

TH384

Self-Instructions: Creating Autobiographical Performance with She She Pop

Seminar Leader: Nina Tecklenburg

In collaboration with members of She She Pop (Ilia Papatheodorou, Sebastian Bark)

Email: n.tecklenburg@berlin.bard.edu

Course Times: Tue 15:45-19:00 (workshops with She She Pop will take place 15:45-20:15)

Room: performance space, factory

Office Hours: Thu 13:15-15:15 or by appointment

Course Description

[She She Pop](#) is an internationally renowned feminist performance collective based in Berlin. Over the course of their 30 years of collaboration, they have challenged established theater aesthetics and traditional hierarchies of theater-making. Their experimental and provocative body of work, for which they received Germany's highest theater prize in 2019 (Theaterpreis Berlin), has been deeply influential and groundbreaking for many emerging theater and performance artists. Considering the private as deeply political, the inclusion of their own autobiographies has been a crucial element of their artistic practice. Rather than being the purpose of their work, however, autobiography is for them primarily a method. In this respect, She She Pop's work is deeply rooted in early performance art of the 1960s and 70s, particularly with regard to the use of (self-)instructions and tasked-based approaches.

In this course we will practice and reflect on She She Pop's particular approach to "autobiography as method." Classes will be taught partly in weekly sessions and partly in four hour-long hands-on workshops with members of the collective (Ilia Papatheodorou and Sebastian Bark). We will study She She Pop's art-historical influences by (performance) artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Yoko Ono, John Cage, Allan Kaprow, Marina Abramovic, Martha Rosler, Adrian Piper, Carolee Schneemann, Valie EXPORT, Chris Burden, Sophie Calle and Forced Entertainment. Investigating techniques of (self-)instructions, tasked-based performance art and conceptual rule-making for both rehearsal and performance, students will be asked to develop short autobiographical solo or group performances, which will be presented at the end of the semester. No previous experience in performance art or theater is necessary.

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.
- Respond to emails from their professors in a timely manner.
- Inform their professors 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 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 of all classes and theater visits is expected. To account for minor circumstances, one absence (that is, absence from **one three-hour session**) will not affect the participation grade or require documentation. **Please note: two theater visits are regarded as one three-hour session.**
- Students are expected to attend all off-campus excursions punctually, from start to finish. If there is a scheduling / travel conflict, the instructor must be informed in advance.
- Tardiness after ten minutes will be considered an absence.
- 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.

Policy on Late Submission of Artworks / Presentations

- Assignments (artworks, essays, performances, 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.

Assessment

Critical thinking, creative work, collaboration: This course aims to productively interweave performance practice and theory. Students will be assessed on their ability and willingness to fruitfully combine creative art work and critical thinking. In addition, this course encourages artistic and intellectual collaboration amongst students. Working independently and taking responsibility for one

another are an essential part of this course. This also includes logistical issues such as organizing rehearsal times and technical equipment.

Participation and preparation: Please complete the required homework (readings, viewings, performance practice/rehearsals) and contribute creatively and meaningfully to the exercises and discussions. You will receive a participation grade which is based on your in-class engagement and completion of homework. Please reserve 4 hours on average for weekly class preparation and asynchronous class work. Most readings will be made available through a printed reader and on Google Classroom. For further readings and research in preparation for the midterm essay please consult the books on our reserve shelf in the library.

Assignments and Deadlines

- Performative presentation assignment on a class reading (in small groups)
- Performance assignments by She She Pop
- Midterm essay (1500-2000 words): by Friday, 17th of March 2023, midnight
- Final performance project: each project will be presented as part of THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY at the end of the semester (date tbc)

Purchases

- Please be prepared to pay for one theatre ticket (ca. 6-15 Euros max per student).

Grade Breakdown

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Class participation (includes attendance, contributions to discussions and exercises, homework, collaboration with peers, communication with professor and other students) | 35% |
| Performative presentation on class reading | 15% |
| Midterm essay | 25 % |
| Final project (including final presentation, devising process, general concept and the ability to self-reflect on the project) | 25 % |

Schedule

**** Please note: this schedule is subject to change due to upcoming theater programs and changing dates for end of semester presentations ****

**** Class times vary due to workshop sessions. Please check the schedule before each class ****

Week 1: Introductions

Class: Tue, 31 Jan 2023, 15:45-19:00

Week 2: She She Pop's Autobiographical Performance-Theater

Homework for week 2:

viewings:

www.sheshepop.de

reading:

- Jerome Bruner: "Self-making and World-making", in: Jens Brockmeier, Donal Carbaugh (eds.): *Narrative and Identity. Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia (John Benjamins Publishing Company) 2001, pp. 25-37.

Voluntary reading in German:

- Aenne Quiñones: "25 Jahre She She Pop", in: *She She Pop: Sich fremd werden. Beiträge zu einer Poetik der Performance*, Berlin (Alexander Verlag) 2018, pp. 114-121.

Class: Tue, 7 Feb 2023, 15:45-19:00

- Performative presentation on reading (10-15 min)
- Autobiography as method
- In-class examples Rachel Rosenthal; She She Pop: Schubladen/Drawers, Testament, Rites of Spring

Week 3: WORKSHOP 1 – in collaboration with She She Pop

Homework for week 3:

Viewings:

- Yoko Ono "Cut Piece" (1965): <https://vimeo.com/106706806>

- Martha Rosler "Semiotics of the Kitchen" (1975):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuZympOIGC0>

reading:

- Yoko Ono: *Grapefruit*, New York (Simon & Schuster) 1970.

