

## UKI - a Scifi Viral Alt-Reality Cinema

UKI engages UKI the virus as infiltrating agents to sabotage a detrimental bio-scheme engineered by GENOM Co.

Scheduled for 2023 release

CONCEPT/SCRIPT/DIRECTION/PRODUCTION

Shu Lea Cheang (2009 – 2023)



Shu Lea Cheang is an artist and filmmaker whose work aims to re-envision genders, genres, and operating structures. Her genre bending gender hacking art practices challenge the existing operating mechanisms and the imposed boundaries of society, geography, politics, and economic structures. Cheang drafts sci-fi narratives in her film scenario and artwork imagination. As a net art pioneer, BRANDON (1998-1999) was the first work of web art commissioned and collected by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. From homesteading cyberspace in the 90s to her current retreat to post-netcrash BioNet zone, Cheang takes on viral love, bio hack in her current cycle of works. She represented Taiwan with 3x3x6, a mixed media installation at Venice Biennale 2019. She made 3 feature films, FRESH KILL (1994, premiered at Berlinale), I.K.U.(2000, premiered at Sundance Film Festival), FLUIDØ (2017, premiered at Berlinale) which were recently screened at Pompidou Center (Paris) in 2020 and at Hammer Museum Billy Wilder Cinema as a screening series of “Shu Lea Cheang -Crafting a genre of new SciFi Queer Cinema” in 2021.  
<http://mauvaiscontact.info>

## SYNOPSIS

UKI is conceived as a sequel to my scifi cyberpunk film I.K.U. which premiered at Sundance Film Festival in 2000. I.K.U. tells the story of IKU (orgasm in Japanese) coders, the replicants dispatched by the internet porn enterprise GENOM Co., who are made into sex machines to collect human IKU data. These programmed humanoids' accumulated IKU data are ultimately downloaded by IKU runners (a la Blade Runner) and made into color-coded IKU chips for mobile phone plug in and consumption. In post-net-crash UKI, the data deprived IKU coders are dumped as pieces of electronic trash amidst the discarded electronic parts and bytes in the e-trashville located somewhere in the Deep Continent. Inhabiting with the transmutants, the hackers, the coders, the migrants, the refugees and the native labourers, the defunct IKU coders unpack their electro-body parts, attempt in rewriting the body codes to reboot themselves back to existence. Trading sex for codes, codes sexing codes, the defunct IKU coders are ultimately infected with body and software virus, emerging amidst the noise blast to declare themselves UKI the virus. Meanwhile, GENOM Co. exits the Net, resurfaces as a BioTech enterprise, takes human body hostage to initiate BioNet, a network made up of re-engineered red blood cells (erythrocytes) which are able to micro-compute and alter human DNA composition. GENOM Co. sets out to conspire a profitable biotech engineering scheme : reprogram human orgasm into auto-generated, self-sustained pleasure that bypasses the need for human interaction, moreover working hand in hand with pharmaceutical industry to further harvest IKU data transaction. UKI the virus, mutated and propagated, takes up the mission to infiltrate the occupied human body, to sabotage GENOM's BioNet organismo production and finally to reclaim her own lost IKU data.

## DEVELOPMENT

UKI was conceived in 2009 during an art residency in Hangar media Lab (Barcelona). The concept has been realized in many forms, including live cinema performance, biosensor collective game during the years 2009 - 2016. In 2016, UKI received a DICREAM/CNC (France) funding for feature film development. In 2020, UKI received a Guggenheim fellowship towards its production. The film in development has been realized in part as art installation, live performance and net art (2018 – 2021). UKI is currently in production for its 3D segments of E-trashville and schedule for location shoot in Berlin, Spring 2022.

## PRODUCERS

Jürgen Brüning (Jürgen Brüning filmproduktion, DE)  
Isabelle Arvers (Kareron, FR)

Jürgen Brüning is a Berlin-based film producer and director. Helming projects by queer luminaries like Dennis Cooper, Cheryl Dunye, Thuncka Pansittivorakul, G.B. Jones, Shu Lea Cheang, Lior Shamriz, and Ela Troyano, Brüning produced Bruce LaBruce's debut feature, *No Skin Off My Ass* (1990) and most of the filmmaker's subsequent projects, *Hustler White* (1996), *The Raspberry Reich* (2004), *The Misandrists* (2017). Jürgen has collaborated with Shu Lea Cheang on *FLUIDØ* (2017) and 10 case 10 films for *3x3x6* (2019).

