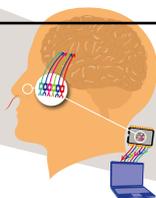


SynCity Festival

Programme



WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

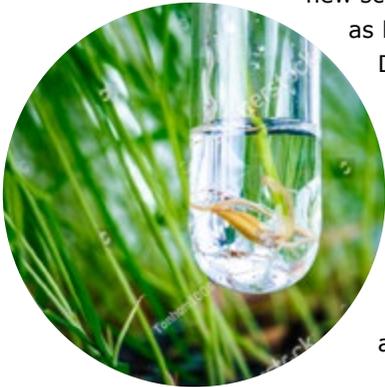
Welcome to the SynCity Festival, where you can immerse yourself in the world of film, art, design and synthetic biology. Get inspired by artists' and designers' perspectives on recent developments in the (re)design of biological systems. Visit art installations on display, watch wonderful and funny BIO-FICTION art videos, movies and documentaries, listen to talks about Bioart, Science Fiction novels and Do-It-Together Biology. Enjoy festival impressions by draughtsmen and leave your ideas and comments on a Brainwave Wall.

Synthetic biology

Synthetic biology is a top-notch research area for engineers and biologists. In synthetic biology, new substances are created, such as medicines or completely new biological systems that have no reason to occur in nature, for instance by re-designing cells or parts of cells. Synthetic biology is a relatively

new scientific discipline. Using natural building blocks such as bacteria and mould as well as parts of proteins and of DNA strands, synthetic biologists can design things like new compositions of intestinal flora, new plants, new medicines, or other new biological systems.

At Wageningen University & Research, a great deal of attention is paid to Synthetic Biology. Researchers aim to use these new creations to feed people better, improve health, achieve a more sustainable environment, and find ways to apply them in a responsible manner.



What would you do?

During the SynCity Festival we want to hear what you would do if you could apply the knowledge and tools of synthetic biology. Would you design living textiles that adapt to weather conditions, or a special intestinal flora for patients with bowel disorders? Would you create algae designed for Do-It-Yourself production of fuels in your backyard pond using CO₂ and wastewater? Or would you be hesitant to apply synthetic biology tools for ethical or other reasons? More information about synthetic biology at Wageningen University & Research and the festival is available at www.wur.eu/syncity



Still from Arjan Brentjes' short film 'Hybris' (Netherlands, 2014)

Wageningen Dialogues on Synthetic Biology



Join Studium Generale for Wageningen Dialogues on Synthetic Biology. Exchange ideas and perspectives. Imagine how synthetic biology will shape our future, and enter into dialogue to explore dimensions of responsibility in this emerging discipline. Thursday 12 October and Wednesday 18 October, 20:00, in Impulse. All welcome. For more information, see www.wur.nl/studiumgenerale

SynCity talks

Steen Rasmussen highlights some of the scientific and technological possibilities and challenges for synthetic biology. From top down approaches, mainly concerned with modifying existing life-forms, to bottom up approaches concerned with creating life from scratch and developing new and different life-forms. Technologies, tools created by humans to solve problems, can change the world as we know it. These tools, ranging from our cell phones to a nail and a hammer, are our "physical" technologies. Synthetic biology is another of our new technologies. But abstract concepts, such as government, laws and social norms are also tools – our "social" technology. Several times through history our physical technology outpaced our social technology. During the industrial revolution, for instance, mass production, labour and a lenty of other changes created social unrest. New laws and systems of administration where

created to deal with the effects of industrial technology and culture began to change. We now seem to be in the middle of a new transition and synthetic biology is a leading technology in this transition.

Ine Gevers' Yes Naturally project (2013) counterbalanced the notion of the anthropocene by bringing into focus the interdependence of interspecies relations. The exhibition/publication aimed at uncovering new senses of 'a-whereeness' as extensions of the more common awareness of human subjects. To achieve such 'a-whereeness' all our senses need to be switched on. It is a prerequisite to become with the many non-human species we encounter every day and helps us to become worldly, responsive citizens of the planet we inhabit. Hacking Habitat, 2016, continued to explore the notion of 'a-whereeness' in a globally digitalized world, encouraging citizens to become disobedient in the age of planetary computing. ROBOT LOVE takes risky relations to its extreme by affirmatively embracing the symbiosis of human-animal-machine.

