PORTFOLIO
Shu Lea Cheang 1992 - 2023

Selected artworks (8)

UTTER (2023) Mixed Media Installation
UKI (2009 - 2023) Scifi Viral Alt-Reality Cinema and its related art works
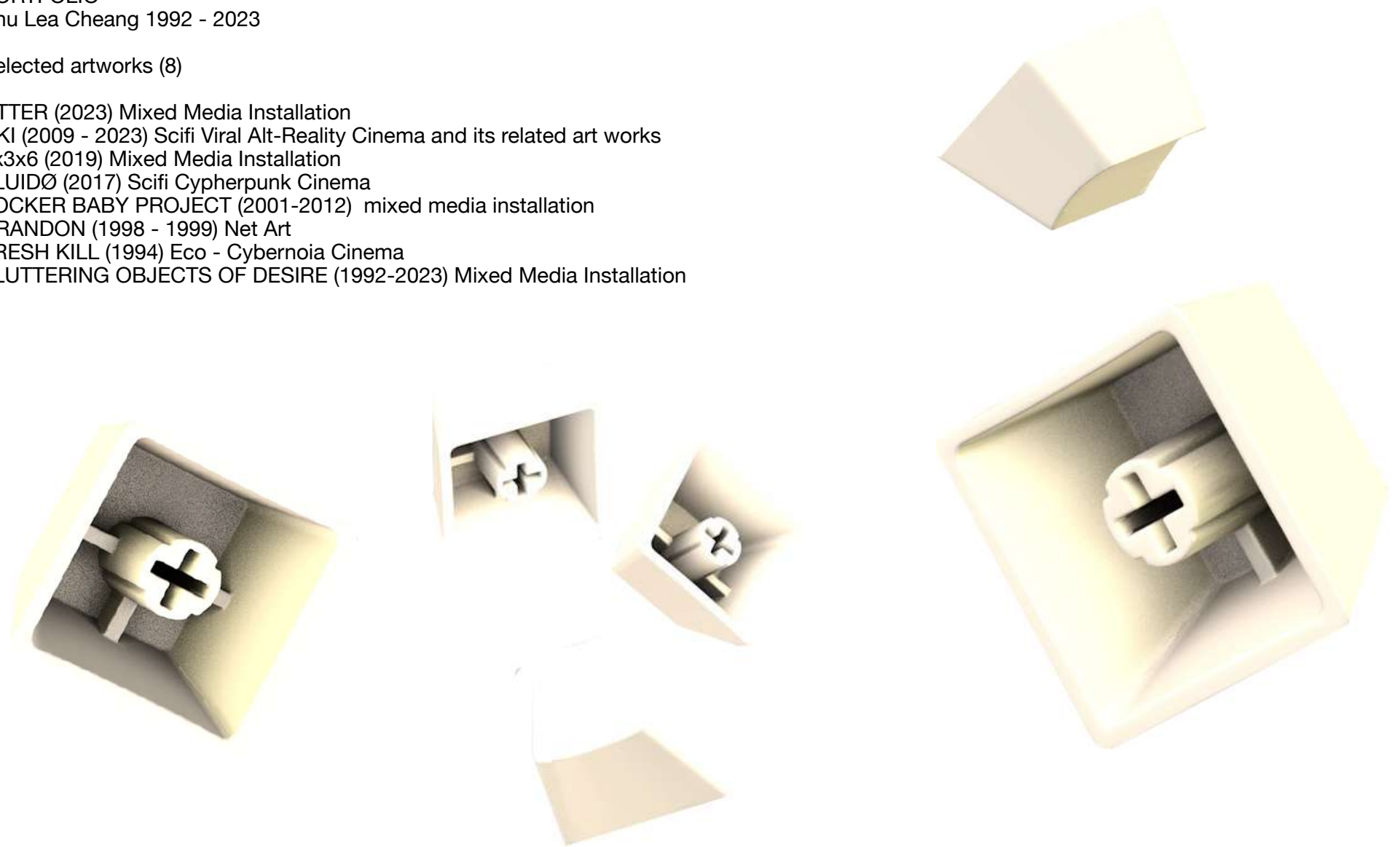3x3x6 (2019) Mixed Media Installation
FLUIDØ (2017) Scifi Cypherpunk Cinema
LOCKER BABY PROJECT (2001-2012) mixed media installation
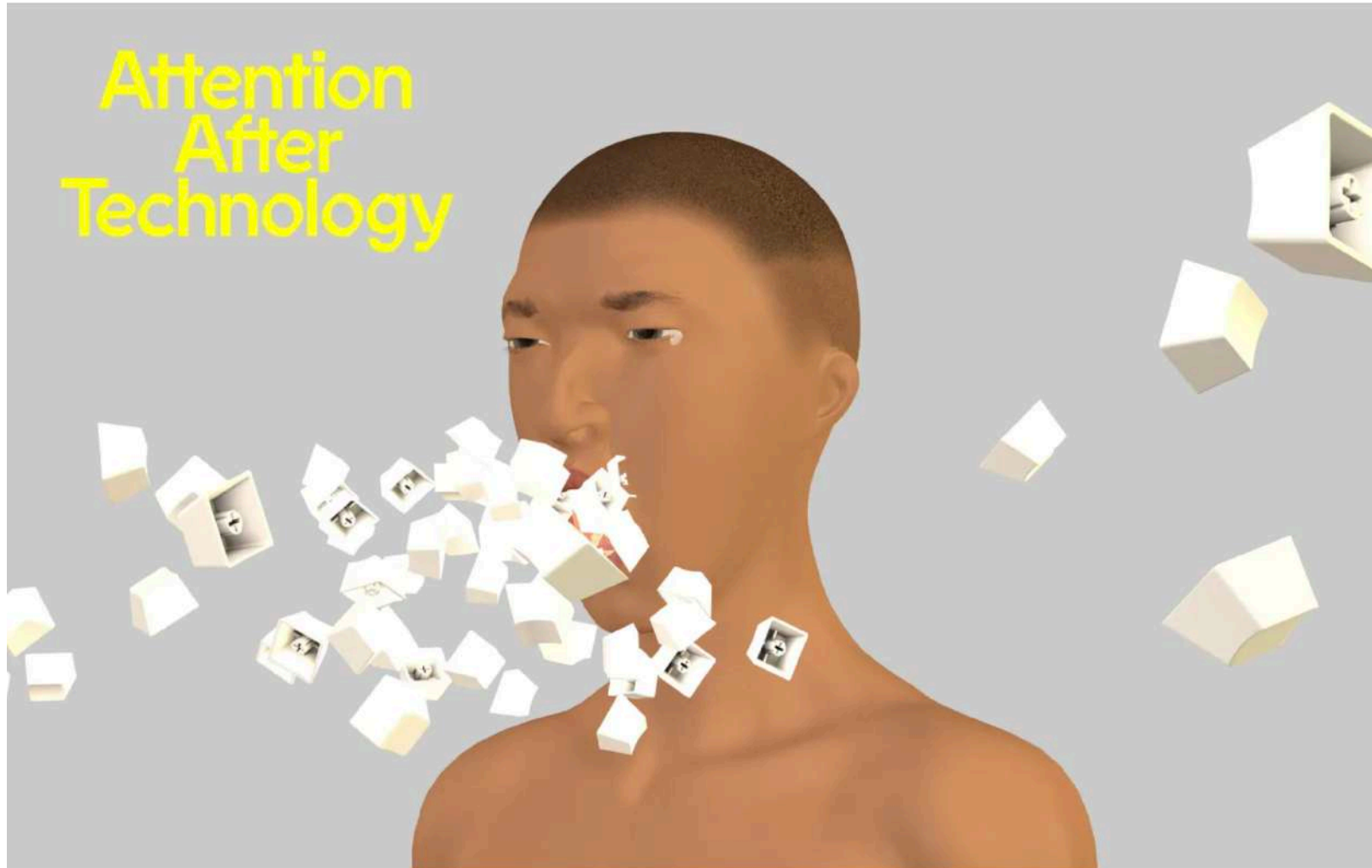BRANDON (1998 - 1999) Net Art
FRESH KILL (1994) Eco - Cybernoia Cinema
FLUTTERING OBJECTS OF DESIRE (1992-2023) Mixed Media Installation

Exhibition opening: Attention After Technology

Shu Lea Cheang, *UTTER* (2023)mixed media installation. Courtesy the artist.

