



U.K.I. (80:00, 2023)
<http://u-k-i.co>

a Scifi Viral Alt-Reality Cinema
Screenplay/Direction: Shu Lea Cheang
Funding: The Guggenheim Fellowship,
Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg

Premiered at Filmfest München 2023
Shown at Las Art Foundation (Berlin), Centre Pompidou (Paris),
MoMA (New York), Goethe Institute (Shanghai),
Taipei Fine Arts Museum Museum (Taipei) among other venues.

Set your electric sheep free range.
It is 2060, what do you do with expired humanoids?

UKI's storyline unfolds as we follow a defunct replicant REIKO dumped on Etrashville - a vast dump for tech - who tries to pull themselves back together with the help of its transgenic inhabitants. A virtual BioNet owned by GENOM Co. has occupied human bodies and re-engineered red blood cells into nano-computing self-generated orgasms. Parallel to REIKO's trajectory is that of an infected city in which a besieged diner gathers the infected to exchange own orgasm data for fresher, intenser, mutual orgasm. The diner is also the meeting-place for hackers who traverse time and space, bringing in news of protest and manifestation while uncovering GENOM's bio-engineering scheme. As the plot thickens, REIKO's body is coded, recoded and finally collapses to re-emerge as UKI the Virus. Setting back GENOM's plans, UKI the Virus seems on the brink of swarming through the infected city to liberate the red blood cells. Through virus Becoming, viral Love, we find a way to reclaim our viral bodies.



An Infected City

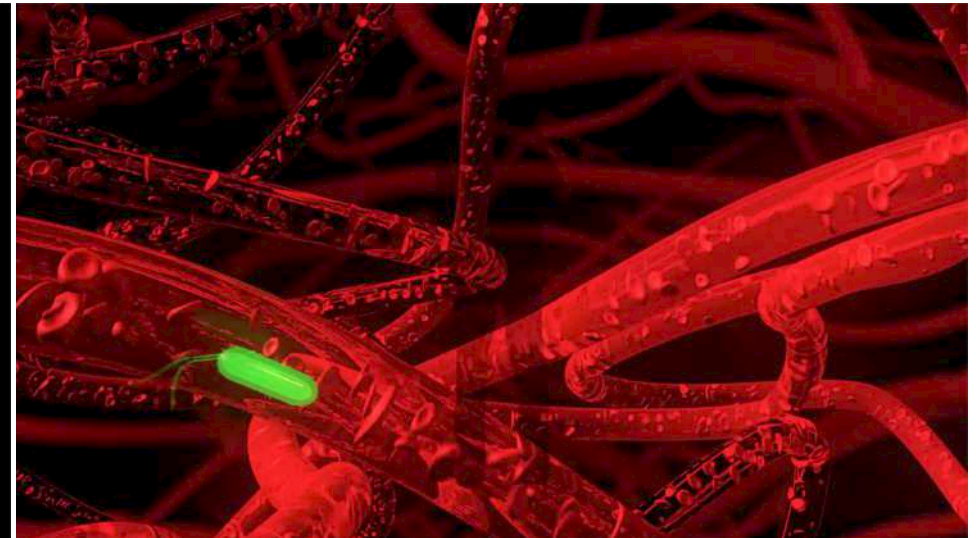
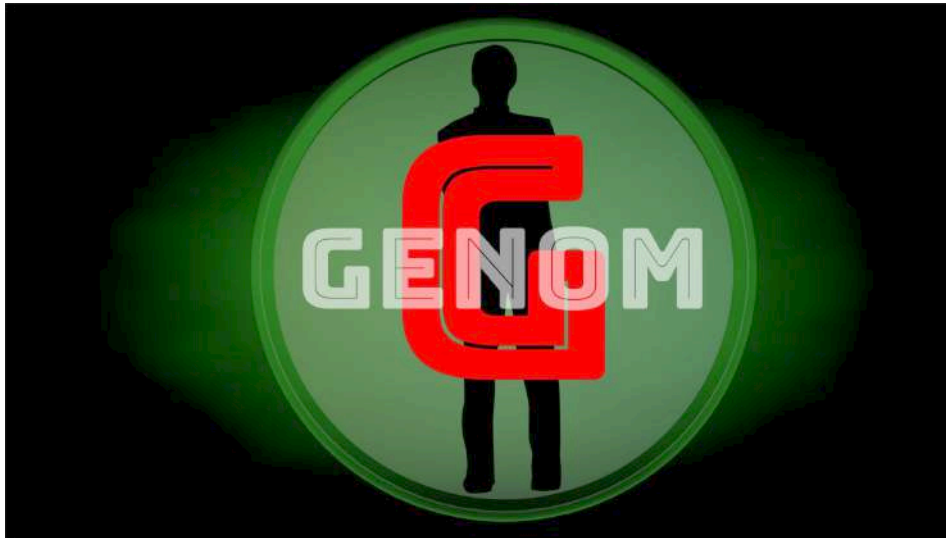
Modelled after Edward Hopper's diner in *Nighthawks* (1942), the infected city in UKI is under siege of bacteria infection schemed by GENOM's take over of human bodies. Outside the diner, the shop windows are burnt and blocked with plywood where graffiti testifies turbulent social/political unrest. A 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.



