

BCB Spring Semester 2021
FA 211: Photography & Social Practice

Seminar Leader: April Gertler

Course Time: Friday, 9 - 12.15pm

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I can be reached on WhatsApp / Signal / iMessage

Office Hours: by appointment - Fridays: 1 - 2pm

Course Description

Social practice is an art medium which aims to facilitate discussion and interpersonal interactions. Although socially engaged art typically focuses on creating social and/or political change through collaboration with individuals, communities, and institutions in the creation of participatory art, this class will focus on the interaction between the audience, social systems, and the artist through aesthetics, collaboration, methodology, media strategies, and activism, using photography as a primary tool in those explorations. This course will concentrate on research development while at the same time focusing on image making. The class will use the city as a backdrop - many class meetings will take place outside, in the city itself. This photography class is for the student who has a clear understanding of how to use a 35mm analogue film camera, has their own camera, and is able work in the darkroom, mix chemistry, and print their own images. A precondition of enrolment is a beginner's photo course at BCB or at the student's home institution.

Requirements and Expectations:

- Turn off phones during the entire class time, including off-campus trips. They will be allowed to be used during breaks.
- Be prepared to present artworks / assignments / presentations without reminder.
- Engage in critiques and discussions.
- Initiate appointments with Professor or arts staff outside of class time when assistance is necessary.
- 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 beginning of semester if photos of student, artwork, works in progress are NOT to be taken and / or used for Bard College Berlin.
- Remove all artworks, art materials, and any personal belongings before the final inspection of the arts spaces during completion week. Failure to remove works and / or clean spaces used will result in final grade penalisation. Donating artworks or art materials (unrequested) at anytime is not permitted and will still be considered student's property that will be expected to be uninstalled and removed.
- Purchase of film and photographic paper when needed

Attendance and Special considerations for Spring 2021:

Some students might 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.

- Attendance of ALL classes is expected.
- More than one absence (that is, absence from one three-hour session per week) in a semester will 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, the Professor must be informed in advance.
- Tardiness after five minutes will be considered an absence unless the Professor is contacted at least 1/2 an hour before class.

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

This class is based simple principles of doing the best you can in class.

That means; handing your work in on time, coming to class on time, participating in class and cleaning / maintaining the darkroom and finally, being prepared and ready when in class. You will be graded on those elements.

Here is a breakdown of percentages for each component listed:

50% work on time

40% cleaning / maintaining darkroom

30% coming to class on time

30% participating in class

...oops... that's 150%.

And in fact, that's what I want you to give to this class.

Assessment

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 to

budget their time for all requirements connected to this class. This assessment also includes preparation, production, and cleaning of the darkroom and classroom at P98, at BCB.

Anticipated Costs for this Class

We recommend buying materials with other students - it's cheaper!

Although this class is using photography as a medium, digital photographic prints are acceptable for all assignments when photographic images are requested.

SPRING 2021 Weekly Schedule*

*There may be adjustments to the timing of assignments as well as adjustments of content as the course progresses. All students will be informed of any new expectations and / or deadlines.

February 5: Week 1

Introduction to the class, introduction of each student to the class

Tour of the facilities, including the Factory and distribution of materials: (film)

February 12: Week 2

Mood board presentations (20 min each)

Assignment #1: THE LOVE LETTER

Write a love letter to an object, person or place. The letter must be hand written on A3 and then copied. The letter must then be installed in 3 very different public places (not acceptable locations include the inside of the building where you live or anywhere on campus)

The letters can be taped, pinned or wheat pasted.

Three (digital) photographs of each installation of the letter must be made;

9 photographs (A5 in size) are due.

Due on February 19.

February 19: Week 3

DUE: Assignment #1: THE LOVE LETTER

Critique of The Love Letter assignment.

Assignment #2: THE EXCHANGE

Find an object you don't necessarily need to have/keep (something simple like a pencil/ pen, packet of tissues etc) and photograph it. Find someone on the street and ask them if they will trade that object with you for something they have. Take a portrait (a loose term which describes documenting that person in some way) of that person and the object you are exchanging with them.

Continue this process 7 times, each time photographing the person and object separately. Document the location, time and date of the exchange. You are not allowed to exchange with anyone you know or anyone who knows someone you know. The people you engage with should be complete strangers.

You should end up with 7 portraits, 7 photographed objects and an actual object that is different from what you started with.

Assignment due: February 28

15 prints are due (these prints can be digital or B/W darkroom prints) + the new object you ended up with.

