

Response to BioArt in Question

This article is the documenting of an interesting discussion between Adam Zaretsky and several members of the artistic community. The discussion centered on several concerns of Nanotechnology and BioArt.

One point which I found intriguing was the question about “New and Improved” humans. Adam asked if any technological development which brings us closer to creating perfect humans could be valid. There were a variety of arguments for and against this line of thinking. The argument which I agreed with the most was that a technological development which cured some terrible disease would be valid or at least more valid than purely superficial developments. For instance, if someone creates a Nanomachine which can repair damaged nerves and cure paralysis then this would clearly be a benefit to society. On the other hand if someone creates a Nanomachine which simply makes a person develop a tan or have softer skin then this would be far less beneficial to society. In short, some developments in improving ourselves are valid and should be pursued while others are purely superficial and should be put on a “back burner” so to speak.

One other point which I found interesting was Adam’s mentioning of so-called “Mutaphobia”. That is, the fear that by changing our genetic structure we will become sci-fi horror film mutants. There were again arguments on all sides of this issue. The argument which I found the most interesting was Adam’s initial description of the issue: we are already mutants, what’s the problem? Humans have evolved in part through natural genetic mutations. Further investigating genetic mutation can lead to medical breakthroughs. It may look as if we are tampering with nature itself but perhaps we are

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just speeding up the process by allowing more genetic variation than previously

available.

Biological developments and nanotechnologies have a variety of implications and possibilities. Clearly there can be arguments for and against any one of these. After reading the article I believe that as a whole developing new biological technologies will benefit society.