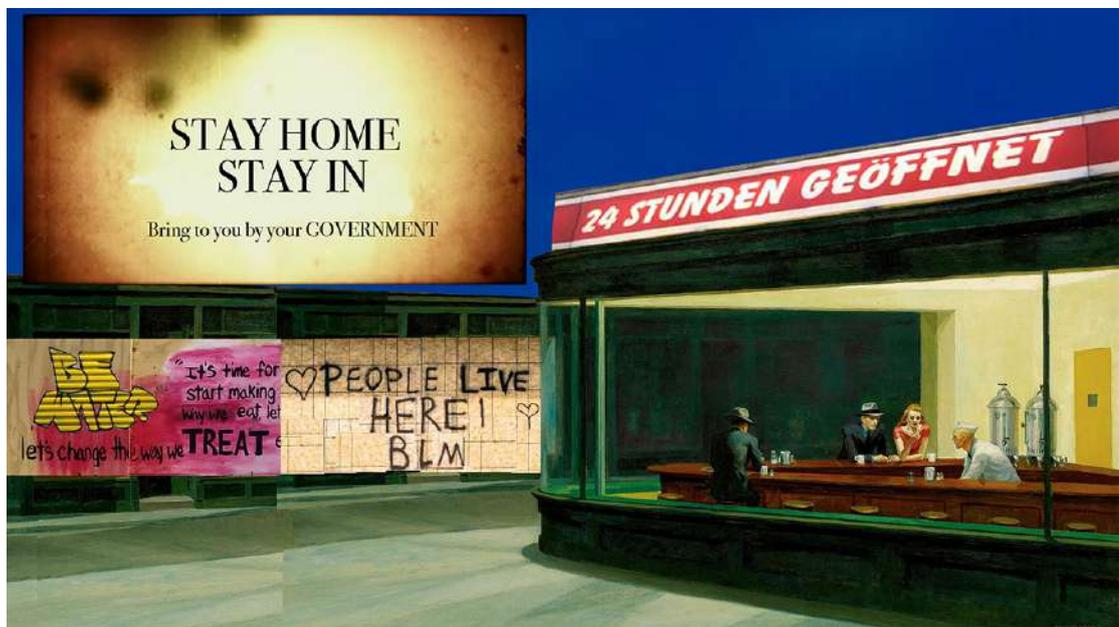
Isabelle Arvers is an artist and curator whose research focuses on the interaction between art and video games. For the past twenty years, she has been investigating the artistic, ethical, and critical implications of digital gaming. As a curator, she focuses on video games as a new language for artists, recently *Tecnofeminismo* (Bogota, AF, 2019), *Interspecies Imaginaries* (Overkill, 2019). In 2019, she embarked on an Art and Games World Tour in non-western countries to promote the notion of diversity of gender, sexuality and geographic origin, focusing on queer, feminist, and decolonial practices. Isabelle has collaborated with Shu Lea Cheang since 2014 with UKI game project, *Enter the BioNet*. Arvers founded Kareron to promote, diffuse and produce digital art, games and exhibitions.

## WORK IN PROGRESS – SKETCH and 3D CREATION

UKI's multi-thread plots unfolded in - (1) an infected city (2) BioNet red blood cells and (3) Etrashville - propose a scifi fable with defunct humanoids, trans-mutants and techno-data-body.

