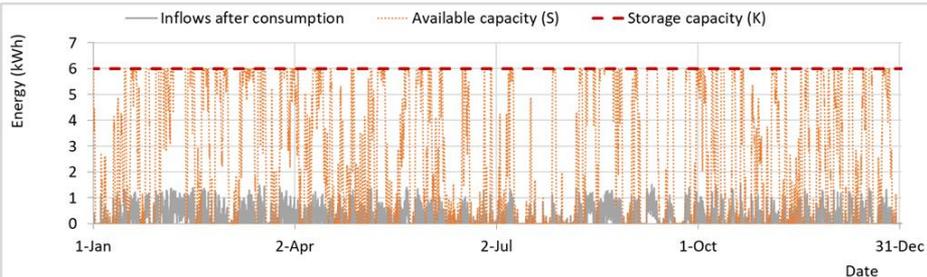
Production and consumption of energy (battery)

Battery ~1/2 of average daily production of energy

Solar



Wind



What can go wrong

Batteries

In 2024, the available batteries could store only 5 minutes of the energy produced by renewables.

By 2050, they are expected to be able to store 47 minutes.

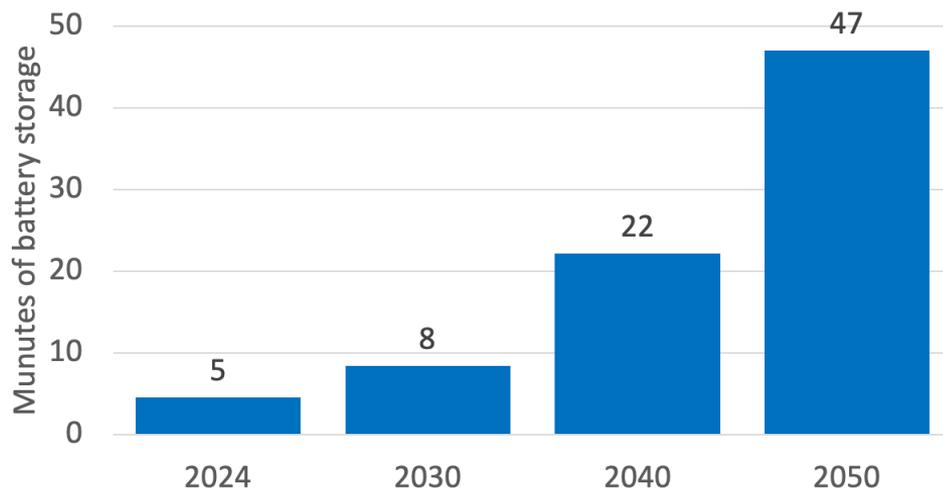
However, achieving 100% renewable energy requires storage capacity for 40–50 days.

No, batteries won't save us

In 2024, batteries can supply nearly 5 minutes of world's electricity

Even in 2050, with 15x batteries, they can supply just 47 minutes

Problem? 100% solar and wind needs 3 months, or ~2,600x more

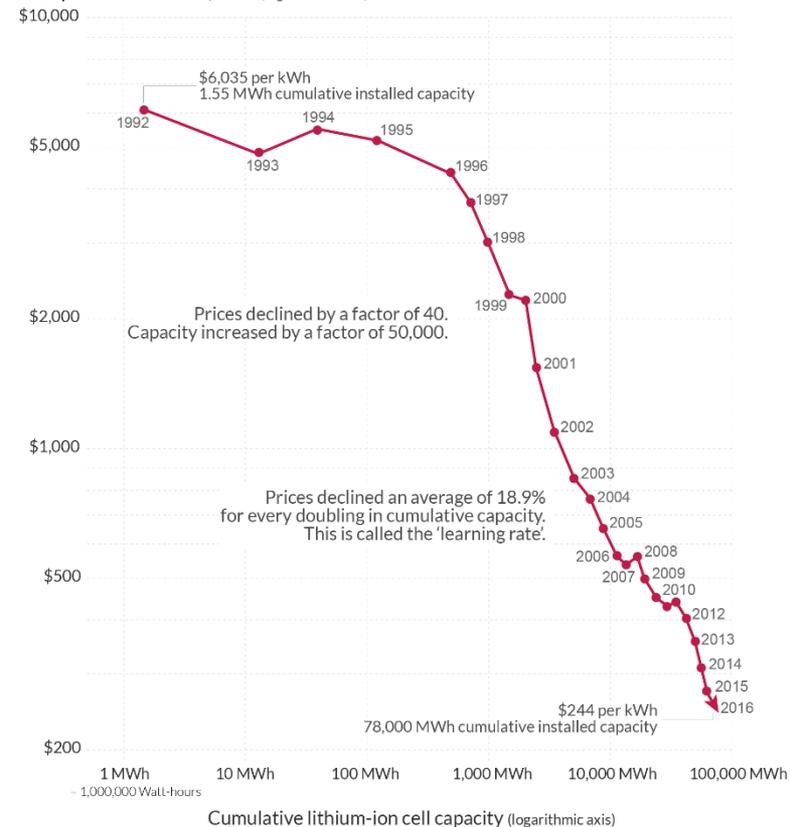


From Biden's Energy Information Administration's International Energy Outlook, October 2023, <https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/ieo/data.php>, battery storage from Table E01.cap and global generation from Table E01.gen. In 2024, EIA estimates global battery generation at 62.9GW, and each holds 4 hours (<https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/ieo/narrative/index.php>), meaning 251.4GWh. Since electricity production is 29,065TWh/year or 55.3GWh/minute, that leaves 4.5 minutes of storage. In reality, throughput is not anywhere close to covering everything. Instead, the total battery capacity will be able to cover 1.9% of all electricity generation for 4 hours (1.9%*4 hours = 4.5 minutes). 2023 paper "Storage requirements to mitigate intermittent renewable energy sources: analysis for the US Northeast" (<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fenvs.2023.1076830>), estimates that a renewable energy future solely using solar power needs 22.4% of annual electricity generation in storage, and wind 24.9%. The average is 23.65% or almost three months of storage, 124,390 minutes or 2,647 times more than storage in 2050. [Twitter.com/bjornlomborg](https://twitter.com/bjornlomborg)

Price and market size of lithium-ion batteries since 1992

Our World in Data

Price per kilowatt-hour; kWh (logarithmic axis)

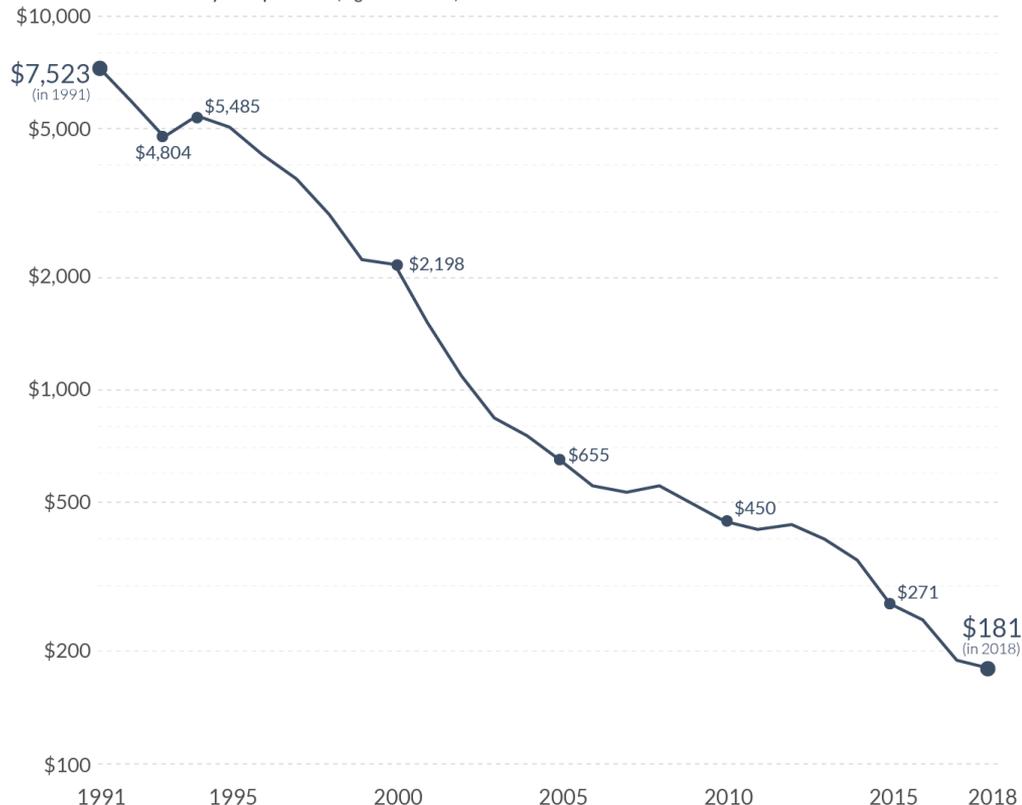


Prices are adjusted for inflation and given in 2018 US-\$ per kilowatt-hour (kWh).
 Source: Micah Ziegler and Jessika Trancik (2021). Re-examining rates of lithium-ion battery technology improvement and cost decline.
 OurWorldInData.org - Research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems. Licensed under CC-BY by the author Hannah Ritchie.

The price of lithium-ion batteries fell by 97%

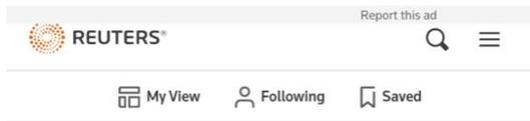
Our World in Data

Price of lithium-ion battery cells per kWh (logarithmic axis)



Prices are adjusted for inflation and given in 2018 US-\$ per kilowatt-hour (kWh).
 Source: Micah Ziegler and Jessika Trancik (2021). Re-examining rates of lithium-ion battery technology improvement and cost decline.
 OurWorldInData.org - Research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems. Licensed under CC-BY by the author Hannah Ritchie.

What can go wrong



Energy | Fuel Oil | Wind

Siemens Energy shares slide 39% after company seeks guarantees from German govt

Reuters

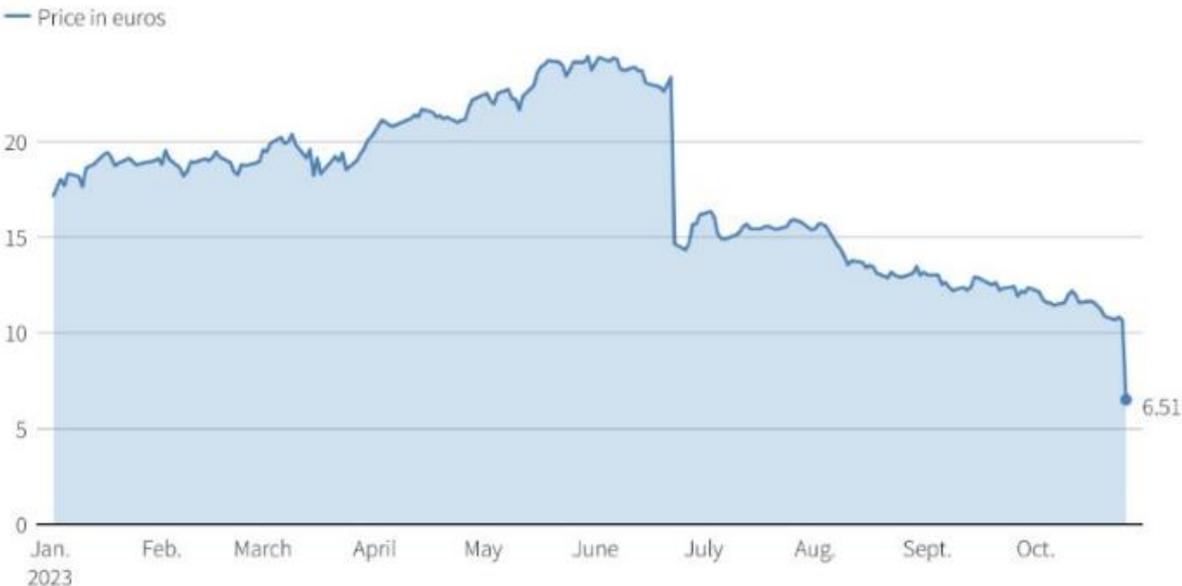
October 26, 2023 6:45 AM CDT · Updated 10 min ago



The logo of energy technology company Siemens Energy is displayed during the LNG 2023 energy trade show in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, July 12, 2023.
REUTERS/Chris Helgren/File Photo [Acquire Licensing Rights](#)

Siemens Energy shares

Shares of the power engineering company plunged after it revealed it was in talks with the German government about state guarantees.



