

FM320 Embodied Video: A Process in Somatic Autobiography and Performance

Seminar Leader: Dafna Maimon
Course Times: Mon 17:30-20:45
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This advanced video class will explore the ways in which autobiography, as experienced through the body, can function as a performative and radical tool for making video art. By placing the body in the foreground as subject, we will unravel new approaches to addressing empathy, memories, feelings, sensations, and options for action in contemporary life. In doing so, we will delve deeply into the intelligence of the body, its capacity to store and process information, as well as express it. We will relate to the filmed medium as an extension of our senses, and to the body itself as a stage for an emotional landscape that can be both personal and political at once. Experiments with different self-empowering movement techniques such as Body Mind Centering, Authentic Movement, Improvisation, scoring systems, and drawing will be at the center of our curriculum. These methods will help us gain somatic awareness and creativity, as well as a sensitivity for time and space: the two major elements we need to learn to control as video artists. Prepare to move, play, and perform utilizing your own body as material and subject within on-site class workshops; extreme curiosity, group participation and open-mindedness will be expected. Students applying for this course should already have some experience in filming and be self-sufficient in editing. Alongside our own experimentations, we will analyze works from artists who work with the body and performance as their starting point. Likewise, visiting somatic practitioners will be invited to host workshops within the class. The focus of this course will not be on technical video instruction. Instead, students will develop a rigorous and unique conceptual and visual language that can at once analyze, criticize, and transmit visceral embodied experiences reflecting on our physical existence and potential as humans in this highly digital age.

Requirements

Students are expected to:

- Turn off phones during class time.
- Initiate appointments with Professor or Arts Staff outside of class time.
- Always allocate extra time for work preparation and clean-up for independent production.
- Respond to emails from Professor in a timely manner.
- Inform Professor at the beginning of the semester if photos of student's identity, artwork, works in progress are NOT to be taken and / or used for Bard College Berlin.
- Remove all artworks, art materials, and / or any personal belongings before the end of the semester. Failure to remove works or return spaces clean and empty may result in final grade

penalization. Donating unrequested artworks and / or art materials is not permitted and will still be considered student property, expected to be removed by your inspection deadline. Please contact Studio Arts Manager Joon Park for more information: j.park@berlin.bard.edu

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Syllabi should note that, instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

Attendance

- Attendance of ALL classes is expected.
- More than one absence (that is, absence from one three-hour session per week) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course.
- Students are expected to attend all off-campus classes punctually, from start to finish. If there is a scheduling / travel conflict, Professor must be informed in advance.
- Tardiness after five minutes will be considered an absence.

Assessment

“Embodied Video: A Process in Somatic Autobiography and Performance” is a course where students utilize experiments with different somatic and body oriented practices as a starting point for creating video art in order to access their topics from an embodied place. We will work in video and other mediums, with collaborative exercises and working methods that will culminate in a final video shown at the Open Studios. The initial phase of experimentation may include performative assignments, drawing, writing as well as set- or prop-creation, and workshops as well as smaller-scale video assignments. Students will be expected to do ALL assignments and participate actively in class, and to be able to structure their time well for videos that often require several stages of production. Even though this is a video-class, the creative process and conceptual procedures that build up toward making the videos will also be part of the assessment; essentially the students entire process in all it’s aspects is assessed, and the process itself is as important as any specific outcome. This means that the earlier experimentations, the students own research, class participation, sketches, rough-cuts of videos, and exercises across mediums are equally important for the grading. If students fail to show earlier rough-cuts, sketches plans and their process in class, the final videos will not be accepted for grading and cannot be shown in the final presentation. Students are also assessed on their ability to work independently and responsibly. They will be graded on their ability to communicate with the Professor as well as amongst themselves. This also includes their ambition to create artworks as well as their willingness and capacity to budget their time for all requirements connected to this class. This assessment also includes preparation, production, and cleaning up of spaces used at Bard College Berlin.

Policy on Late Submission of Artworks / Presentations

Assignments (artworks, essays, performances, oral presentations) that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (Example: B+ becomes C+). Professor is not obliged to accept assignments

that are more than 24 hours late. Where Professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Grade Breakdown

Communication and Class participation: Communication includes communication habits with Professor, in class and via email, and among other students. Class Participation includes attendance, engagement in class workshops, in class work, critiques and conversations and maintenance of all common and private spaces used for production / rehearsal: % 35

Assignments and Project presentations for critiques includes: all assignments, sketches, homework and production phases, the students own ongoing research end of semester presentations / videos / performances: % 30

Final Video Assignment % 35

Schedule

Fall 2019 classes start on Monday, September 2 and run until Friday, December 20 with fall break planned from Monday, October 28 – Sunday, November 3. Completion week is from December 16 - 20. Students are required to be on campus during completion week.

