

TH325 Performance Practice: **Bodies in the City**

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

What are cities aside from their (hard) material structures and infrastructures? What is it that cities offer our bodies as possibilities? What does public space permit? The seminar *Bodies in the City* explores how cities accommodate and resist human (and non-human) bodies and how artistic strategies can probe and expand the possibilities of being in and indeed making *city*.

There are many factors that influence and determine how and where we spend time. From playing high-pitched sound to drive young people away from certain locations, placing armrests on benches so lying down is impossible, to the unintentional winds funneled by tall buildings, cities shape human and non-human behaviour in obvious and less obvious ways. Feelings of safety, danger or entitlement in different spaces are also greatly influenced by the way race, class and gender are dealt with in our societies, which often have deep effects on our cities. In this seminar, we will examine how to employ artistic and physical strategies to explore, reflect upon, critique and perhaps push the envelopes of these urban and social affordances and prohibitions.

Through a mixture of performative assignments in the city, group discussions, and examples of artists' works, we will explore methods of examining, exploring and augmenting the role of the body in the city. We will examine artistic strategies such as psychogeography, algorithmic walking and urban intervention, both practically as well as through the work of artists. We will be walking, moving, sharing, tracing, map-making, recording, playing and developing strategies to see and finally share with others, new experiences of urban practice. Through tasks inspired by the work of artists such as Sophie Calle, Francis Alÿs and Christina Kubisch, we will be working to find modes of being in, reflecting on and performing the city and making a wide variety of work that can be shared publicly during the final presentations.

Requirements

Students need to attend the contact sessions in person and be prepared to work both on and off campus. The course will entail some sessions working in the city, so it will be important to note where to meet and to arrive on time when off campus.

Students are expected to:

- Only use their phones if explicitly told to do so but otherwise turn them off when not on a break.
- Allow enough time for work preparation and clean-up if required.

- 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, work-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. Leaving artworks and / or art materials behind is not permitted. It is considered student property and must 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.

Accessibility

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, (accommodations@berlin.bard.edu) to request an official accommodation.

Requests for longer-term accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.

If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the Bard College Berlin Accessibility page. Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker (j.harker@berlin.bard.edu) or Maria Anderson-Long (m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu).

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, one absence from a once-per-week course should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin may 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.

Assessment

Bodies in the City is a course that combines independent urban observation and exploration, class examination of work by other artists and group discussions, reflective group discussion about the nature of urban space and the production of an artwork capable of being shared with visitors to the final presentations.

The methods used to sensitize to the environment and explore are primarily physical rather than material or mediated by recording equipment but the final project is open for the student to propose a way to share their work with a wider public. This will be guided by the professor and the group during the seminar.

The final piece can be solo work or made in small groups. In group work, you should document your individual effort to the group process so that the professor can award a grade that reflects your work in the group.

Students are expected to try different modes of working with attention and perception both conceptually and physically. While students are encouraged to explore any creative medium during their time at Bard College Berlin, they will be graded on their performative participation and conceptual playfulness for this class.

Students will be assessed on their engagement in class in the classroom setting as well as on excursions in public space, on their mid-term proposal and final realization of a shareable project.

Students are also assessed on their ability to responsibly work independently and in small groups. They will be graded on their ability to communicate with Professor as well among themselves and group. 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 preparation, production, and cleaning up of 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+). 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 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 (includes attendance, maintenance of all common and private spaces used for production / rehearsal, communication with the professor and other students): 30%

Homework assignments and in-class work: 30%

Project presentations for critiques (includes end of semester presentations / performances): 40%

Schedule

Scheduled class times will be available online under the relevant course heading:
<https://berlin.bard.edu/academics/courses/search/>

Classes missed due to federal holidays will not be rescheduled. Classes missed due to incapacity of the professor will be rescheduled.

Session 1 Friday 9 September 14:00-17:15

Introductory session including introduction to professor, course contents, psychogeography, artists working in public space 1, local excursion. Read Andrea Gibbon's article *Salvaging Situationism: Race and Space*¹ by next week.

Session 2 Friday 13 September 14:00-17:15

AV and Factory technical induction, local excursion with exercises, discussion of text 1, Artists working with GPS and artists working in public space (railway stations).

