

THE FUTURE OF LIFE IS SYNTHETIC: THE PROMISES OF XENO BIOLOGY

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Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities
Leibniz Hall, Markgrafenstraße 38, 10117 Berlin

Tremendous technical advances have been made in the life sciences in recent years. Scientists are now able to alter and analyze genes with an ease never seen before. Whole genomes can be built from scratch and transplanted into living cells. But has this brought us any closer to understanding life?

Synthetic biology in particular has been heralded as an exciting new field which will allow a deeper knowledge on how living systems "work". Synthetic biologists extensively manipulate organisms at DNA level. Even bringing long lost species such as the woolly mammoth back to life from recovered DNA samples seems possible nowadays. Xenobiologists reach further yet – aiming to create artificial life built out of synthetic chemicals instead of natural DNA.

Such new biologies promise groundbreaking solutions for pressing global problems. However, these possibilities have raised concern about their future environmental and societal impact, and how they might change the way we think about life, biodiversity and evolution. Our interdisciplinary panel will bring together renowned experts from xenobiology and the philosophy of the life sciences to explore these and other matters of humanly-created life.

Admission is free. Registration is required.



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Introduction

Bernd Müller-Röber

University of Potsdam
Member of the BBAW

Panel Discussion

Philippe Marlière

Scientist of Fortune S.a., Luxembourg

Philipp Holliger

MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology,
Cambridge UK

Heiner Fangerau

Heinrich Heine University, Düsseldorf

Markus Schmidt

Biofaction, Vienna, Austria

Moderated by

Kai Kupferschmidt

Science journalist



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