Source: LSEG | Reuters, Oct. 26, 2023 | By Tom Sims

What can go wrong

≡ pv magazine



Weekend Read: A 10 GW time bomb

It is estimated that 10 GW of solar modules in Germany suffer from prematurely aging backsheets, with sites of all sizes affected. **pv magazine Germany's Cornelia Lichner** looks at how to detect and repair such defects.

SEPTEMBER 9, 2023 CORNELIA LICHNER

INSURANCE MODULES & UPSTREAM MANUFACTURING QUALITY UTILITY SCALE PV
GERMANY



If the back foil tears, it is only a matter of time before the stability of a module fails completely.

Photo: Bernhard Weinreich, HaWe Engineering

ParisTech REVIEW

ABOUT US

INDUSTRIES

BUSINESS

SOCIETY

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The German solar energy crisis: looking for the right incentive scheme

ParisTech Review / Editors / April 13th, 2012

[green economy](#) [renewable energy](#) [technology adoption](#) [technology and business](#)

The German photovoltaic industry is in chaos. Overwhelmed by the boom of solar home systems, the government has had to brutally halt subsidies whose costs were threatening to... go through the roof. Caught between Chinese competition and the falling price of solar panels, several of the flagships of this young industry are now on the brink of bankruptcy. After having enjoyed a heyday of several years, the sector suddenly has to adjust to new conditions. And, if it hopes to recover, must adapt.

3. Sustainable Development

27. Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept of sustainable development does imply limits - not absolute limits but limitations imposed by the present state of technology and social organization on environmental resources and by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities. But technology and social organization can be both managed and improved to make way for a new era of economic growth. The Commission believes that widespread poverty is no longer inevitable. Poverty is not only an evil in itself, but sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations for a better life. A world in which poverty is endemic will always be prone to ecological and other catastrophes.

**to meet the needs of the present without
compromising the needs of the future**

What can go wrong



Fragments of wind turbine blades await burial at the Casper Regional Landfill in Wyoming. Photographer: Benjamin Rasmussen for Bloomberg Green

Green | Energy & Science

Wind Turbine Blades Can't Be Recycled, So They're Piling Up in Landfills



© Benjamin Rasmussen/Getty Images

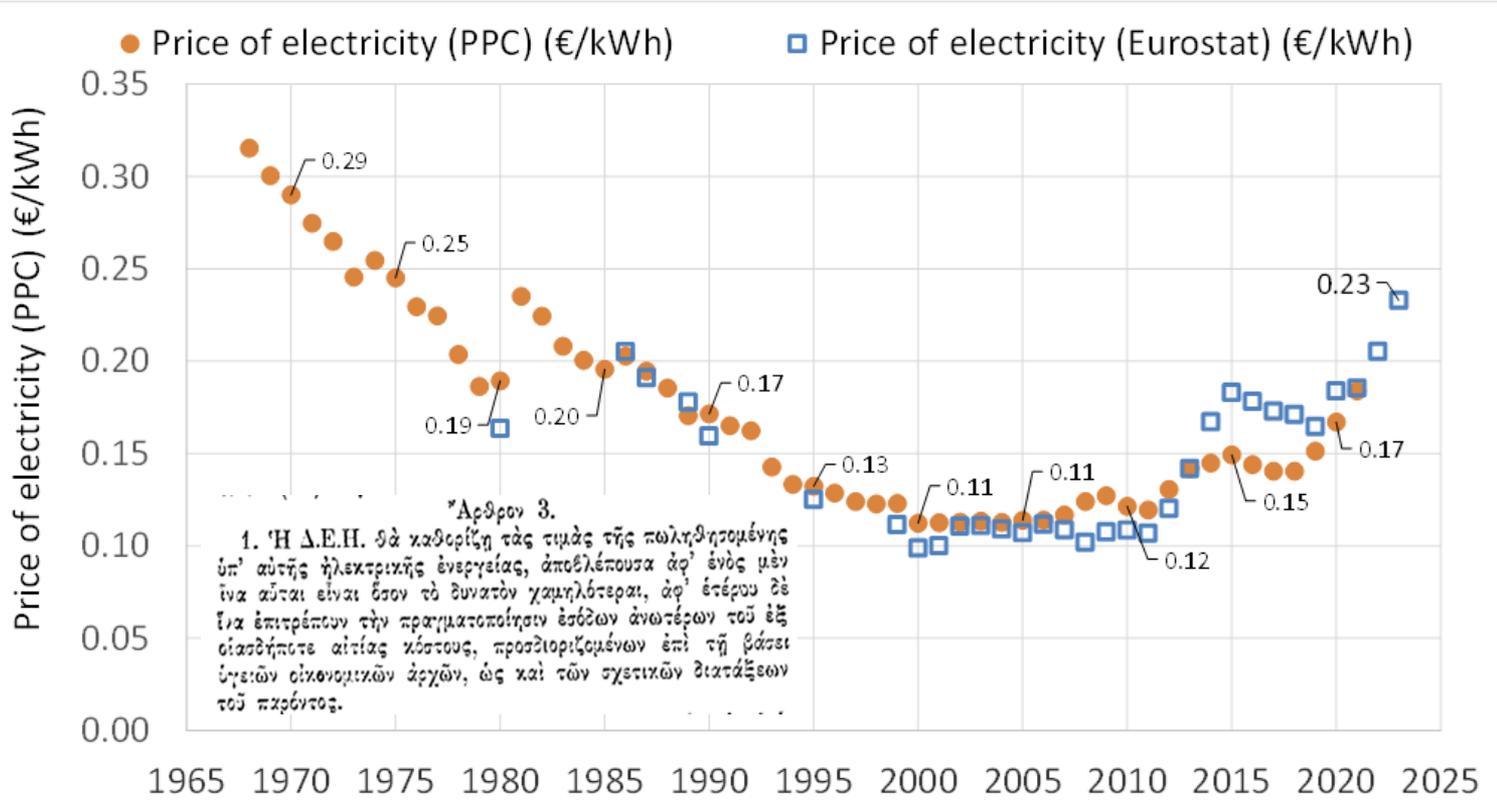
The cost of electricity in Greece (1965-2023)



Άρθρον 3.

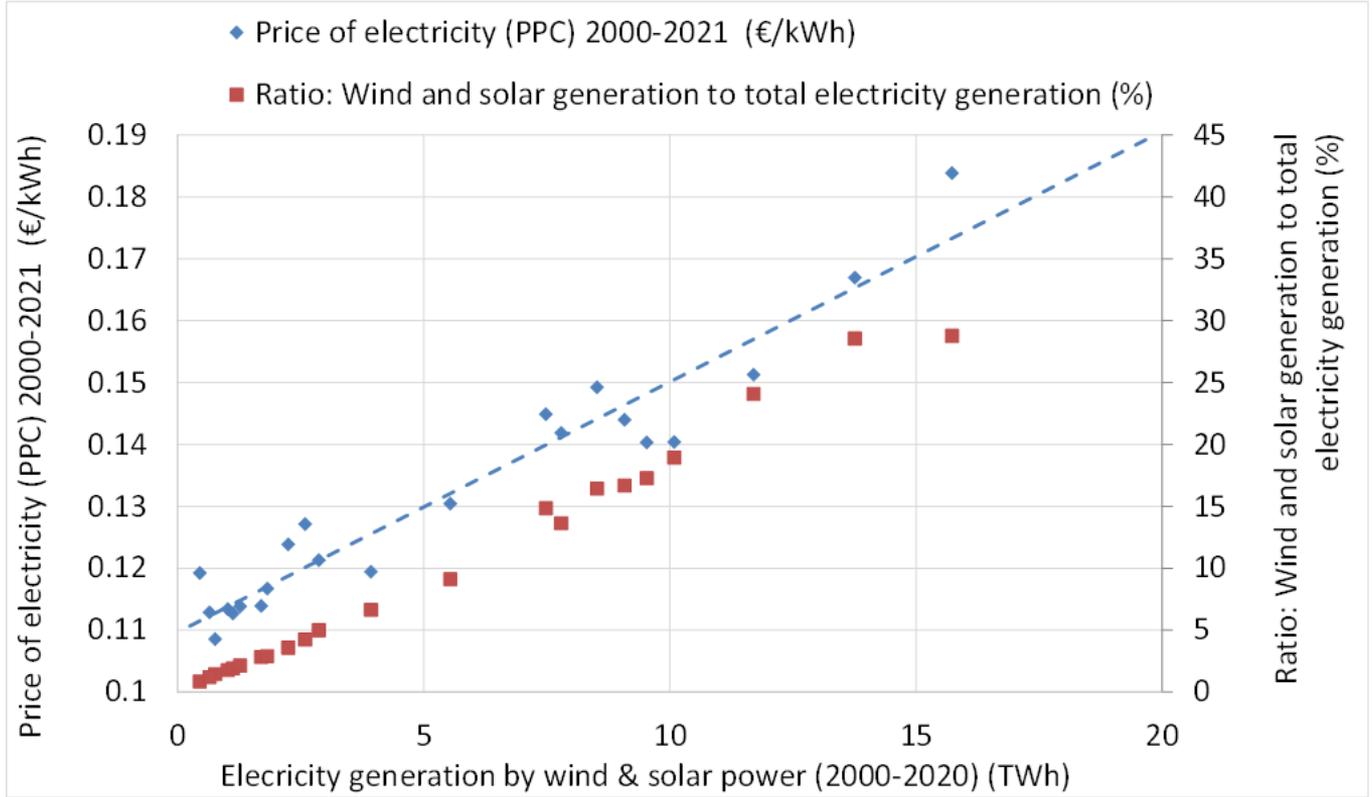
1. Ἡ Δ.Ε.Η. θὰ καθορίζῃ τὰς τιμὰς τῆς πωληθησομένης ὑπ' αὐτῆς ἠλεκτρικῆς ἐνεργείας, ἀποβλέπουσα ἀφ' ἐνός μὲν ἵνα αὐταὶ εἶναι ὅσον τὸ δυνατὸν χαμηλότεραι, ἀφ' ἑτέρου δὲ ἵνα ἐπιτρέπων τὴν πραγματοποιήσιν ἐσόδων ἀνωτέρων τοῦ ἐξ οἰασθῆναι αἰτίας κόστους, προσδιοριζομένων ἐπὶ τῇ βάσει ὑγειῶν οἰκονομικῶν ἀρχῶν, ὡς καὶ τῶν σχετικῶν διατάξεων τοῦ παρόντος.