February 28: Week 4

DUE: THE EXCHANGE #2

15 prints (7 portraits) plus the final object

Assignment #3: PSYCHO-GEOGRAPHICAL WALK

Students will be put into teams of 2 and each team will choose a small geographical area. That area must be researched, explored and considered as the students create a walk through their designated area. An overarching theme of the walk must be determined for the chosen geographical area.

The requirements of the walk are as follows:

1. The walk must be a minimum of 2 hours in length and must include a break and can not retrace steps.
2. A series of 15 (digital or analog) photographic images must be created/found through research and presented along the walk.
3. A video and/or sound clip must be shown or played at a certain point along the walk.
4. A food or drink must be served at one point along the walk which conceptually connects to the walk.

Assignment due: March 20 (SATURDAY!)

March 5: Week 5

Mood Board Presentations are due by each group about their walk:

What is the theme of the walk?

What has been discovered, explored and found so far?

What is the geographical area that has been chosen for the walk?

What video clip or sound clip has been chosen if you are that far?

What food will be served?

The Mood Board must have 15 slides.

March 12: Week 6

We will do a test walk of one walk today! That means your photographs and video clips, and anything else you want to add to your walk have to be ready.

March 19: Week 7

We will do a test walk of one walk today! That means your photographs and video clips, and anything else you want to add to your walk have to be ready.

March 20: (SATURDAY!)

DUE: Assignment #3: PSYCHO-GEOGRAPHICAL WALK

10 - 5pm: Final critique of this project, therefore we will be doing all the walks today!

If you want to invite others to participate in the walk, that would be great but this needs to be arranged in advance.

March 26: Week 8

In class Workshop demo:

Making natural vegetable dyes from food waste and testing photographic paper (avocado pits, onion skins, cabbage leaves, and potato peels)

March 29 - April 2 : SPRING BREAK!

April 9: Week 9

Bring 5 B/W prints to class. The prints can be the same image!!

The prints will be used for tests with the natural dyes.

Menu discussion for Assignment #5

Assignment #4: THE DINNER

The assignment is about food waste and image making. We will be making dinner for a group of people - each student in the class can invite 2 additional people to the dinner.

Let's discuss the possibilities of invitations going out to others this closer to the time frame - all things Covid considered!

The class will either shop for the food or find the food that has been considered waste, make the food and serve the food to the dinner guests.

The guests will join the meal with the understanding that they will be photographed during the meal. The refuse from the food will be used to create natural ink tones which will then be used to tone the images that are printed from the dinner!

What is actually due?

Each student will be required to submit 12 images from the dinner - and each student must use a minimum of 5 tone baths made from 5 different plants/food waste to tone their prints.

Food waste apps to consider: Toogoodtogo, Resq Club, Mealsaver, or Sirplus Supermarket (that sells food that would otherwise have been destined for the bin - <https://www.iamexpat.de/lifestyle/lifestyle-news/video-how-german-supermarket-eliminating-food-waste> - Schloß Strasse 94, 12163 Berlin-Steglitz)

The school cafeteria will be asked about their food waste as well.

Dinner: Negotiation of this date will be discussed

Assignment #4 due: April 23

April 16: Week 10

Dinner served for Assignment #5 - the logistics of this dinner will need to be discussed

April 23: Week 11

DUE: Assignment #4: THE DINNER

12 images from the dinner with the use of a minimum of 5 tonal baths made from 5 different plants/food waste

For next week: bring old magazines, newspapers, photos to class

April 30: Week 12

In class workshop: Collect a minimum of 300 images or fragments of text as image

Demo: Accordion book structure

Assignment #5: Accordion book

Create an accordion book with 200 images. The book can either be A5 or A4 in size.

Things to think about: Organization of your images? Editing and Sequencing

Is narrative important? Should there be a beginning, middle and an end? What about flow?

May 7: Week 13

Bring in what you have been working on so far for an in class round table discussion.

May 14: Week 14: Final class day

DUE: Assignment #5: Accordion book

Final critique!

These rules are a mantra for this class.

