

FA105 Contemporary Materials and Techniques

Seminar Leader: John von Bergen

Email: j.vonbergen@berlin.bard.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1 - 2pm (office upstairs at Eichenstrasse 43)



Course Description

This course is a comprehensive introduction to sculpture as a medium that has evolved in many diverse directions over the last century, and is accelerating as an expansive, critical medium for art production in the 21st Century. The concentration of this course is a hands-on workshop that explores materials and techniques, supplemented by slide lectures, reading and writing assignments, and off-site meets (off-campus workshop, museum / gallery visits, artist studio, etc.). Workshops will allow students to learn about a large range of materials that will be explored further by individual projects, as we investigate the advantages and disadvantages of many materials that include rubber, wood, styrofoam, plaster, plastics, polymer-gypsum, polymer-webbing, wax and found objects. We also will explore basic construction, various mold-making techniques and the importance of maintaining health and safety standards in one's studio. Please Note: A limited supply of materials will be offered to students. Some students may need to contribute their own funds / resources for completing projects.

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. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

Attendance

- Attendance of all classes 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 five minutes will be considered an absence.

Assessment

“Contemporary Materials and Techniques” is a beginner's course allowing students to use sculpture as their main medium of production. Many art materials will be provided, though some materials may need to be purchased / acquired directly by each student at their own expense depending on individual project goals. Students must produce and present artworks for this class that are (or relate to) sculpture. While students are encouraged to explore any creative medium during their time at Bard College Berlin, they will be graded on their production for this class within the guidelines of the assignment.

Students are also assessed on their ability to work independently and responsibly. They will be graded on their ability to communicate with Professor as well amongst themselves. This also includes their ambition to create artworks as well as their willingness to budget their time for all requirements

connected to this class. This assessment also includes the preparation, production, and cleaning up of materials, artworks, and 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+). 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 production / rehearsal, communication with Professor and other students): 40%

Homework: 30%

Project presentations for critiques (includes end of semester presentations / performances): 30%

Schedule

Fall 2019 classes start on Monday, September 2 and run until Friday, December 20 with fall break planned from Monday, October 28 – Sunday, November 3. Completion week is from December 16 - 20. 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/>

Week 1 / Sept 3

Introductions / review syllabus + BCB facilities

Discussion: Rube Goldberg / watch section of Fischli + Weiss “The Way Things Go” + “10 Lessons How to Work Better”

Workshop: Hot glue, styrofoam, cardboard, basic wood-shop tools / Health & Safety

Homework due in 1 week: Individual or collaborative building of Rube Goldberg machine (section) based on found objects. Researching / reading interview with Tom Friedman (pdf)

Week 2 / Sept 10

Factory orientation with BCB Studio Manager Joon Park.

Discussion: Reviewing Rube-Goldberg machine projects / Tom Friedman interview

Workshop: Translating forms between 2D and 3D, conventional and non-conventional methods for

“drawing and thinking”

Homework due in 1 week:

- 1) Develop a “Tom Friedman-esque” object / image to be presented as a “concept” (sketch form).
- 2) Research at least three of these artists whose work we will see next week at Hamburger Bahnhof: Carl Andre, Lee Bontecou, John Chamberlain, Isa Genzken, Jenny Holzer, Richard Jackson, Bruce Naumann, Sigmar Polke, George Segal, Rosemarie Trockel.

Week 3 / Sept 17

Off-campus trip #1: **Meeting exactly at 2pm: Hamburger Bahnhof (Invalidenstraße 50-51, 10557 Berlin) for introduction to “Local Histories” exhibition by curator Matilda Felix. Be prepared with any kind of camera to document works (phone camera is acceptable). Class discussion afterwards.