The cost of electricity in Greece (1965-2023)



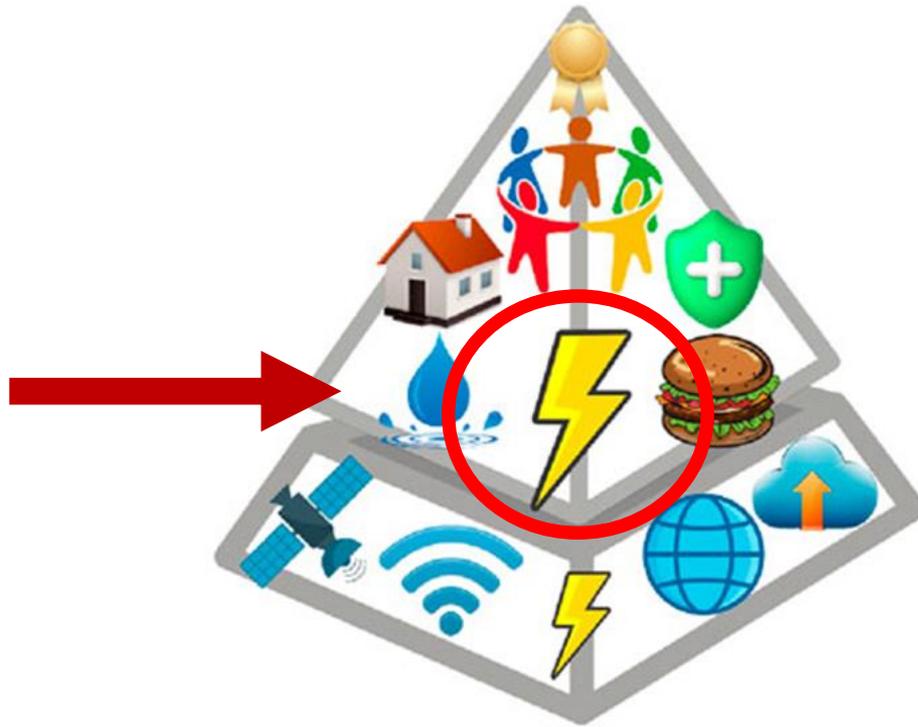
Sargentis, G.-F.; Ioannidis, R.; Mamassis, N.; Zoukos, V.; Koutsyoyiannis D. A review of the energy policy in Greece in the last 50 years and its implications to prosperity (Under review) Preprint at Researchgate: <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.13834.27846>

The energy mix in Greece (1990-2023)



Sargentis, G.-F.; Ioannidis, R.; Mamassis, N.; Zoukos, V.; Koutsyiannis D. A review of the energy policy in Greece in the last 50 years and its implications to prosperity (Under review)
Preprint at Researchgate: <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.13834.27846>

What can go wrong: are they useful?



What can go wrong: industrial landscapes



Question: Why aren't we concerned with their aesthetics?



Question: They are considered less disruptive than pillars.

Why are we concerned with their aesthetics and not with pillars?

Industrial landscapes



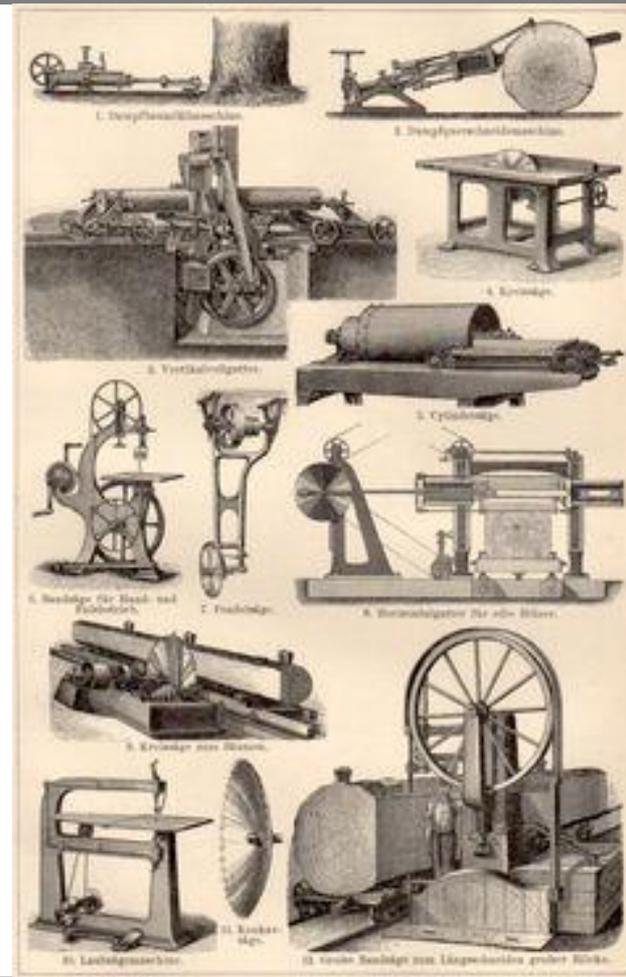
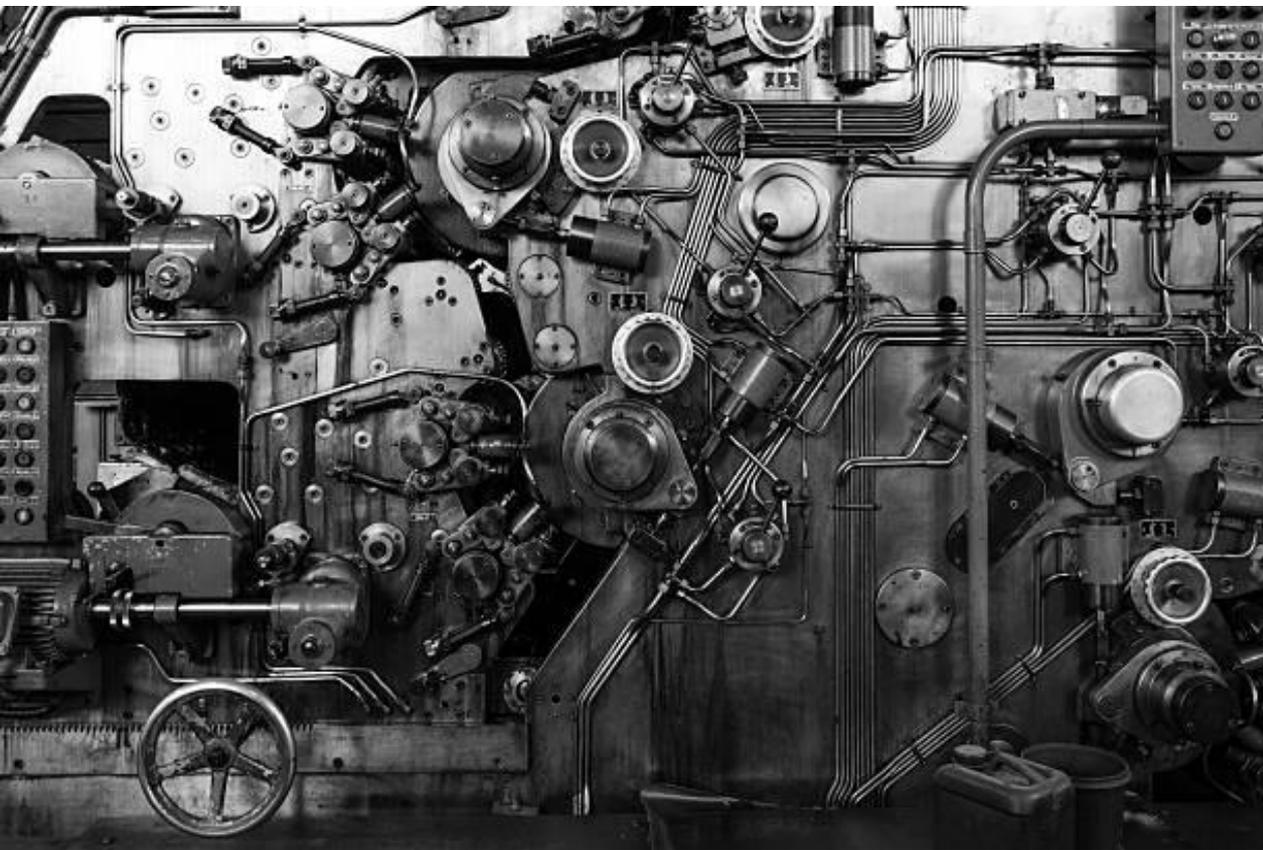
What can go wrong



Can art be useful?



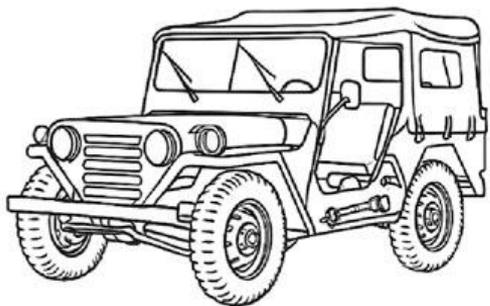
Can art be useful?



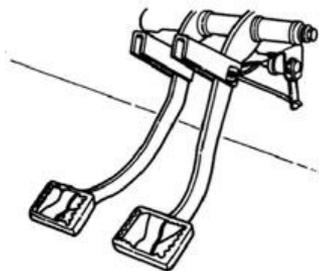
Can art be useful?



Can art be useful?



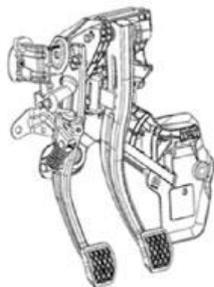
(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



Can art be useful? "form follows function"



An "umbrella on four wheels" that could carry four adults and 50 kg of farm goods across a ploughed field without breaking a basket of eggs.

Can art be useful? "form follows function"



A tough little four-wheel mule that could take four soldiers, a machine gun, and a week of rations up a steep hill, cross rivers, and still pull a stuck tank out of the mud.