UTTER (2023) Mixed Media Installation

https://kunsthalltrondheim.no/en/utstillinger/attention-after-technology

UTTER is a Creative Europe commission showing in the exhibition *Attention After Technology* which focuses on attention economies, algorithms, and social justice.

UTTER comprises two videos – *UTTERING* and *PARAMETERS* – and 2 modified candy dispensers filled with blank computer keycaps. *UTTERING*, a self-portrait of an artificial intelligence (AI), features a human torso in programmed contortion and mutation. The features never stop changing; skin colour, eye colour, eye shape, hair colour, body shape and gender, all morphing in a continuous loop. Accompanying this video is *PARAMETERS*, which shows the coded parameters associated with gender and race.

The work explores AI alignment, which aims to guide the programmed systems towards human goals, such as preferences and ethical principles. A pacifier in the mouth of the figure in *UTTERING* recalls a baby being kept quiet while attempting to utter. As the pacifier transforms into a ball gag, the self is rendered into submission and forced into silence. The figure spits out the ball gag as blank keycaps cascade out from its mouth. 3D-printed blank keycaps are also placed inside two modified candy dispensers, which permit the audience to interact and dispense the keycaps, leaving them spreading out on floor of the exhibition space.

UTTER explores the ethical protocols in AI alignment, the programmed algorithms and whether AI is able to grasp the complexity and fluidity of human identities beyond reductive views such as binary genders.

Two video loops, *UTTERING* (36'26"), *PARAMETERS* (36'26"), two modified candy dispensers (each 140 x 16 cm), 2500

units of 3D-printed blank computer keycaps (each 40 mm). Commissioned by Kunsthall Trondheim, Art Hub

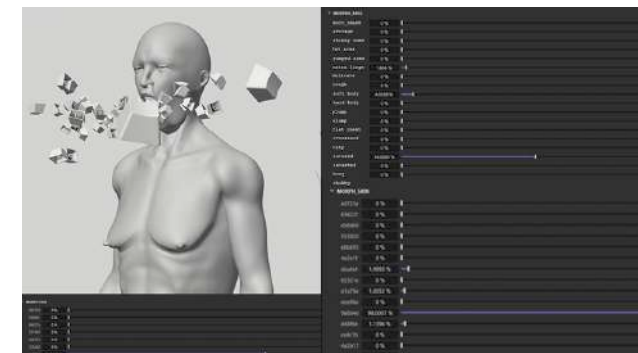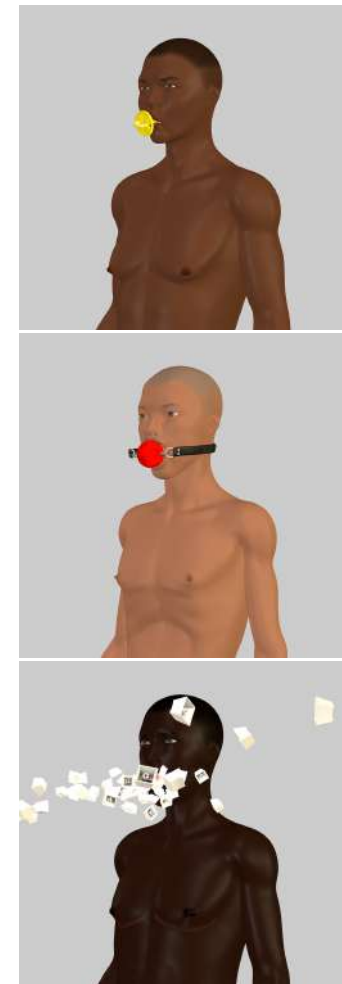Copenhagen, Tropical Papers, State of Concept Athens and Swiss Institute New York.

Stills from UTTERING & PARAMETERS, Shu Lea Cheang 2023
UTTERING (36:26 loop)
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1u6RT-D9lmvKKkdR_7ZAh-gQM3k6rccYv/view?usp=drive_link

PARAMETERS (36:26 loop)
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zr9HzsTi5QQlzeQtkr3Req5DFt27r4-m/view?usp=drive_link

installation view, Kunsthall Trondheim 2023
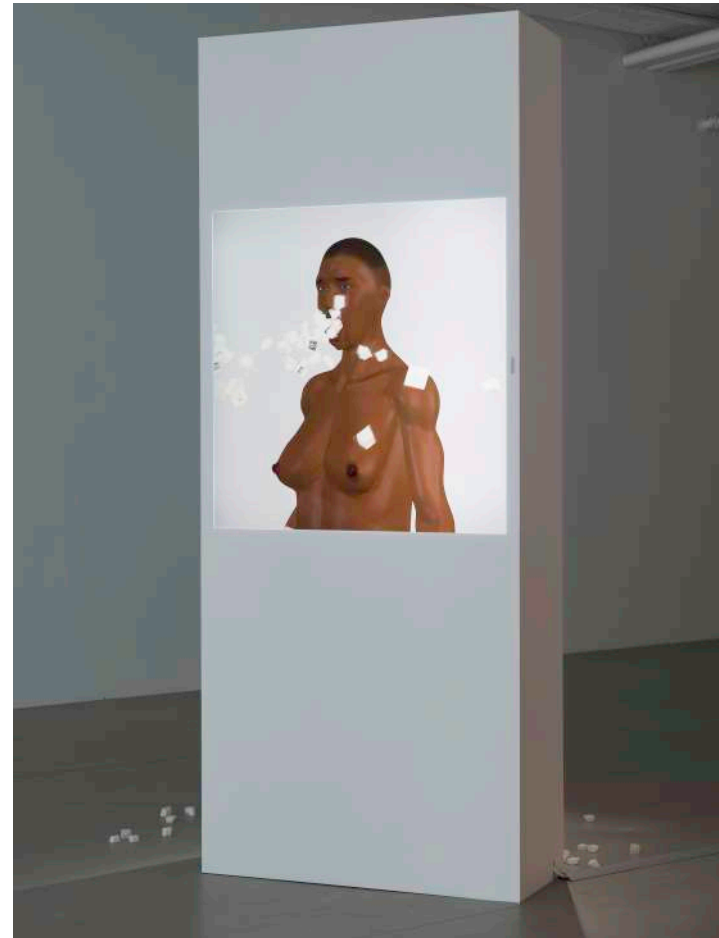
still from UKI, Shu Lea Cheang (2023)

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UKI (2023, 80:00, 4K) Scifi Viral Alt-Reality Cinema
and its related art works (2009 - 2023)

http://u-k-i.co
http://u-k-i.co/UKI2009-2016

Story/Script/Art Design/Direction: Shu Lea Cheang
A Jürgen Brüning FilmProduktion
Major funding provided by
The Guggenheim Fellowship (USA)
Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg (Germany)

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 Etrashville's transgenic inhabitants. Parallel to REIKO's trajectory is that of an infected city where we are made aware of the reckless schemes of the biotech enterprise, GENOM Co.

The three narratives interweave in three film sets - (1) A virtual BioNet owned by GENOM Co. takes human bodies hostage to re-engineer red blood cells into nano-computing self-generated orgasms. BioNet further collects enhanced orgasm data to produce orgasmic red pills for profit. (2) A besieged diner in the city where the infected congregate to exchange data while the hackers who traverse time and space, bringing in news of protest and manifestation and uncover GENOM's bio-engineering schemes. (3) Etrashville, set in the Deep Continent, where REIKO awakes to find their glitched body undergoing a series of reboot and re-format with the help of Etrashville's transmutant, transgenic creatures. As the plot thickens, REIKO's body is coded, recoded and finally collapses to emerge as UKI the Virus.

