

FA328: Embodied Storytelling Through Video

Seminar Leader: Dafna Maimon
Email: d.maimon@berlin.bard.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This advanced video class will explore embodied ways to approach storytelling and script creation within video by working with our own autobiography as experienced through the body. Our aim will be creating video works that do not merely tell a story but allow viewers to experience it viscerally. We will relate to the filmed medium as an extension of our senses, and to the body itself, as a stage for an emotional landscape that can be both personal and political at once. Our goal is to unravel new approaches in communicating empathy, memories, feelings and sensations through video. As such, experiments with different self-empowering movement techniques such as Body Mind Centering, Authentic Movement, Improvisation, collaboration and drawing will be at the center of our curriculum, and applied to different video assignments. These methods will help us gain bodily awareness and creativity, as well as a sensitivity for time and space: the two major elements we need to learn to control as video artists. Prepare to move, play, and perform utilizing your own body as material and subject within on-site class workshops; extreme curiosity, group participation and open-mindedness will be expected. Students applying for this course should already have some experience in filming and be self-sufficient in editing. We will also analyze works from artists and filmmakers who work with the body and autobiography as their starting point. Likewise, visiting body practitioners will be invited to host workshops within the class. The focus of this course will not be on technical video instruction. Instead, students will delve into a rigorous process and develop their own visual language that can at once analyze, criticize, and transmit visceral experiences reflecting on our existence and potential as humans in this highly digital age

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 at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

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 FALL 2020: Students must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill.

Assessment

Embodied Storytelling Through Video is a course where students utilize experiments with different somatic and body oriented practices as a starting point for creating video art in order to access their topics from an embodied place. We will work in video and other mediums, with collaborative exercises and working methods that will culminate in a final video shown at the Open Studios. The initial phase of experimentation may include performative assignments, drawing, writing as well as set- or prop-creation, and workshops as well as smaller-scale video assignments. Students will be expected to do ALL assignments and participate actively in class, and to be able to structure their time well for videos that often require several stages of production. Even though this is a video-class, the creative process and conceptual procedures that build up toward making the videos will also be part of the assessment; essentially the students entire process in all it's aspects is assessed, and the process itself is as important as any specific outcome. This means that the earlier experimentations, the students own research, class participation, sketches, rough-cuts of videos, and exercises across mediums are equally important for the grading. If students fail to show earlier rough-cuts, sketches plans and their process in class, the final videos will not be accepted for grading and cannot be shown in the final presentation. 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 and capacity to budget their time for all requirements connected to this class. This assessment also includes preparation, production, and cleaning up of spaces used at Bard

College Berlin.

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+). 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

Communication and Class participation: Communication includes communication habits with Professor, in class and via email, and among other students. Class Participation includes attendance, engagement in class workshops, in class work, critiques and conversations and maintenance of all common and private spaces used for production / rehearsal: % 30

Assignments and Project presentations for critiques includes: all assignments, sketches, homework and production phases, the students own ongoing research end of semester presentations / videos / performances: % 35

Final Video Assignment % 35

Key Assignments:

1. "Video Self-Sensing"- Due September 22nd
2. "Editing Ourselves; Choreography For/By/With Camera" - Due Oct 13th and 27th
3. "Zoom Performance; A Video Art Lecture" - Due November 10th
4. Final Video/ Short Film; "This Body of Work" - Several Stages and Deadlines: Nov 10th, Nov 17th, Nov 24th Dec 1st & 8th
5. Screening at Open Studios December 11th

Note: September 1st there will be no class! The first class will be September 8th and it will be a longer class till 8PM. Additionally, the Class of September 1st will be replaced with additional mentoring/personal talks during the process of making the final video / visit to the Berlin Biennial to be confirmed & scheduled.

Schedule

Class 1: September 8th

Note: This class/workshop will be 1 hour longer till 8PM

Introduction to class, working methods and theme: How can autobiography be experienced through the body? What is it to embody something? How can we script through embodying? How do we translate a somatic process to video art?

Class Examples: Mona Hatoum, Bruce Nauman, Ed Atkins, Adrian Piper, Meredith Monk, Mark Leckey etc.

Factory Introduction by Joon

Discussion and in class somatic workshop and introductions: *Loose the body & Let it be heard*

(If weather permits the exercises and discussion will be held outdoors)

Assignment: Buy a notebook for tracking experiments of listening to your body and translating these into video. You will utilize this ongoing research throughout the course for various assignments.