How to communicate a message with art

Emotion, critique, and ideas into reality

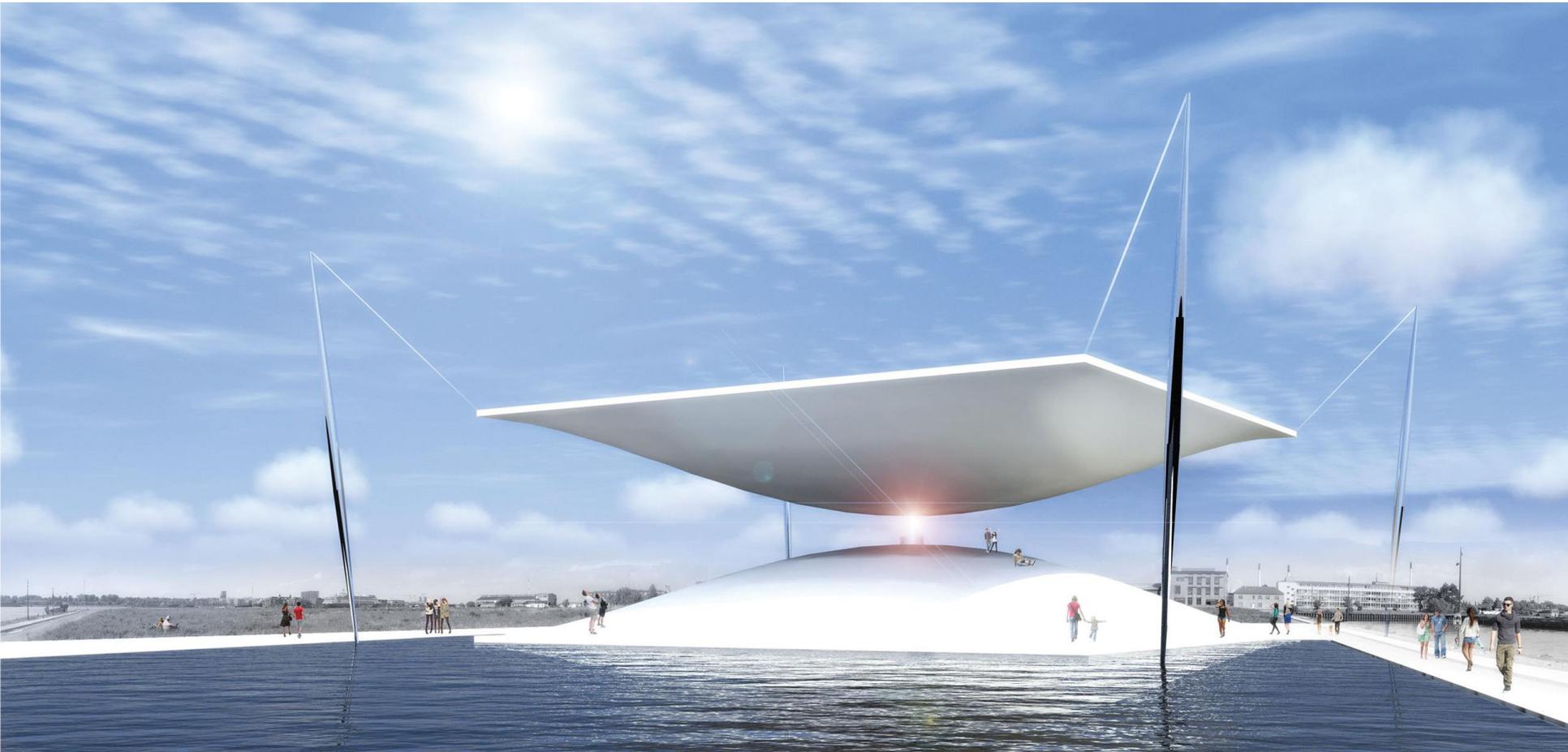
- Art doesn't just decorate – it speaks when words fail.
- From cave paintings to protest graffiti, humans have always used images to send urgent messages.



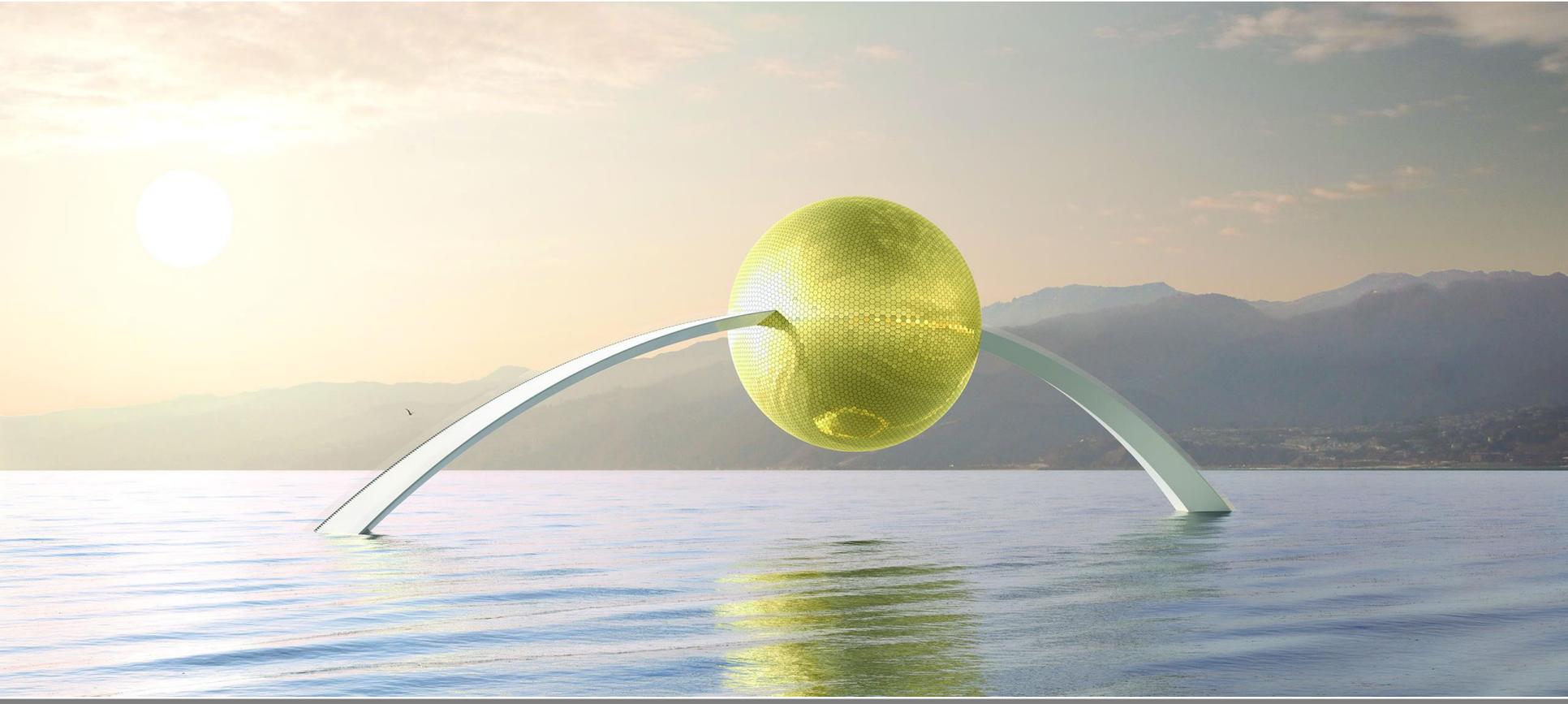
Emotion, critique, and ideas into reality



LAGI: Land Art Generator (<https://landartgenerator.org/>)



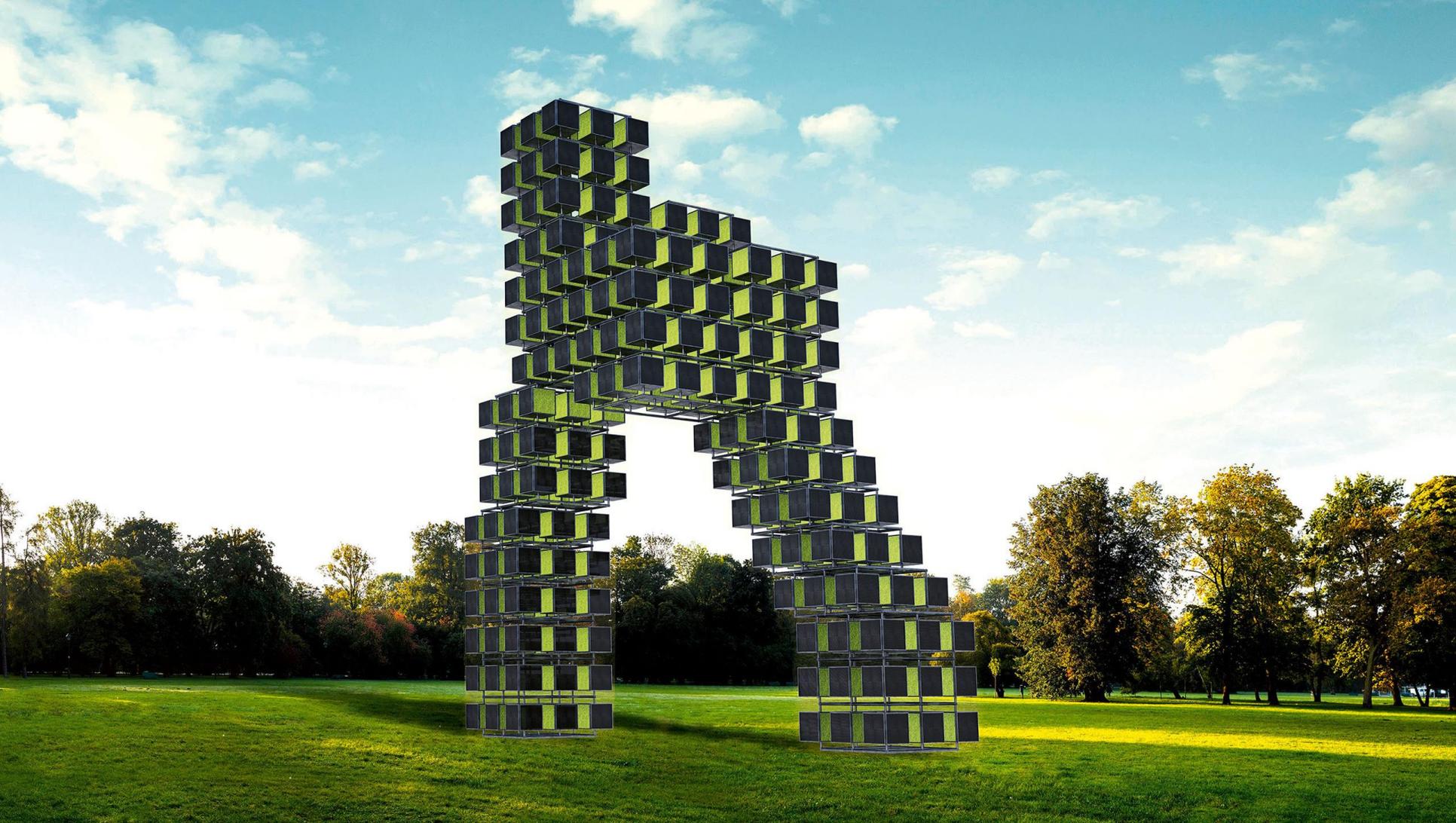
LAGI: Land Art Generator (<https://landartgenerator.org/>)











