

Uwe B. Sleytr

“Synthetic Biology and Evolution”

Fossil findings and molecular biology data allow a fairly precise reconstruction of the evolution of life forms including that of humankind in its present manifestation. Nevertheless, this accumulated data and knowledge do not allow any prediction of the future of evolutionary events. On the other hand, in the foreseeable future, synthetic biology and gene editing will enable the “engineers of biology” to design new animal species or a new “creature.” This could be the next stage in evolution of life on earth including human life.

In the sculptures gilded with gold leaf, the multiple sense organs, such as the eyes and the noses, the components of the skeleton, or changes in skull dimensions, emblematised the non-predictable self-induced evolution of humans. The splashed sculptures and the dynamic distorted images of the sculptures in mirror foils symbolize snapshots of crucial trial and error events during a biological evolution driven by humans. Although part of a human process, the results can be unforeseen and incomprehensible due to current human intellectual limitations. To symbolize this post-human situation extremely distorted images have been chosen, in which the mask like sculptures could hardly be recognized as an integral part of the image.

Thus, synthetic biology, including gene editing, alerts us to the fact that we are the first form of life on this planet with the potential to separate the evolution of life from its previous evolutionary rules, and that humankind has a time-limited existence. (Splashed sculptures with Fritz Simak).

For more information see: www.art-and-science.eu