Premiered at FILMFEST MÜNCHEN with an homage hosted by Museum Brandhorst in June 2023, followed by Berlin premiere presented by LAS Art Foundation with film screenings, installation and performance for two days in July 2023. UKI is currently touring major cities for 2023 premieres including Centre Pompidou (13/09), Cinematek Brussels (03/10), TFAM Taipei (18/10), Uplink Kyoto & Tokyo (November), MoMA New York (20/11) and ICA London (15/12).
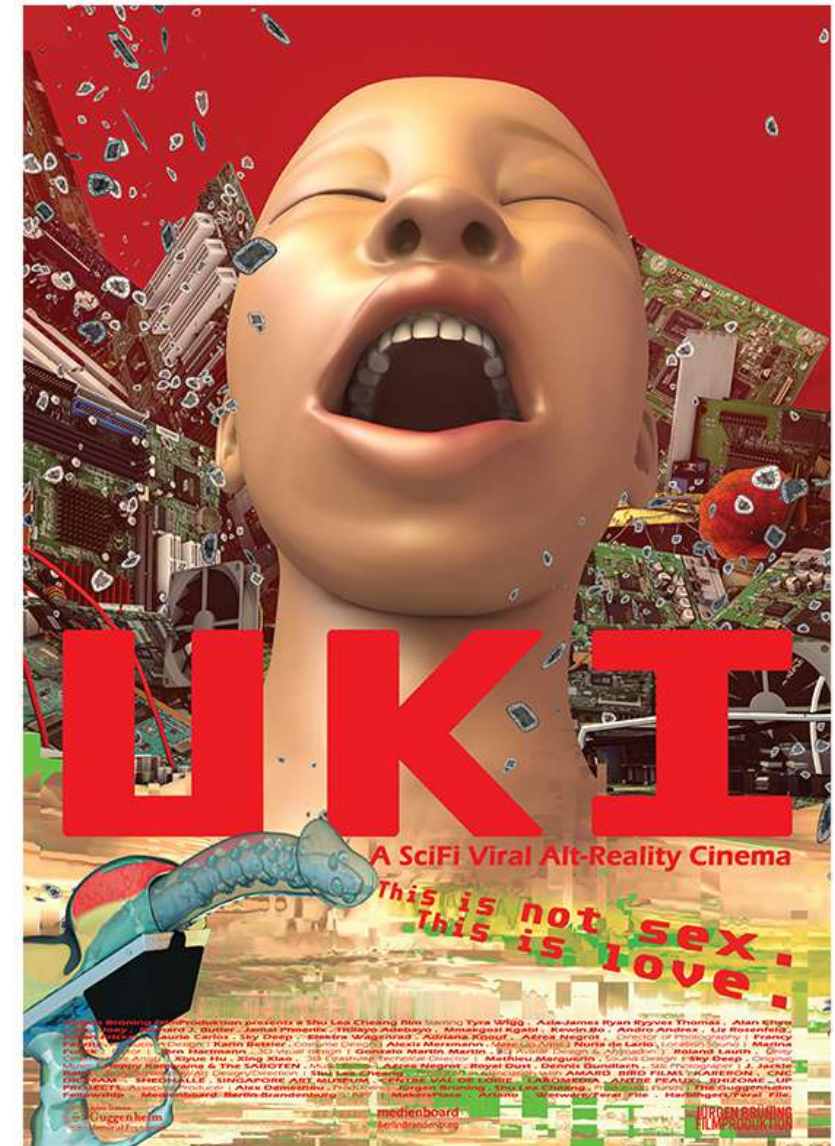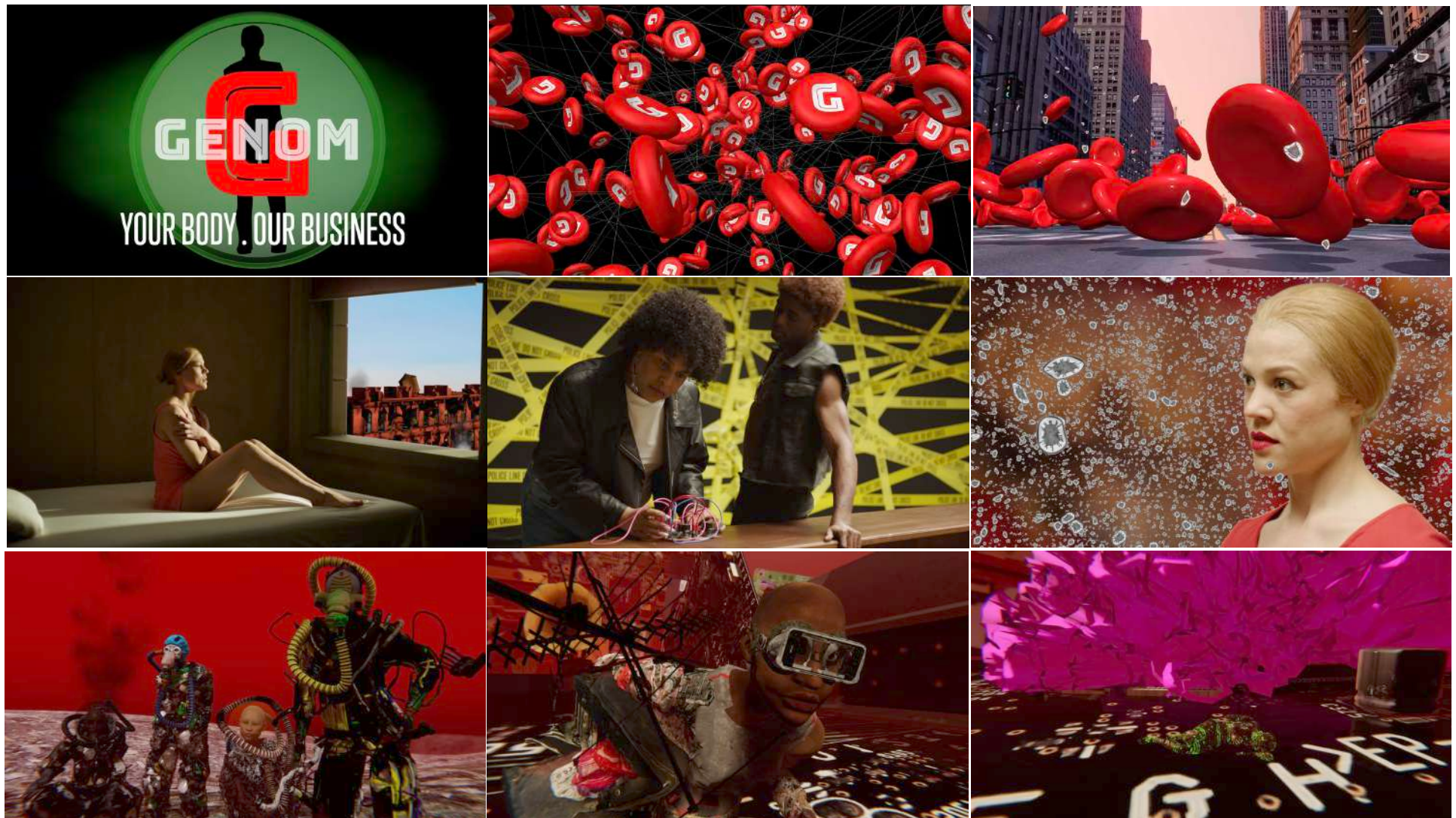
"This extraordinarily visually intense film moves from 3D graphics to game engine generated cinematic *mise en scène* to visual effects enhanced live action scenes in an extraordinary *tour de force* of contemporary digital collage."
 – Matthew Fuller, Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths, London

ART WORKS derived from UKI concept, plot and art design

UKI Virus Rising (2018, 3 Channel installation)
Gwangju Biennale 2018
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEo5hAVK6G4

RED PILL (2023) mixed media installation
Three 3D printed red pills (100cmx30cmx30cm)
1320 blood cells (150mm dia)
Red Pill ad (00:30, 4K)
https://vimeo.com/502220153
HOPE, Techno Humanities, Museion Bolzano, Italy
https://www.museion.it/2023/09/hope/
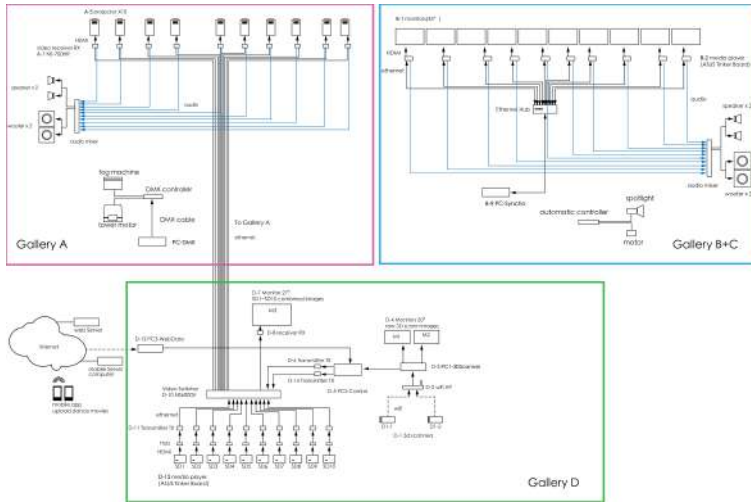