Understanding of the sources

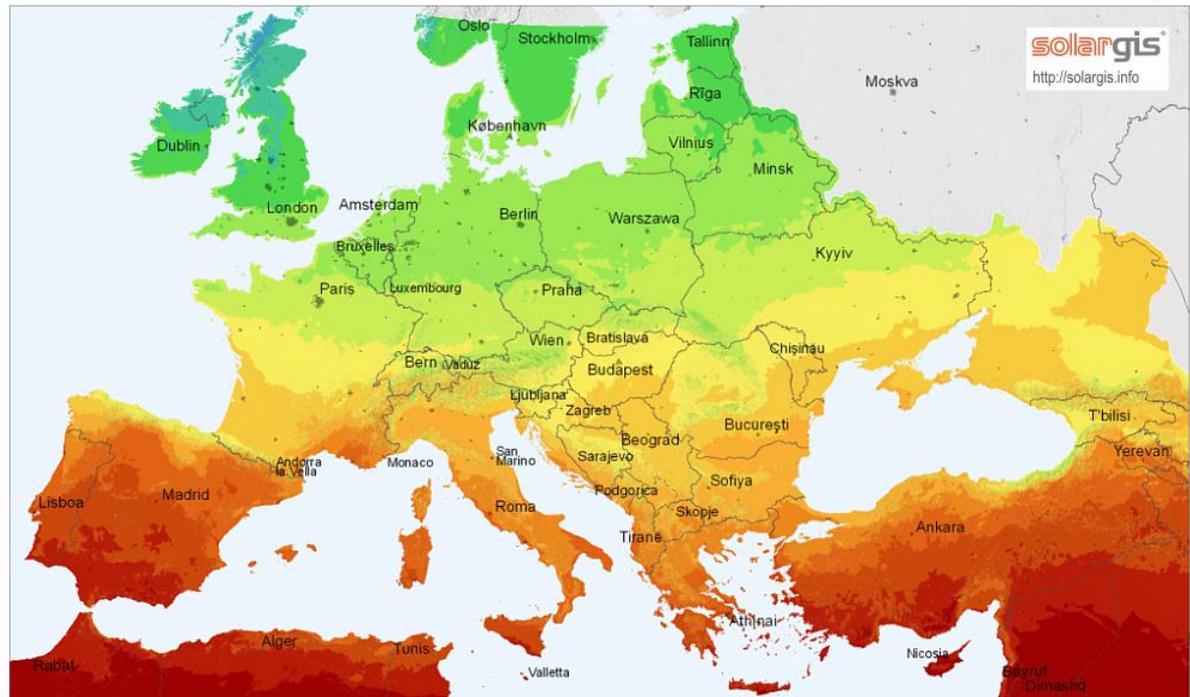
The basic principals

Energy sources

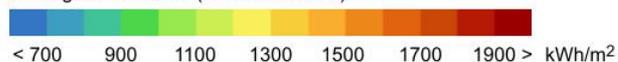
Europe Average Daily Solar Hours

Global horizontal irradiation

Europe



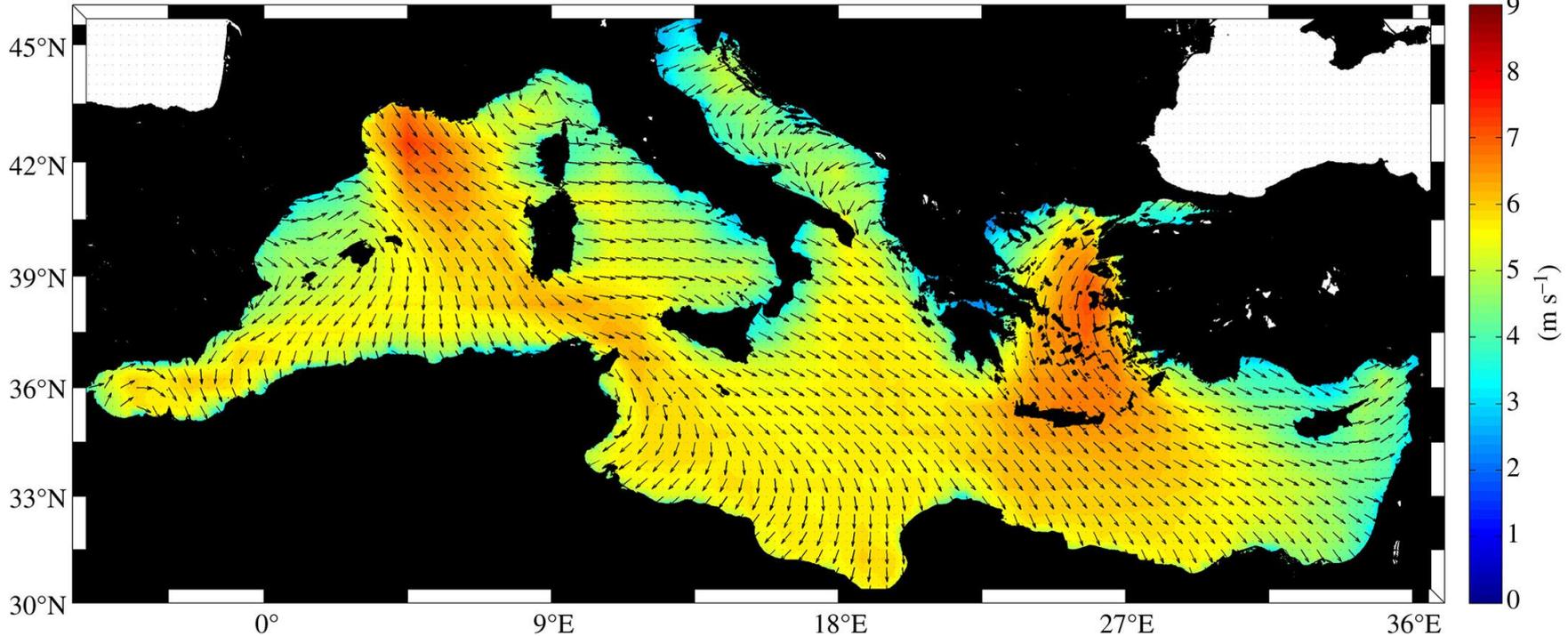
Average annual sum (4/2004 - 3/2010)



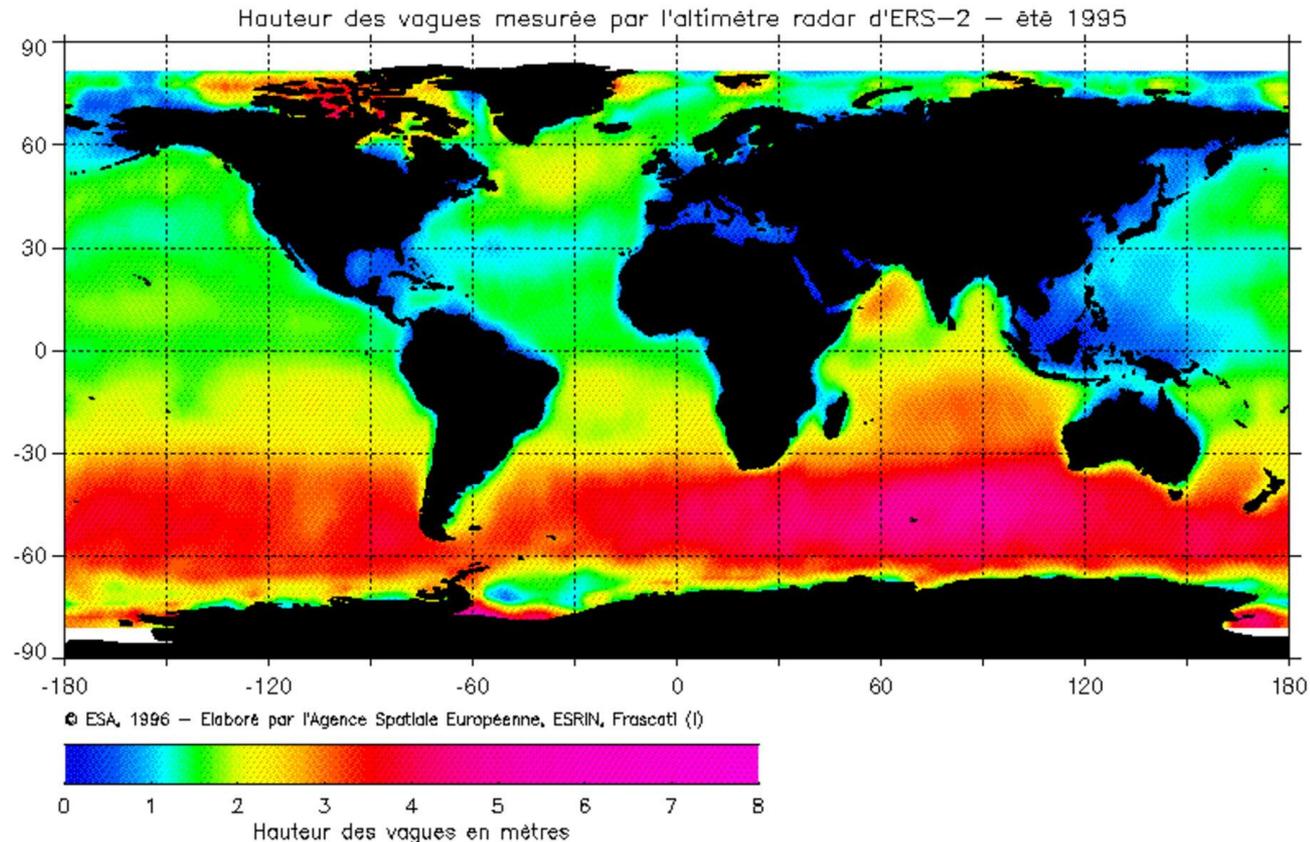
© 2011 GeoModel Solar s.r.o.

Offshore wind climate analysis and variability in the Mediterranean Sea

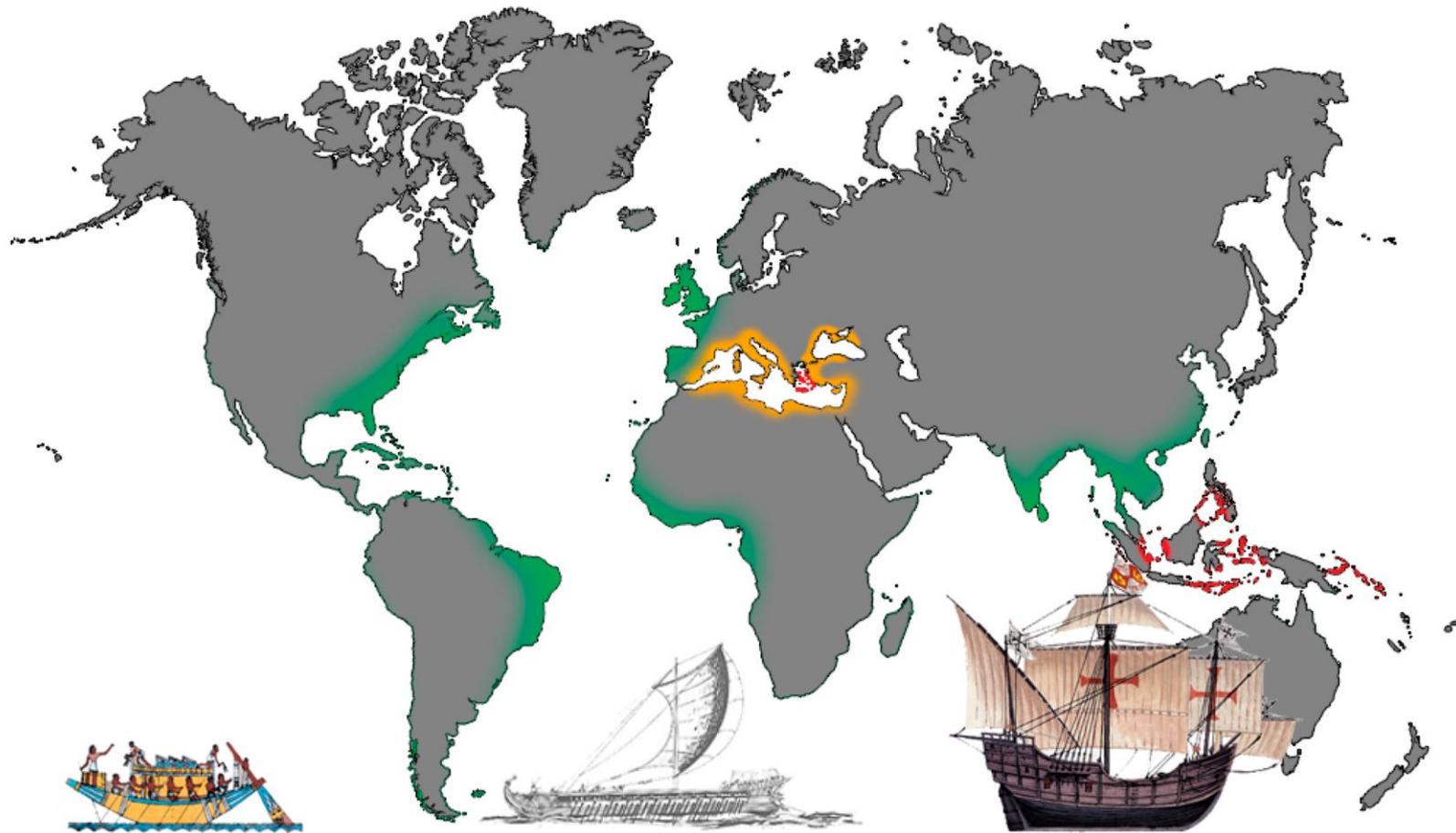
ERA-Interim, 1979–2014: Mean annual wind speed and direction



