

UKI - a Scifi Viral Alt-Reality Cinema
<http://u-k-i.co>

CONCEPT/SCRIPT/DIRECTION/PRODUCTION
 Shu Lea Cheang



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

SYNOPSIS

UKI is conceived as a sequel to my scifi cyberpunk film I.K.U. (2000) which tells the story of the replicant IKU (orgasm in Japanese) coders who are dispatched by the internet porn enterprise GENOM Co., 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 coder, REIKO, is dumped as a piece of electronic trash amidst the discarded electronic parts and bytes in the E-trashville located somewhere in the Deep Continent. REIKO encounters the inhabitants - the migrants, the refugees, the native labourers, the transmutants, the hackers, the coders, and goes through a series of body transformations to emerge amidst the noise blast as UKI the virus. Meanwhile, an infected city gathers the loners, the intruders in a 24 hour open diner set amidst graffiti defaced burnt buildings. Meanwhile, the 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 made into micro-computing units to store bio-engineered DNA composition. GENOM Co. sets out to conspire a profitable biotech scheme : reprogram human orgasm into auto-generated, self-sustained pleasure that is collectible assets. Working hand in hand with pharmaceutical industry, GENOM Co. further harvests BioNet's orgasm data to manufacture red pills for orgasmic consumption. As the plot thickens, UKI the virus return to the city, 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 and in 2021, a Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg (Germany) grant. The film in development has been realized in part as art installation, live performance and net art (2018 – 2021).

PRODUCERS

Shu Lea Cheang

Jürgen Brüning (Jürgen Brüning filmproduktion, DE)

Shu Lea Cheang is an artist and filmmaker whose work aims to re-envision genders, genres, and operating structures. Her genre bending gender hacking practices challenge the existing operating mechanisms and the boundaries imposed on society, geography, politics, and economic structures. As a net art pioneer, her BRANDON (1998 - 99) was the first web art commissioned and collected by New York's Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Her feature length films, FRESH KILL(1994), I.K.U. (2000) and FLUIDØ (2017), respectively termed ecocybernoia, sci-fi cyberpunk, and sci-fi cypherpunk, seek to define a genre of new queer sci-fi cinema. 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. In 2019, Cheang presented Taiwan in Venice Biennale 2019 with 3x3x6.

Jürgen Brüning is a Berlin-based film producer and director. Helming projects by queer luminaries like Dennis Cooper, Cheryl Dunye, Thunska 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).

PRODUCTION

Associate Producer - Alex Dimitriou

Director of Photography - Francy Fabritz

Production Designer - Karin Betzler

Costume Designer - Alexis Mersmann

Visual Effects Design – Gonzalo Martin

3D avatar design and animation – Roland Lauth

UNITY cinemachine production - Xiyue Hu and Xing Xiao

Sound design - Sky Dietrich

Music – SABOTEN & Aerea Negrot

Editor – Jörn Hartmann

SCENES

UKI's multi-thread plots propose a sci-fi fable with defunct humanoids, trans-mutants and techno-data-body. The story unfolds in 3 settings-

- (1) an infected city
- (2) BioNet inside human body with red blood cells as micro-computing units
- (3) The continent - etrashville

