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"Challenging anthropocentrism in Art and AI: From micro perfomativity and macro effects to un-greening greenness"

Prof. Dr. Jens Hauser

https://art.kaist.ac.kr/doc/ko/eduLec.do?docSeq=3225

https://art.kaist.ac.kr/html/AI+ART_programbook.pdf

https://art.kaist.ac.kr/

Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqSlyXp5hnQ

Abstract:

While art may always be tempted by an ever-increasing availability of new media between soft, hard and wetware, their use also fosters updated nature-culture debates and likewise requires criticality and willingness to employ the tools of the contemporary techno-sciences against the grain. Key technologies of our times such as Artificial Intelligence and biotechnologies, including synthetic biology, serve imageries of unprecedented prowess and feed associated hypes, buzzwords and metaphors, meanwhile potentially reinforcing anthropocentric mindsets in times of major ecological crisis. In the field of the epistemologically self-aware media arts the 'newness factor' itself is, however, very old. In contrast to affirmative and apologetic positions, many artists therefore go beyond mainstream 'AI' based on increased information-processing capacities or the mimicking of human cognitive abilities to produce images or text. In their works, they contrast the current tendencies of symbolic computational 'AI' based on increased information-processing capacities with bio-inspired 'N/AI', sparking discussions about the largely ambiguous concept of 'intelligence' and whether the notion of 'artificiality' is reserved to human action only, or play on the polysemic variety of what 'green AI' may mean.

Hence this fraction of artists addresses innate technical capacities that non-human agents play out within a larger bio-semiotic web. Such 'microperformativity' denotes a current trend both in performative art practices and theories of performativity to destabilize human scales – both spatial and temporal – as the dominant plane of reference and to emphasize biological and technological micro-agencies that, beyond the mesoscopic human body, relate the invisibility of the microscopic to the incomprehensibility of the macroscopic. Such inclusion of 'biofacts' and their 'aliveness' enlarges the scope of the evolving field of the 'live arts'.While our contemporary technophile societies are metaphorically greenwashing greenhouse effects away, here, the pervasive 'greenness trope' needs to be addressed in its inherent ambiguity between alleged naturalness and artificiality: 'Green' urgently needs to be disentangled from terms – putatively non-technological – such as 'life' and 'nature'; it may even be addressed as the most anthropocentric of all colors: To humans, a plant only appears green because its chlorophyll absorbs the high-energy red and blue light photons for photosynthesis, but reflects the middle spectrum, as its 'waste': This spectrum is useless for plant's photosynthesis, but it corresponds precisely to the largest spectrum visible to humankind, as a result of biological evolution – green literally is our medium. There has been little reflection upon greenness' migration across different knowledge cultures: On the one hand, engineers brand 'green chemistry' or 'green biotechnology' as ecologically benign, while, on the other, climate researchers point to the 'greening of the earth' itself as the alarming effect of anthropogenic CO2 emissions.

Despite its, at first sight, positive connotations of aliveness and naturalness, the term ‘green’ incrementally serves the uncritical, fetishistic desire to hyper-compensate for a systemic necropolitics that has variously taken the form of the increasing technical manipulation of living systems, ecologies, the biosphere.