UKI Berlin premiere presented by LAS Art Foundation
with screenings, installation & performance.
documentation: https://www.picdrop.com/clemensberlin/7AWGJySfAs

3x3x6 (2019) Mixed Media Installation
Palazzo delle Prigioni, Venice Biennale 2019
http://3x3x6.com

Type to enter text
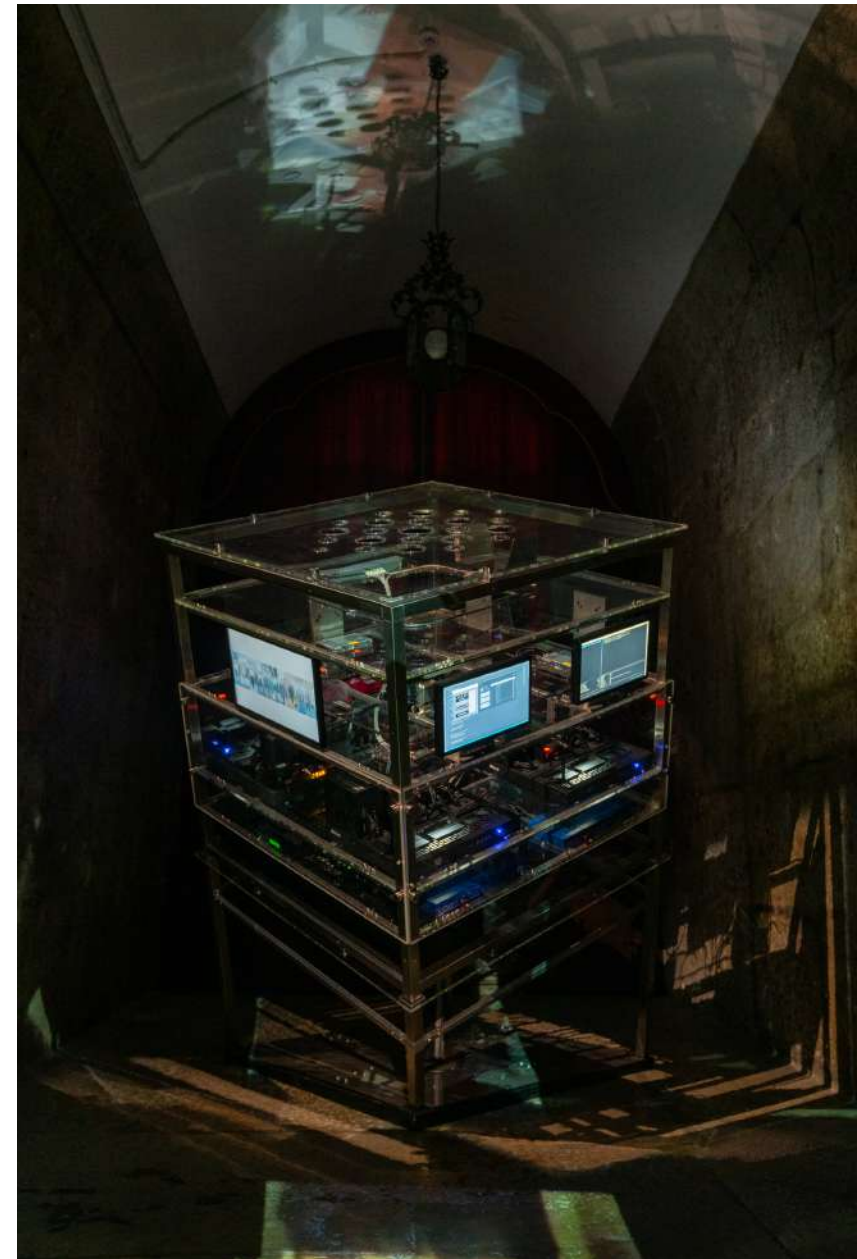
Sketch for software programmation.
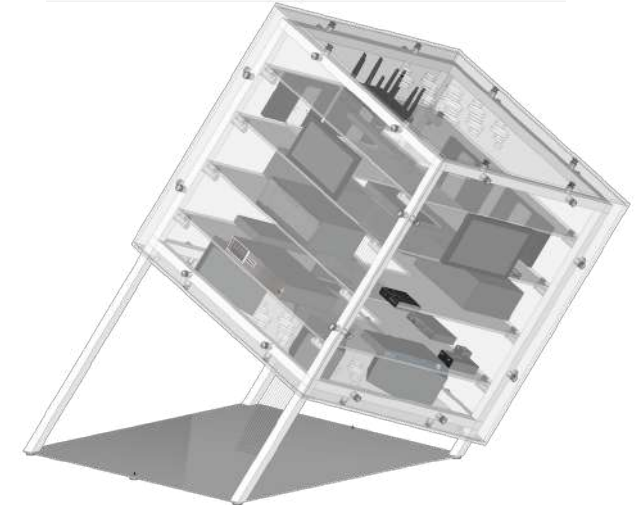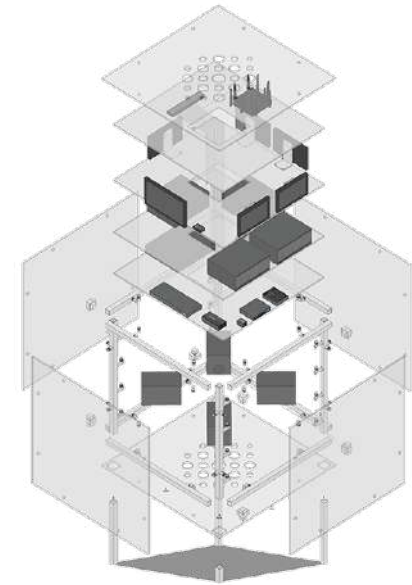All 4 galleries are wifi connected and managed.

Installation view - 4 galleries at Palazzo delle Prigioni, Venice.

Inverted panopticon
10 projectors making 360 degree turn around,
projecting intro-data of 10 cases.

Collapsing the operating system
Gallery D - 30 degree leaning cube with all
controlled mechanism of the 4 gallery installation
and staircase surveillance cameras.

10 cases 10 films - CASANOVAX . SADEX . FAUCAULTX . BX . MWX . 00X . DX . RX . LX . FSBX.
3x3x6- 10 case - crimedata- intro - https://vimeo.com/795815907

Reflecting upon the transformation of surveillance techniques since the panopticon to include contemporary 3-D facial recognition, AI, and the Internet, Shu Lea Cheang's 3x3x6 restages the rooms of the Palazzo delle Prigioni - a Venetian prison from the sixteenth century in operation until 1922 - as a high-tech   surveillance space. Taking as its starting point the story of libertine writer Giacomo Casanova, imprisoned in the Prigioni in 1755, Cheang has conducted in-depth studies on ten historical and contemporary cases of subjects incarcerated because of gender or sexual dissent, including Marquis de Sade and Michel Foucault, as well as contemporary cases from Taiwan and South Africa. Their fictionalized portraits become part of the exhibition's system; the title of which refers to today's standardized architecture of industrial imprisonment: a 3 x 3 square-meter cell constantly monitored by 6 cameras………
Cheang uses the site of the prison to create a glitch in its histories and to create a real-time dissident interface that the visitor is invited to join. Involving legal documents, fake news, historical reports, myths and fantasies, as well as the data retrieved from 3-D surveillance cameras and the images uploaded b visitors, the exhibition constructs a collective counter-history of sexuality, where trans-punk-science fiction, queer, and anti-colonial imaginations provide visual and critical frameworks to think through the histories of subjection and resistance and to activates a critical proliferation of poetic and political actions for digital times. - Curator Paul B.Preciado 2019
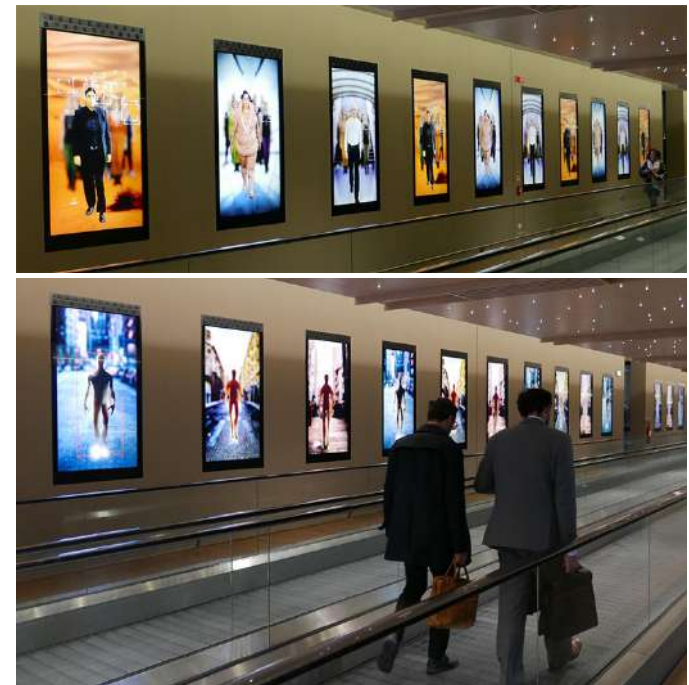