Scheduled class times will be available online under the relevant course heading:
<https://berlin.bard.edu/academics/courses/>

Note:

-Due to off campus visits and in class workshops and filming, there may be 1-2 classes that take the format of a longer 4-6 hour workshop, and therefor some classes may be extended or rescheduled. The extension will be made up for by shortening another class. You will be informed of these schedule changes ahead of time in class.

- Please always come ready to move physically in this class; we will explore almost weekly exercises that incorporate physical movement, so make sure you wear warm enough and comfortable clothing.

Key Assignments:

1. *“Lost and Found in the Emotional Landscape”*- Due September 23rd
2. *“Not Me, Me; Performance to Camera”* - Due Oct 7th and 14th
3. - Final Video; *“This Body of Work”* - Several Stages and Deadlines: Nov 11th, Nov 18th, Nov 25th Dec 2nd & Dec 9th
4. Ongoing presentations of somatic research in video (individual dates t.b.a for each student)
5. Screening at Open Studios December 13th

Note: This class will end with an open to public screening of the final video works at the open studios on December 13th.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Class 1 September 2nd

Introduction to class, working methods and theme: How can autobiography be experienced through the body? What is it to embody something? Can the body be an archive? What constitutes a body? How do we translate a somatic process to video art?

In class somatic exercise and introductions: *Walk the body & Let it be heard*

Assignment: Buy a notebook and continue experimenting with listening to your body (through given exercises) and taking notes and translating these into video. You will present parts of this ongoing research throughout the course in various classes.

Class 2 September 9th

Viewing work examples and discussion of artists that work with the body, choreography and somatic processes in video i.e: Yvonne Rainer, Bruce Nauman, Sondra Perry, Ed Atkins

Mandatory Factory Orientation and Camera instruction by Janina Schabig

Brief Presentation of your somatic research

Assignment: *“Lost and Found in the Emotional Landscape”* You will create a 1-2 min autobiographic video, where the camera will be utilized as an extension of your body and self in space. Due September 23rd

NOTE: September 16th NO CLASS

This class is rescheduled for a longer workshop taking place in October

Class 3 September 23rd

In class somatic/awareness exercise
Review assignment “*Lost and Found in the Emotional Landscape?*”

Audio and Light instruction by Janina Schabig

Class 4 September 30th

Discussion and viewing works relating to “performing to camera”: ie. Joan Jonas, Shana Moulton, Erkka Nissinen, Pipilotti Rist, Stanya Kahn,

Somatic exercise: “Authentic Movement” preparing you for performing to camera

Assignment: “*Not Me, Me; Performance to Camera*” You will create a 3 minute video where you explore a mind body split as theme through a performance to camera. Due October 14th

Class 5 October 7th

First Review of “*Not Me, Me; Performance to Camera*”

Discussion: Dealing with trance states & body language in video; Jeremy Shaw, Liz Magic Laser, Francois Delsarte

Class 6 October 14th - Extended Class till 22.30 with guest Andrew Kerton

Final Review of “*Not Me, Me; Performance to Camera*”

Presentation of your ongoing somatic research as introduction of yourself to our guest

Somatic Video Workshop and Lecture by Artist & Body Mind Centering Practitioner Andrew Kerton

Class 7 October 21st

Body is a complicated word; discussing works of i.e. Hannah Black, Tejal Shah, Melanie Bonajo

Reading: Gossip by Silvia Federici

Assignment: Ideas, Sketches, Scores, Writing, Moodboard, Script for Final film

October 28th FALL BREAK - NO CLASS

Class 8 November 4th

Studio visit with artist, performer and musician Mariechen Danz

Class 9 November 11 th

Exploring choreography, scripting and scoring through the video work of Keren Cytter and Lawrence Halprin's *RSVP Cycles* as well as through a collaborative in class experiment

Reviewing sketches, mood boards for final film

Class 10 November 18th

Review: "This Body of Work" Final-Video rough cut 1

Contemplating the work through a 3-part in-class exercise reading/moving/writing

Class 11 November 25th

Individual Talks: Review of the 2nd cut of your final video "This Body of Work"

Each student will get 20 min each, so the individual talks may be scheduled till 22.00

Class 12 December 2nd

Review of the 3rd cut of your final video "This Body of Work" and planning screening

Presentation of somatic research

Class 13 December 9th final critique

Final Critique of Videos

The favorites: Last somatic group moving

Please Note: This syllabus may be subject to changes in regard to content as well as dates!

