



LAPS
Gerrit Rietveld Academie
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Smart Hybrid Forms

Addressing ecological challenges by blurring the lines between biology and technology

We have entered the Anthropocene. Humanity has become a geological force transforming the geology of the earth itself. The traditional method of science, which sees nature as an object of study which lies outside of ourselves, can not be maintained anymore. We need to find new narratives on human relationship with nature. At the same time, biological science is moving rapidly into technology, producing hybrid entities that cross over from the natural into the technical world. Generally viewed upon as an acceleration away from nature, we propose to go beyond a defensive reaction by exploring entities that represent new actors for a new world: can a computer program become a plant, or a plant a machine? What kind of political agency will they be able to assume?

We address these questions by means of alternative ways of exploration, creating a new field where science and art come together. Concomitantly, we investigate the significance of these practices of knowledge production and distribution, which works towards new, non hierarchical notions of self and environment. This project builds upon the expertise in photosynthesis research at Vrije Universiteit and artistic research at Rietveld Academie, and seeks to explore common ground between the two institutes. Together with de Waag/Amsterdam and V2/Rotterdam as part of bio labs and expert exchange programs the research process will be made visible to the public. At Zone2Source it will reach a wide audience as part of an artistic research program 'Machine Wilderness' at Artis Zoo Amsterdam and at their headquarters in the Amstelpark. Spela Petric en Christiaan Zwanikken are working as artists in the Smart Hybrid Lab at VU University, while [Alice Smits](#) is engaged as researcher affiliated with Rietveld Academie to explore these art science collaborations, the role of art in the field of AI and the cultural and philosophical implications of these art science projects.

This project is made possible through the support of [NWO](#).

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