Homework due in 1 week: 300-word essay with photo illustration as pdf in response to our encounters from “Local Histories”. Essay should be a personal reflection on relationships to the following:

- Information offered by the website: www.smb.museum/en/exhibitions/detail/local-histories.html
- Research relating to the artists (homework assigned on Sept 10th)
- Matilda Felix’s introduction
- Experiences one-on-one with the artworks
- Class discussion
- Research after the exhibition

Week 4 / Sept 24

Discussion: Bonnie Collura, Michael Joo, Lynda Benglis

Workshop: Mold-making (part one) with plaster, clay, alginate, Flexwax (polymer wax)

Homework due in 2 weeks:

- 1) Transforming any body part into a surreal “unexpected” context
- 2) Reading Bruce Nauman interview (pdf)

Week 5 / Oct 1

**Off-campus trip #2: artist studio visits in Kreuzberg (exact meeting location to be announced) + Ceramic Kingdom in Neukoeln: <https://www.ceramickingdomberlin.com/>

Week 6 / Oct 8

Discussion: Reviewing “surreal” assignment / discussing Diana al Hadid, David Altmejd, reviewing Bruce Nauman interview.

Workshop: Mold-making (part two) with silicone, foam-coating, polymers continued (Kobracast, Worbla, Acrylic-1)

Homework due in 1 week: Combine at least three materials or techniques from our mold-making workshops into one form

Week 7 / OCT 15

Discussion: Review homework / Special visiting artist talk with Berlin-based Israeli sculptor Noa Heyne – www.noa-heyne.com

Workshop: Intro to ceramics with Joon Park

Homework due in 1 week: Begin the preparations of at least three ceramic objects as a “series” to be fired at Ceramic Kingdom

Week 8 / Oct 23

Discussion: Review ceramic homework progress / discuss Robert Arneson, Richard Deacon, Julia Philips

Workshop: Finalize small series of ceramic works for firing over the fall break

Homework due in 2 weeks: Student presentations for new material process: five-minute slideshow / presentation involving student’s own computer to be used with seminar-room projector. The goal: introduce to the class some new sculptural material or process that has not yet been explored in this class.

FALL BREAK: Mon, Oct. 28 – Sun, Nov. 3, 2019 (ceramic firing scheduled during this time)

Week 9 / Nov 5

Discussion: Review ceramic projects, discuss Nancy Rubins, Mike Kelley, Danh Vo

Workshop: Basics of model-building using foam-core, electric styro-cutter, 3Doodler, Sculpey

Homework due in 1 week: Finish a model with 1:25 scale plastic figure that connects to an outdoor public artwork – “Imagine The Impossible”. Selected reading from “Mike Kelley: Educational Complex” by John Miller (pdf)

Week 10 / Nov 12

Discussion: Review model presentations / discuss Iris van Herpen + examples of 3D art production

Workshop: Tech workshop using 3D modeling program Sculptris <https://pixologic.com/sculptris/> + intro to 3D printing (working in MacLab but meeting first at the factory) to develop iPhone cover-sculpture as “frame”. Please note: Students able and willing to use their own laptops may be ideal for this production (tech specifications will be reviewed beforehand).

Week 11 / Nov 19

Workshop: Continue in-class Sculptris + 3D printing

Homework due in 1 week: Finalize 3D projects to be presented next week / Read Rosalind Kraus’s “Sculpture in The Expanded Field” (pdf)

Week 12 / Nov 26

Discussion: Presenting final 3D prints / discussing “Sculpture in The Expanded Field”

Workshop: Consider a collaborative installation on campus (details / homework TBA)

Week 13 / Dec 3

Discussion: Sara Sze, Jessica Stockholder, Do-ho Suh

Workshop: Installation production (details / homework TBA)

Week 14 / Tues. Dec 10

Workshop: Installation project production (details TBA). Begin preparations for Open Studios (planned for Fri, Dec 13) including pedestals or shelves, lighting, labeling, text, etc. Please note: Professor will be choosing the final works for this presentation based on the production from the whole semester. Assignments / projects worked on after the midterm are not automatically included.

Week 14 / Fri. Dec 13

Open Studios event at The Factory, timing to be announced (attendance mandatory)

Week 14 / Sat. Dec 14

Final clean-up and inspection of spaces – removal of all artworks and materials must be completed!

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.
- 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.