



## ANNA DUMITRIU & ALEX MAY

### BIOTECHNOLOGY FROM THE BLUE FLOWER

movie & interactive installation – project documentation (work in progress, to be published in 2022)

Through an ongoing artists' residency Anna Dumitriu and Alex May are exploring cutting edge contemporary research being undertaken by the **CHIC Consortium**, especially the potential future benefits of working with new plant breeding methods techniques such as CRISPR to provide future healthcare and food security. In their work so far they have focussed on the internal and external morphology of the plants as well as the cultural impacts of the plants throughout history, as an ancient remedy and a natural dye, to a coffee additive in times of crisis.

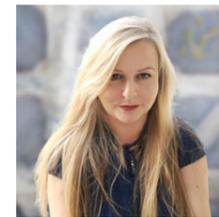
Chicory was one of the plants (along with the cornflower) that inspired the idea of the *Blue Flower* in German Romanticism – a central symbol of the movement. The movement was in part a reaction to the industrial revolution and held nature and emotion in high esteem. In our current biotechnological revolution, the idea of the *Blue Flower* will become an important symbol again, but this time in a more complex position at the interface of nature and technology. Central to societal explorations of what may be acceptable in terms of synthetic biology and how 'nature' and 'natural' may be defined in the future.

The artists are focussing on the areas of the use of chicory for dietary fibre and its impact on human health and the human microbiome, antibiotics, and the uses of inulin and medicinal terpenes extracted from *Cichorium intybus* (common chicory). They are working with the plants themselves: the roots, the flowers, and the seeds, as well as chicory flour, chicory inulin and terpenes, and other relics of the research process. These sculptural, physical materials are combined with 3D data and video footage to create the installation.

Artwork made as the element of the  
Chic Innovative Consortium Horizon 2020



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 760891



#### Anna Dumitriu

British artist working with BioArt, sculpture, installation & digital media to explore our relationship to infectious diseases, synthetic biology and robotics. She has an extensive international exhibition profile including ZKM, Ars Electronica, BOZAR, The Picasso Museum, The V&A Museum Philadelphia Science Center, The Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei LABoral, Art Laboratory Berlin, and The Museum of the History of Science. She was the 2018 President of the Science and the Arts section of the British Science Association. Her work is held in several major public collections.

[www.annadumitriu.co.uk](http://www.annadumitriu.co.uk)



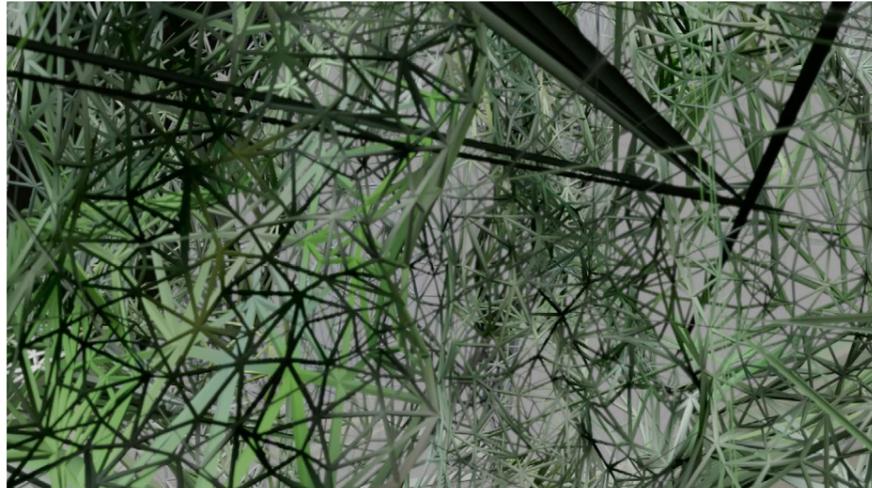
#### Alex May

British contemporary artist whose practice forges links between art, science, and technology through a wide range of digital new media, including virtual reality, photogrammetry, algorithmic photography, robotic artworks, video projection mapping, interactive installations, generative works, performance, and video and sound art. His international exhibition profile includes Tate Modern, Ars Electronica, the Francis Crick Institute, LABoral (Spain), the Victoria & Albert Museum, Royal Academy of Art, ZHI Art Museum (China), and other renowned institutions.

[www.alexmayarts.co.uk](http://www.alexmayarts.co.uk)

Anna Dumitriu & Alex May (in collaboration with the EU CHIC Project)

Stills from a video presenting the ongoing process of 3D scanning of the chicory plant. The two pictures at the top present printscreens from the 3D scans.



#### Anna Dumitriu in collaboration with Robert Sevenier

CRISPR transfected Chicory protoplasts with GAS gene knockout experiments at Keygene Laboratory.