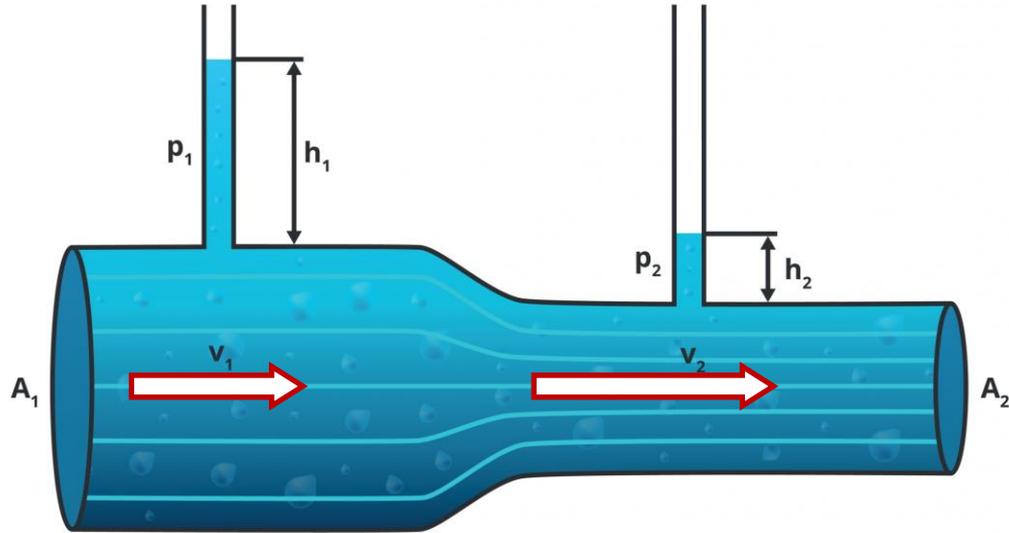
Significant Wave Height



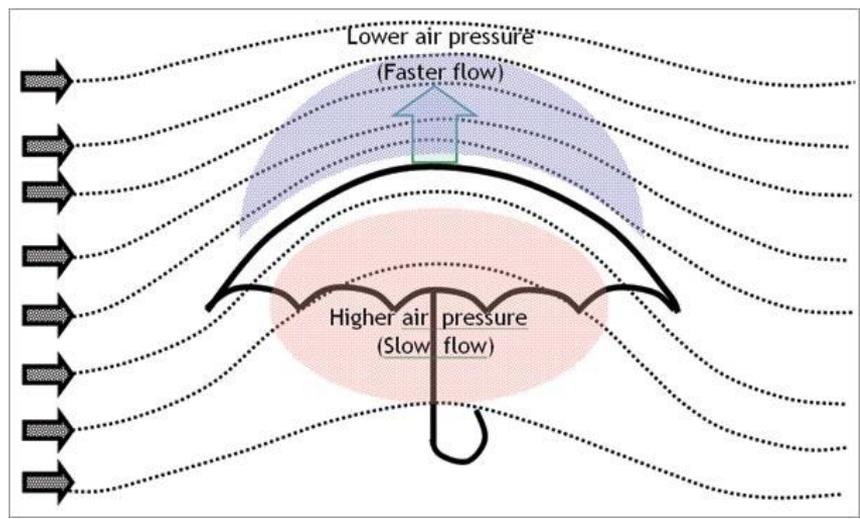
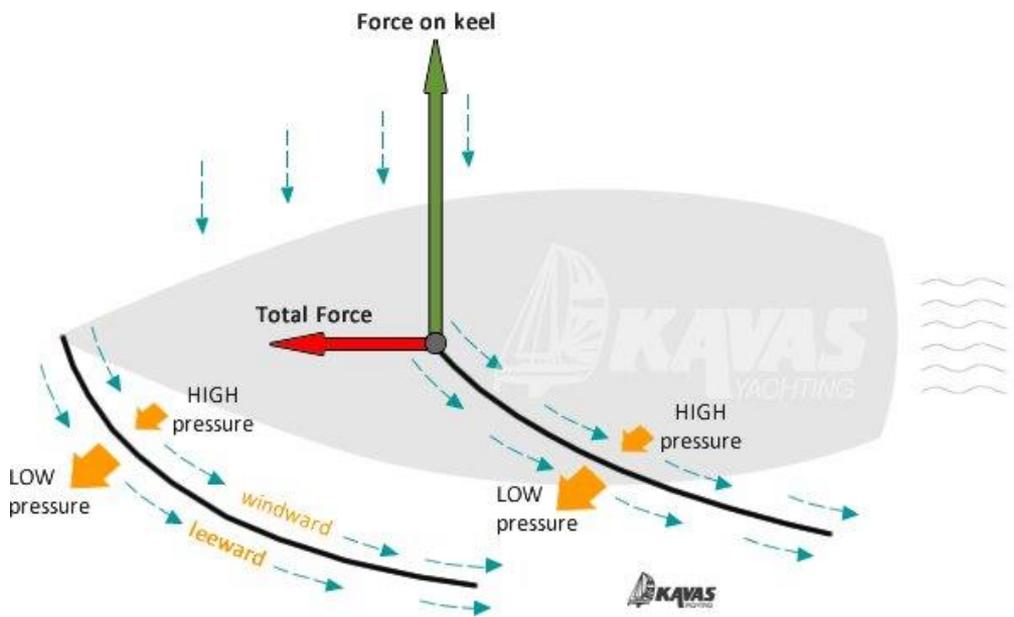
The use of wind

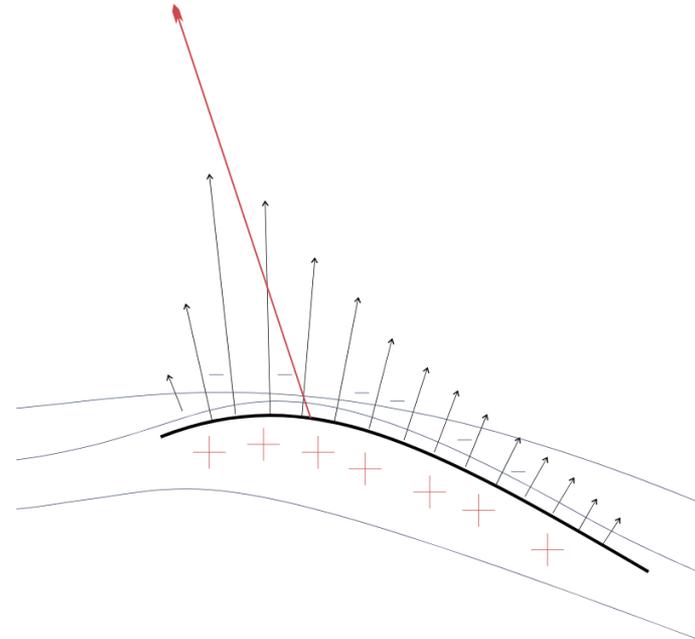
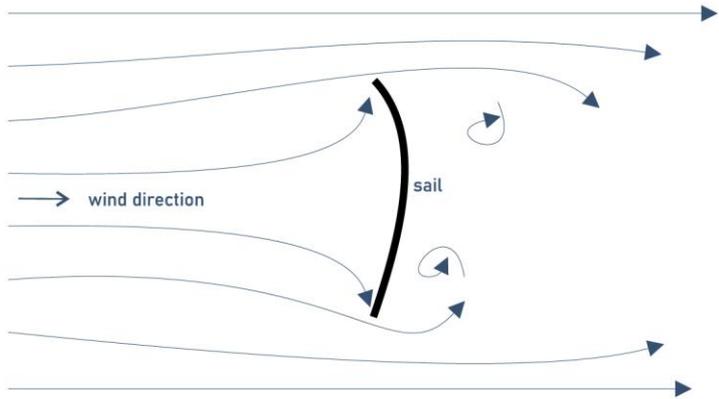