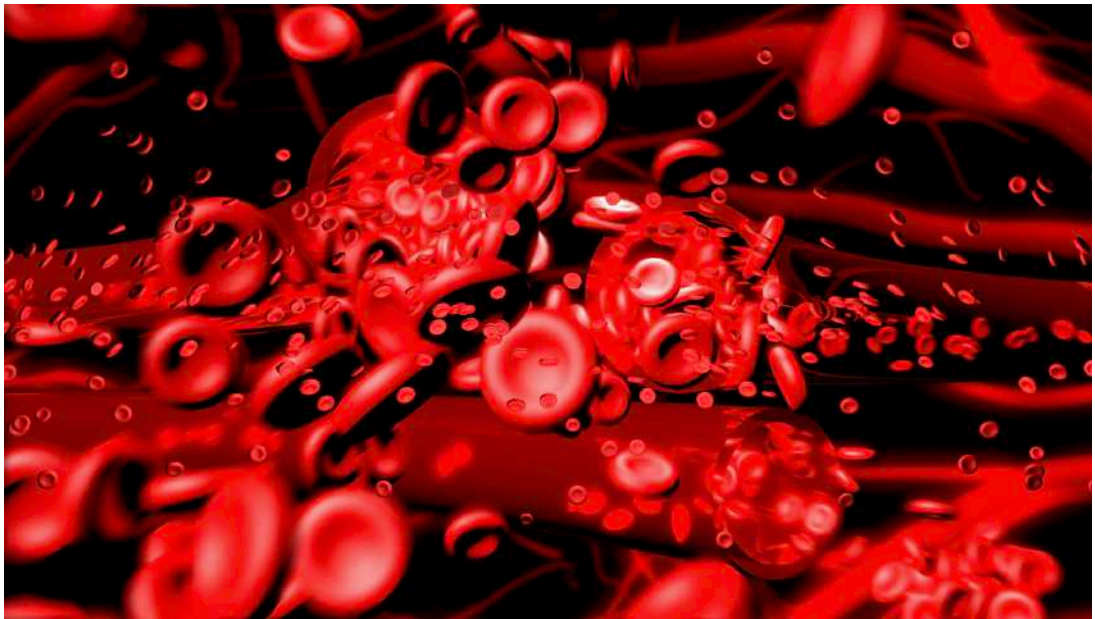
- (1) an infected city

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) 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.



AN INFECTED CITY



ANNA, VICTOR and MAGIC – played by Tyra Wigg, Joey Steffens, Bernard J Butler



BISHOP, ISSAC, TAYLOR – played by Jin, Asia James, Alan Chen

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)



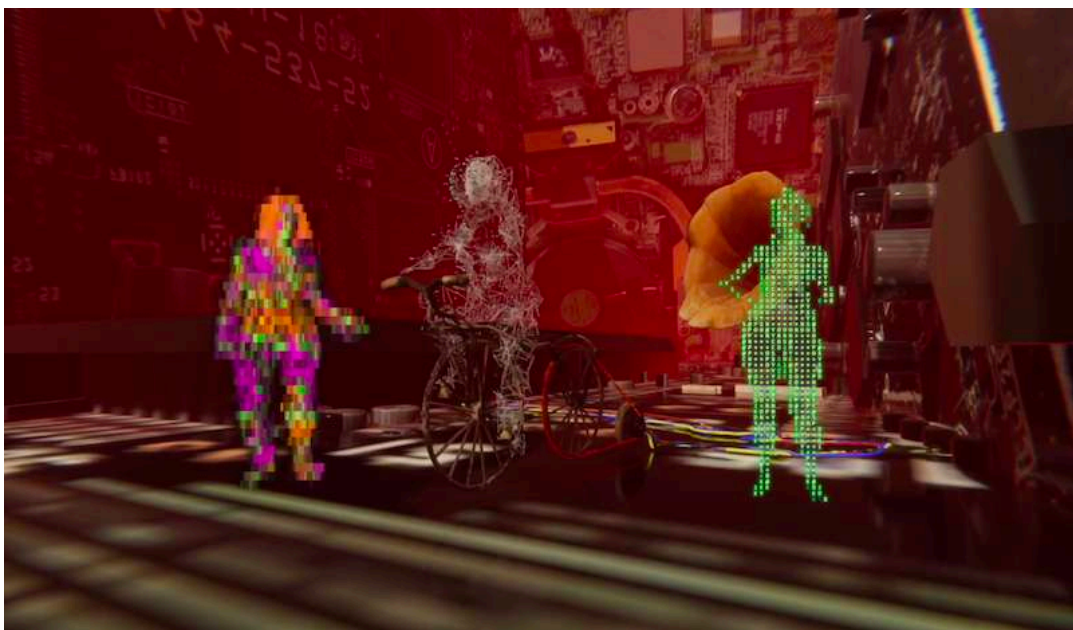
* ZONE LABORAL

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 (homage 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.



The IKU runner DIZZY played by Jamal Phoenix



UKI VIRUS BECOMING

