

TH315

Making Theater in Berlin: A Collaboration with the Theater *Ballhaus Ost*

Seminar Leader: Nina Tecklenburg

In collaboration with Ballhaus Ost (contact: Anne Brammen, Daniel Schrader, Tina Pfurr)

Email: n.tecklenburg@berlin.bard.edu

Course Times: Wed 14:00-17:15 *Please note:* in some weeks class times will vary or be split into two sessions due to performance visits and workshops. See schedule below.

Locations: Ballhaus Ost (Pappelallee 15, U2 Eberswalderstraße/M1 Milastraße); performance space BCB factory, Eichenstraße 43

Office Hours: Mon 13:30-15:30 or by appointment

Course Description

This course offers an intensive study and practical exploration of how performing arts are produced in Berlin. Our semester-long case study will be Ballhaus Ost, a theater venue located in Penzlauer Berg. As one of most vibrant places for bold and innovative independent performing arts in the city, Ballhaus Ost offers a rich program that includes emerging performing artists as well as established, award-winning theater makers such as Monster Truck, Christoph Winkler, or Bard alumna Marie Schleef.

In this course, Ballhaus Ost serves as an exemplary theater institution that we will study and explore practically: How do people work in a theater? What departments are needed to make a theater piece? How does one curate a meaningful program? What is the relationship between artists and the institution? Between the institution and cultural policy? Together with the Ballhaus Ost team, we will delve into the work of various departments such as curation and programming, lighting and sound design, communications and fundraising, and, above all, artistic creation: In workshops with artists commissioned by Ballhaus Ost, we will explore their artistic approaches, concerns and working methods. The aim is to get hands-on experience of creating performing arts and working in a theater institution, while situating the working structures and art produced at Ballhaus Ost in a larger context of Berlin's rich theater culture and a globalized theater industry. Classes will take place in the rehearsal spaces and on the stage of Ballhaus Ost.

Note: This advanced course is also open to foundational level students.

Assessment

Collaboration

This course encourages artistic and intellectual collaboration amongst students. Working independently, communicating respectfully, and taking responsibility for one another are an essential

part of this course. This also includes logistical issues such as organizing rehearsal times, labor division, and technical equipment.

Artistic practice and theory

This course aims to productively interweave performance practice, institutional practice and theory. Students will be assessed on their ability and willingness to fruitfully combine creative art work and critical thinking.

Participation and preparation

Please complete the required homework (performance practice/rehearsals, readings, viewings, writing) 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.

Readings will be made available through Google Classroom. For further readings please consult the books on our reserve shelf in the library.

Assignments and Deadlines

- Artistic and written responses to performance visits and workshops with artist from Ballhaus Ost (see schedule)
- Midterm writing assignment (1500-2000 words): by Monday, 18th of March 2024, midnight
- Final performance project: each project will be presented as part of THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY at the end of the semester (date tbc)

Purchases

- We aim to give out as many free theater tickets as possible. However, please reserve ca. 40 Euros for tickets just in case. Updates will follow.

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 excursions** is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. 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 of an average length are regarded as one three-hour session.**
- Students are expected to attend all off- and on-campus classes and performance visits from start to finish. If there is a scheduling / travel conflict, the instructor must be informed in advance.
- You may encounter circumstances that prevent you from attending classes for which you may be excused, meaning that the absence will not impact your grade. These circumstances include illness, religious observance, military obligation, attendance at a conference, a Bard Network event, a civic engagement initiative, a research trip or another compelling circumstance outside of your control (i.e. court appearance, visa appointment, death of a family member). Optional non-academic travel, hosting visiting family and friends, or work schedules **are not ground for excused absences.**
- You will **be allowed to self-report your absence one time**, meaning that a notification informing your instructor about the reason for your absence before or within 24 hours of the class is sufficient. If you miss class more than once you will need to provide your instructor with appropriate documentation in order to be excused (i.e. a doctor's note).
- Tardiness after fifteen minutes will be considered an absence.
- All unexcused absences will lower the final grade by one step (i.e. if your final grade is a B, you will be downgraded to a B-).
- 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.

Accommodations

- We aim to make this course accessible to all students, regardless of ability, circumstances, and resources. If you have any general medical issues or other concerns that could impact your compliance with these regulations, **please inform your instructor during the first week of the semester.**
- If you need an accommodation, please consult with Atticus Kleen, Health & Wellness Officer: a.kleen@berlin.bard.edu. The process for applying for disability accommodation is explained in the Student Handbook with links to the forms here: <http://www.berlin.bard.edu/for-students/student-handbook/policies-and-regulations/#c4206>

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.

Grade Breakdown

Class participation 40%

Grading criteria:

The participation grade includes attendance; homework; contributions to discussions and exercises; active collaboration with partners; communication with instructors and other students.

Midterm written reflection 25 %

Grading criteria

Relevance/originality of the subject and its relation to questions discussed in class; language, style, terminology; structure and argumentation; performance analysis; conclusion.

Final project 35 %

Grading criteria:

Artistic concept; relation to topics and/or artistic approaches experienced and discussed in class; devising process; artistic complexity; presentation; ability to self-reflect on the project.