BioNet – red blood cells

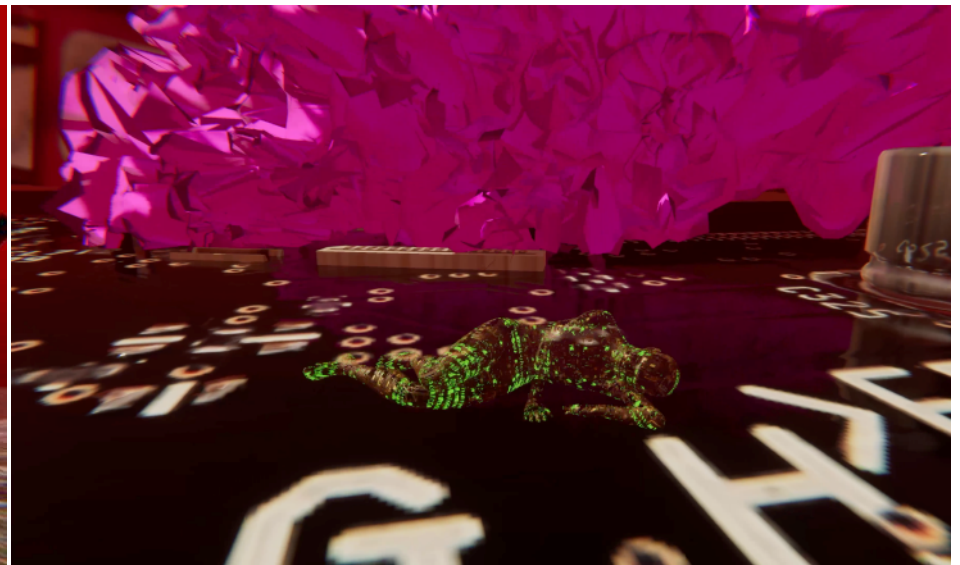
Welcome to the era of BioNet, a corporate scheme to claim, alter, reconfigure our biodata.

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.



The Continent 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. The defunct Reiko dumped by GENOM corp. among the Etrash is introduced to OZONE, 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 introduced the four tribes - S.O.B.(Soul on the Beach), Les Mutants, Laboral and S.I.C.K. (Saint Insane Cookie Kool) to Reiko, hoping to revive Reiko's codes. Yet accidentally turning Reiko into UKI the virus.





We are part of a [science] fiction playing out with bio-informatics, bio-engineering and mobile digital media. We have forsaken the prostheses cyborg-bodies and made kins with microbes. Bacteria, fungi, archaeobacteria, protists, green algae, plankton, planarians, amoebas are put under the microscopes as we study them, adopt them and embed them into our collective Open Source Body. We have departed from gender binary and deviated into transgenic discourse. To live with the virus is to transmutate our bodies, teleporting our viral bodies into a brave new Eco-System.