Facility Guidelines:

“The Factory” – Eichenstrasse 43

The Factory Policy Agreement

- 1) “The Factory” at BCB (Eichenstrasse 43) has space and facilities available to BCB students with an academic purpose for using the building. Mandatory in-class orientations are required to retain chip access to the Factory. Chip access to The Factory is from 7am to 10pm everyday during the semester. At 10pm students will be asked to leave the building by BCB security personnel.
- 2) Students agree to only use the common spaces that are available for their needs, and must respect private spaces that are off-limits. For requesting to reserve the dance / theater space and / or Seminar Room 6, please fill out the online [Factory Reservation Form](#). The Factory Staff will get back to you within two weekdays. (Monday - Friday).
- 3) No smoking is allowed anywhere inside the building. There are to be no projects using open flames (such as candles, torches, lanterns, fireworks, etc.) inside any part of the building.
- 4) Fire exits and lanes must be kept clear of any obstructions.
- 5) Spray painting and handling of any hazardous (chemical or combustible) material is not allowed inside the building. Contact the Studio Arts Manager concerning working with these materials. All work surfaces (indoor and outdoor) must be properly protected with a drop cloth or a packing paper provided by the workshop.
- 6) No sandals, flip-flops, or bare feet will be allowed inside the workshop and studio 6.
- 7) Students must make sure all lights are turned off and doors are closed when leaving the building. No windows or doors are to be left opened or cracked. All electrical items must be unplugged when not in use.
- 8) If BCB workshop tools must be borrowed for a purpose outside of the building, please contact The Studio Arts Manager (by appointment).
- 9) There are to be no architectural changes to studios or any areas inside or outside of the building without first speaking with the Studio Arts Manager.
- 10) During completion week, any space used by a student must be returned empty with clean walls and floors. All garbage must be bagged (or boxed) and properly disposed of. Final grades may be penalized and / or fines imposed if items are left (or renovations unfinished) by the inspection deadline.
- 11) Contact Studio Arts Manager directly with any questions: j.park@berlin.bard.edu

AV Facilities – Eichenstrasse 43 (upstairs)

- 1) BCB’s AV (Audio / Visual) facilities provide a limited quantity of AV equipment to support Admin, Faculty as well as those students enrolled in arts classes that require specific items. AV facilities do not include any black and white or color printing services for students.
- 2) The opening times may change every semester to adapt to specific course times. Once these times are established they will stay consistent throughout the semester, with possible exceptions. AV facilities are ONLY available during days when classes are held (closed during official BCB holidays).
- 3) All items checked out are due back during AV hours the following day, unless other arrangements have been made in advance directly with AV Staff.

- 4) Items to be reserved on a specific date should be requested at least one week in advance. Without reservation, availability is limited to a first-come, first-serve basis.
- 5) The AV Staff may exclude students from borrowing items at any time, if the student:
 - failed to return items in time
 - failed to return items in person (pick up and/ or return by friends is not allowed)
 - returned items with missing pieces
 - returned items damaged or in poor shape
- 6) AV equipment will be given out only to those students responsible in organizing, picking up as well as returning their items IN PERSON. No exceptions.
- 7) All items returned late, regardless of patron's position at BCB, will be subject to a 1 Euro fine, per day.
- 8) Any item returned without accessories (such as cables, SD card, batteries, tripod head, lens cap, etc) will be subject to a 1 Euro fine, per day (the same as late returns).
- 9) Any items missing will be subject to patron reimbursement for its value (or under special circumstances, replacement, at the discretion of AV Staff). Any items damaged or malfunctioning are expected to be reported to Staff upon check-in.
- 10) Please use the AV email to inquire about equipment or policy, as well as to reserve (av@berlin.bard.edu). Do not contact AV Staff through their personal emails.
- 11) We strongly suggest personally visiting the facilities to inquire and reserve before borrowing equipment!
- 12) AV equipment is limited at BCB. Whenever possible students are encouraged to use their own devices (computers, cameras) for production purposes.
- 13) Contact AV Staff directly with any questions: av@berlin.bard.edu

MacLab and Photo Darkroom Facilities – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)

** Guidelines to be offered during orientations.