Bernoulli's principle

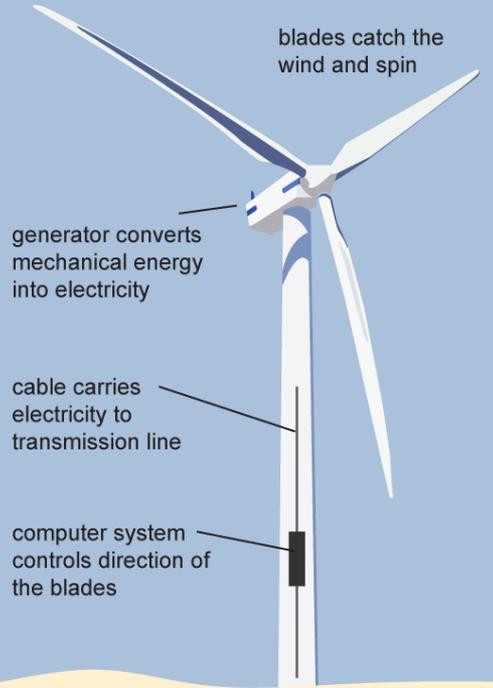






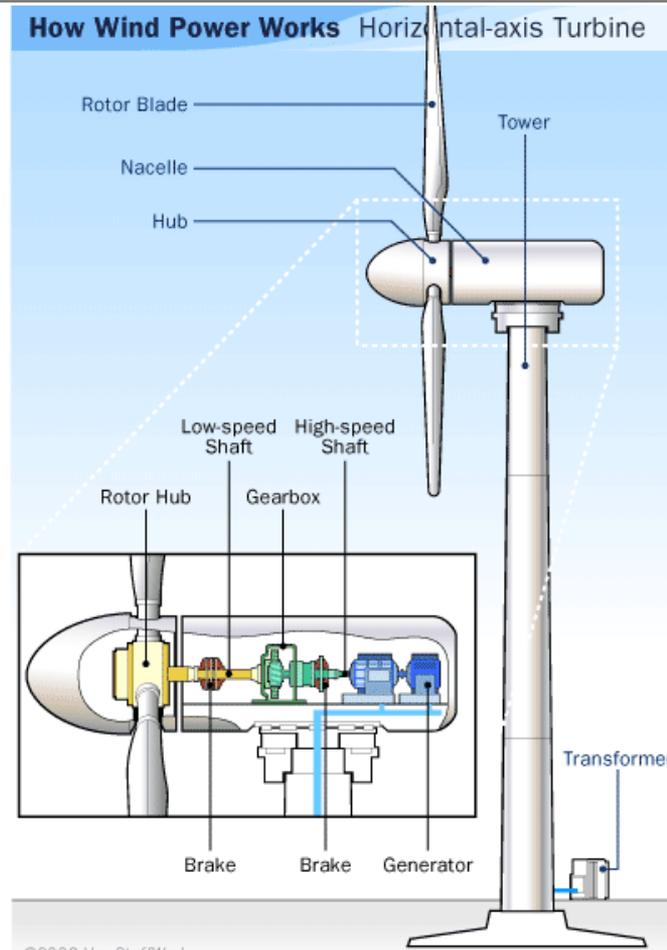


Horizontal-axis wind turbine



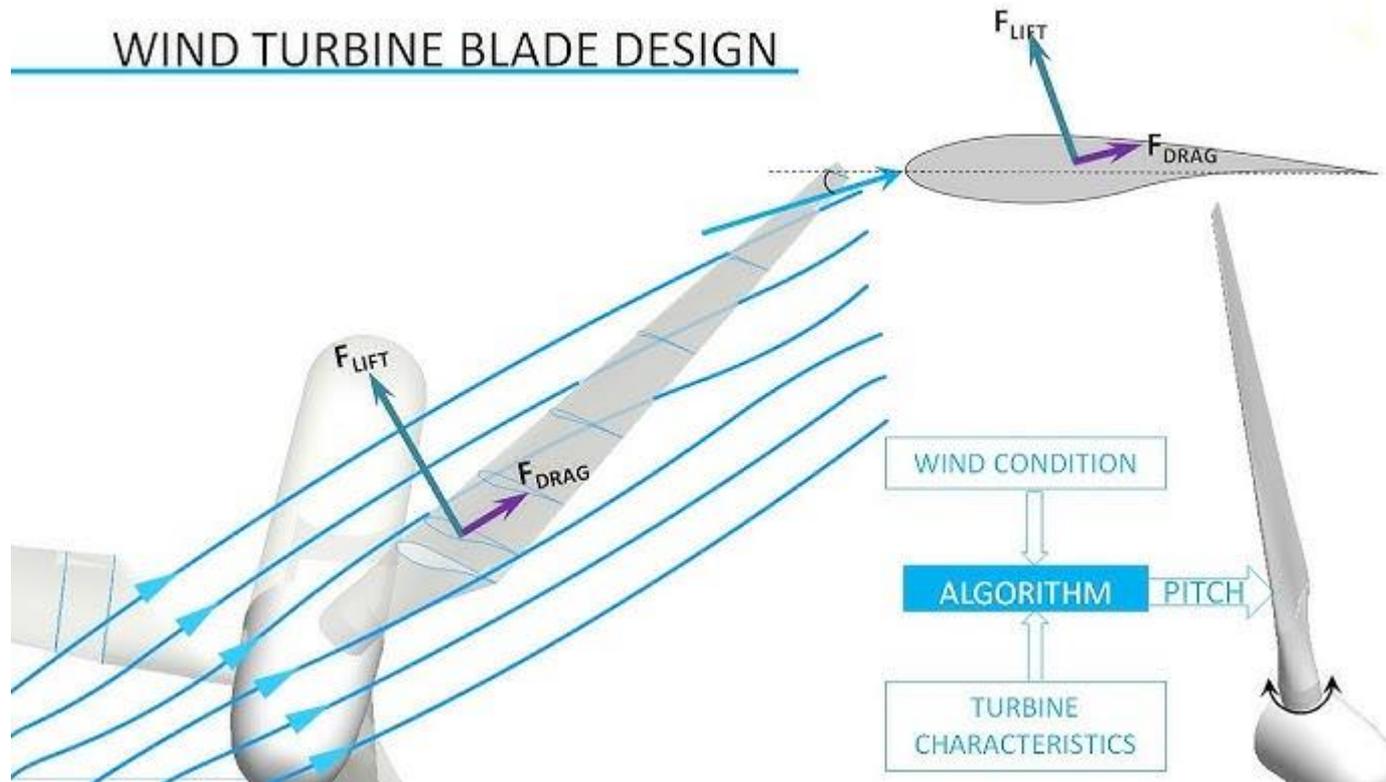
Source: Adapted from National Energy Education Development Project (public domain)

How Wind Power Works Horizontal-axis Turbine



©2006 HowStuffWorks

WIND TURBINE BLADE DESIGN



The use of sun

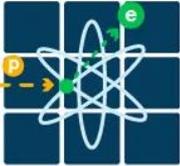
The use of sun

How do solar panels work?

1
The sun emits light, which is made up of tiny particles called "photons"



2
Photons hit a solar panel, knocking the electrons off the silicon atoms



3
These loose electrons generate an electric current



4
This electric current is then converted from AC to DC



5
And then powers your house, or gets stored in a battery

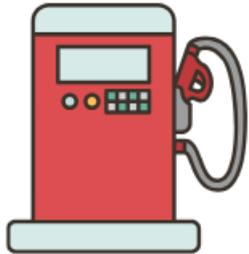


Energy storage

Law of Conservation of Energy

Definition:

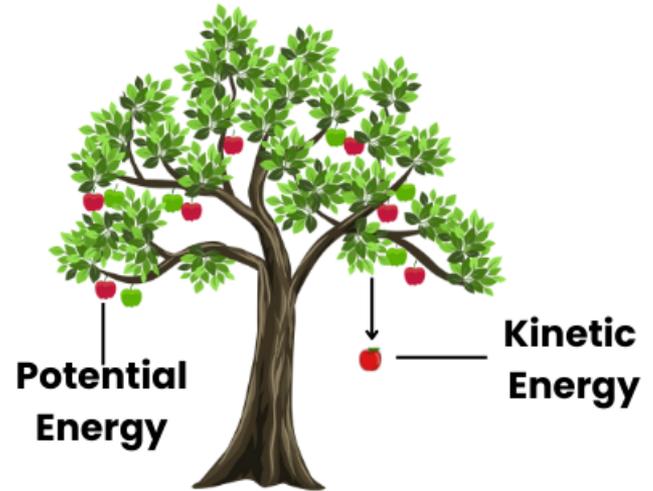
The Law of Conservation of Energy states that energy cannot be created or destroyed in an isolated system; it can only be transformed from one form to another.



