

TH150

body/material

Seminar Leader: Maria F. Scaroni

Times: Wednesdays 9-12:15

March 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th

April 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th

May 5th, 12th

Saturdays 1-5 pm

March 27th

April 17th

April 24th

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

body/material is a dramaturgy of dances, where dance is intended primarily as a movement of attention and a technology of ecstasy, practiced alone yet together. The work invites the participants to look and treat the body as material, addressing its organic functions and spiritual potential as well as its cultural implications. The nature of the approach is eclectic, and it weaves techniques that will promote alignment, awareness and strength. In this class, we'll experiment a variety of bodily and mental practices, such as 'chi' cultivation techniques such as Qi Gong (energy circulation technique) and Pranayama (breathing techniques), spine and limbs patterns explorations (body connectivity, proprioceptive systems) and Contact Improvisation/hands-on work/experiential anatomy (touch and imagination to feel how the body functions). Improvisation, fiction and free movement play are central to access physical states of enhanced consciousness. We will use journeys and extended duration to flirt with the notion of ritual and personal/collective transformation, relying on trance and exertion, boredom, frustration and contemplation as tactics.

Dancing offers itself as a playground where concepts can be digested and embodied; dancing can be a lived place of speculation, ideal to test forms of thought especially around otherness, borders, mind body spirit, identity paradoxes, togetherness and difference, coexistence, interdependence. The intention is to come to an understanding or to a state of questioning of the body's borders, acknowledging it as multiple and idiosyncratic: codified, yet desirous of ecstasy and play, and seeking grounding and tenderness.

This laboratory suits anybody who is interested in the body as a site of knowledge, as a problem or a hoax or mystery, as a forest of symbols or simply as a phenomenon to be felt, visually, kinesthetically and sonically. A certain stamina is required, but no specific skill, therefore is open to any moving body.

Requirements

Students are expected to:

- arrive 5-10 minutes before each class starts, to have time to change clothes if needed and settle down.
- wear clean, warm, comfortable training clothes as we will work physically and sometimes use touch contact, so it is essential for everybody to feel safe and have a pleasant time to observe basics hygienic standards for a movement class (clean socks and clothes in general)

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 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. In case of missing a class, it is appreciated for the student to get in touch via email with the teacher to give a short update. Please consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPRING 2021: the course will take place in person. We will be wearing masks during the practice if indoors. If feeling ill refrain from participating.

Assessment

There will be 2 assignments given throughout the course:

One mid-term assignment in the form of a written or recorded somatic poem, which will result from a series of physical tasks/instructions given by the teacher. The deadline is by latest March 20th 2021.

A final written assignment, in the form of a short self-evaluation essay of the student's personal learning process during the semester. The written assignment will need to be handed via email by May 10th 2021. It will consist in a short essay of max 1500 words (min 500) and will not require research other than a process of self-inquiry regarding the experience done in the course.

Other assignments will be given during each class, in the form of individual and collaborative short performances or writing tasks.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Please note that no late essay will be accepted. Please refer to the policy from the Student Handbook on the submission of essays: *essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.*

Grade Breakdown

The student's grade will be assigned according to 3 aspects: the level of participation during all classes (intended as an active, focused, cooperative engagement with the activities proposed) (50%), the level of commitment and personal contribution both at a physical and speculative level (35%), the 2 assignments (written or recorded somatic poem and 1 written self-evaluation) (30%). Please note that for this class punctuality is of great importance, and being late to more than one class will affect the student's grade.

Schedule Spring 2020

WEEK 5

March 3rd Wed 09:00 – 12:15

Focus: physical body/dance as movement of attention

Warm up: constructive rest, technology of breath, Matsunaga's meridian stretches, Chi Gong Shaking, primal activation (compression, push and pull)/Setting boundaries ("enough")

WEEK 6

March 10th Wed 09:00 – 12:15

Focus: physical body/dance as movement of attention

Warm up: constructive rest, technology of breath, Matsunaga's meridian stretches, Chi Gong Proprioceptive systems/The body as a radio receiver/"The sensation is the image"/ Elements of improvisation and witnessing aliveness

WEEK 7

March 17th Wed 09:00 – 12:15

Focus: physical body/dance as movement of attention

Warm up: constructive rest, technology of breath, Matsunaga's meridian stretches, Chi Gong Cognition (breath sound language and movement)/Sci-fi bodies /Elements of Improvisation and witnessing aliveness

WEEK 8

March 24th Wed 09:00 – 12:15

Focus: physical body/dance as movement of attention/psychic body

Warm up: constructive rest, technology of breath, Matsunaga's meridian stretches, Chi Gong Introduction to Authentic Movement

Mar 27th Wed **SAT 1pm-5:30 pm**

Focus: physical body/dance as movement of attention/psychic body

Warm up: constructive rest, technology of breath, Matsunaga's meridian stretches, Chi Gong

Authentic Movement/Authentic Performing/Entanglement of energetic spheres, dances "under the influence".

WEEK 9

April 7th Wed 09:00 – 12:15

Focus: physical body/dance as movement of attention/emotional body

Warm up: constructive rest, technology of breath, Matsunaga's meridian stretches, Chi Gong

Authentic Movement/Authentic Performing/'body/material' partners journey

WEEK 10

April 14th¹ Wed 09:00 – 12:15

Focus: technologies of ecstasy

Warm up: small dance (Paxton), legs puzzles

Totentanz ecstatic dance/Cauldron of dance tales/Reference to Barbara Ehrenreich "Dancing in the Streets, A history of Collective Joy"

April 17th **SAT 1pm-5:30 pm**

Focus: technologies of ecstasy

Osho Dynamic Meditation/Reflections on the social function of collective ecstasy

WEEK 11

Apr 21st Wed 09:00 – 12:15

Focus: technologies of ecstasy

A diagonal history of Contact Improvisation/Working with collective bodies (piles)

Apr 24th **SAT 1pm-5:30 pm**

Focus: technologies of ecstasy

Hi-Tech Soul dance journey (kinesthetic and visual witnessing)/Silent Conversations

WEEK 12

Apr 28th Wed 09:00 – 12:15

Focus: technologies of ecstasy

Collective support structures/Flying Carpet journey

WEEK 13

May 5th Wed 09:00 – 12:15

Technodrift (outdoors)

WEEK 14

May 12th Wed 09:00 – 12:15

Technodrift (outdoors) and closure