

TH215 Visibility, intervention, and collective empowerment: Contemporary approaches to Performance Making

Seminar Leader: Azadeh Ganjeh

Email: a.ganjeh@berlin.bard.edu, Azadeh.Ganjeh@gmail.com

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course investigates contemporary methods of performance-making in theatre and global performance art, with a focus on inclusive narrative strategies that foregrounds co-creation, care, and cultural critique. The course combines theory and practice through readings, embodied exercises, and group experiments. Central themes include: co-creation with communities as a dramaturgical strategy, performing care and consent, decolonizing narratives and challenging representational hierarchies, creating spaces of appearance and aesthetic resistance. We will discuss and reflect on approaches used by artists and collectives such as She She Pop, Tania Bruguera, Tania El Khoury, La Pocha Nostra, Rabih Mroué, and Forensic Architecture. Through collaborative creation, students will develop works using personal and everyday material, devising techniques, and interdisciplinary methodologies—including task-based creation, co-narration, and score-making. The course welcomes students from all backgrounds, with or without prior performance experience.

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 and cc all emails to Azadeh.Ganjeh@gmail.com.
- 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.

Accommodations

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 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, 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.

One additional absence or late arrival is permitted, provided the student informs the instructor by email before the start of the class.

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

Engagement, Collaboration, and Critical Reflection:

This course brings together performance practice and theory. You'll be encouraged to combine creative work with critical thinking and to collaborate with your classmates. Working independently and supporting each other—like organizing rehearsal times or handling technical equipment—is an important part of the process.

Participation and Preparation:

To get the most out of this course, please complete all assigned homework readings, videos, and practice exercises—before each session. Come ready to contribute creatively and thoughtfully in class. Your participation grade will reflect both your in-class engagement and your preparation. Expect to spend around 4 hours per week on readings, assignments, and asynchronous work. Most materials will be shared on our Padlet page, where you'll also post reflections, homework, and comments.

Policy on Late Submission of Artworks / Presentations

Due to the collaborative and in-class nature of the assignments, which take the form of group presentations, late submissions are unfortunately not possible. In cases of unavoidable absence, students may present in a hybrid format on the originally scheduled date. If this is not possible, the assignment will receive a failing grade.

Grades and written comments will be shared in a timely manner. In addition, students will receive ongoing verbal feedback during class sessions.

Throughout the semester, students will be supported through individual mentoring and feedback for their performance projects. When helpful, students may also be invited to meet with the instructor at any stage of the semester to reflect together on their progress in the course.

Grade Breakdown

Class participation (includes attendance, maintenance of all common and private spaces used for production / rehearsal, communication with Professor and other students): 25 %

Homework and in-class work: 30 %

In class- Project presentations: 20 %

Final Project: 25%

Schedule

Week 1: Introductions

In-class facility orientations

Class: Mon, 26 Jan 2026, 9:00-12:15

Week 2: To Perform, To Appear

Readings:

- Richard Schechner: "What is Performance", in: Performance Studies. An Introduction, 4th edition, London (Routledge) 2020, pp. 1-25.
- Hannah Arendt: *The Human Condition*, "**Action**" (Part of the book), in: *The Human Condition*, 2nd edition, Chicago / London (University of Chicago Press) 1998, pp. 177–242.
- Additional reading for deeper engagement (optional): Ganjeh, Azadeh. "Freedom of Action: A Brief Illumination on the Nature of Artistic Activism through Performing Arts in Modern Iran." *FIELD: A Journal of Socially-Engaged Art Criticism*, Issue 21 (Spring 2022).

Class: Mon, 2 Feb 2026, 9:00-12:15

Week 3: Who is in the Room?

Participation, Performer, Audience, Performative Threshold

performance practice: Finding a Stimulus

Readings:

- Jacques Rancière: "The Emancipated Spectator", in: The Emancipated Spectator, London / New York (Verso) 2009, pp. 1–45.
- Gareth White: "Introduction", in: Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation, London / New York (Palgrave Macmillan) 2013, pp. 1–18.