Chemical Energy

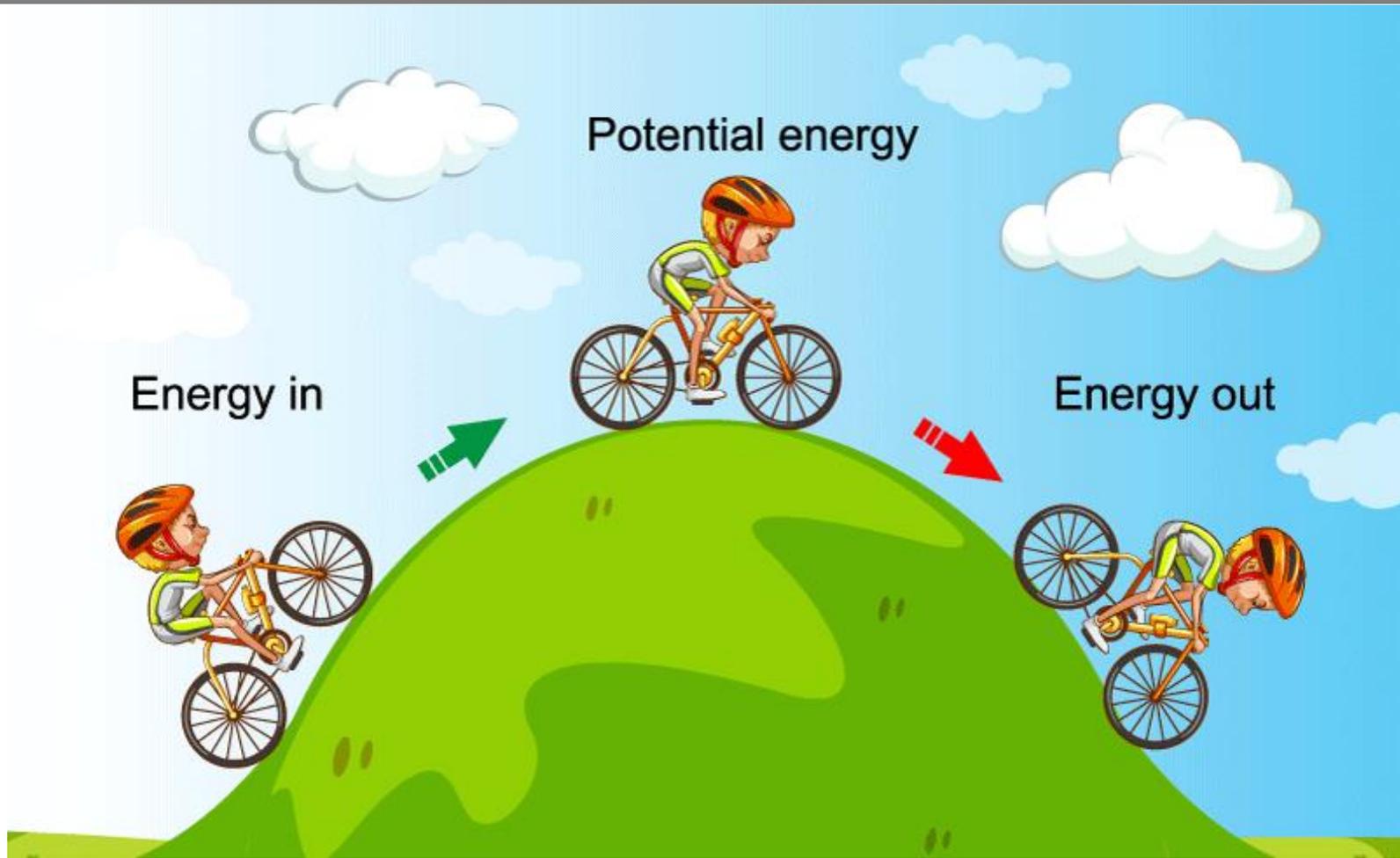


Mechanical Energy



Potential Energy

Kinetic Energy

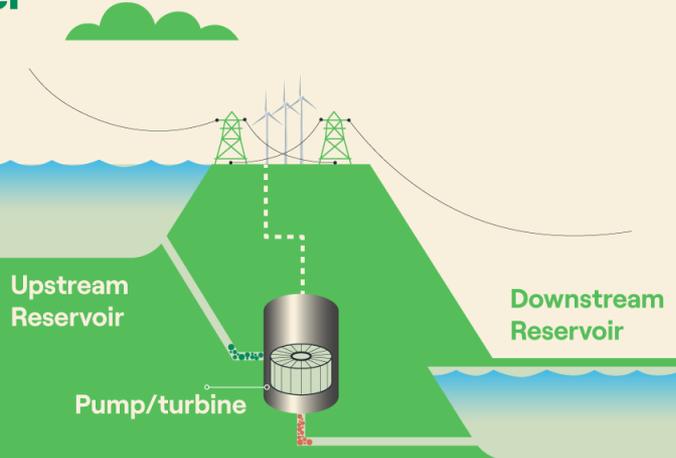


Potential energy

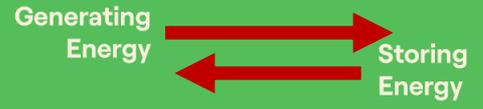
Energy in

Energy out

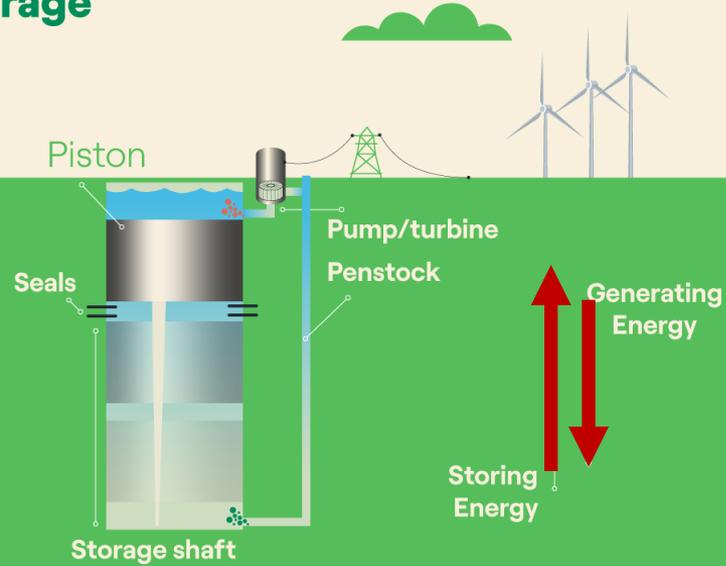
Pumped Storage Hydropower



Efficiency
70-75%

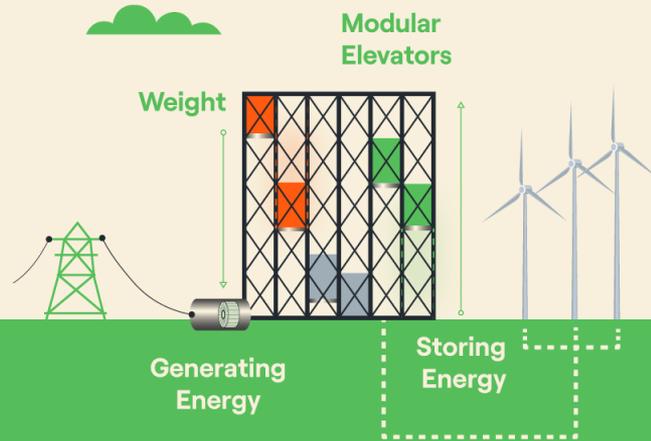


Underground Gravity Storage



Efficiency
65-70%

Gravity Energy Storage Tower



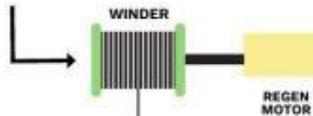
Efficiency
75-80%

STEP 1

CHARGE SYSTEM

Lift weights to the surface, consuming renewable electricity from the grid.

ELECTRICITY GRID



MINE SHAFT

STEP 2

STORE ENERGY

Store weights on the surface.



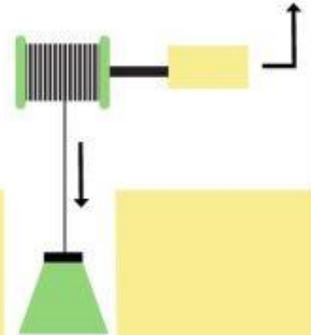
WEIGHT CLASP

SURFACE STACK

STEP 3

DISCHARGE SYSTEM

Lower weights back down the mine shaft, generating electricity to the grid.



The questionable investment in art

The value in Cultural Investment



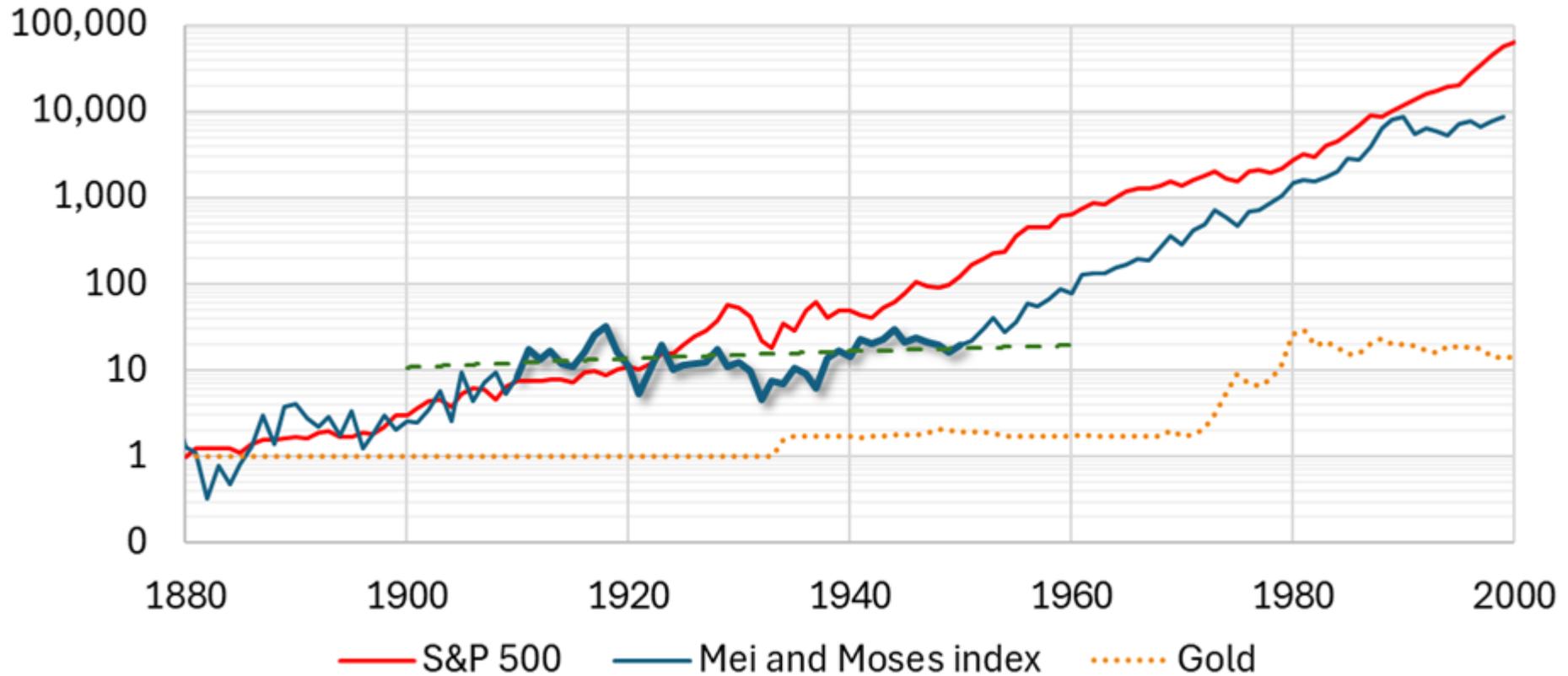
The value in Cultural Investment



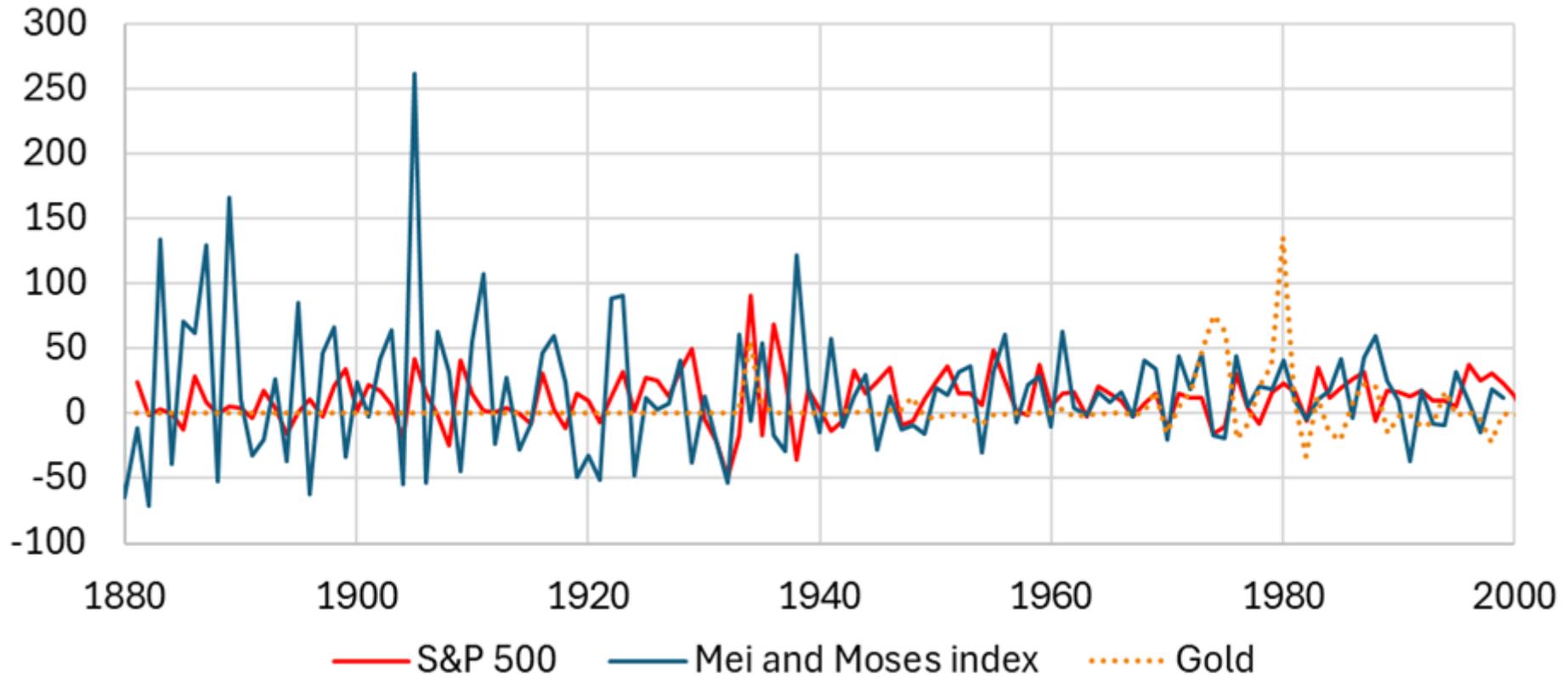




The Economics of Art: Stability, Value, and Crisis



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