

FA260

Dance Out. (DO) Liberation, possession and film

Seminar Leader: Justin F Kennedy

Times: Mondays 10-13h15 (with special session on Sat. 13.4., 13-18.00)

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Hours by appointment

Course Description

Dance it out! Dance to get out of your own way! Dance out/with the spirits! Dance out all you already possess inside! 'Dance Out' is an experimental dance lab focused on the emancipatory potential of dancing and embodied knowledge. The overarching theme of the course is to use movement-, vocal-, imagination-based tasks and repetition to tap into spiritual communion. The core of the course involves a rigorous warm-up: including breathwork, guided meditation, Kundalini yoga exercises, Qi Gong and voice exercises to prepare for durational dance sessions (inspired by Authentic Movement), where students take turns witnessing (the gaze as material) and improvising in various altered states upheld for long durations, creating a deeply collective and conscious relationship to each other and the materials. In a stylistic and cultural hodgepodge, no physical coordinations are off limits, some of which may include headbanging, robotics, swarming, landscaping, learning simple choreographic sequences, open scores, singing together (choiring), and Body-MindCentering exercises. Known and unknown science fictions, cosmologies, myths, and conceits of the imagination (readings, hypnosis, dreamworks) will also be introduced to form and inform the dances, discursively framing the work in black queer diasporic studies. We will develop a range of performative skills, sliding along a spectrum of spirit possession/trance and tools for daily living. The final component of the course will be looking at various dances on film and filmed dance references that feature trance, possession and apocalypse/disaster, linking the dances to larger geopolitical movements and other artistic mediums.

Requirements

Students are expected to:

-arrive 5-10 minutes early to change clothes and settle in, wear clean, comfortable, and warm attire for dancing for longer durations, where one may sweat or come into physical contact with others, bring

whatever one needs to stay hydrated and nourished (The class will include a break), practice basic hygienic standards for a movement class (clean socks, layers if necessary, etc.)

- come prepared to engage in durational dance scores with openness, curiosity and concentration, and to give feedback about their experiences and what they witness, as well as to watch and analyze clips of filmed dance.

-be punctual

-to respect any urgent access needs of the group at large including any personal covid restrictions (wearing mask, keeping distance, etc.)

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.

Students should not attend class when they test positive for COVID-19.

Assessment

There will be 2 assignments given throughout the course: One mid-term assignment in the form of a written review of a piece of filmed dance chosen by each student, resulting from a series of eye aerobics exercises, calibrations of the `gaze`, as well as film clips (featuring trance, spirit possession and Apocalypse) facilitated by the teacher. The deadline is, by the latest 18 March 2024. Throughout the semester, students will be assigned to direct and perform in each other`s individual and collaborative micro scores, followed by automatic writing/response tasks and an assessment from the teacher. A final assignment will be due at the semester`s end, in the form of a short self-assessment/synthesis of the takeaways of the course. This assignment can take on any submittable form, (ie written, a music composition, an epic poem, a filmed choreography. etc.)

The assignment will need to be handed in via email by 6 May 2024 and will not require research other than a process of self-inquiry, auto fiction, and reinterpretation/excavation of the materials/skills from the course.

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 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 student's grade will be assigned according to 3 criteria: the quality of participation during all classes (intended as an active, focused/concentrated, cooperative engagement with the activities proposed) (60%), the level of commitment and personal contribution both at a physical and creative/artistic level (25%), filmed dance review, the self-directed open scores, and written self-evaluation) (15%). Please note that for this class punctuality is of great importance, and being late to more than one class will affect the student's grade.

Schedule Spring 2024

WEEK 1 29 Jan 2024 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: AIR/WIND: Opening and closing the portals (breathework, sounding, and micro-trance states

Warm up: Guided meditation, improvised 3-part activation, introduction to breathwork (3-part breathing) & sounding/vocalizing together, micro trance states exercises Durational Dance

Score: Murmuration, Alternative Flocking, Flying, Buoyancy.

BMC/Viscera Considerations: The development of the Lungs, the diaphragm, the belly, the throat

Film/Discourse: Jeremy Shaw 'Best Minds', Merce Cunningham's 'Beach Birds for Camera', Ligia

Lewis's 'Minor Matter,' Readings about murmuration from Sierra Pickett and Kei Miller. Solo

Abandon (You're on your own trip. Drug and Party Scene from Martine Syms' African Desperate 2022, Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley alongside Timothy Leary on psychedelics.

WEEK 2 5 Feb 2024 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Earth/Minerals & Needing/Kneeding the organs

Warm up: Guided meditation, improvised 3-part activation, breathwork & sounding together

Durational Dance Score: Moroccan Issawan trance ritual (Rocking), Kneeding the organs

concaving & convexing movements, curving and carving through physical and time based on Ria Higler's book 'Movement Research - Stories and Journeys'

BMC/Viscera Considerations: All the organs that lay in the lower torso (spleen, liver, kidneys, gall bladder, bladder, uterus, appendix, lower intestines, etc.)

Film/Discourse: Kneeding piece from Jefta, Issawa rituals, Cypher/Group Assisted Trance/Ceremony, Of Men and Gods (Des Hommes et Dieux (documentary) Discuss the complications of the ethnographic gaze.

