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The excess of meaning: developing an ethical attitude toward biological life through engaging with bioart

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Propositions

The Excess of Meaning

Developing an ethical attitude toward life through engaging with bioart

Lotte Pet

1. Following Chapter 6, it can be stated that in ethical decision making, both postponing a decision and acting out a decision have ethical value—but neither conduct can be truly ethical without the other.
2. The concept of an excess of meaning cannot be aligned with the notion of informed consent. It calls for a different attitude toward dealing with the unknown in biomedical settings, in which the attitude of taking absolute (ir)responsibility (by all parties involved) can play an important role.
3. An artwork must be amoral and reject *doxa* in order to provide a relevant experience for bioethical debates, because only then it requires the spectator to rethink and reevaluate.
4. The concept of an excess of meaning implies that taking absolute (ir)responsibility is an act based on the notion of freedom.
5. A discussion about the moral status of an artwork remains flawed if the temporal and spatial specificity of an artwork and the relation with the individual spectator is not centralized.
6. The research published in June 2023 on the development of synthetic embryos without beating hearts or brain cells—which is intended to research embryonic development after the fourteen-day limit—is an example of the biotech industry's tendency of pursuing further research and experimentation with life without reflecting on what this life is.
7. Conducting and communicating scientific research on bodies requires discursive framing through sociocultural activity. Art has the ability to disrupt this framing and thus the understanding of this scientific research.
8. Art cannot be implemented as solution. Asking an artist to create an artwork to solve another discipline's problem amounts to the disenfranchisement of art.
9. Making art is simultaneously a quest for and a destruction of meaning.