



Paris Sciences et Lettres
Labex TransferS

Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature
62, rue des Archives, Paris 75003

International conference

“La vie à l’œuvre”
Life at work
New ecologies, bioart, biodesign

Organised by
Perig Pitrou

October 16 & 17, 2017

Scientific committee

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Call for papers

In view of the international conference co-organised by the *Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature* (Museum of Hunting and Nature, Paris) and PSL Research University (Labex TransferS), this call for papers targets artists, designers, architects and researchers – both in social sciences and natural sciences –, who are engaged in interrogating how the living can be incorporated in art, design, as well as architecture projects. By displaying living beings and vital processes, or by collaborating with them, these explorations that put « life at work » contribute to the emergence

of new ecologies, effectively or speculatively, as *speculative design* and *critical design* do. Whether or not they inscribe their approaches into bioart and biodesign – categories whose boundaries are actually far from being clearly defined, these projects have in common to redefine the notion of nature, by inviting us to reconsider the modalities of human beings' interventions on their environments. The issue is then not only to pay attention to the creation of unprecedented life forms (hybrids, semi-livings, etc.) but also to study the new networks of relationships that develop around them. In order to explore these relationship dynamics and highlight the ability of these experiments to invent new ecologies, it is suggested to take a closer look at three types of phenomena.

1) New interactions between living beings

First, it is the diversity of interactions between living beings (exchange, symbiosis, commensalism, predation, etc.) and the modalities of inter-species communication that is worth being addressed on several scales – from the microbiome to the planetary environment. Concurrently to the possibility to make new *Life Forms* appear within their environments, it is necessary to examine the capacity of creators to imagine new *Forms of Life*.

2) Vital processes and transformations

The interactions that living beings establish with other living beings, and more broadly with their environment, lead us to question the continual transformations at work in the organisms and the multiple connections established between them. Through metabolic processes, organisms are indeed linked to each other, for example through oxygen production (by plants or cyanobacteria), or by their integration in trophic chains. Projects depicting this kind of processes – often by inserting them in technical processes – open up significant paths to highlighting the dynamic and cyclic dimension of living systems.

3) The evolution of living systems

When considered on an even wider temporal scale, life arises in evolutive processes that, over generations, modify the species and their relations to the environment. From the old practices of selective breeding of plants and animals, to the contemporary methods of genetic engineering and molecular biology, human beings have endeavoured to develop techniques to act on these natural phenomena. Often led by practical concerns – ecological as well as economic –, these interventions sometimes are the products of aesthetic approaches. The diversity of intents driving the creators' work enables thus to increase our capacity to think the directed evolution in all its complexity, as well as in its prospective potentials.

By starting a collective reflection on the introduction of new ecological systems, one stake is to rethink the articulation between nature and technique. Instead of opposing them, arts, design and architecture practices lead up to exploring the intertwining between vital processes and technical processes, and to questioning the various ways humans live with nature while transforming it.

Paper proposals and information requests must be submitted to Viao@univ-psl.fr before June 15, 2017.

Important dates:

June 15, 2017: deadline for submission

June 30, 2017: notification of acceptance

August 30, 2017: deadline for final title and abstract submission

October 16 & 17, 2017: Conference at the Museum of Hunting and Nature, Paris

