FA199 Virtual Reality in The Artist's Studio

Module: Artistic Practice
Course Instructor: John von Bergen

Email: j.vonbergen@berlin.bard.edu
Office Hours:: Thursdays before class by appointment
Credits: 8 ECTS, 4 U.S. credits

Course Times: Thursdays from 3:45 - 7pm

Course Description:

For artists as different as Laurie Anderson to Jon Rafman, Virtual Reality has been embraced as an art-medium in recent years. Long lines and wait lists at museums prove the high degree of curiosity about this medium, which makes possible a range of sensory aesthetic experiences unknown to audiences in previous decades.

This course is mainly designed for learning about the Google VR software "Tilt Brush" which is becoming a new and exciting alternative to analog art production. By working from prompts, our goals will be to explore what is possible in VR while finding ways to push our artistic interests in a medium that presents

itself with very few limitations. We will discuss and explore the conversations that have related to VR and other forms of both digital and physical art while responding to specific prompts that students work on outside of class time. The end of semester goal is to prepare short video documentation of selected projects while sharing some of these projects in VR to the BCB community.

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 the 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

- Please be aware that VR may cause dizziness and / or headaches if used too often and / or carelessly. It is up to each student's discretion to know if using VR may cause any problems for the production needs of this class.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook. Any visual or audio material imported from other sources for assignments must give credit to those artists / musicians when presented.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, one absence will not affect the participation grade or require documentation. Beyond that, communication concerning the circumstance from student to Professor by email BEFORE the beginning of any missed class may allow for any non-penalized make-up assignments at the discretion of the Professor. Punctuality is critical, and tardiness will be noted and influence a student's grade.

Please note that Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences, whether excused or unexcused.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FALL 2021: Some students may need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors should make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

Assessment

"FA199 Virtual Reality in The Artist's Studio" is a workshop that allows students to explore the world of VR (Virtual Reality) as an art medium. This course expects students to manage the production and technical needs of the assignments independently. The production of VR files involves the first stage of completing assignments. Students will be expected to manage the documentation (hardware enabled video capture), exporting, editing, and presentation of their work. When requested for an assignment; presenting an artist statement connected to your assignments, either written or verbal, heavily influences project grading, as does the post-production presentation (edited video).

While students are encouraged to explore any creative medium during their time at Bard College Berlin, they will be graded on the production expectations for this class. Experimentation is encouraged, and specific to the VR program "Tilt Brush", to allow this course to be an opportunity for expressing ideas through a unique art medium.

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 amongst themselves. This also includes their ambition to create artworks as well as their willingness to budget their time for all requirements connected to this class, and assessed for their preparation and managing of equipment offered at Bard College Berlin.

In the event that any student mishandles or is negligent with equipment provided by the college there may be fines expected connected to the value of the equipment. Consequences may involve the withholding of the final grade for this course until such fines are settled.

Policy on Late Submission of Assignments

Assignments that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (Example: B+ becomes C+). The Professor is not obliged to accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late. Where a Professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown

- Class participation (includes attendance, maintenance of all common and private spaces used for production, communication with Professor and other students): 30 %
- Homework and in-class work: 40 %
- End of semester presentations (all production files submitted for grade): 30 %

Schedule

Fall classes start on Monday, August 30 and run until Friday, December 17 with fall break planned from October 18 – October 24. Completion week is from December 13 through December 17. 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/

Please note that this Syllabus – both scheduling and content – is subject to change:

Week 1 / Sept 2:

- Introductions / Syllabus review /
- Student presentations of their creative influence (info emailed directly to students beforehand)
- Seminar: Discussing Laurie Anderson and William Kentridge
- Homework: reading for next week's discussion:
  https://www.touchpoint-resource.com/virtual-reality-virtuality-part-one/
- VR Prompt 1: Import jpeg into tilt brush, "recreate" the image in 2D VR space

Week 2 / Sept 9:

- Mandatory in-class facility orientations with Janina Schabig and Joon Park
- Schedule block-times for independent VR work
- Review homework
- VR prompt 2 (to be reviewed in 2 weeks): Installation or environment limited to "one brush"

Week 3 / Sept 16: **** OFF CAMPUS****

- meeting at 4:30pm off campus in Schoeneberg for Dennis Rudolf's studio + gallery visits

Week 4 / Sept 23:

- Review homework
- Seminar: interactive VR installation by Viktor Timofeev: https://viktortimofeev.com/
- Homework: Read New Yorker article on "Beeple" and the recent NFT phenomena
- VR Prompt 3: "The Game" – a physically engaged environment with rules for your guests

Week 5 / Sept 30:

- Review Homework
- In class discussion: "The Memorial". Artists to discuss: Pablo Eduardo, Nancy Rubins, Nicholas Galanin, Peter Eisenman

Week 6 / Oct 7:

- Guest speaker: BCB faculty Laura López Paniagua to discuss perspectives on "memorials"
- VR Prompt 4: develop a concept for "Memorial" to be shared in class next week

Week 7 / Oct 14:

- Review homework. Please note: "Memorial" project heavily influences midterm grade

Oct 18 – Oct 24: Fall Break

Week 8 / Oct 28:

- Guest Speaker: Berlin based VR curator Tina Sauerlaender speaks to our class on campus
- VR Prompt 5: "Exquisite Corpse"– collaborative environment produced in <u>one VR file</u>
-

<u>Week 9 / Nov 4:</u>

- Review homework
- Intro to 3D Printing with Studio Manager Joon Park
- VR Prompt 6: Plans to develop VR project that is transformed into real space through digital or analog means (example: make one object in VR which is then 3D printed <u>or</u> sculpted by hand)

<u>Week 10 / Nov 11th:</u>

- Independent work (analog or digital) / student choice for project development

<u>Week 11 / Nov 18th:</u>

- Review all projects in progress for feedback session

<u>Week 12 / Nov 25th:</u>

- Independent work (analog or digital) / student choice for project development

<u>Week 13 / Dec 2nd:</u>

- **Final projects due for final crit. All projects graded on this date!**

<u>Week 14:</u> (exact date and time to be announced)

- Last class: installing work + preparing event / public presentation

<u>Week 15:</u>

- Completion week / Inspection of spaces (all student property must be removed)

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 – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)

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 and social distancing conditions. Borrowing equipment is currently implemented by scheduling an advance appointment through this link: https://janinaschabig.youcanbook.me/
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

Photo Darkroom Facilities – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)

Computer Pool and Media Lab – Kuckhoffstrasse 24 (first floor)

** Guidelines to be offered during orientations.