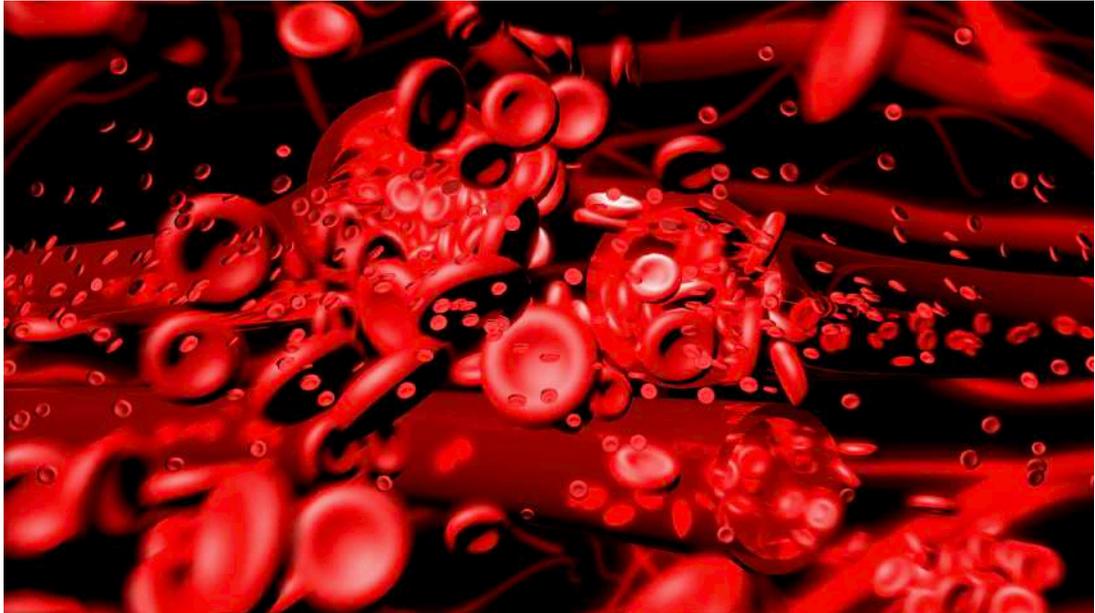
(1) an infected city

Modelled after Edward Hopper's diner in Nighthawks (1942), the infected city in UKI is under siege of bacteria infection schemed by GENOM's take over of human bodies. Outside the diner, the shop windows are burnt and blocked with plywood where graffiti testifies turbulent social/political unrest. A large screen mounted above the buildings carries messages from the GOVERNMENT and streams Corporate Ads. Inside the diner, a microcosm of a neighborhood social space where customers undergo body transition and hackers counter mis-information.



## (2) BioNet – red blood cells

Welcome to the era of BioNet, a corporate scheme to claim, alter, reconfigure our biodata. Using bacteria as foreign 'agents' to enter the human body, GENOM Co. can then reprogram the erythrocytes, to transfuse the membranes of red blood cells. Red blood cells which function as carriers to deliver oxygen to the body tissues via blood flow through the circulatory system, is reconfigured into DNA retainers with possibilities to store and reprocess data/memories. In its profitable biotech engineering scheme, GENOM Co. further harvests orgasmic data transactions to produce red pills for mass pharmaceutical markets.



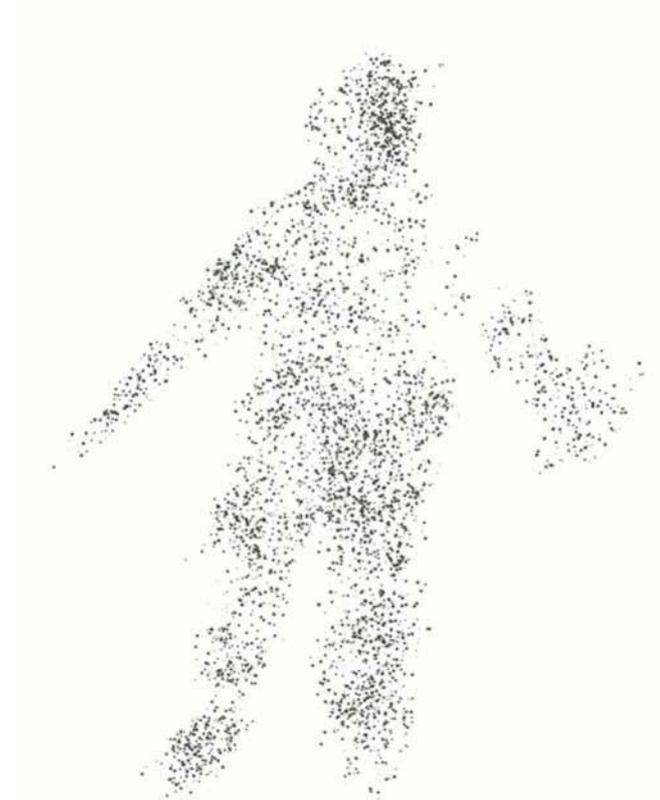
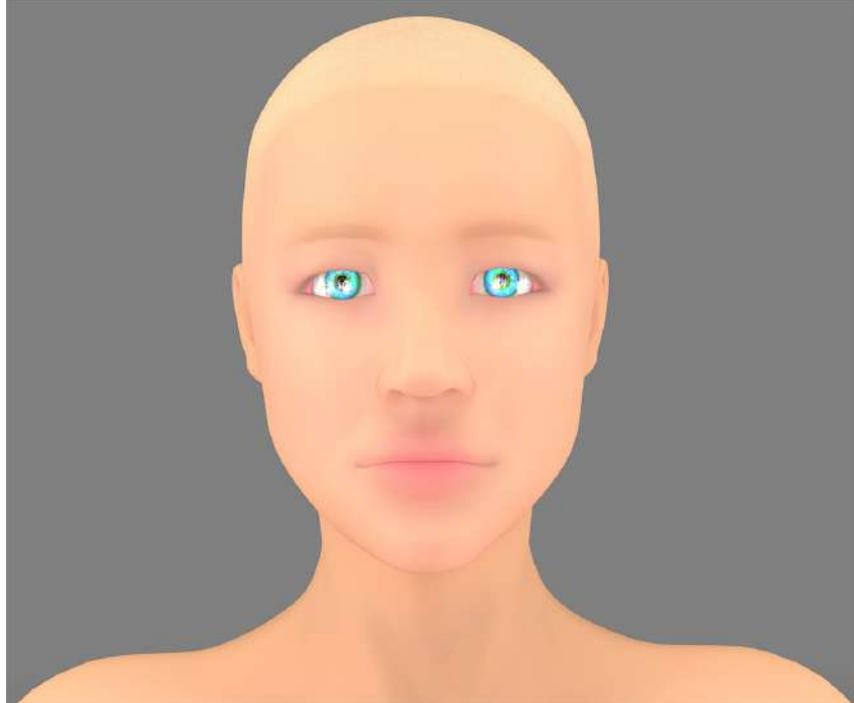
### (3) E-trashville