"This extraordinarily visually intense film moves from 3D graphics to game engine generated cinematic mise en scène to visual effects enhanced live action scenes in an extraordinary tour de force of contemporary digital collage." - Matthew Fuller, Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London

UKI trailer (1:00)
<https://youtu.be/ds3qS9MTObQ>



Shu Lea Cheang

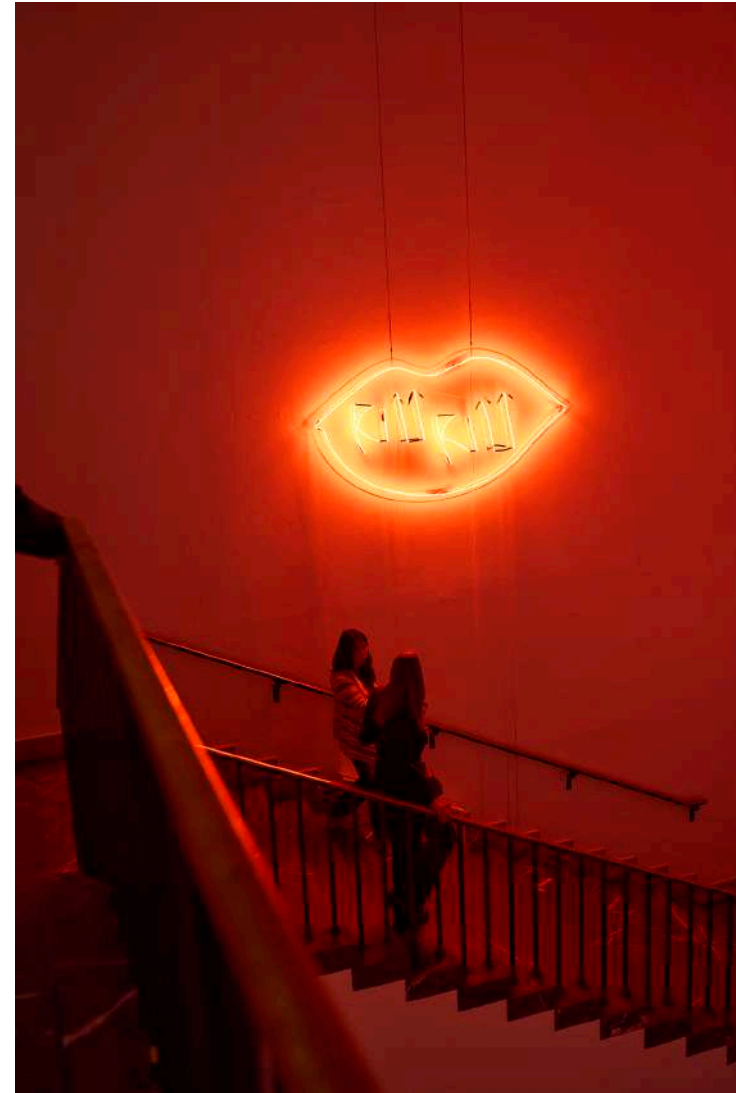


KI\$\$ KI\$\$ (2025)
Shu Lea Cheang

mixed media Installation
Haus der Kunst, Munich, 2025
Ludwig Forum Aachen, 2025-2026

Occupying the 3 rooms in North gallery at Haus Der Kunst in Munich, KI\$\$ KI\$\$ is made up with 3 titles -Home Delivery, Spoken Words and Portal Porting. The exhibition updates works and artefacts into new landscape formations extending through four gallery spaces. Trash appears as a primary theme that leads the investigation into the entanglement of biosphere and technosphere. Each gallery is its own world in which internet-based installation, software interaction, and multiplayer performance invite the audience to explore and play.

Employing science-fiction narratives focus on human/non-human interface, both natural and artificial. "KI\$\$ KI\$\$" reimagines the exhibition as a transformative journey or a "machine of experience."



Kiss Kiss Kill Kill neon sign
KI\$\$ KI\$\$, installation view, Haus der Kunst, 2025