installation view: Marco Polo Airport walkway, VB2019

FLUIDØ (80:00, 2017)
A Scifi Cypherpunk Cinema

http://fluidthemovie.com

Premiered at Berlinale, Berlin Film Festival, 2017
Presented at Documenta 14, 2017

FLUIDØ is virus, sex, hack, drug, and conspiracy. Set in 2060, after the Government declares the eradication of AIDS, mutated AIDS viruses result in the ZERO GEN - genetically evolved gender fluid humans whose ejaculate is an intoxicating hypernarcotic for the 21st century. A new war on drugs begins, and the ZERO GEN are declared illegal. The bio-drug carriers are caught between underground drug lords, glitched super agents, a scheming corporation, and a corrupt government in this conspiracy-filled cypherpunk sci-fi cinema. FLUIDØ recalls the AIDS epidemic in the eighties when the government failed to release drugs in a timely manner. Promoted as a "cypherpunk" sci- fi movie, FLUIDØ subverts current preveiling data surveillance and engages in coding cryptography.

When Shu Lea Cheang's Fluidø first came out in 2017 it was meant to be a queer cypherpunk science-fiction film. Now, in the era of global confinement, digital sexuality, and sanitary surveillance, it has become the archeology of our present. - Paul B. Preciado for the screening at Billy Wilder Cinema (Hammer Museum, LA), 2021
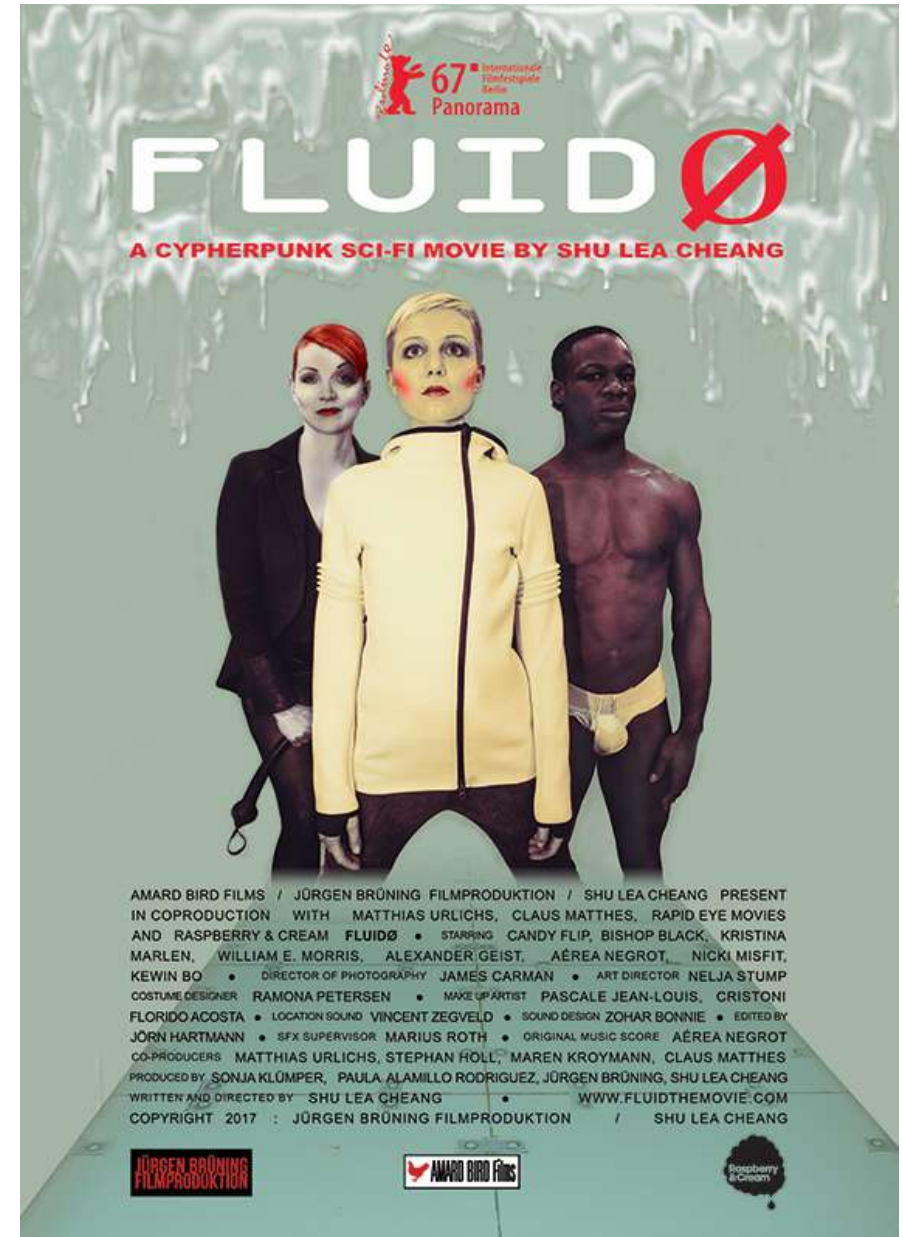
Pissing Wall graffitti **layers of codes on pissing wall**

$$\xi_r = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{s=1}^{N}\exp\left[-\frac{2\pi i r s}{N}\right]x_s,$$
$$\eta_r = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{s=1}^{N}\exp\left[-\frac{2\pi i r s}{N}\right]y_s,$$

$$\sum_{s=1}^{N}\exp\left[\frac{2\pi i r s}{N}\right] = 0 \quad \text{if} \quad 0 < r < N,$$
$$= N \quad \text{if} \quad r = 0 \text{ or } r = N$$

$$\frac{d\xi_s}{dt} = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{s=1}^{N}\exp\left[-\frac{2\pi i r s}{N}\right]\left[ax_r + by_r + \mu\left(\exp\left[-\frac{2\pi i s}{N}\right]-2+\exp\left[\frac{2\pi i s}{N}\right]\right)\xi_s\right]$$
$$= a\xi_s + b\eta_s + \mu\left(\exp\left[-\frac{2\pi i s}{N}\right]-2+\exp\left[\frac{2\pi i s}{N}\right]\right)\xi_s$$
$$= \left(a - 4\mu\sin^2\frac{\pi s}{N}\right)\xi_s + b\eta_s.$$

Venipuncture **genetic codes altered (Turing code, stationary solution)**

$$X_r - h = 2\mathscr{R}A_{s_0}\exp\left[\frac{2\pi i s_0 r}{N} + It\right],$$
$$Y_r - k = 2\mathscr{R}C_{s_0}\exp\left[\frac{2\pi i s_0 r}{N} + It\right].$$

iris scan codes (actual iris scanning equation from austrailian military)

$$\max_{(r,x_0,y_0)}\left|G_\sigma(r)*\frac{\partial}{\partial r}\oint_{r,x_0,y_0}\frac{I(x,y)}{2\pi r}ds\right|$$

$$\mu = \mu'\left(\frac{N}{2\pi\rho}\right)^2, \quad \nu = \nu'\left(\frac{N}{2\pi\rho}\right)^2$$

Surgery Room **generic alteration codes over iris, needle inject**
(turing morphogenesis codes from "continous ring of tissue")

$$\frac{\partial X}{\partial t} = a(X-h) + b(Y-k) + \frac{\mu'}{\rho^2}\frac{\partial^2 X}{\partial\theta^2},$$
$$\frac{\partial Y}{\partial t} = c(X-h) + d(Y-k) + \frac{\nu'}{\rho^2}\frac{\partial^2 Y}{\partial\theta^2},$$

Research on code hacking
consulted with Harry Halpin - Nym Technologies

LOCKER BABY PROJECT (2001 – 2012)
Mixed Media Installation

BABY PLAY (NTT/ICC, TOKYO, 2001)
BABY LOVE (PALAIS DE TOKYO, PARIS, 2005)
BABY WORK (ZERO1 BIENNALE, SAN JOSE, 2012)
 https://mauvaiscontact.info/reviews/lockerbaby-3parts.pdf

 In 2001, I wrote this concept for Locker Baby Project as 3 part
installation – Baby Play, Baby Love and Baby Work.

