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LEA

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**SUBJECT** LEA Digital Media Exhibition Platform: 'BIOTOPIA REVISITED'

**FEBRUARY EXHIBITION: 'BIOTOPIA REVISITED'**

'BIOTOPIA REVISITED – BEYOND ART IN THE WET ZONE': featuring Stelarc (AUS), Revital Cohen (UK), Jacob Kirkegaard (DK), Jim Gimzewski / Victoria Vesna (USA), Paul Vanouse (USA) and Mogens Jacobsen (DK); Co-curated by Morten Søndergaard and Vince Dziekan.

According to Stelarc the body is obsolete.

If the body is obsolete, as Stelarc hypothesizes, what does this mean?

In one sense, perhaps art is obsolete as well. Instead, new collective concepts appear that 'pick up' art again, and use it for something different – as attested to by examples such as 'New Media Art', 'Digital art', and 'Media Art'. If we accept that 'Media Art' is a metaphor of this transformation of aesthetics and art happening in the wet zone, then what would define (the consequences of) a Bio Media Art? The transformation of man?; of science?; a transformation of the human sciences, at least?

Today, media art and the human sciences are both in a situation where tensions between techno-aesthetic and bio-logical patterns are prevalent and preconfiguring our cognitive systems. 'Biotopia Revisited' examines how art – and science – 'manage' this situation; how do artists and (human) scientists navigate the wet zones?

The original exhibition – 'BIOTOPIA' – brought together seven artists, all of whom set out to explore the wet zone through specifically

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commissioned installations: Stelarc (AUS), Revital Cohen (UK), Jacob Kirkegaard (DK), Jim Gimzewski / Victoria Vesna (USA), Paul Vanouse (USA) and Mogens Jacobsen (DK). 'BIOTOPIA' was part of the Port 2010 festival of contemporary art and realized in cooperation with KUNSTEN Modern Art Museum, Utzon Center (Aalborg, DK) and Aalborg University.

Reconceived here for LEA's digital media exhibition platform, 'BIOTOPIA REVISITED' seeks to expose how art, technology, and curating enter into different roles (than the traditional ones) in the wet zone. They become more akin to scientific investigations into unknown territories of a remote corner of the universe – a science based on the human body's hypothetic obsolescence. All the participating artists operate in the wet zone in-between and beyond art and science, acutely aware of what happens when technology and human beings intersect and intervene with each other.

**Co-curators:**

**Morten Søndergaard**

*Media Art Curator, BIOTOPIA (Utzon Center: Aalborg)*

&

**Vince Dziekan**

*Digital Media Curator, Leonardo Electronic Almanac*

**Senior Curators:**

**Lanfranco Aceti**

*Director and Senior Curator, Kasa Gallery*

**Christiane Paul**

*Curator of New Media Arts at the Whitney Museum of American Art*

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### **Featured Contributors:**

Revital Cohen (b.1981 UK) lives and works in London.

Revital Cohen was educated as a designer, but moves freely among an infinite number of other disciplines. She works together with scientists, doctors, animal breeders etc. with a view to creating sensational works, all of which operate in the intersection between the natural and the artificial. Cohen harbours a blatant fascination for the possibility of combining human biology, not only with machines, but with elements from the plant and animal kingdoms too.

Jim Gimzewski (b.1951 UK) lives and works in California.

By profession Jim Gimzewski is a scientist, working mainly with gene technology and neuroscience. But over the last 10 years he has also been involved in a number of artistic projects. These include various large-scale installations, which express and visualise the wet zone between science and art.

Mogens Jacobsen (b.1959 Italy) lives and works in Copenhagen.

The media artist Mogens Jacobsen is one of Denmark's leading ambassadors in the field of digital and internet-based art. In recent years one of his main preoccupations has been the relationship between art and viewer. His audience-participatory installations are dynamic works, which actively relate and react to the viewer. Jacobsen possesses a fundamental fascination for the possible fusion of technology with life and art.

Jacob Kirkegaard (b.1975 Denmark) lives and works in Berlin.

Jacob Kirkegaard investigates sound and its physical effect upon the environment. His perspective is both scientific and aesthetic. The artist's work captures and records sonic universes, which otherwise could not be heard with the ear alone. By means of unorthodox and homemade recording equipment Kirkegaard detects sounds we have

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never heard before, from empty rooms, dunes, geysers, even the innermost region of the human ear, sounds that reveal hitherto unknown worlds.

Morten Søndergaard (b. 1966) [www.sondergart.dk](http://www.sondergart.dk)

Morten Søndergaard is Associate Professor / Curator of Interactive Media Art, Head of Research at The Unheard Avant-gardes / The Larm infra-structure and Senior Curator and General Chair at re-new – digital arts festival ([www.re-new.org](http://www.re-new.org)). He was Curator and Deputy Director at The Museum of Contemporary Art in Denmark between 1999-2008, and part of the artistic management of PORT 2010 Contemporary Art Festival in Aalborg (2008-11). Morten has curated exhibitions internationally at Kiasma (FI), Splintermind (S), Rupertinum (AT), and ZKM (D). Selected publications (in English) include: (w. Mogens Jacobsen): RE\_ACTION – The Digital Archive Experience (Aalborg University Publishers, 2009); (w. Peter Weibel): MAGNET – Thorbjørn Lausten's Visual Systems (Kehrer Verlag, 2007); Get Real – Art + Real time (New York: George Braziller Publishers, 2005).

Stelarc (b.1946 Cyprus) lives and works in Melbourne, Australia.

The Greek-Australian performance artist Stelarc is a pioneer in the exploration of the interplay between human beings and technology. His spectacular shows have involved performing with a mechanical third arm and letting outsiders from all over the world control his body remotely via an advanced Internet link-up. By means of an enormous range of technological resources, including biotechnology and robotics, he challenges and tests the relationship between body and machine.

Paul Vanouse (b.1967 USA) lives and works in Buffalo.

Paul Vanouse refers to himself as a passionate amateur, who wryly and critically explores the complex questions posed by the world of science. A strong visual consciousness is a frequent hallmark of his artistic expression. In his work he draws on the same technologies as the scientist, if nothing else than to investigate the significance and

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effect of such technologies. Vanouse's work has included genetic experiments that critically undermine scientific notions of race and identity.

Victoria Vesna (b.1959 USA) lives and works in California.

Victoria Vesna is a professor of design and media art, but is also a practising artist. Her works are experimental and investigative and move freely from one discipline to another. Communication technology and digital media and how they affect human social behaviour particularly fascinate Vesna.

#### **LEA International Curatoriate**

Lanfranco Aceti & Christiane Paul (Senior Curators), Vince Dziekan (Digital Media Curator)

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