

# TH191

## Making a Performance

### Devised Theater as Artistic Research

Seminar Leader: Nina Tecklenburg  
Course Time: Wed 9:00-12:15  
Location: factory, performance space  
Email: n.tecklenburg@berlin.bard.edu  
Office Hours: Wed 13:30-15:00 or by appointment

#### Course Description

This course combines two elements: first, it offers a critical introduction to Devised Theater – a specific practice of theater-making in which the performance originates from a collaborative work rather than a pre-existing script as a starting point. What exactly distinguishes Devised Theater from traditional theater-making? What are the possible histories of Devised Theater? How is Devised Theater currently being practised? In order to answer these questions, we will study the different working methods of contemporary, mostly Berlin-based theater makers (Gob Squad, She She Pop, Rimini Protokoll, Turbo Pascal, Interrobang, Monster Truck, andcompany&co, Showcase Beat Le Mot, Hysterisches Globusgefühl etc.) and use them as inspirational sources to devise our own performance pieces. Second, the course provides a space for a different kind of research, namely artistic research. Students are encouraged to bring their current research interests, personal and political concerns into the class and to take a closer look at their own areas of interest from the perspective of devising performance. What happens to our topics and questions when we look at them through the lens of performance and theater? What kind of knowledge and insight do we get from “performance-devising our concerns”? Internal showings, feedback sessions and critical reflections will be an integral part of our devising processes and performance-based artistic research. No previous experience in performance or theater is necessary. An interdisciplinary approach and interest is encouraged.

#### 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 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

### Attendance

- Attendance of all classes and performance/theater visit 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 ten minutes will be considered an absence.

### Assessment

This course aims to creatively combine performance practice, theory and analysis. Due to the experimental nature of this course students will be assessed on their ambition and ability to combine critical thinking and creative art work as well as their willingness to budget their time for all requirements connected to this class including class preparation. Since this course fosters artistic collaboration students are also assessed on their ability to work together independently and responsibly with and for each other. They will be graded on their willingness to communicate with Professor as well amongst themselves, including productive feedback sessions.

### Assignments and Deadlines

Each student is asked

1. in pairs: to present two lecture-performances/performative presentations that engage with arguments from class readings or with the works of a performance group discussed.
2. to attend chosen evening performances at various locations throughout the city.
3. to develop a written performance project concept that includes a research question (artistic research concept paper).
4. to work in collaboration with other students and devise a performance to be presented as part of THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY at the end of the semester.
5. in groups: to keep a rehearsal and research journal during the artistic process and to submit extracts from it.

### 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

### Class participation

(includes attendance, maintenance of all common and private spaces used for rehearsal, communication with Professor and other students): 30%

Two lecture performances/  
performative presentations on class readings/artists: 20%

Performance project concept paper: 20%

Devising process and presentation of final project  
(includes rehearsal and research journal, journal and tech-rider submission): 30%

## Schedule

Spring 2020 classes start on Monday, January 27 and run until Friday, May 15 with spring break planned from Monday, April 6 – Monday, April 13. Completion week is from May 11 - 15. 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: schedule may vary according to upcoming theater programs*

### Week 1

Wednesday, 29 January 2020, 9-12:15  
- introductions

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

Friday, 31 January 2020, 19:00-1:00 (!)  
- performance visit:  
Gob Squad: *I Love You, Goodbye* (The Brexit and Beyond Edition)  
Hebbel am Ufer I (Stresemannstraße 29, 10963 Berlin)

### Week 2

**Wednesday, 5 February 2020, 9-12:15**

- Discussion performance visit: *Gob Squad*

- Introduction: Performance as Research

- performative presentations on:

- Annette Arlander: "Introduction to future concerns: Multiple future of performance as research?", in: *Performance as Research: Knowledge, Methods, Impact*, ed. By Annette Arlander, Bruce Barton, Melanie Dreyer-Lude, Ben Spatz, London and New York: Routledge, 2018, p. 333-49.
- Shana MacDonald: "The city (as) place. Performative remappings of urban space through artistic research", in: *ibid.*, p. 275-96.