Under a red sky, the camera moves along the motherboards, rams and CPUs to reveal the E(electronic) – trashville where tribes of inhabitants live off the dumped E-trash. The discarded electronic parts, laying bare and out of function, beam the last signals of life in red, blue, green LED lights.



**WORK IN PROGRESS****E-TRASHVILLE - TRIBES and INHABITANTS (as 3D AVATARS)**

\* REIKO/UKI THE VIRUS (Performer – Tyra Wigg)  
an obsolete IKU replicant coder dumped as electronic trash by GENOM Corp. finds her way to reprogram herself with the help of Etrashville inhabitants. In the process of codin and malware, REIKO re-emerges as UKI the VIRUS.



\* OZONE (performer - Titilayo Adebayo)  
a floating agent, travel with self-designed roller skates and a modified VR goggle made with an iPhone2G (released in 2007) inserted into a WW2 aircrew goggle. OZONE is an early generation IKU coder dumped by GEMOM, re-emerged as informer, still royal to GENOM Corp.



\* ZONE S.O.B. (Soul on the Beach)

– homage to Kongo Astronauts and Kinshasa street performers

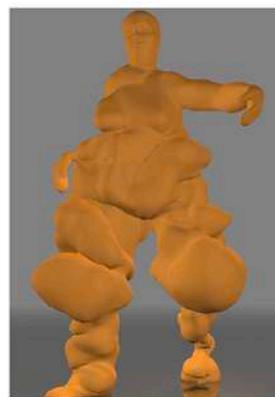
The tribe of S.O.B. (Soul on the Beach) appear in the smog on the burning hill.

They are Eke and Halo, the Cosmonauts and ALPHA, BETA, the F.O.B. (Fresh off the Boat) who take on the self-ordained duty of “border patrol”.



\* ZONE LES MUTANTS

LES MUTANTS are borne out of toxic trash remix. Through generations of electronic-toxic pollution and environmental viral infection, they are transgenic creatures carrying mutated virus within. Their E-trash modified living quarter appears to be chaotic, including a bread stove made with aluminum parts, some bubbling jars with fermenting organism. LES MUTANTS are LES (modelled after Liz Rosenfeld), SKETCH (modelled after ANDRO), VARIUS and ALBA (performer Julian Fricker)



LES



SKETCH



ALBA



VARIUS

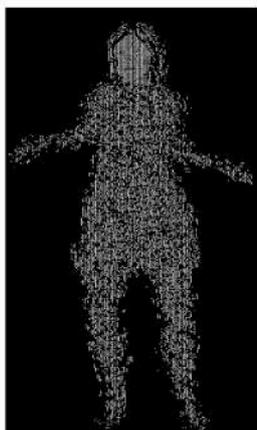
### \* ZONE LABORAL

The labourers, mostly young men in their teens, work with bare hands and primitive tools found on the junk piles. They mine the circuit boards for copper wires, aluminum parts which are deemed valuable in the E-trashville's self-regulated marketplace. VIOLET (hommage to performer Lauri Carlos), a strong woman, manages all tradings of etrash junks with a rusty weight scale.

