

William Myers, remarks, Bio Art & Design Award Ceremony
2 July 2020, Erasmus MC, Rotterdam

Becoming a Sentinel Species

Sissel Marie Tonn

In collaboration with Heather Leslie and Juan Garcia Vallejo (Department of Environment and Health, VU Amsterdam)

This poetic vision of humans altering themselves in order to act as sentinels is a potential gateway to think about interconnectivity, one of the major themes of our era. Whether we talk about climate change, ecosystem collapse, pollution, or pandemics, we are exploring the same thing: our interconnectivity, between one another and across species. The jury was convinced that in Sissel and Heather's hands, this starting point, and with data about the demonstrated effect of microplastics on the immune system, they will create a meditative yet critical and immersive installation, one that spotlights our shared origins in the primordial sea.

Productive Fur

Dasha Tsapenko

In collaboration with Han Wösten (Microbiology Research Group, UU Utrecht)

This project struck the jury as a critique, on some level, of fast fashion and the accelerating activities of production and consumption attending to it. This work initiates the appreciation of value rather than depreciation over time and use of a garment. The different phases and their varying aesthetics and sensorial elements we hope will provide numerous entry points for an audience to consider alternatives to the status quo. It also was an observation of the jury that fashion as well as agriculture still have so much to change, and we are hopeful this work can illuminate the dimensions of how different a personal and ecological system such as they imagine questions our current dysfunctional reality.

Projecting Other-wise

Nadine Botha

In collaboration with Henry de Vries (Department of infectious diseases, AMC and Public Health Services (GGD), Amsterdam)

This project... to make an interactive installation allowing the re-embodiment of iconic zombie movie scenes offers a layered cake of critique, engagement, and aesthetic possibility. This is the sort of work the jury believes will invite an unravelling of the narratives we all have absorbed about infection, danger, and otherness. It is an indictment of Hollywood's profit machine blinded to the social impact of entertaining narrative that either ignores or irresponsibly stokes hurtful belief systems. By appropriating the pop-culture seductiveness of the zombie horror typology, the jury hopes that this project can help complicate and contest our notions of virus and the other-ing of both non and fellow humans.