- Rule 1** FIND A PLACE YOU TRUST AND THEN TRY TRUSTING IT FOR A WHILE.
- Rule 2** GENERAL DUTIES OF A STUDENT:
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR TEACHER.
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS.
- Rule 3** GENERAL DUTIES OF A TEACHER:
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR STUDENTS.
- Rule 4** CONSIDER EVERYTHING AN EXPERIMENT.
- Rule 5** BE SELF DISCIPLINED. THIS MEANS FINDING SOMEONE WISE OR SMART AND CHOOSING TO FOLLOW THEM.
TO BE DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A GOOD WAY.
TO BE SELF DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A BETTER WAY.
- Rule 6** NOTHING IS A MISTAKE. THERE'S NO WIN AND NO FAIL. THERE'S ONLY MAKE.
- Rule 7** The only rule is work.
IF YOU WORK IT WILL LEAD TO SOMETHING.
IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO DO ALL OF THE WORK ALL THE TIME WHO EVENTUALLY CATCH ON TO THINGS.
- Rule 8** DON'T TRY TO CREATE AND ANALYSE AT THE SAME TIME. THEY'RE DIFFERENT PROCESSES.
- Rule 9** BE HAPPY WHENEVER YOU CAN MANAGE IT. ENJOY YOURSELF. IT'S LIGHTER THAN YOU THINK.
- Rule 10** "WE'RE BREAKING ALL OF THE RULES. EVEN OUR OWN RULES. AND HOW DO WE DO THAT? BY LEAVING PLENTY OF ROOM FOR X QUANTITIES." JOHN CAGE
- HELPFUL HINTS: ALWAYS BE AROUND. COME OR GO TO EVERYTHING. ALWAYS GO TO CLASSES. READ ANYTHING YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON. LOOK AT MOVIES CAREFULLY, OFTEN. SAVE EVERYTHING-IT MIGHT COME IN HANDY LATER.
THERE SHOULD BE NEW RULES NEXT WEEK.

- 1) The BCB "Factory" (main arts building) has space and facilities available to BCB students with an academic purpose for using the building. Any space in the building, private or shared, cannot be used unless permission has been granted. Any questions relating to this must be addressed to the Director of Studios Arts.
- 2) Chip access to the building will only be granted to those students currently registered for classes using the factory (after add-drop), and that have been offered orientation.
- 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 (black-taped areas) must be kept clear of any obstructions.
- 5) No spray-painting inside of the building. This also includes any strong, odorous materials (with or without spray). All production involving odorous material is to be done outside the building.
- 6) All work surfaces (table and floor) must always be protected with thick plastic or cardboard. If production is to happen outside, ground / concrete is also to be protected.
- 7) Food must be always cleaned up and removed immediately. Any food used for an art project requiring refrigeration must be labeled with one's name, and disposed of after presentation. All food must be disposed of in lidded trash cans.
- 8) All students are to always be respectful of other student artworks and personal property.
- 9) No art projects may function as weapons, or potentially cause bodily harm.
- 10) No sandals, flip-flops, or bare feet will be allowed inside or around the workshop areas, which includes walking through the workshop. This includes dance and theatre students as well.
- 11) Students should always wear adequate protection (goggles, gloves, dust masks, etc.) when needed. BCB will always try to provide these items.
- 12) If you are uncertain how to use a tool or piece of equipment or require assistance, please ask for assistance (by appointment, if necessary).
- 13) Students must be aware of who else is working in the building after dark. Any curfews established by Bard College Berlin must be respected. Finishing production and cleaning up must happen before the curfew time.
- 14) 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.
- 15) Any unidentified property left in any common space is subject to either be taken or thrown out, without restitution. All private property **MUST** be labeled and stored in its proper location.
- 16) All workshop items must be returned to the workshop when not in use.
- 17) Any items leaving the building without permission will be considered stolen, and access to the factory may be suspended for the rest of the semester. If an item must be borrowed for a purpose outside of the building, contact the arts staff, and be pre-

- pared to leave your Student ID as a deposit. Fines may be charged for late return.
- 18) All students must respect signage posted in the factory that may involve rules that are not mentioned in this document. This includes signage indicating reserved spaces where communal use is restricted.
 - 19) There are to be no architectural changes to studios or any areas inside or outside of the building without first speaking with your Professor, Studio Arts Manager, or Director of Studio Arts. When repainting any walls that need restoration, please consult with arts staff beforehand.
 - 20) 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. All students must accept the penalty of grades being affected and / or fines imposed if items are left (or renovations unfinished) by the inspection deadline.
- 21) Contact Studio Arts Manager John von Bergen with questions you might have.**

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, tri-

pod 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).
- 10) 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 with any questions: av@berlin.bard.edu

Photo Darkroom Facilities

Platanenstrasse 98

** Guidelines given during orientation.

Facility Policies: The Factory – Eichenstrasse 43

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Contact AV Manager: Janina Schabig with questions: j.schabig@berlin.bard.edu