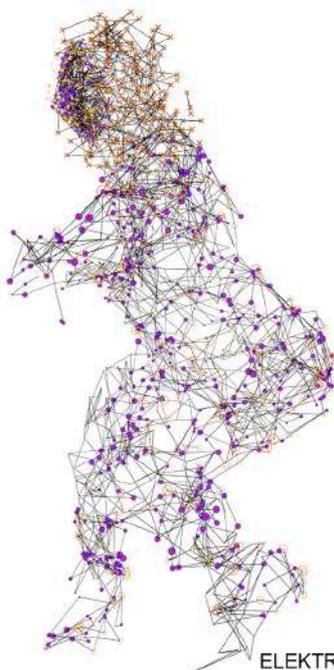


### \*ZONE S.I.C.K. (Saint Insane Cookie Kool)

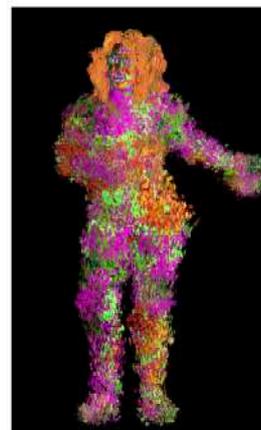
The zone of S.I.C.K. is made up with a collection of ancient electric/electro devices, the E-bay wholesale from last centuries dumped on the E-trashville. Out of this assemble of E-trash, unruly mushrooms sprout out, making loudly toxic-eco statements. The S.I.C.K. chicks, STONE, ELEKTRA, XENO respectively modelled after Sandy Stone, Elektra Wegenrad and Adriana Knouf, are geeks, additive code jammers.



S.I.C.K.



ELEKTRA on bike



XENO

**FUNDINGS (updated November 2021)**

UKI has received funding by DICRÉAM/CNC (FR, 2016), Guggenheim Fellowships (USA, 2020), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg (DE, 2021).

**PRODUCTION TIMELINE (2021-2022)**

We are currently in both pre-production and 3D production phase of UKI cinema.

(1) an infected city with a diner

The production of the diner scenes in the city is scheduled for Spring (March-April) 2022. It will be shot in Berlin with local crew. Editing in May-June, 2022.

(2) GENOM's BioNet made up of re-engineered blood cells

Most sketches for BioNet (3D design with Gonzalo Martín) is done associated with various exhibited art projects during 2020- 2021.

(3) the E-trashville

3D DESIGN/ANIMATION/CINEMA: Mathieu Marguerin (Paris), Roland Lauth (Berlin)

Schedule for Etrashville production is as follows-

August - December 31, 2021 –20 avatars design (cinema4D), E-trashville 4 ZONE set construction (programmed in UNITY).

January 1- June 30, 2022 - work with performers to realize avatars' facial expression and body movements, Animation - merge avatars in the E-trashville scenary based on the script, scene by scene.

July- August, 2022 - multimedia studio residency at Antre Peaux Bourges with support of a well-equipped studio to work on final motion capture, render and 4K output.

**POST PRODUCTION**

September – October 2022 – final editing, sound design, music composition.

November 2022 – final picture output for sound mixing, completion of the film.

**UKI LINKS – WEBSITE & RELATED ART PROJECTS**

\*UKI website – <http://u-k-i.co>

\*UKI virus Rising, a 3 channel installation, Gwangju Biennale (2018)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEo5hAVK6G4>

\*Makery interview

<https://www.makery.info/en/2021/05/31/english-virus-becoming-shu-lea-cheang-on-viral-love-biohack/>

\*UKI Virus Rising performance, Shedhalle, Zurich

<https://shedhalle.ch/shu-lea-cheang-uki-virus-rising-2/>

\*Welcome to BioNet, an Up Projects (London) web art commission

<https://upprojects.com/pages/welcome-to-bionet>

<http://u-k-i.co/welcometobionet/>

\*Red Pill (30sec AD)

<https://vimeo.com/502220153>

\*UKI bionet - a sketch

<https://vimeo.com/447784117>