Session 3 Friday 20 September 14:00-18:30

Please note that the next three sessions are longer because the professor is unavailable on Friday 18 October.

Session theme is Flow. After some sensitizing exercises we will travel to Hauptbahnhof together on U2 / Alex / S-bahn. Observational and sensory exercises to complete there in pairs. **NB** The session will end with assignments for personal work at Hauptbahnhof or elsewhere. Take drawing equipment.

¹ <https://salvage.zone/salvaging-situationism-race-and-space/>

Session 4 Friday 27 September 14:00-18:30

Longer session because of no class on 18th October.

Andrea Keiz special guest (tbc). Theme is moving bodies / moving image / still bodies / still image. Artists that work with media and the city. Read at least pages 18-20 of Steven Flusty's *Building Paranoia*² by next week.

Session 5 Friday 4 October 14:00-18:30

Last longer session.

Theme of the session is Dystopia. Discussion of spaces that repel from 'Building Paranoia' (set text). Artists working with the influence of invisible networks or narrative / New York in the 1970s. Look at historical maps. Make allegorical maps.

Session 6 Friday 11 October 14:00-17:15

Last session before a two-week break. Writing exercise based on course theme. Hidden infrastructure in the city. Local excursion exercise.

Homework for next two weeks is to make a proposal about a work that you will produce over the rest of the course and finally present in some form at the end of term. Students will present their proposals to the whole group on the first session back.

Professor unavailable [Oct 14 – Oct 18]

Work on proposal

Fall break: [Oct 21 – Oct 27]

Session 7 Friday 1 November 14:00-17:15

Presentation of proposals for pieces to develop over next three weeks to group. Deadline for completed projects is **Session 11, Friday 29 November**. Each student or group will have maximum 20 minutes to share their project idea.

Session 8 Friday 8 November 14:00-17:15

From here, the sessions respond to the work proposed by the students. The sessions will mix group discussions of artistic themes prompted by the work with examples of relevant artwork and artists as well as individual support ranging from technical to artistic for individuals and groups.

² http://architectureofwar.artun.ee/wp-content/uploads/Steven_Flusty_-_Building_Paranoia1.pdf

Session 9 Friday 15 November 14:00-17:15

Group work prompted by the students' artistic themes and individual support / tutorials.

Session 10 Friday 22 November 14:00-17:15

Group work prompted by the students' artistic themes and individual support / tutorials. Last week before the project completion deadline.

Session 12 Friday 6 December 14:00-17:15

Planning and preparation for install next week

Session 13 Friday 13 December Public Presentation

Feedback and evaluation in space away from Factory. Public presentation / opening in the evening.

Monday 16 December (tbc)

Factory get-out and clean-up check to be scheduled with Joon Park and students (Time tbc.)

Policy on the use of facilities:

1. The Factory (Eichenstrasse 43) and Monopol (Provinzstr 40-44) at BCB offer space and facilities to BCB art students. Chip access is from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day, including the weekends during the semester. The buildings cannot be used outside these hours.
2. Fire exits and lanes must be kept clear of any obstructions.
3. Students agree only to use the designated class spaces or communal workshops. Respecting the building and its facilities is crucial, as they are shared resources that need to be preserved for the benefit of all.
4. For your safety and the safety of others, smoking and drinking alcohol are strictly prohibited anywhere inside the building.
5. Unauthorized events and/or parties are not permitted. Projects using open flames (such as candles, torches, lanterns, fireworks, etc.) are not permitted inside the building.
6. Spray painting and handling any hazardous (chemical or combustible) material is not permitted inside the building.
7. All work surfaces (indoor and outdoor) must be adequately protected with the workshop's drop cloth before spray painting or working with plaster.
8. During completion week, any space used by a student must be emptied, with clean walls and floors. All garbage must be adequately disposed of. Final grades may be affected or withheld if any item remains by the inspection deadline.

9. When leaving the building, students must ensure all lights are turned off, all electrical items must be unplugged, and doors must be closed.

10. Contact the Studio art manager directly with any questions: j.park@berlin.bard.edu

Emergency phone numbers:

Police (calling from a German landline or cellphone): 110

Fire (calling from a German landline or cellphone): 112

Ambulance and Paramedics (calling from a German landline or cellphone): 112

Out-of-Hours Medical Care (calling from a German landline or cellphone) : 116 117