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Field of expertise

Ellen ter Gast holds a Masters degree in both medical biology (University of Amsterdam) and philosophy (Free University). She is specialized in bioethics and philosophy of science, in particular the use of laboratory animals.

Current research and projects

Currently Ellen is writing a Ph.D thesis about genetic engineered laboratory mice, the pioneer species in biotechnology. This “philosophical inquiry” focuses on the history of the transgenic laboratory mouse, its role in the development of biotechnology and the debate on the social and moral aspects of animal biotechnology, including artistic responses to biotechnology that can be found in recent work by bioartists. Transgenic mice challenge our vision of nature, mouse nature and human nature.

Illustration

Visual images of the mouse play a central role in this study. Below some famous genetically engineered mice clock wise: Charles Vacanti’s (MIT) mouse with human ear, ‘s Joe Tsien’s (Princeton) smart mouse Doogie, Richard Palmiter and Ralph Brinster’s Giant mice, two researchers gazing upon a patented Oncomouse™, a fluorescent GFP mother with pups and Ron Evan’s (Salk institute) Marathon mouse.

