

**AR316 Contemporary Art and Urban Development:  
Historical Archetypes, Present-day Case Studies, and Better Scenarios**

Seminar Leader: Tirdad Zolghadr  
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Course times: Tuesdays 14:00-17:15  
Office Hours: By appointment

**Course Description**

How have artists occupied, colonized, revitalized or otherwise contributed to the (metropolitan) spaces around them? This practicing arts/curatorial class will engage with historical and contemporary examples of how art affects its material context. As a canonical point of departure, we will begin in Europe, with the hubris of the historical avantgardes, deep in the suffocating mass of the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century industrial city. We will then move on to the iconic 1970s cool cats in the enormous lofts of deindustrialized Manhattan – and on to the freakish violence of today's planetary real estate cycles. Although Berlin will remain a key point of reference, the seminar will look beyond the European context, to venture cross-comparisons to artist initiatives in Palestine, California and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Importantly, this class includes theoretical as well as practical components. On the one hand, it will include excursions to various settings and case studies across Berlin, including Haus der Statistik and KW in Mitte, and ExRotaprint in Wedding. On the other hand, we may also collectively pursue a curatorial exercise, and attempt to translate our conceptual concerns into a concrete public moment, however gestural or fleeting. In the best of cases, we will tackle the issue of “art & urban renewal” critically and historically, but also “act our way into thinking”, by means of hands-on experiments that open up new and more speculative scenarios.

**Requirements**

Students are expected to:

- Turn off phones during class time.
- Initiate appointments with the professor or arts staff outside of class time.
- Always allocate extra time for work preparation and clean-up for independent production.
- Make sure to borrow A/V equipment on time in order to be able to perform the required tasks.
- Respond to emails from their professors in a timely manner.

- Inform their professors at the beginning of the semester if photos of students, their artwork, or their 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](mailto:j.park@berlin.bard.edu)

### **Academic Integrity**

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. 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. 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. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FALL 2022:** Some students may 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.

### **Assessment**

Students are requested to complete the reading assignments and also play an active part in the conception and realization of the final project.

Additionally, students will be requested to contribute a short presentation of 10 minutes and a written essay of 800-1000 words. The respective topics will be decided on together with the instructor.

## **Policy on Late Submission of Artworks / Presentations**

Assignments 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 should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. 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**

The grade will be based in equal measure on the following criteria (one-third each):

- general participation (attendance / in-class communication)
- essay & individual presentation
- contribution to collective project

## **Readings**

All course readings will be distributed digitally.

## **Schedule**

### **Week 1: Aug. 30**

#### **Introductions, Objectives, a Clarification of Terms**

### **Week 2: Sep. 6**

#### **Genealogies**

A selective history of cities via the artists who lived and worked in them.

#### **Readings:**

Neil Smith, "Toward a Theory of Gentrification: A Back to the City Movement by Capital, not People", in Loretta Lees, Elvin Wyly, Tom Slater (eds.), *The Gentrification Reader*, London: Routledge 2010, pp. 85-98

Rosalyn Deutsche & Cara Gendel Ryan, "The Fine Art of Gentrification", *October Magazine*, Vol. 31, 1984, pp. 91-111

### **Week 3: Sep. 13**

#### **Art & Power**

Which tools does contemporary art have at its disposal to map and theorize its impact on the world around it – and how transparent can it afford to be in this regard? As case studies we turn to Kunstwerke Berlin and the biennial industries.

Reading: Tirdad Zolghadr, "Provisional Global Snapshots", in *REALTY: Beyond the Traditional Blueprints of Art & Gentrification*, Berlin: Hatje Cantz 2022, pp. 16-52

### **Week 4: Sep. 20**

#### **Villeggiatura**

How to redefine our cities as fragments of a much larger context of rural and non-human life? Case studies include the 2019 "Conversations" document by the Falling Wild collective. The session also includes a first brainstorming session to chart our group appetites regarding a public moment in December.

#### Readings:

Maria Hetzer, "Land Reform: Utopia and Infrastructure", in Zolghadr, *ibid*, pp. 120-126

Marion von Osten, "Pigeon Towers and Donkey Paths", in Zolghadr, *ibid*, pp. 98-101

Simone Hain, "To Conquer a Province Peacefully? How the Seizure of Land on the Rivers Oder, Netze, and Warthe Drove a Government to the Brink of Ruin", in Zolghadr, *ibid*, pp. 102-109

Goldin & Senneby, *Shifting Ground*, 20-page script from 2009 performance lecture

### **Week 5: Sep. 27**

#### **Primitive Accumulation**

An attempt at a bird's eye view of dispossession and development, with recent histories of the Palestinian West Bank as case studies. Today's seminar includes a second brainstorming session to address practical possibilities regarding an event in December.