The Locker Baby project conceived in 2001 reflects a time when science
is accused of out of control and scifi fantasia fortells a future that is now.
The quest for rechargeable robot labor continues, intelligent pets open up
new markets and transgenic clones are among us. Versions updated,
bodies unwired, behaviours dictated, what remain to be programmed
are "memory" and "emotions".

The Locker Baby project proposes a fictional scenario set in year
2030. The DPT (DollyPolly Transgency) clones locker babies out of
genes extracted from deep sea pearls harvested off Okinawa Island.
Coin lockers situated in busy Tokyo train stations are breeding
grounds for underworld test tube fertilization and the cloning of
locker babies. The biobot babies "brewed" out of the lockers are the
Clone Generation who are entrusted to negotiate human "memory"
and "emotions". Locker Baby holds the key to unlock a networked
inter-sphere of ME-motion (memory-emotion), a playing field of texts
and sound that can only be triggered by human interaction.

BABY PLAY (2001) , the first installment of the Locker Baby project, was commissioned by and realized at NTT[ICC] Tokyo in 2001.

Baby Play employs a large scale table football field (15m x 7.5m) to link Locker Baby with networked intersphere. Table football, a pastime game of the last century, serves as an interface for net interactivity. Opposing rows of ball players (22 in total) are replaced by human sized cloned locker babies (140cm in height). The movement of the ball bounced by the players is tracked by 36 touch sensors that are 'mined' below the floor surface. On the web, 36 lockers, each a depository of texts and sound, correspond to 36 sensor fields. The sensor data of ball movement is transmitted to the web. Accordingly the tracking of ball movement retrieves ME-data (texts and sound) deposited in the respective lockers.

BABY LOVE (2005), the second installment of the Locker Baby project, consists of 6 large size (170cm diameter) teacups and 6 clone babies (70 cm tall). Each teacup is an auto-driving mobile unit. Each baby installed with a mac-mini is wifi linked to the net depository of popular love songs. Baby Love situates human and its baby clones in a perpetual spin of fairground teacup ride. The teacup ride, its spinning wheel allowing direction maneuver and speed variation, shuffles and remixes the love songs in the baby engine. A gentle ride can turn into fast spin, the data jams and jammed, we are left to sort out the ME with the babies in the swirling teacups. The crash would eventually happen. http://babylove.biz
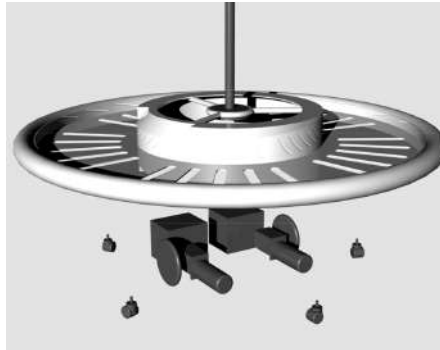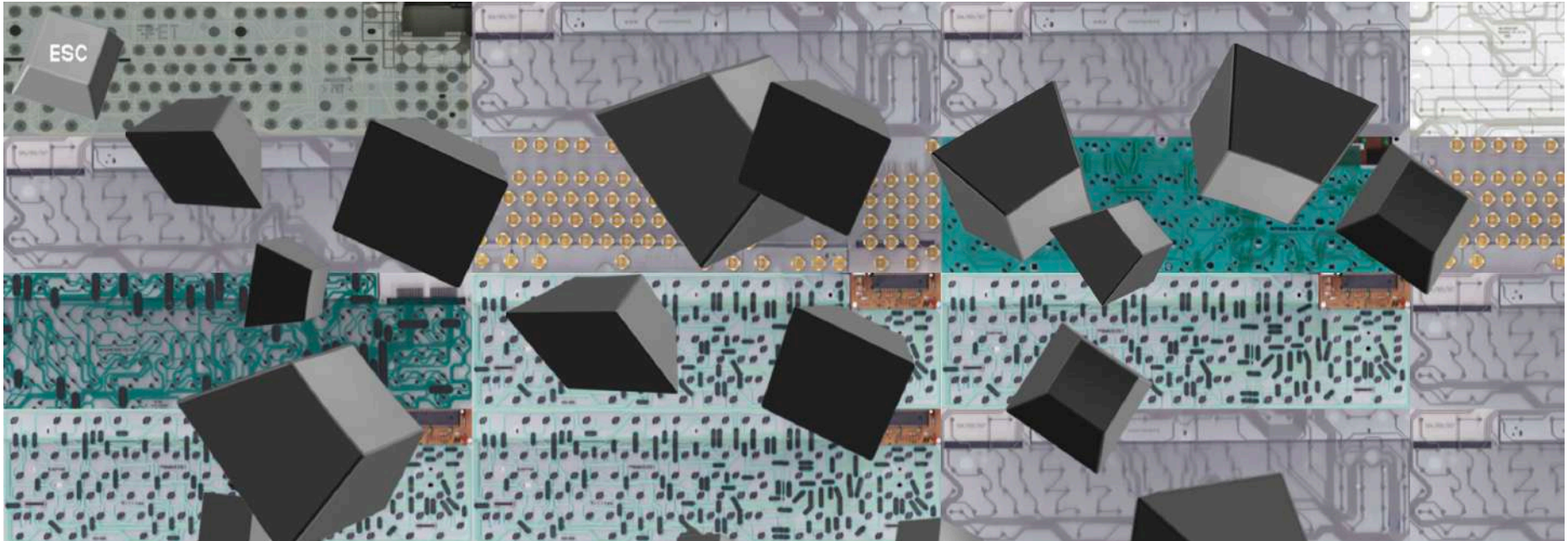

installation view
Palais de Tokyo, Paris 2005
2005

public riding teacup
ZERO 1, San Jose 2006

BABY WORK (2012) as a performative installation situates the public as BABY who works to align the lost ME data. Set in a post-keyboard E-trashscape, BABY WORK collapses keys and rewires junked keyboards to put the baby/public at work. A toy claw crane machine is installed in the middle of a mountain of broken keys. The keys are thrown about while the public adorned in worker's white cotton gloves collect the scattered keys. Picking up keys, the public arrange randomly the keys on the intelligent wall made up by the rewired used keyboard matrix. Each key placed triggers a sound note. With many babies (the public) at work, keys with sound notes are patched, (a)synchronized into a sonic expression of lost memory and emotions.

