

# TH384

## Self-Instructions: Creating Autobiographical Performance with She She Pop

Seminar Leader: Nina Tecklenburg

In collaboration with members of She She Pop (Ilia Papatheodorou, Lisa Lucassen, Sebastian Bark)

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Course Times: Tue 15:45-19:00 (workshops with She She Pop will take place 15:45-21:15)

Room: performance space, factory

Office Hours: Thu 10:00-12:00 or by appointment

### Course Description

[She She Pop](#) is an internationally renowned feminist performance collective based in Berlin. Over the course of their 27 years of collaboration, they have challenged established theater aesthetics and traditional hierarchies of theater-making. Their experimental and provocative body of work, for which they received Germany's highest theater prize in 2019 (Theaterpreis Berlin), has been deeply influential and groundbreaking for many emerging theater and performance artists. Considering the private as deeply political, the inclusion of their own autobiographies has been a crucial element of their artistic practice. Rather than being the purpose of their work, however, autobiography is for them primarily a method. In this respect, She She Pop's work is deeply rooted in conceptual performance art of the 1960s and 70s, particularly with regard to the use of (self-)instructions and tasked-based approaches.

In this course we will practice and reflect on She She Pop's particular approach to "autobiography as method." Classes will be taught partly in weekly sessions and partly in five hour-long hands-on workshops with members of the collective (Ilia Papatheodorou, Lisa Lucassen, Sebastian Bark). We will study She She Pop's art-historical influences by conceptual (performance) artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Sol LeWitt, Yoko Ono, John Cage, Allan Kaprow, Marina Abramovic, Valie EXPORT, Chris Burden, Sophie Calle and Forced Entertainment. Investigating techniques of (self-)instructions, tasked-based performance art and conceptual rule-making for both rehearsal and performance, students will be asked to develop short autobiographical solo or group performances, which will be presented at the end of the semester. No previous experience in performance art or theater is necessary.

### Requirements

Students are expected to:

- Turn off phones during class time.
- Always allocate extra time for work preparation and clean-up for independent production.
- 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. 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. 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.

### Attendance

- Attendance of all classes and theater visits is expected. To account for minor circumstances, one absence (that is, absence from **one three-hour session**) will not affect the participation grade or require documentation. **Please note: two theater visits are regarded as one three-hour session.**
- Students are expected to attend all off-campus excursions punctually, from start to finish. If there is a scheduling / travel conflict, Professor must be informed in advance.
- Tardiness after ten minutes will be considered an absence.
- 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. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.
- 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.

### Policy on Late Submission of Artworks / Presentations

- Assignments (artworks, essays, performances, presentations) 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.

### Assessment

**Critical thinking, creative work, collaboration:** This course aims at a productive interweaving of performance practice and theory. Students will thus be assessed on their ability and willingness to fruitfully combine creative art work and critical thinking. Furthermore, this course fosters artistic and intellectual collaboration amongst students. Working together independently and taking over responsibility for each other is a crucial part of this course. This also includes logistical issues such as organizing rehearsal times and technical equipment.

**Participation and preparation:** Please complete the required homework (readings, presentations, viewings, performance practice/rehearsals) and contribute creatively and meaningfully to the exercises and discussions. You will receive a participation grade which is based on your in-class engagement and completion of homework. Please reserve 4 hours on average for weekly class preparation and asynchronous class work. Most readings will be made available through a printed reader and on Google Classroom. For further readings and research in preparation for the midterm essay please consult the books on our reserve shelf in the library.

### Deadlines

- Midterm essay (1500-2000 words): by Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2021, midnight.
- Final performance project: Each project will be presented as part of THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY at the end of the semester (date tbc).

## Grade Breakdown

<b>Class participation</b> (includes attendance, contributions to discussions and exercises, homework, collaboration with peers, communication with Professor and other students)	35%
<b>Performative presentation on readings</b>	20%
<b>Midterm essay</b>	20 %
<b>Final project</b> (including devising process, general concept and self-reflection)	25 %

## Schedule

\*\*\* Please note: This course includes 1-2 performance visits that have not been scheduled yet \*\*\*

### Week 1: Introductions

Class: Tue, 2 Feb 2021, 15:45-19:00

### Week 2: She She Pop's Autobiographical Performance-Theater

Homework for week 2:

viewings:

[www.sheshepop.de](http://www.sheshepop.de)

readings:

- Nina Tecklenburg: chapter "Tailoring Identity", in: *Performing Stories: Narrative as Performance*, London and Calcutta (Seagull Books) 2021, excerpts from manuscript.

- Jerome Bruner: "Self-making and World-making", in: Jens Brockmeier, Donal Carbaugh (ed.): *Narrative and Identity. Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia (John Benjamins Publishing Company) 2001, pp. 25-37.

**Voluntary:**

- Anne Quiñones: "25 Jahre She She Pop", in: *She She Pop: Sich fremd werden. Beiträge zu einer Poetik der Performance*, Berlin (Alexander Verlag) 2018, pp. 114-121.

Class: Tue, 9 Feb 2020, 15:45-19:00

- Autobiography as method: discussion and exercise on readings
- Examples by She She Pop: Schubladen/Drawers, Testament, Rites of Spring

### Week 3: WORKSHOP 1 – in collaboration with She She Pop

Homework for week 3:

Viewings:

- Yoko Ono "Cut Piece" (1965): <https://vimeo.com/106706806>

readings:

- Yoko Ono: *Grapefruit*, New York (Simon & Schuster) 1970.

**Voluntary:**

- Lisa Lucassen: "Wir sind einige von euch", in: *She She Pop: Sich fremd werden*, pp. 7-32.