Hub Zwart considers science novels and science cinema as laboratories of the imagination where future scenarios are explored and assessed in an engaging manner. He will focus on two synthetic biology novels (Oryx and Crake by Margaret Atwood and Ian McEwan's Solar), but will also discuss movies such as Westworld and Black Mirror.

An ambiguous message emerges from these documents: the synthetic refurbishing of life is both fascinating and unsettling, both underestimated and overhyped. What is the added value or critical contribution of synbio novels and cinema to the current debate?



Programme

Day 1 · Thursday 5 October

- 15:30** **Official Opening**
Vitor Martins dos Santos, Chair of Systems and Synthetic Biology
and Louise Fresco, President of the Executive Board of
Wageningen University & Research
- 16:00** **Synthetic Biology and our Brave New World**
Steen Rasmussen, professor in Physics and Center Director
at the University of Southern Denmark
- 16:45** **Risky Relations (on Yes Naturally and other projects)**
Ine Gevers, curator, writer and activist
- 17:30** **Playing Games with Biology – Science Gamification
in Biotechnology**
Camillo Meinhart, co-founder of Bio.faction, Austria and documentary filmmaker
- 17:45** **BIO-FICTION - Next Nature I**
5 short films showing how the creation of another, human made layer
of biology may affect our relationship with 'nature' and other living beings
- 18:15** **Dinner**
Walk through an installation developed by students of iArts in Maastricht
Take a Chance for Information with Mies Loogman's Gene Machine
- 20:00** **BIO-FICTION - Identity**
5 short films imagine the impact on our personal identity
and/or the identity of what we create
- 20:30** **Going with the Flow of Intuition – How Science can be Inspired by Art**
Bert Lotz, team leader at Agrosystems Research
- 20:50** **Fungus, Plastic of the Future**
Alejandro Tauber investigates the possibilities of printing and
growing objects with living cells
- 21:00** **Earth + Heaven + Joe Davis**
Joe Davis: is he a genius or just the most brilliant con artist that ever lived?
Watch the award winning documentary by Peter Sasowsky, 2014,
and judge for yourself
- 22:30** **Closing and Drinks**

Watch the short video explaining
about synthetic biology
at Wageningen University & Research



Day 2 · Friday 6 October

- 14:00** **Recapturing**
- 14:05** **BIO-FICTION - Biohacking**
4 short films about unexpected applications,
within the system & outside of the system
- 14:35** **Do It Together Biology – Synergy Between Creativity and Synthetic Biology**
Lucas Evers, head of Waag Society's Open Wetlab, Amsterdam
- 15:05** **Saving Bananas and Diagnosing Disease with Biobricks**
Wageningen's 2014 en 2017 teams pitch their projects for the
international Genetic Engineering Machine competition (iGEM)
- 15:30** **BIO-FICTION - Next Nature II**
4 short films showing how the creation of another, human made layer of
biology may affect our relationship with 'nature' and other living beings
- 16:00** **Break**
Walk through an installation developed by students of iArts in Maastricht
Take a Chance for Information with Mies Loogman's Gene Machine
- 16:30** **Genres of the Imagination and Future of Life –
Synthetic Biology in Novels and Cinema**
Hub Zwart, professor of Philosophy of the Natural Sciences;
Radboud University Nijmegen
- 17:15** **The Public Inspired**
Reflection on ideas and comments from the audience left behind
on our Brainwave Wall
- 17:45** **The Scientist Inspired**
Vitor Martins dos Santos reflects on ideas and comments from the audience
- 18:00** **Dinner**
Walk through an installation developed by students of iArts in Maastricht
Take a Chance for Information with Mies Loogman's Gene Machine
- 19:30** **BIO-FICTION – Alienation**
3 short films feeding our imagination regarding 'alien biology'
- 20:15** **GATTACA**
SF movie, a biopunk version of a future society driven by eugenics.
However "There is no gene for the human spirit..."
- 22:00** **Let's Get Funky Tonight with Power to the Pipo**
Live music - An energetic and swinging mix of hard groove and
explosive improvisation
- 23:30** **Closing**