YOU ARE THE BABY. WORK.
http://babywork.biz


installation view, ZERO1, San Jose 2012

BRANDON (net art, 1998 – 1999)
a one year narrative project in installments
http://brandon.guggenheim.org

BRANDON derives its title from Brandon/Teena Brandon of Nebraska,
USA, a transgender being who was raped and murdered in 1993 after
his female anatomy was revealed. Teleporting Brandon onto
cyberspace through multi-layered narratives brings up issues of crime
and punishment in the cross-section between real and virtual space.
Conceived as a multi-artist / multi-author / multi-interface / multi-
institutional collaboration, BRANDON unfolds over a year's duration
on the net.
http://brandon.guggenheim.org/credits/

BRANDON was restored and relaunched by the Guggenheim in 2017
https://www.guggenheim.org/press-release/guggenheim-restores-first-
internet-artwork-acquisition-through-conserving-computer-based-art-
initiative

BRANDON is included in rhizome.org's Net Art Anthology
https://anthology.rhizome.org/brandon

" The goal of the restoration was to reinstate BRANDON's intended
online experience and interactivity as a living artwork, while preserving
all functional behaviors and aesthetic properties of the work as defined
by the original source code. ….. BRANDON's Java applets were
replaced with JavaScript functions and animated GIFs. Deprecated
HTML tags that previously specified BRANDON's styling of text and
pages were replaced with CSS styling, and HTML framesets were
replaced with tables and iframes. Static user data sets were extracted
from a MySQL database and integrated into the code. " - Joanna
Phillips, Senior Conservator of Time-based Media, Solomon R.
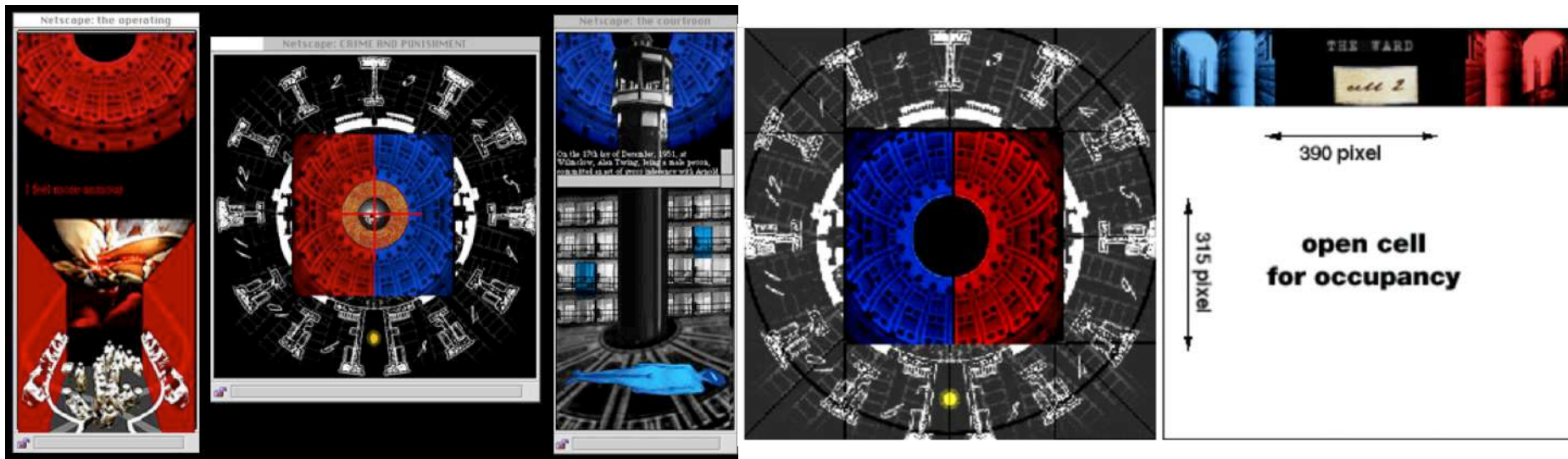Guggenheim Museum, 2017
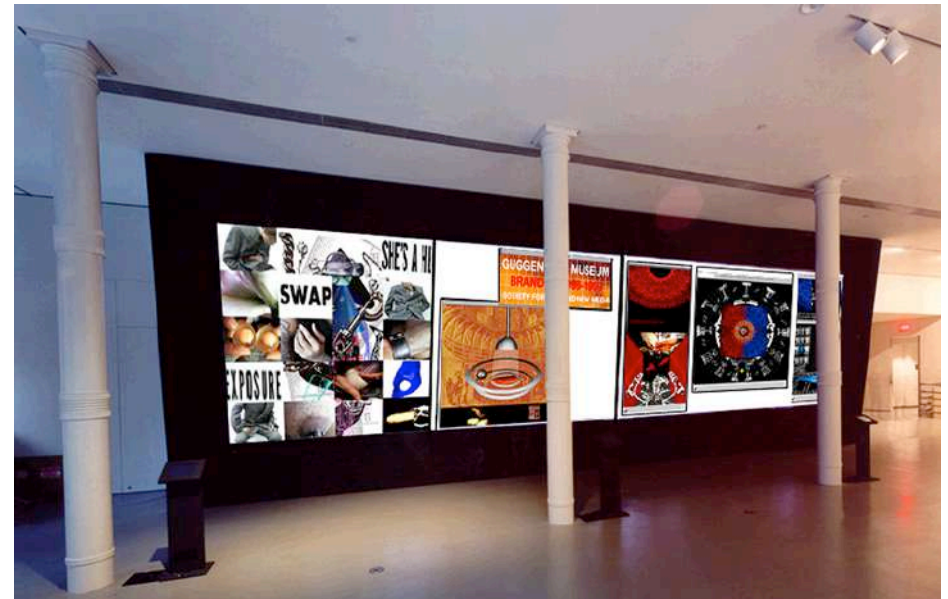
BIGDOLL interface: Recombinant Body

ROADTRIP interface: function episodeOpen(){

MOOPLAY interface: Chatbot narrative fusion

PANOPTICON interface: open cells for occupancy

Two online and on site public forums were held during 1998-1999 at the Theatrum Anatomicum in Amsterdam

(1) Digi Gender Social Body
Under the knife, under the spell of anesthesia

this forum convenes a textual surgical operation on the theory and construction of technosocial bodies.

(2) Would the jurors please stand up?
Crime and punishment as net spectacle

On trial are the cases of sexual assaults that blur the distinctions between male/female or actual/virutal space, an experiment on joint decision making and conflict resolution on the Net.

" Cheang's work has its own wild architecture: a fusion of testimony, chat, Web searches, puzzlelike interfaces, and a scrolling "highway" that constitutes the spine of the piece. With technical grace and an unprecedentedly epic scale, Brandon makes a bid to become the inaugural piece in the canon of online art. " - Fanning the Fame by Austin Bunn, Village Voice 1998
https://www.villagevoice.com/1998/07/21/fanning-the-fame/
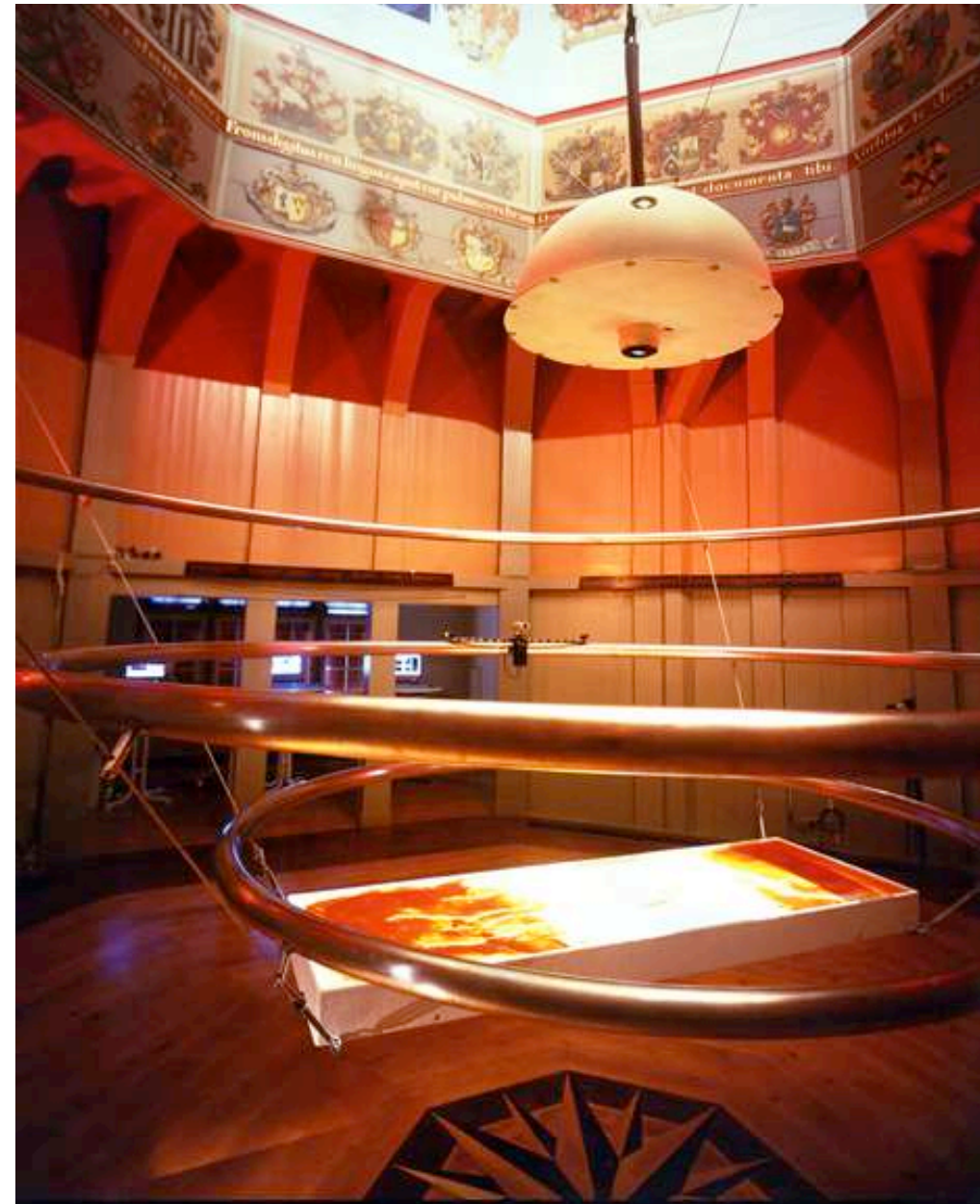
installation view, Theatrum Anatomicum, Waag, Amsterdam 1998 - 1999