Class: Tue, 16 Feb 2021, 15:45-21:15

Week 4: \*\*\* NO CLASS \*\*\*

Homework during week 4:

performance practice:

Creating solo piece based on instructions

\*\*\* SPECIAL DATE \*\*\*

Performance visit

tbc

Week 5: She She Pop and Performance Art I (Body Art – Risk – Feminism)

Homework for week 5:

performance practice:

Continue creating solo piece based on instructions

readings:

- Peggy Phelan: “The Returns of Touch: Feminist Performances, 1960-80”, in: Cornelia Butler (ed): *Wrack! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, Cambridge Massachusetts (MIT Press) 2007, pp. 346-361.
- Amelia Jones: excerpts from chapter “The Rhetoric of the Pose: Hannah Wilke and the Radical Narcissism of Feminist Body Art”, in: *Body Art/Performing the Subject*, London and Minneapolis (University of Minnesota Press) 1998.

Class: Tue, 9 Mar 2021, 15:45-19:00

- Evaluation of artistic process
- Performative presentation on readings (10-20 min)
- Body Art and Risk: Marina Abramovic, Chris Burden
- Performance Art and Feminism: Carolee Schneemann, Valie EXPORT, Annie Sprinkle, Yoko Ono
- Works by She She Pop: What’s Wrong?, 50 Grades of Shame, Hexploitation

Week 6: She She Pop and Performance Art II (Instructions – Happenings – Concepts)

Homework for week 6:

performance practice:

Continue creating solo piece based on instructions

readings:

- Marvin Carlson: chapter “Performance Art”, in: *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, London (Routledge) 2018.

- Richard Schechner: "Happenings", in: TDR, vol. 10, no. 2, 1965, pp. 229-232.  
- Allan Kaprow: "Performing Life" (1979), in: *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, Berkeley (University of California Press), p. 195-198.  
- Sol LeWitt: "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" (1967), in: Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (eds.): *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, Cambridge Massachusetts (MIT press) 1999, pp. 12-16.

**Class: Tue, 2 Mar 2021, 16:45-19:00**

- Evaluation of artistic process
- Performative presentation on readings (10-20 min)
- Conceptual (Performance) Art: Marcel Duchamp, Yoko Ono, Allan Kaprow, John Cage
- Works by She She Pop: BAD, Seven Sisters, Oratorio

**Week 7: WORKSHOP 2 – in collaboration with She She Pop**

Homework for week 7:

performance practice:

Finishing solo piece based on instructions

Reading (voluntary):

- Iliá Papatheodorou: "Wir sind niemand. Ersetzbar sein im Kollektiv", in: She She Pop: *Sich fremd werden*, pp. 43-74.

**Class: Tue, 16 Mar 2021, 15:45-21:15**

**Submission Midterm Essay (1500-2000 words):**

**Thu, 18 Mar. 2021, midnight**

**Week 8: \*\*\* NO CLASS \*\*\***

Homework during week 8:

performance practice:

Creating piece in small groups

**\*\*\* SPECIAL DATE \*\*\***

**Online Workshop on Collaborative Theater Devising (voluntary)**

**with BCB Alumna Talia Kracauer**

**(The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London)**

**Open to BCB community**

**Date tbc**

\*\*\* Spring Break: Mar 29 – Apr 5 \*\*\*

Week 9: She She Pop and Postdramatic Theatre

Homework for week 9:

performance practice:

Continue creating piece in small groups

readings:

- Hans-Thies Lehmann: *Postdramatic Theatre*, London (Routledge) 2006, pp. 16-28.
- Michael Kirby: "On Acting and Non-Acting", in: TDR, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1972, pp. 3-15.

**Class: Tue, 6 Apr 2021, 15:45-19:00**

- Evaluation of class thus far
- Evaluation of artistic process
- Performative presentation on readings (10-20 min)
- She She Pop and Postdramatic Theater (Examples: Einar Schlee, Forced Entertainment, Gob Squad)

Week 10: She She Pop and the Canon

Homework for week 10:

performance practice:

Continue creating piece in small groups

readings:

- Rebecca Schneider: "Performance Remains", in: Adrian Heathfield and Amelia Jones (eds.): *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History*, New York (Intellect Ltd) 2012, pp. 137-50.
- Nina Tecklenburg: chapter "Make (No) Graven Images: The Myth of Performance Art", in: *Performing Stories*, London and Calcutta (Seagull Books), excerpts from manuscript.

**Class: Tue, 13 Apr 2021, 15:45-19:00**

- Evaluation of artistic process
- Performative presentation on readings (10-20 min)
- Works by She She Pop: Canon, Testament

Week 11: WORKSHOP 3 – in collaboration with She She Pop

Homework for week 11:

performance practice:

Finishing group piece

Reading (voluntary):

- Sebastian Bark: "Was man aufs Spiel setzt. Zum Material der Performance", in: She She Pop: *Sich fremd werden*, pp. 86-113.

Class: Tue, 20 Apr 2021, 15:45-21:15

Week 12: \*\*\* No class! \*\*\*

Homework during week 12:  
performance practice:  
Creating final piece (solo or group)

Week 13: WORKSHOP 4 – in collaboration with She She Pop

Homework for week 13:  
performance practice:  
Finishing final piece

Class: Tue, 4 May 2021, 15:45-21:15

Week 14: Wrap-up and final presentation as part of THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY spring 2021

\*\*\* please note: the following dates may vary \*\*\*

**Mon, 10 May 2021, evening**

- tech-run and dress rehearsal with other performing arts courses

**Tue, 11 May 2021, 15:45-17:00 (!)**

- Short wrap-up class

**Tue, 11 May 2021, evening**

\*\*\* THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY \*\*\*

Week 15

(completion week)



## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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.