Voluntary reading in German:

- Lisa Lucassen: "Wir sind einige von euch", in: *She She Pop: Sich fremd werden*, pp. 7-32.

Class: Tue, 14 Feb 2023, 15:45-20:00

Week 4: She She Pop and Performance Art I (Body Art – Risk – Feminism)

Homework for week 4:

performance practice:

devising, rehearsing

readings:

- Peggy Phelan: "The Returns of Touch: Feminist Performances, 1960-80", in: Cornelia Butler (ed): *Wrack! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, Cambridge Massachusetts (MIT Press) 2007, pp. 346-61.

- Ryan Claycomb: excerpts from chapter "Performative Lives, Performed Selves", in: *Lives in Play: Autobiography and Biography in the Feminist Stage*, Ann Abor (University of Michigan Press) 2012, pp. 27-54.

Class: Tue, 21 Feb 2023, 15:45-19:00

- Performative presentation on readings (10-15 min)
- Body Art and Risk: Marina Abramovic, Chris Burden
- Performance Art and Feminism: Carolee Schneemann, Valie EXPORT, Annie Sprinkle, Yoko Ono
- Works by She She Pop: What's Wrong?, 50 Grades of Shame, Hexploitation

Week 5: WORKSHOP 2 – in collaboration with She She Pop

Homework for week 5:

performance practice:

Finishing performance based on instructions

Voluntary reading in German:

- Ilia Papatheodorou: "Wir sind niemand. Ersetzbar sein im Kollektiv", in: She She Pop: *Sich fremd werden*, pp. 43-74.

Class: Tue, 28 Mar 2023, 15:45-20:00

Week 6: She She Pop and Performance Art II (Happenings - Instructions)

Homework for week 6:

performance practice:

devising, rehearsing

readings:

- Marvin Carlson: chapter "Performance Art", in: *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, 3rd edition, London (Routledge) 2018.

- Richard Schechner: "Happenings", in: TDR, vol. 10, no. 2, 1965, pp. 229-232.

- Allan Kaprow: "Performing Life" (1979), in: *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, Berkeley (University of California Press), p. 195-198.

Class: Tue, 7 Mar 2023, 16:45-19:00

- Evaluation of artistic process
- Performative presentations on readings (10-15 min)
- Conceptual (Performance) Art: Marcel Duchamp, Allan Kaprow, John Cage
- Works by She She Pop: BAD, Seven Sisters, Oratorio

***** SPECIAL DATE *****

Performance visit

tbc

Week 7: instruction-based (performance) art

Homework for week 7:

Midterm essay:

Submission Midterm Essay (1500-2000 words):

Fri, 17 March 2023, midnight

Class: Tue, 14 Mar 2023, 15:45-19:00

- Examples: Sophie Calle, Erwin Wurm, Hans Ulrich Oberist, Rimini Protokoll, Miranda July, Antonia Baehr, Eva Meyer-Keller
- Midterm summary and evaluation

Week 8: ***** NO CLASS *****

Homework during week 8:

performance practice:

devising, rehearsing

Week 9: WORKSHOP 3 – in collaboration with She She Pop

Homework for week 9:

performance practice:

Finishing performance

Voluntary reading in German:

- Sebastian Bark: "Was man aufs Spiel setzt. Zum Material der Performance", in: She She Pop: *Sich fremd werden*, pp. 86-113.

Class: Tue, 28 Mar 2023, 15:45-20:00

- SSP 1 hour Q&A: Open to the BCB community

***** Spring Break*****

Week 10: She She Pop and Postdramatic Theatre

Homework for week 10:

performance practice:

final project: concept, devising, rehearsing

readings:

- Hans-Thies Lehmann: *Postdramatic Theatre*, London (Routledge) 2006, pp. 16-28.

- Michael Kirby: "On Acting and Non-Acting", in: TDR, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1972, pp. 3-15.

Class: Tue, 11 Apr 2023, 15:45-19:00

- Performative presentations on readings (10-15 min)
- She She Pop and Postdramatic Theater (Examples: Einar Schleaf, Forced Entertainment, Gob Squad)

Week 11: Final Performance Project

Homework for week 11:
performance practice:
devising, rehearsing

Class: Tue, 18 Apr 2023, 15:45-19:00
- Rehearsal, showing, feedback

Week 12: **** individual mentoring - NO CLASS ****

Homework during week 9:
performance practice:
devising, rehearsing

Week 13: WORKSHOP 4 – in collaboration with She She Pop

Homework for week 13:
performance practice:
Finishing final performance

Class: Tue, 2 May 2023, 15:45-19:00

Week 14: Wrap-up and final presentation as part of *THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY / OPEN STUDIOS spring 2023*

**** please note: the following dates may vary ****

Tue, 9 May 2021, 15:45-17:15 (!)
- Wrap-up class

Thu, 11 May 2021, evening
- Technical rehearsal with all performing arts classes

Fri, 12 May 2021, evening
**** THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY + OPEN STUDIOS ****

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

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

Photo Darkroom Facilities – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)

Computer Pool and Media Lab – Kuckhoffstrasse 24 (first floor)

** Guidelines to be offered during orientations.