FRESH KILL (80:00, 35mm, 1994)
an Eco-Cybernoia film

1994 - Premiered at Berlinale, Berlin Film Festival
1995 - Whitney Biennale 1995
2021 - Center Pompidou Paris
2022 - BAM New York 90s film series

In 2021, FRESH KILL received a National Film Preservation Foundation Grant for a 4K restoration which is completed and scheduled for release in 2024.

In 2023, FRESH KILL is listed as100 greatest artworks on New York City in Artnews. https://www.artnews.com/list/art-news/artists/best-new-york-city-artworks-nyc-1234674469/shu-lea-cheang-fresh-kill-1994/

FRESH KILL envisions a post-apocalyptic landscape strewn with electronic detritus and suffering the toxic repercussions of mass marketing in a high-tech commodity culture. Exploring connections between people surviving on the margins, "*Fresh Kill* collapses the globe in solidarity against racism, sexism, and the excesses of transnational corporate capitalism as resistance circulates through networks originally designed to facilitate the exchange of labor, commodities, and capital……..*Fresh Kill* operates on a faith in media activism and the empancipatory potential of the digital. Commercial media penetrate into the social and psychological fabric of daily life, but they can be resisted. *Fresh Kill* offers itself as an example of that resistance while providing models for potential hackers and cable activists in the audience. Like the works of Bertolt Brecht and Godard, it offers hope of seizing the means of communication by reflecting on its own production and providing an image of radical media empowerment to inspire others." - Cinema Frames, Videoscapes, and Cyberspace: Exploring Shu Lea Cheang's *Fresh Kill* by Gina Marchetti, Duke University Press 2001

A Cinema Against the Vérités   207
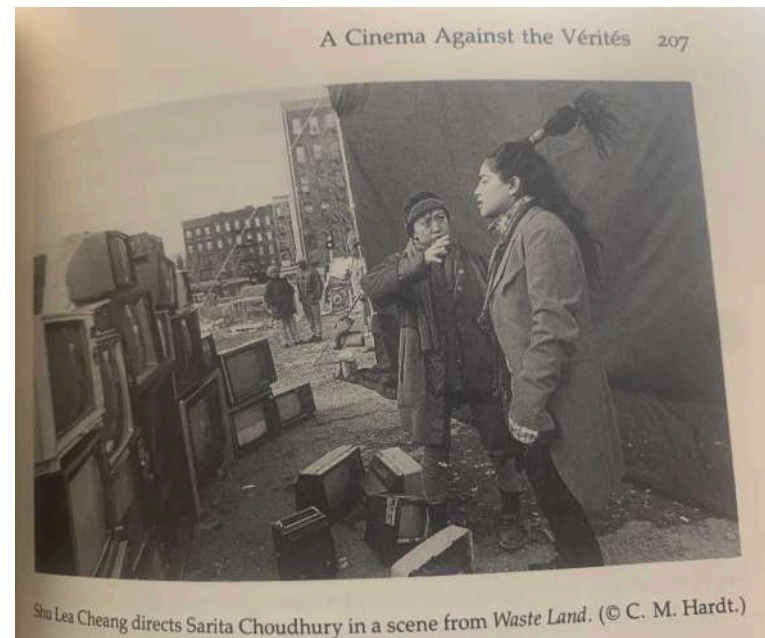
Shu Lea Cheang directs Sarita Choudhury in a scene from *Waste Land*. (© C. M. Hardt.)

Stills from FRESH KILL, Shu Lea Cheang 1994

Those Fluttering Objects of Desire (1992 - 2023)
Coin Operated Mixed Media Installation with modified red phones, coin-operated booths, video loop (60:00) , audio loops (various length)

Originally produced as a solo show at EXIT ART (NYC) in 1992 and selected for the Whitney Biennial in 1993, the work was digitalised, updated and reinstalled at Res gallery, London (2018) and at Museum Brandhorst (2022-2023) as Part of " Future Bodies from a recent past – sculpture, technology and the body since the 1950s" exhibition.

The installation contains two parts with modified dial phones and the mechanism of coin-operated porno booths to subvert the male gaze.

[Part 1] 1-900-DESIRES. Dial this number to hear audio loops on desire and politics recorded with bell hooks, Jessica Hagedorn, Lauri Carlos, Renee Tajima-Peña, Lawrence Chua.

[Part 2] Channels of Desire. 15 woman artists are invited to dissect sexual politics from personal experience. Filmed with a self-operated polaroid camera and re-filmed with a betacam, the 15 self portraits are edited into a 60 minute video loop which can only be viewed by inserting coins (per 5 minute viewing for 25 cent $ or 50 cent €). Coins collected from the exhibition are distributed among participating woman artists.

Installation tech diagrams & archive of production photos

Installation view, Exit Art 1992

Installation view, Whitney Biennale 1993

Installation view, Museum Brandhorst (2022-2023)

"Shu Lea Cheang's Those Fluttering Objects of Desire, another technological mapping of the body, uses technology's quotidian presence as both the friend and foe of a sense of community….. As bell hooks remarked, "I think the telephone is very dangerous to our lives in that it gives us such an illusory sense that we are connecting." Underscoring the critical reading of the technology is the link viewers-listeners may make to the realm of pornography - to the peep show and 900 telephone numbers. Nonetheless, this collective of women's voices and images talking about their various sexualities, their bodies, has a positive power, resembling the congregation of women in Spike Lee's Jungle Fever, with the significant difference that the auteur of Those Fluttering Objects of Desire is herself a member of the community of women she portrays. " - Coming Together in Parts: Positive Power in the Art of the Nineties by Elisabeth Sussman for Whitney Biennale 1993

Shu Lea Cheang is an artist and filmmaker who engages in genre bending gender hacking art practices. She builds social interface with transgressive plots; constructs networked installation in participatory impromptu mode; drafts sci-fi narratives in film scenario and artwork imagination. Celebrated as a net art pioneer with BRANDON (1998 - 99), the first web art commissioned and collected by Guggenheim Museum, New York, Cheang represented Taiwan with a mixed media installation 3x3x6, at Venice Biennale 2019. Her feature length films, FRESH KILL(1994), I.K.U. (2000),

FLUIDØ (2017) and UKI (2023) respectively termed eco-cybernoia, sci-fi cyberpunk, sci-fi cypherpunk and scifi viral alt-reality cinema, seek to craft a genre of Scifi New Queer Cinema. She is currently touring her newly released UKI, presenting in Berlin (LAS Art Foundation), Paris (Centre Pompidou) , New York (MoMA), ICA (London) among other venues and exhibiting at Hope, Techno-humanities (Museion, Italy) and Attention After Technology (Trondheim, Norway).

Personal agenda website -
http://www.mauvaiscontact.info

Vitae - http://www.mauvaiscontact.info/proposal/shuleavitae2023.pdf