Class 2 September 15th

Viewing video art examples and discussing artists that work with the body, choreography and somatic processes in video i.e: Maya Deren, Joan Jonas, Yvonne Rainer, etc.

In class exercise: I Am Aware

Assignment: *"Video Self-Sensing"* Based on the in class awareness exercise you will create a 1 min autobiographic video, where the camera will be utilized as an extension of your senses and your body and self in space. Due September 22nd

AV Facilities and Camera instruction by Janina Schabig

Class 3 September 22nd

Review assignment “*Video Self-Sensing*”

Discussion and viewing of works and artists working with autobiography and performing to camera: i.e: Arthur Jafa, Shana Moulton, Erkka Nissinen, Stanya Kahn, Eli Cortiñas

Note: This class may take place online over zoom

Class 4 September 29th - NO CLASS - Will be rescheduled to Saturday 12. 9, 19.9 or 26.9 t.b.c

Visit to Julia Stoschek Collection to see *Quantification Trilogy* by Jeremy Shaw

The class will take place on a Saturday as the institution is not open on Tuesdays. The exact date will be confirmed with the availability of the students or split into two groups over two visits.

Class 5 October 6th

Workshop on choreographing for video with artists and choreographers:

Justin Kennedy & Emma Waltraud Howes (t.b.c)

In addition to their own work including performance, video, sculpture and drawing they have also choreographed for several artists incl. Jeremy Shaw, Adam Lindner, Tino Sehgal etc. Their collaborative work is currently on view at the Berlin Biennial.

Introduction to assignment: “*Editing Ourselves; Choreography For/By/With Camera*” - Due Oct 13th and 27th

Class 6 October 13th

First review of “*Editing Ourselves; Choreography For/By/With Camera*”

Somatic exercise: “Authentic Movement” expanding ideas on performing to camera and unraveling new perspectives for autobiography (if weather permits this exercise will be done outdoors)

OCTOBER 20th NO CLASS - FALL BREAK

Class 7 October 27th

Final Review of *“Editing Ourselves; Choreography For/By/With Camera”*

Viewing work examples: Scoring & body language in video; Liz Magic Laser, Anna Halprin RSVP Cycles etc.

Assignment: You will create a 10-15 minute Video Art Lecture on Zoom which includes Performing to Camera

Class 8 November 3rd

Presentation and Review of Video Art lecture on Zoom

Introduction /First stage of final assignment: “This Body of Work” - Several Stages and Deadlines: Nov 10th, 17th, Nov 24th Dec 1st & 8th

Class 9 November 10th

Body is a complicated word; discussing works of i.e. Hannah Black, Tejal Shah, Melanie Bonajo, Sondra Perry

Review: Ideas, Sketches, Scores, Writing, Moodboard, Script for Final film

Reading Assignment: Gossip by Silvia Federici + Anne Carson The Gender of Sound

Class 10 November 17th

Review: “This Body of Work” / Rough Cut 1

Contemplating the work through a 3-part exercise reading/moving/writing

Class 11 November 23rd

Individual Talks: Review of the 2nd cut of your final video “This Body of Work”
Each student will get 30 min each

Class 12 December 1st

Review of the 3rd cut of your final video “This Body of Work” and planning for open studios

Class 13 December 8th

Final Critique of Videos

The favorites: Last somatic group moving

December 11th - Open Studios

It is mandatory to participate in the open studios, as well as to help set the screening up and take it down

Please Note: This syllabus may be subject to changes in regard to content as well as dates!

All classes will be held on site in person as long as this is possible. In case of lockdowns or other restrictions some classes may be rescheduled and adapted to be held online over zoom. One or two classes are planned to be held over zoom in order to accommodate a blended teaching format. If students miss classes due to Covid-19 related restrictions class materials, and video links can be provided to students online, as well as viewing of video works. Critiques can also be held over zoom if needed. As this class will have a cap of only 6 students the class can when there are no larger restrictions take place in person at Bard.

Movement and collaborative exercises will be held outdoors as much as possible in order to allow for additional social distancing, these may also be adapted to be done over zoom if needed.

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 – 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.
- 1) 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.
- 2) We strongly suggest personally visiting the facilities to inquire and reserve before borrowing equipment!
- 3) AV equipment is limited at BCB. Whenever possible students are encouraged to use their own devices (computers, cameras) for production purposes.
- 4) 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.