

# Sci-Fi New Queer Cinema a lecture by Shu Lea Cheang

5pm, 14th December 2023  
Room TBC  
Goldsmiths, University of London  
Public, Free, All welcome



Shu Lea Cheang has made four feature-length films, FRESH KILL (1994), I.K.U. (2000) and FLUIDØ (2017) and UKI (2023). Each film is respectively termed ecocybernoia, sci-fi cyberpunk, sci-fi cypherpunk and SciFi Viral Alt-Reality Cinema. Taken together, in over three decades of work, they seek to define a genre of New Queer Sci-Fi Cinema. In this lecture Shu Lea Cheang will present key parts of these films and present an overview of New Queer Sci-Fi Cinema.

## FRESH KILL

Shu Lea Cheang's ecocybernoia film 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, writes scholar Gina Marchetti, "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." (1994, dir. Shu Lea Cheang, 35mm, colour, 80 min.)

#### I.K.U.

Envisioned as a sequel to *Blade Runner*, this cyberpunk sci-fi porn tells the story of an internet porn enterprise that dispatches I.K.U. coders to collect orgasm data and introduces massively profitable orgasms on-the-go. "I.K.U. is a phenomenon that wants to refuse definition .... As much trans-genre as it is trans-gender, I.K.U. also wants to merge video and film into a fresh digital universe large-scale enough to overwhelm the viewer." (2000, dir. Shu Lea Cheang, colour, 90 min director's cut.)

#### Fluidø

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. "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 archaeology of our present," writes Paul B. Preciado. (2017, dir. Shu Lea Cheang, colour, 80 min.)

#### UKI

UKI - a Scifi Viral Alt-Reality Cinema, 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. 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. (2023, dir. Shu Lea Cheang, 80 min, colour, 4K)

#### Biography

Shu Lea Cheang is an artist and filmmaker who engages in genre-bending gender-hacking art practices. 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 the mixed media installation, 3x3x6, at Venice Biennale 2019. Crafting her own genre of Scifi New Queer Cinema, she has made 4 feature films: FRESH KILL (1994), I.K.U. (2000), FLUIDØ (2017) and UKI (2023). In 2023, she is touring UKI at LAS Art Foundation (Berlin), Centre Pompidou (Paris), MoMA (New York) and ICA (London) among other venues, also exhibiting at RED PILL (2023) at Hope, Techno-Humanities (Museion, Italy) and UTTER (2023) at Attention After Technology (Trondheim, Norway).

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