

Techno-Organic Practices in the Nordic Art

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The author discusses trends in human-conducted evolution that no longer has biological survival as a primary goal but is motivated by different aims, and specifically how this notion relates to contemporary art & design practices.

Biotechnology is an engineering discipline that has, in recent decades, entered the realm of the arts. A growing number of artists utilizing biotechnological methods are also inextricably pairing art practices with living matter

The paper builds a trajectory of historical and recent artistic works that exemplify a shift from solely hardware- and software-focused new media art works towards practices that include evolutionary traits and wetware. Like Roy Ascott claimed already in 2000: 'MOISTWARE erodes the boundary between hardware and wetware' (Ascott 2000). Historical antecedents for this type of art can be traced to art that dealt with biological or technological matter, for example land art, art that included animals, and to digital art works. The paper points out common denominators in these practices, but also differences in their focus and motivation. The author presents a critical viewpoint to the widespread approach to treat living matter with techno-scientific logic.

The author's practice-based research and art works presented in this paper, among other exemplary works by artists primarily from Nordic countries, address the merger of hardware, software and wetware. The author calls these *techno-organic practices* that include both biological and technological agencies.