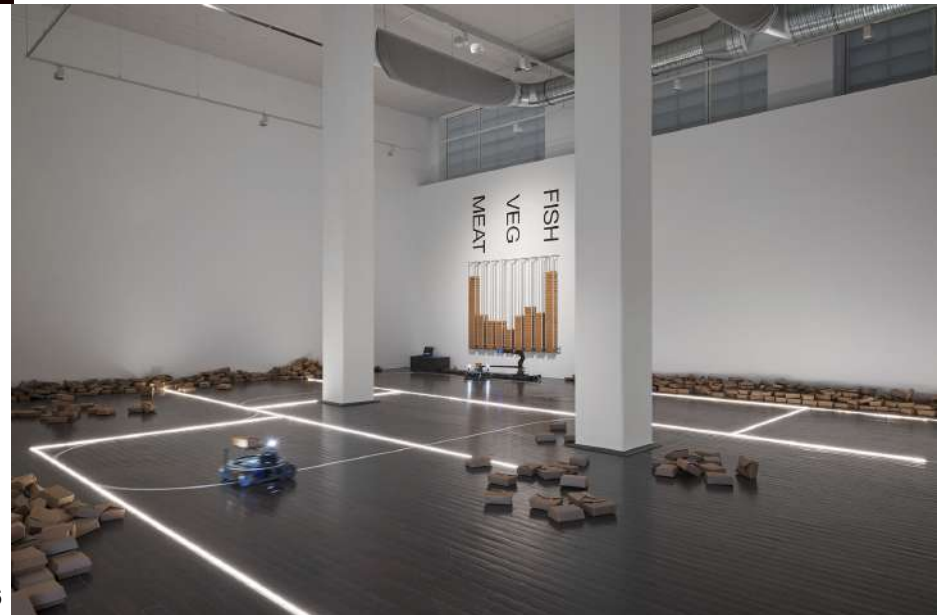


Home Delivery
KI\$\$ KI\$\$, installation view, Haus der Kunst, 2025

ROOM#1 HOME DELIVERY

3 autonomous robots, large quantity of cardboard food containers, 6 fragrances composed of synthetic and natural molecules, 9 sheep heads, live stream radio.

The installation Home Delivery addresses the ways in which we produce, distribute and consume food and emphasises how it shapes communities and transforms our cities. It allows us to understand these areas as an interconnected system in which we humans are one part of many. Derived from my work Drive By Dining (2002), Home delivery touches on connected issues such as migration and mobility with a scifi scenario, In 2030, food service industry has come to a halt. Working out of stored data of past deliveries, robots pick up empty food boxes and make the run following the mapped routes, knowing there is no food supplied or ordered. The boxes pile up to form fragile sculptures, a foolscap of waste.



Home Delivery
KI\$\$ KI\$\$, installation view, Ludwig Forum Aachen 2025-2026



SPOKEN WORDS
KI\$\$ KI\$\$, installation view, Haus der Kunst, 2025

ROOM#2
SPOKEN WORDS
Derived from
BABY WORK (2012)
Baby Work with large quantity of used keyboard membranes, keycaps,
USB cable, computer, speakers, LED panels, acrylic glass, wood,

UTTER (2023) Uttering - 4K video, color, 36:26 min
transparent flex-tube, keycaps dispensing machine sync
with video's keycap spitting sequence.

SPOKEN WORDS
KI\$\$ KI\$\$, installation view, Ludwig Forum Aachen 2025-2026

SPOKEN WORDS is an e-trashscape which navigates actual waste, informational waste, and waste as information. The installation syncs two distinct works to interrogate the technological nature of language and the methods of subjective intervention and exploration. As a performative installation, Baby Work situates the public as BABY who works to align the lost ME data. Set in a postkeyboard E-trashscape, the installation rewires junked keyboards to put the baby/public at work. YOU ARE THE BABY. WORK. Uttering shown in large scale projection is a self portrait of the artist's constantly changing self. The video begins with a figure gently sucking on a pacifier which grows into a ball gag. The sex toy symbolises submission and refers to the self-censoring effects of AI alignment processes and the moral filters of prompt-based image generators. A sudden glitch frees the figure from its gag, which in turn ejects blank keycaps from deep within.





PORTAL PORTING
KI\$\$ KI\$\$, installation view, Haus der Kunst, 2025

ROOM#3

PORTAL PORTING

derived from *Composting the Net* (2012)

interactive web projection, website, mailing list archives: <nettime>; SPECTRE; iDC; Rohrpost; AHA; New Media Curating; NetBehaviour; The Thing; -empyre-.

Portal to the Next (2022)

Burnt car, Shiitake mushrooms, speakers, sensors, metal, rust, sand, plastic, rubber, spray paint and marker on metal.