WEEK 3 12 Feb 2024 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: BMC cellular fluids/sacrum pelvic floor-to sternum solar plexus water

Warm up: Seated meditation with mudra, somatic activation, Qi Gong

Durational Dance Score: Pelvic Floor as a boat (3 plates/discs around pelvis, sternum, and skull)
intercellular fluids dance

BMC/Viscera Considerations: All the organs that lay in lower torso (spleen, liver, kidneys, gall bladder, bladder, uterus, appendix, lower intestines, etc)

Film Discourse: BONNIE BAINBRIDGE COHEN'S 'SENSING, FEELING, AND ACTION', ROBYN'S MUSIC VIDEO CHOREOGRAPHED BY JEFTA.

WEEK 4 19 Feb 2024 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Internal waves energy/Water of body/Body of water and Vampires

Warm up: Seated meditation with mudra, breatheology, Kundalini Exercise, Internal wave energy warm-up from Sistema.

Durational Dance Score: Internal wave energy

BMC/Viscera Considerations: Vascular System, The Endocrine System

Film Discourse: The Girl with All the Gifts, Contact Juggling or that form that kid from sndo said, The Story of Black Panther/ Red Wolf, Singaporean Vampire Folklore, "Nosferasta"- New Red Order, True Blood scenes.

WEEK 5 26 Feb 2024 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Merpersoning

Warm up: guided meditation, somatic activation, Pranayama (alternative nostril breathing in constructive rest pose, sounding, Aquatic coordinations, Intro to operatic co-speculation

Durational Dance Score: Podding and Reschooling like fish, Docking Stations to recharge and reanimate

BMC/Viscera Considerations: Bruno Listopad's the legs moving as arms, the arms moving as legs, antigravity/everything tilted on it's side.

Film/Discourse: The Lure, Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley (queer Afro-caribbean merperson folklore), hydrofeminism, Sedna (indigenous merperson folklore) about femme revenge, a scene from 'Merpeople' (Netflix).

WEEK 6 4 March 2024 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: FIRE: Breathe of FIRE, Headbanging. It's being done to you, Possession by Someone else/Being Puppeted

Warm up: meditation with Firestarter mudra (Soorya Mudra), somatic activation, rapid breathe of fire. Activation of the outer musculature and warming up the neck and head in preparation for headbanging.

Durational Dance Score: Headbanging Score

BMC/Viscera Considerations: Muscles, Loose Joints while remaining tethered and rooted.

Film Discourse: Ethiopian and Moroccan Women headbanging, Ibn 'Arabi quotes, Ligia Lewis' Deader than Dead (film), Maya Deren's MEDITATION ON VIOLENCE (film)

WEEK 7 11 March 2024 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: FIRE: MUSCLES animatrons, incremental movements, musicality, rhythm and timing

Warm up: Guided mediation, Osho Dynamic Meditation/Feedback on collective transformation

Durational Dance Score: Animatrons, Creation Stories

BMC/Viscera Considerations: Tensing and releasing the outer muscles (pop n lock strategies), Emancipation through restrictive movements, limbs falling off the bone, faceless sphere as head
Film Discourse: World War Z, Octavia Butler's Bloodchild, Sylvia Wynter on origin stories, Metaphors/Associations with Zombies and Animatrons, Jordan Wolfson's artworks, Sami Schalk's Bodyminds Reimagined.
Discuss how ableism functions in dance.

WEEK 8 18 March 2024 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: A Bag of bones (Bruno Listopad) Zombies

Warm up: Guided mediation, Wim Hof Method, Kundalini Kriyas, Sounding (Operatic co-speculation)

Durational Dance Score: Zombie Animatrons

BMC/Viscera Considerations: Zombie Choir, Zombie Linguistics, uncomfortable sounds, Zombie Apocalypse, The Banal Apocalypse operatic co-speculation continued.

Film Discourse: Zombie (1979) Advertisement, Racial and gender terror through the lens of Jordan Peele's films, MJ's thriller, Night of the Demons (HD) - Angela's Dance, Poor Things (Film)

SPRING BREAK March 25-April 1

Week 9 no class (April 1 is a federal holiday)

Week 10, ATTENTION, SPECIAL DATE: SAT, 13 April 2024 SAT 13:00-18:00h

Ligia Lewis guest teaches and shares her choreographic practice Week 11, no class

WEEK 12, 22 Apr 2024 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: mini-performances, auto-fictions and Actens, micro scores.

Durational Dance Score: merpersons vs zombie animatrons score (put it all together)

BMC/Viscera Considerations: Holistic approach, full body integrations

Film Discourse: Freedom Theater Documentary (Film), Discuss subjectivity / objectivity.

WEEK 13, 29 Apr 2024 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Senovial fluid/Vestibular fluid

Durational Dance Score: Open score presentations

BMC/Viscera Considerations: The chambers of the heart, the pulse, the meridians

Film Discourse: Wu Tsang's `Moby Dick, : or the Whale`, Mayfield Brooke's Whale Fall, Anna Halprin's work, Kei Miller's `Things I have Withheld`, Phaniel Antwi's `On Cuddling`

WEEK 14, 6 May 2024 Mon 10:00 – 13:15 Cave Rave (3-hour dance party live djed by the teacher) and closure.