Class: Mon, 9 Feb 2026, 9:00-12:15

Week 4 : Evening Theatre Visit: **Super night Shot** by Gob Squad collective, 18 or 19th Feb (to be announced).

Reading:

- <https://www.gobsquad.com/about-us/the-gob-squad-story/>
- Tecklenburg, Nina: Performing Stories: Narrative as Performance, Seagull Books, London 2022 (English translation of the German original published by transcript 2016). I. Performing Stories: An Introduction: Origin Story Number One; Historical Contexts.

Watch:

www.gobsquad.com/faq/

Class: To be announced

Week 5: Where is the room? Spatiality, Public interventions

Readings:

- Erika-Fischer-Lichte: "Spatiality, In The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance, edited by Paul Allain and Jen Harvie, 175–186. London: Routledge, 2006.

- Michel de Certeau: "Spatial Practices", in: *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Rendall, Berkeley (University of California Press) 1984, pp. 91–110.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o: "Enactments of Power: The Politics of Performance Space", in: *TDR (The Drama Review)*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Autumn 1997), pp. 11–30.
- Additional reading for deeper engagement (optional): Judith Butler: "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street", in: *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, Cambridge, MA / London (Harvard University Press) 2015, pp. 65–100.

Class: Mon, 23 Feb 2026, 9:00-12:15

Week 6: Invitation: Task, Score, Feedback method, reflection on Theatre visit
performance practice: Finding our questions, creating tasks and scores in groups

Reading:

- Olivia Millard: What's the score? Using scores in dance Improvisation, originally published on 1 March 2016 in *Brolga* 40
- Yoko Ono. *Grapefruit*. Simon & Schuster, 1964.

Watch:

<https://vimeo.com/97319636>

Class: Mon, 2 March 2026, 9:00-12:15

Week7: Evening Theatre Visit: **Wait To be seated** by She She Pop Collective, 09 March.

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.

Class: Mon, 9 March 2026, 9:00-12:15

Week 8: Performative presentation methods: Lecture performance
performance practice: Presenting and exhibiting materials and answers, forming groups, and discussing roles

Homework for week 8: Research and material collection in reply to the questions and tasks

Class: Mon, 16 March 2026, 9:00-12:15

Week 9: Reclaiming Narratives.

Performance Practice: Devising in groups

Reading:

- Guillermo Gómez-Peña, "Disclaimer"
- Sara Ahmed, *Home and away*, *Narratives of migration and estrangement*.
- Sandra Umathum: *Actors, Nonetheless*
- The Right to Narrate, Homi K. Bhabha

Class: Mon, 23 March 2026, 9:00-12:15

Spring break: [March 30 – April 6]

Week 11: Performative presentation of Final ideas, Reflection
Class: Mon, 13 Apr 2026, 9:00-12:15

Week 12: Rehearsal, showing, feedback
performance practice: devising, rehearsing
In group reflection and mentoring
Reading: Defined by each group's performance projects
Class: Mon, 20 Apr 2026, 9:00-12:15

Week 13: Rehearsal, showing, feedback
performance practice: devising, rehearsing
Reading: Defined by each group's performance projects
Class: Mon, 27 Apr 2026, 9:00-12:15

Week 14: Finishing final performance, Reflection
Class: Mon, 4 May 2026, 9:00-12:15

Week 15: Wrap-up and final presentation
Class: Mon, 11 May 2026, 9:00-12:15

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. Fire exits and lanes must be kept clear of any obstructions.
2. 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.
3. For your safety and the safety of others, smoking and drinking alcohol are strictly prohibited anywhere inside the building.
4. 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.
5. Spray painting and handling any hazardous (chemical or combustible) material is not permitted inside the building.
6. All work surfaces (indoor and outdoor) must be adequately protected with the workshop's drop cloth before spray painting or working with plaster.
7. 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.
8. When leaving the building, students must ensure all lights are turned off, all electrical items must be unplugged, and doors must be closed.
9. 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