

FA260

Dance it Out!

Freedom Tactics & Channeling on film

Seminar Leader: Justin F Kennedy

Times: Mondays 10-13h15 (with a Hamburger Bahnhof Visit replacing class on week 7 / 10 March 2025 and Corey Scott-Gilbert subbing for weeks 9, 10, 11)

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Hours by appointment

Course Description

Dance it out! Dance to get out of your own way! Dance with spirit! Dance out all you already possess inside! 'Dance it Out' is an experimental dance lab focused on the emancipatory potential of dancing and embodied knowledge. This course builds/acquires tools for artistic composition as well as for healing. The overarching theme of the course is to use movement-, vocal-, imagination-based tasks and repetition/insistence to tap into spiritual communion. The core of the course involves a rigorous warm-up: including breathwork, 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 is also material) and improvising in various altered states upheld for long durations, creating a deeply collective and conscious relationship to each other and the materials. Engaging in a stylistic and cultural hodgepodge, no physical coordinations are off limits, some of which may include shaking, animatronics, sonic landscaping, folkloric footwork, simple choreographic sequences, Body-Mind-Centering, as well as activated somatic exercises. Known and unknown fictions, mythologies and imaginaries will emerge to inform and form the dances, discursively framing the work in radical Afro-Caribbean queer studies/politics. We will develop a range of performative skills/affects, sliding along a continuum of spirit possession/trance states/channeling 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 (if possible with journals and writing utensils) 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/bodily needs of the individual students as well as 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 one of the 7 films featured in Jeremy Shaw's 'Phase Shifting Index', exhibited at Hamburger Bahnhof Berlin. The deadline is, by the latest 24 March 2025. A final assignment will be due during class on week 12 / 28 April 2025, where students will be assigned to direct and perform in each other's individual and collaborative micro scores (between 5-20 minutes), followed by automatic writing/response tasks and an assessment from the teacher.

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 (attendance 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%), and filmed dance review and the self-directed open scores (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 / 27 Jan 2025 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Opening and Closing the Portals/Intro to Authentic Movement Practice and Channeling

Element: AIR/WIND

Warm up: Seated or laying Meditation, improvised 3-part activation, introduction to breathwork (Longer Exhales) & intro to sonic landscaping, micro trance states exercises ('Sausage Finger' & Arms and Legs through the floor)

Durational Dance Score: Authentic Movement + One Filter?

BMC/Viscera/Somatic Considerations/Links: Peripheral vision, regulation of nervous system, The Lungs, the diaphragm, the belly, the throat

Discussion Topics: Community Guidelines. Translate the word 'Trance' or 'Channeling' into your native language. Discuss tools for Improvising Together / Tools for finding materials while also composing together (Ensembling) / the by-product of catharsis? Memesis / Mirroring? Discuss Politics of Black Radical Queer Liberation through the Five Portals of Dinkinesh Method (when feedbacking, question one's own power and position. Commitment to non-violent communication and accountability once and if another is harmed/ how to be critical of our bias as we witness each other and others as subjects), Solo Abandon on film, discuss intersectionality.

Film/Discourse: Jeremy Shaw 'Best Minds', Drug and Party Scene from Martine Syms' African Desperate 2022, Text on Altered States, Readings about murmuration from Sierra Pickett and Kei Miller. Solo Abandon (You're on your own trip with others, Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley alongside Timothy Leary on psychedelics, Video from Gaia about Channeling.

5 minute meditation

WEEK 2 / 3 Feb 2025 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Staying Grounded in the Organic / the unreliable goopiness

Element: Earth/Minerals

Warm up: Guided meditation, improvised 3-part activation, breathwork (root chakra pranayama & root sounding together)

Durational Dance Score: Voicing the Viscera (psychodrama exercise), Issawa rocking, Hissing, Yielding with the organs (based on Ria Higler's book 'Movement Research - Stories and Journeys')

BMC/Viscera/Somatic Considerations/Links: All of the under-considered organs (spleen, liver, kidneys, gall bladder, bladder, uterus, appendix, lower intestines, etc.)

Discussion Topics: Discuss the complications of the ethnographic gaze, cite Tina M. Campt's 'The Black Gaze', Ria Higler's book 'Movement Research - Stories and Journeys'

Film/Discourse: 'Kneeding' from Jefta Van Dinther, Issawa rituals, Cypher/Group Assisted Trance/Ceremony, Of Men and Gods (Des Hommes et Dieux (documentary, speaking in tongues (Quickeners).

WEEK 3 / 10 Feb 2025 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Oceanic Feeling / the Ghastly Merpeople.