Schedule

***** PLEASE NOTE: Class times vary due to workshop sessions and performance visits! Please read this schedule carefully and mark the class location and any extra dates in your calendar. *****

***** This schedule is subject to change due to various collaborations with artists and staff from Ballhaus Ost. We will keep you updated on any changes that might occur, so please check your emails regularly. *****

Week 1: Introductions - Ballhaus Ost and the Berlin Theater Landscape

Wed, Jan 31, 2:00-5:15pm (BCB factory)

Week 2: Lighting Department Workshop + Performance Visit

Wed, Feb 7, 2:00-5:15pm (BHO)

Reading due:

Mieke Matzke: "Other Spaces for Production: On the Spaces of Independent Theater".

In class

House tour and Lighting workshop (together with Set Design class from University of the Arts)

Fri, Feb 9, meeting 7:30-9:00pm BHO

Performance visit:

"You Know the Feeling" by Blomen/Moré/Reiniger

Week 3: Working as Independent Performing Artists + Set Design Day

Wed, Feb 14, 2:00-3:30 pm (BHO), **time tbc**

Writing due:

Response on performance visit

Reading due:

Lisa Lucassen: "Working Independently in a Collective – An Invitation".

In class

Meet the artists: discussion with Blomen/Moré/Reiniger

Sat, Feb 17 – exact time tbc

Set Design Day:

Exhibition of Set Design Class University of the Arts at BHO

Week 4: Artistic Response 1 + Tech department

Wed, Feb 21, 2:00-5:15 (BHO)

Performance assignment due:

In groups: create an artistic response to "You Know the Feeling" by Blomen/Moré/Reiniger

In class

Artistic response showing, feedback

Meet BHO's Technical Director

Week 5: Imaginative Justice Workshop + Performance Visit

Wed, Feb 28, 2:00-5:15pm (BHO)

Artistic workshop with Salma Said and Miriam Coretta-Schulte

No homework due!

Fri, March 1, evening (BHO)

Performance Visit:

"Court Fantasies" by Salma Said and Miriam Coretta-Schulte

Week 6: Artistic Response 2 + Performance Visit

Wed, March 6, 14:00-15:30 (BHO)

Performance assignment due:

In groups: create an artistic response to "Court Fantasies"

In class

Artistic response showing, feedback

Fri, March 8, evening (BHO)

Performance Visit:

"Screening Invisibilities" by Zino Wey

Week 7: Department Tour - Artistic Direction, Production, Fundraising, Communications

Wed, March 13, 2:00-5:15pm (BHO)

Writing due:

Response to performance visit "Screening Invisibilities"

Readings due:

- Introduction to *Curating Dramaturgies*, edited by Peter Eckersall and Bertie Ferdman, pp. 1-5.

- "How can one employ strategies from theater as curatorial strategies?", Interview with Florian Malzacher in: *Curating Dramaturgies*, pp. 141-50.

In class

Discussion "Screening Invisibilities"

Department tour BHO

Week 8: Artistic Workshop with SEE! + Performance Visit

Mon, March 18, midnight

***** Midterm writing assignment due *****

Wed, March 20, 2:00-4:00pm (BHO)

Viewings due:

<https://www.seekollektiv.de/work/>

In class

Workshop with performance collective [SEE!](#)

Fri, March 22, evening

Performance visit:

"Das Leuchten" by SEE!

***** SPRING BREAK *****

Week 9: Artistic Workshop with Tina Pfurr (former BHO artistic director)

Wed, April 3, 2:00-5:15pm (BHO)

Writing due:

Response to "Das Leuchten" by SEE!

In class

Discussion performance visit "Das Leuchten"

Workshop with Tina Pfurr (actress, performance artist, former BHO artistic director)

Week 10: Ballhaus Ost and Cultural Politics + Final Project Pitch

Wed, Apr 10, 2:00-5:15pm (BHO)

Reading due:

Brandon Woolf: *Institutional Theatrics. Performing Arts Policy in Post-Wall Berlin*, pp. 1-11.

Final project assignment due:

Bring an idea for a final project and present it to the class

In class

BHO in Berlin's and Germany's theater landscape

Political conditions of production

Final project: idea pitching and teaming up

Week 11: How to Survive: Application Writing + Final Project

Wed, Apr 17, 2:00-5:15pm (BHO)

Writing due:

In final project groups: write a short funding application for your final project

Final project assignment due:

Devising and rehearsing: bring a first performance draft to be presented in class

In class

Application writing workshop + discussion

Final project: rehearsal, showing, feedback

Week 12: Final Project

Wed, Apr 24, 2:00-5:15pm (Monopol, tbc)

Final Project homework due:

Group rehearsal (on campus)

Rehearsal journal entry

In class:

Showing, feedback, defining next steps, rehearsals

Week 13: Final Project – Dress Rehearsal

Federal Holiday – 1st of May – *NO CLASS!!!*

Final Project homework due:

Group rehearsal (on campus)

Rehearsal journal entry

Fri, May 3, 7-10pm

Dress Rehearsal (Monopol)

Class wrap-up

Week 14: Wrap-up and final presentation as part of *THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY / OPEN STUDIOS* *spring 2024 – Monopol, tbc*

Mon, May 6, evening (Monopol)

Technical rehearsal with all performing arts classes

Tue, May 6, evening (Monopol)

***** *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.