- In-class facility orientations (60 min)

### Week 3

**Wednesday, 12 February 2020, 9-12:15**

- special guest:

*Siegmar Zacharias (artist, scholar)*

lecture and workshop on Performance as Research / Artistic Research

### Week 4

**Wednesday, 19 February 2020, 9-12:15**

- introduction to Devising Theater

- DEVISING APPROACH I: Interrogang

- performative presentation on:

- Emma Govan, Helen Nicholson and Katie Normington: *Making a Performance: Devising Histories and Contemporary Practices*, London and New York: Routledge, 2007, p. 1-53.

- devising exercise

### Week 5

**Wednesday, 26 February 2020, 9-12:15**

- performative presentations on:

- DEVISING APPROACH II: Gob Squad
- DEVISING APPROACH III: Turbo Pascal

- devising exercise

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

(to be confirmed)

**Wednesday, 26 February 2020, 20:30**

- performance visit:

Wagner-Feigl-Forschung/Festspiele: *Hyperobjekte?*

Sophiensaele (Sophienstraße 18, Mitte)

### Week 6

**Wednesday, 4 March 2020, 9-12:15**

- discussion performance visit: *Wagner-Feigl-Forschung/Festspiele*
- performative presentations on:
  - DEVISING APPROACH VI: Hysterisches Globusgefühl
  - Jess Thorpe, Tashi Gore: *A Beginner's Guide to Devising Theatre*, London, Oxford, New York, New Delhi and Sydney: Methuen, 2019, chapter: "Selecting an Inquiry Question", p. 50-72.

### Week 7

**Wednesday, 11 March 2020, 9-12:15**

- summary: short guide to Devising Theater
- introduction: rehearsal and research journal
- presentations of personal research interest (10 minutes per student)
- finding groups, jamming ideas, in groups: rehearsal schedule with 2 rehearsals per week

### Week 8

**Wednesday, 18 March 2020, 9-12:15**

- discussion: Jess Thorpe, Tashi Gore: *A Beginner's Guide to Devising Theatre*, chapter: "Making Original Material for Performance" (writing text; movement and choreography), p. 73-125.
- showing, creative feedback, defining next steps.

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

**Saturday, 21 February 2020, 16:00 (!)**

- performance visit:  
*Turbo Pascal: Unterscheidet Euch! Ein Gesellschaftsspiel*  
Theater an der Parkaue (Parkaue 20, 10367 Berlin)

### Week 9

**!!! NO CLASS on Wednesday, 25 March 2020 !!!**

- *submission*: performance project concept paper (Wednesday 25 March midnight)

### Week 10

**Wednesday, 1 April 2020, 9-12:15**

- discussion performance visit: *Turbo Pascal*
- discussion: Jess Thorpe, Tashi Gore: *A Beginner's Guide to Devising Theatre*, chapter: "Making Original Material for Performance" (performance images, action, music), p. 125-162.
- showing + "imagine premiere", creative feedback, defining next steps

*SPRING BREAK: 6-13 April 2020*

### Week 11

**Wednesday, 15 April 2020, 9-12:15**

- discussion: Jess Thorpe, Tashi Gore: *A Beginner's Guide to Devising Theatre*, chapters: "Structure and Composition", "Reflection", "Production – Sharing your Work with an Audience", p. 163-205.
- showing, creative feedback, defining next steps
- *submission*: rehearsal and research journal

Week 12

Wednesday, 22 April 2020, 9-12:15

- showing, creative feedback, defining the next steps
- *submission*: technical rider

Week 13

Wednesday, 22 April 2020, 9-12:15

- showing of final version, feedback, preparing *THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY*

Week 14

Wednesday, 6 May 2020, 9-12:15

- dress rehearsal in class
- wrap-up

\*\*\* *SPECIAL EVENING DATE* \*\*\* (date tbc)

- tech-run with other theater/performance courses

\*\*\* *THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY* \*\*\* (evening date, exact date tbc)

- final presentation

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). 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.