Element: Water

Warm up: Seated meditation with water mudra, somatic activation, breatheology (background noise sounding), Qi Gong Water Meridian Exercise/ 4 elements (Water) Exercise

Durational Dance Score: Aquatic Coordinations/Pleasure Principle/BMC cellular fluids, internal wave energy (Sistema), docking stations, recharging NPC, embodied restorative justice

BMC/Viscera/Somatic Considerations/Links: Cellular Fluids

Discussion Topics: Merpeople Associations /Water Spirits, Interference and Climate Justice (Restorative vs Transformative Justice 'Mia Mingus'), Bodies of Water (Hydrofeminism), how do we describe othered subjects? Discuss the complications of the ethnographic gaze, cite Tina M. Campt's 'The Black Gaze'

Film/Discourse: Mayfield Brooke's 'Whale Fall', BONNIE BAINBRIDGE COHEN'S 'SENSING, FEELING, AND ACTION', ROBYN'S MUSIC VIDEO CHOREOGRAPHED BY JEFTA Van Dinther, The Girl with All the Gifts, Contact Juggling, Merpeople folklore, 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 4 / 17 Feb 2025 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Animatronic Zombies

Element: Fire

Warm up: Seated meditation with fire mudra, Osho rose dynamic mediation, sounding (the cackle and zombie linguistics), Intro to operatic co-speculation ('Zombie Apocalypse Banal')

Durational Dance Score: Zombie Animatronics (Incremental micro-movements), Stop-Motion Animation, Simulation Studies (Bruno Listopad)

BMC/Viscera Considerations: Vascular System, The Endocrine System, outer musculature

Discussion Topics: Black Meme (Legacy Russell), Contemporary Zombies Pop Choreo (MJ's Thriller)

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)

Extra Vampire-lore: The Story of Black Panther/ Red Wolf, Singaporean Vampire Folklore, "Nosferasta"-New Red Order (The Indigenous Present), True Blood scenes.

WEEK 5 / 24 Feb 2025 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Mermaids vs. Zombies

Elements: Fire /Water

Warm up: guided meditation, shaking into the fluid / incremental (review), Pranayama (alternative nostril breathing in constructive rest pose, sounding (the cackle & zombie linguistics), operatic co-speculation

Durational Dance Score: Mermaids vs. Zombies (including Podding and schooling like fish + Docking Stations to recharge and reanimate, Creation Stories, symphonic timing, tensing and releasing the outer muscles (pop n lock strategies), Emancipation through restrictive/constrained movements, limbs falling off the bone, faceless sphere as head (Bruno Listopad)

BMC/Viscera Considerations: intracellular breathing, liver, outer musculature

Discussion Topics: Discuss how ableism functions in dance and the many metaphors that the figures of Mermaids and Zombies evoke (ie: Climate Disaster, Transness, hybridity, contagion, dehumanization, apocalypse, etc.)

Film/Discourse: `World War Z`, Octavia Butler's `Bloodchild`, Sylvia Wynter on origin stories, Metaphors/Associations with Zombies and Animatrons, Jordan Wolfson's artworks, Five Nights at Freddies, Italian Carnival (surveillance animatrons), Sami Schalk's `Bodyminds Reimagined`, more on Bodyminds (Trans Care)

WEEK 6 / 3 March 2025 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Object-oriented movement research

In preparation for class, students should bring in objects (in pieces or that can be parceled (ie. water pipes, etc.)) and conduct physical research with the objects (see how the objects inspire movement and vice versa)

Warm up: Guided mediation, Wim Hof Method, Kundalini Kriyas, Sonic Landscaping.

Durational Dance Score: Object-oriented movement research

BMC/Viscera Considerations: worlding, creativity, left brain function, neurology.

Discussion Topics: Discuss animism.... cite Nkisis of Palo Mayombe.

Film Discourse: Show the choreographic works of Dana Michel and Chilean artist, Rodrigo Sobarzo.

WEEK 7 / 10 March 2025 (no in-person class)

Mon 10:00 – 13:15 or at Student's own will

Group Excursion to Hamburger Bahnhof Museum to visit Jeremy Shaw's film `Phase Shifting Index`.

WEEK 8 / 17 March 2025 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Folklore or Headbanging or Whirling

Warm up: meditation, 3-part activation, sounding (the trill/yodel/the break), reflexology exercise, Instant Folkloric Footwork or neck warm-up or `trusting the blur` exercise.

Durational Dance Score: Megastroll, Headbanging or Sufi whirling score.

BMC/Viscera Considerations: the feet (reflexology), root chakra.

Discussion topics: Mysticism, Cultural connections to rhythm, musicality and ritual.

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

Week 9 / 24 March 2025 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Corey Scott-Gilbert Guest teaching their own open scores and showing/discussing film references of their own and Wu Tsang's work.

Theme: Walking score

Week 10 / 31 March 2025 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Corey Scott-Gilbert Guest teaching and showing/discussing film references to Ligia Lewis' work

Week 11 / 7 April 2025

Corey Scott-Gilbert Guest Teaching and advising the students' open score ideas after the warm up.

SPRING BREAK April 14-22

WEEK 12 / 28 Apr 2025 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Warm-up: Seated Mediation and 3-part activation.

Theme: mini-performances, auto-fictions and Actens, micro scores, Problematizing the Gatekeeper

Students will direct and perform in each other's individual and collaborative micro scores (between 5-20 minutes), followed by automatic writing/response tasks and an assessment from the teacher.

WEEK 13 / 5 May 2025 Mon 10:00 – 13:15

Theme: Takeaway Inventory / Recollecting the Archive / Open Jam (Zombie Mermaid Megastroll?)

Warm Up: recall warm-ups (both physical and vocal)

Journaling Task (from Trans Care): to recall materials from the class

Durational Dance Score: Open Jam for 1 hour (agree on filters or not)

BMC/Viscera Considerations: Integration of all systems (BodyMindSpirit)

Film Discourse: Students can share the filmed dance clips that inspire them.

WEEK 14 / 12 May 2025 Mon 10:00 – 13:15 Cave Rave (3-hour dance party live djed by the seminar leader) and closure.