#### Readings:

Khaldun Bshara, "Rural Urbanization: Commodification of Land in Post-Oslo Palestine", in Zolghadr, *ibid*, pp. 110-115

David Harvey, "The Urban Roots of Capitalist Crises" (extract), in *Rebel Cities*, Verso: London 2012, pp. 27-45

## **Week 6: Oct. 4**

### **City Excursion**

Reading: Tirdad Zolghadr, "Speculative or Pragmatic Responses to the Doom & Gloom Bemoaned in the Provisional Global Snapshots", in Zolghadr, *ibid*, pp. 154-182

## **Week 7: Oct. 11**

### **Art as Infrastructure**

How and when does art assume the form of infrastructure, and when is this what you might call a good thing? Today's seminar includes initial concrete steps towards a collective effort in December.

#### Readings:

Matthew Soules, "Financial Formations," in *Industries of Architecture*, eds. Katie Lloyd Thomas, Nick Beech, and Tilo Amhoff (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 199-208

Victoria Ivanova, "Please Mind the Switch: Organisational Small Print in a Financialized (Art)World", in "A Modest Proposal (Symposium)," *Jubilee – platform for artistic research and production*, October 27, 2018, pp. 21-26

Betty Marín, Heather M. O'Brien, Christina Sanchez Juarez, "Beyond Pointing: Reflections on Organizing and Artistic Participation", three-page artist statement 2017

## **Week 8: Oct. 18**

### **Policy**

How and to which effect does public policy play a role – and which options are currently available? Today's seminar will also subdivide tasks leading up to a collective effort in December.

#### Readings:

Mohamed Elshahed, "The Prospects of Gentrification in Downtown Cairo", in *Global Gentrifications*, Bristol: Policy Press 2015, pp. 121-142

Suhail Malik, "Capitalizing Anti-Gentrification", in Zolghadr, *ibid*, pp. 53-59

"Property Entails Obligations: H.J. Vogel in conversation with Christopher Roth", in *Arch+ Journal for Architecture & Urbanism*, The Property Issue, May 2018, pp. 54-59

**Fall break: [Oct 24 – Oct 30]**

**Week 9: Nov 1**

**Financialization & Ownership**

How has financialization changed the game, and does collective ownership offer a way to square the circle? Case studies include work by terra0, Christopher Kulendran Thomas and the Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise.

Readings:

Wolfgang Scheppe, "The Ground-Rent of Art and Exclusion from the City: The exemplary quality of Venice's singularity," *ARCH+: The Property Issue*, *ibid*, pp. 14-31

Laura Calbet Elias, "Financializing the Development of Urban Neighborhoods", in Zolghadr, *ibid*, pp. 60-67

Suhail Malik, "What Can be Done with a White Cube?", seven-page public lecture 2018, published in Anthony Downey and Els Roelandt (eds), *Critique in Practice. Episode III: Enjoy Poverty*, Berlin: Sternberg, 2019

**Week 10: Nov. 8**

**Documentation and Propaganda**

How to testify to development – and its discontents – to the best possible effect? Case studies include the work of artist Christopher Roth as well as the 2003 documentary film *Flag Wars*, by Linda Goode Bryant & Laura Poitras (1'26).

Readings:

Rachel Moore, "Marketing Alterity", *Visual Anthropology Review*, September 1992, pp. 126-137

Jenelle Power & Harriet Kuhnlein, "Collaborative Research", five-page 2008 presentation for Kishk Anaquot Health Research & Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research

Katya Sander, "A Landscape Study", in Zolghadr, *ibid*, pp. 80-91

**Week 11: Nov. 15**

**The Flux Fetish: Precarization and the Creative Classes**

What are the mythological and economic underpinnings of latter-day forms of freelancing, and what do they have to do with art or gentrification?

Readings:

Andrea Phillips, "Art & Housing: the private connection", in A. Phillips & Fulya Erdemci (eds.), *Actors, Agents and Attendants*, Sternberg: Berlin 2012, pp. 143-158  
Kristel Raesaar, "Redistributing Risk", in Zolghadr, *ibid*, pp. 134-139

**Weeks 12, 13, 14: Nov. 22, Nov. 29, Dec. 6**

The last three sessions will be devoted to finalizing the group endeavor – and to any aspects of the above sessions which the class wishes to return to in more detail.

## **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 – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)

- 1) BCB’s AV (Audio / Visual) facilities provide a limited quantity of AV equipment to



support 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 and social distancing conditions. Borrowing equipment is currently implemented by scheduling an advance appointment through this link: <https://janinaschabig.youcanbook.me/>  
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

Photo Darkroom Facilities – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)

Computer Pool and Media Lab – Kuckhoffstrasse 24 (upstairs)

\*\* Guidelines to be offered during orientations.