PORTAL PORTING
KI\$\$ KI\$\$, installation view, Ludwig Forum Aachen 2025-2026

PORTAL PORTING is a digital landfill or a post-nature jungle. Positioning the space of the World Wide Web as an ecosystem that can be poached but also wandered through, squatted, and planted on, the net reimagined as space for (political) community. Borrowing from software logic: porting is the act of adapting software to run on a different platform or system. In a more sci-fi conception, a portal also could be a transition point between different realities. The mixed media living installation *Portal to Next* (2023) consists of a burnt car and Shiitake mushrooms growing on tree branches and trunks. The mycelium network is an earth-bound network extension. It is rendered audible by an installation created with the artist Martin Howse that amplifies noises of unrest and revolt. The car appears as a totem of progress; the burnt car, however, has become synonymous with street protests in an ever-shrinking public sphere of action.





Shu Lea Cheang. KI\$\$ KI\$\$ | Exhibition film

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vDI89KVTms>

HAGAY DREAMING (2020 -2026)
A Techno-Fantasia Guided Theater of Revival
in collaboration with Dondon Hounwn

Theatre Performance
World premiere: Tate Modern, London, 2025
Taipei Performing Arts Center, 2026

<http://hagaydreaming.net>

Derived from a fabricated legend recounted by Dondon Hounwn, an artist and a practicing shaman, *Hagay Dreaming* recounts a story based on an ancient legend connected to the Truku indigenous culture of Taiwan. In her dreams, a hunter meets a group of spiritual non-binary beings called 'Hagay' and they pass on ancestral knowledge of living, weaving and hunting to the hunter. The hunter returned to the tribe and continued sharing Hagay's knowledge.

The stage design coverts the pouring rain, the transfer of knowledge in knitting and hunting into dazzling projections of laser beams. Applying the digital technology of motion capture and image processing, the multiplicity of genders are constantly transitioning. The tribal totem "dowriq" with the spectra of laser light beaming through summons the ancestral spirits to watch over us, guiding us forest walking, chanting, dreaming, weaving, hunting, gender hacking, leading us to the spiritual other-world.





A hunter, hiding from the rain, sought shelter in the forest and fell asleep. She dreamt of a group of beautiful people. The hunter asked them, Manu ka Numa? Who are you? They said, they are Hagay.

The tribal people say that “Hagay” is the first Truku who bravely proclaimed that he, an effeminate man. Hagay transmits the knowledge of weaving, hunting and Gaya living principle to the hunter, for further disseminating among the tribal people.



Hagay Dreaming, Taipei Performing Arts Center, 2026

HAGAY and the woman hunter challenge the Truku tribe's traditional definite binary moves.

They switch their birth assigned genders, exchange the roles of leading and being led in their duet.

Temu. Masin who plays HAGAY writes –

"The exchange between them is the exchange of information, identity, temperament and ability, gender is just the external form of all this. Putting aside gender, this is an insistence on self-worth and a way of living for one's own soul, with a concept of "self-determination". - temu. Masin "Exchanged Souls"

HAGAY's floating semi-transparent costume is unwrapped into a layer of membrane.

Through motion capture and software processing of their body movements, their intertwined dancing bodies multiplied are projected onto the layer of membrane.

The projected bodies overlap each other, creating the illusion of multiple gender bodies, pulling and tearing, full of intensity, intimacy, repression, conflict and sensuality. Transcending binary gender imposition, they find ease and freedom from multiple identities of self.

Finally the layer of membrane wraps tightly the two entangled bodies, bodies falling down.....



In a public conversation held at Dandai Art fair in 2025, Dondon Hounwn and Shu Lea Cheang reflect on their boundary crossing collaboration - the fusion of digital signaling with oral storytelling and the interplay of light and sound in the work. Together with their collaborators, they have been searching for a language that transcends time and space. They assert that technology is not merely a tool, but a modern shamanic device. They invoke technology to carry tradition, transforming it into a storyteller of contemporary mythology. By rejecting the dominant narratives of mainstream technology, they articulate a futurism rooted in Indigenous worldviews. *HAGAY DREAMING* questions If *HAGAY DREAMING* portrays a dreamscape in the forest, then what lies ahead? Can that future be a liberation of gender consciousness? A profound dialogue between technology and Indigenous knowledge systems? A re-ritualization that transcends bodily and cultural boundaries?





HAGAY DREAMING, Tate Modern, London 2025(Short Version)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLH_I5IRhLc