

# Institute of Contemporary Arts

PRESS RELEASE

NEO ULTRA PUNK

18–20 May 2018



‘I situated myself in trans communities respectively in San Francisco, Amsterdam and London in the late 90s, a time when the binary gender notion dictated the body modification proposed by sexual reassignment: one “transitioned” to either FTM (female to male) or MTF (male to female). Nearly 20 years later, *WONDERS WANDER* [web series] brings up a new generation of nonbinary creatures who swim freestyle in gender fluidity. HE/SHE/IT merge into a “THEY” as a singular noun.’  
– Shu Lea Cheang, describing production of web series *Brandon*

The Institute of Contemporary Arts is pleased to present NEO ULTRA PUNK, a three-day programme featuring new and recent works by artist and filmmaker Shu Lea Cheang, alongside presentations by performers, filmmakers and thinkers reflecting on Cheang’s concept ‘NEO ULTRA PUNK’ – the attitude of ‘a nouveau queer generation that includes refugees, migrants, functional diversity, transfeminism, open families, subversive motherhoods, forms of sustainable living and the rise of self-defence practices for self-empowerment.’ This series of events follows Shu Lea Cheang’s recent participation in the ICA’s Post-Cyber Feminist International and is programmed in partnership with Res.

Over the past three decades, Cheang’s films, performances and networked productions have addressed the future of the nonbinary techno-body. The incorporation and wilful hacking of the body in the context of late stage biotechnical capitalism led prominent queer theorist Paul B. Preciado to claim, ‘we are facing a new kind of capitalism that is hot, psychotropic and punk.’ Artists featured in NEO ULTRA PUNK offer practical, metaphysical and

speculative renegotiations of the boundaries of the body in order to challenge social and structural injustices reproduced through patriarchal gender norms. Participants include artists and filmmakers Shu Lea Cheang, Elizabeth Mputu, Ayesha Tan Jones, Shadow Sistxrs Fight Club, Zach Blas, Natasha Lall, Hannah Quinlan and Rosie Hastings, producer Giulia Casalini and writers Mijke van der Drift and Matthew Fuller.

On 18 May, the last episode of Cheang's recent mobi-web series titled *¿Entiendes?* (*Do you understand?*) will be shown during WONDERS WANDER Short + Panel. This episode follows the formation of a queer youth self-defence collective in Madrid and is presented alongside short artist films responding to Cheang's exploration of queer strategies of care and poetics of the body.

On 19 May, Cheang's new cypherpunk sci-fi porn feature film *Fluidø* (2017) will be screened and followed by a conversation between Cheang and writer Matthew Fuller. The film is set in the post-AIDS future of 2060, in which mutated AIDS viruses give birth to ZERO GEN, whose ejaculated white fluid is the hyper-narcotic for the 21st century. As in many of Cheang's works, the body is encoded and acts as a device for data transmission, thereby acting out a parable, both for viral and techno-mediated desire. Articulating the ascendancy of biotechnical solutions that exploit organic systems for industrial purposes, scenes unfold celebrating the free flow of bodily fluid. The screening is bracketed by Let's Make a Sequel – Fluidø 2, a live open casting call for the speculative sequel to *Fluidø* (2017). This is followed by the performance party Liberate the Fluid, showcasing performances by the assembled cast.

On 20 May, ICA Social Creative Network residents Shadow Sistxrs Fight Club present a physical and metaphysical self-defence workshop, inviting participation from women, nonbinary and QTPOC witches. The group, founded by Ayesha Tan Jones and Monique Etienne, will employ a range of techniques from herbal amulets and sacred ritual through to practical self-defence skills.

NEO ULTRA PUNK is presented in collaboration with Res. and runs parallel to their exhibition *Alembic III: Protocols for Intimacy, Shu Lea Cheang & Annabelle Craven-Jones*, which includes a recreation of Cheang's coin-operated, gender fluid porno booth installation *Those Fluttering Objects of Desire* (1992).

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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

**Res.**

Shu Lea Cheang (Taiwan/US/France) is an artist and filmmaker working with net-based installation, social interface and independent film production. Recent projects include *Wonders Wander* (2017), a mobi-web-series produced for Madrid Pride and the feature length, cypherpunk sci-fi film *Fluidø* (2017). Her seminal cyberfeminist web project *Brandon* (1998–1999), concerning the rape and murder of a young transgender man in Nebraska, was recently restored as part of the Guggenheim's permanent collection.

Res. is a mutable project based in a gallery and workspace in Deptford, South East London. Alembic is curated by [Res.](#) curators Helen Kaplinsky, Sarah Jury and Lucy A. Sames.

## PROGRAMME

### [WONDERS WANDER, Shorts + Panel](#)

Fri 18 May, 6pm, Cinema, £5/£3

### [Let's Make a Sequel – Fluidø 2](#)

Sat 19 May, 2–5pm, Theatre, Free

### [Fluidø + Shu Lea Cheang Q&A](#)

Sat 19 May, 6:30pm, Cinema, £5/£3

### [Liberate the Fluid](#)

Sat 19 May, 9pm, Theatre, £5/£3

### [Shadow Sistxrs Fight Club](#)

Sun 20 May, 3pm, Studio, £5/£3

## FORTHCOMING AT THE ICA

### [QUEERS READ THIS](#)

Thu 24 May, 7pm, Theatre, £5/£3

Queers Read This is a presentation of readings, performance and film by writers dealing with intersectional identity and nonconforming forms of literature in the UK, featuring Richard Dodwell, Abundance Matanda, Nisha Ramayya, Timothy Thornton, Isabel Waidner and Joanna Walsh.