

TH384

Self-Instructions and Collaboration: Creating Performances with She She Pop

Seminar Leader: Nina Tecklenburg, in collaboration with She She Pop members Sebastian Bark, Johanna Freiburg, and Ilia Papatheodorou.

Course time: Wed 14:00-17:15 or **14:00-18:30 for the workshops with She She Pop**

Course location: Factory performance space

Email: n.tecklenburg@berlin.bard.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

[She She Pop](#) is an internationally renowned feminist performance collective based in Berlin. Over the course of their 30 years of collaboration, they have challenged established theater aesthetics and traditional hierarchies of theater-making. Their experimental and provocative body of work, for which they received Germany's highest theater prize in 2019 (Theaterpreis Berlin), has been deeply influential and groundbreaking for many theater and performance artists. Considering the private as deeply political, the inclusion of their own biographies has been a crucial element of their artistic practice. Rather than being the purpose of their work, however, autobiography is for them primarily a method. In this respect, She She Pop's work is deeply rooted in conceptual performance art of the 1960s and 70s, particularly with regard to the use of (self)-instructions and tasked-based approaches.

In this course we will practice and reflect on She She Pop's artistic approaches to autobiography, feminism, and collaboration. Classes will be taught partly in weekly sessions and partly in four hour-long hands-on workshops with members of the collective. We will study She She Pop's art-historical influences by performance and theater artists such as Yoko Ono, Martha Rosler, John Cage, Allan Kaprow, Marina Abramović, Valie Export, Merce Cunningham and Forced Entertainment. Investigating techniques of (self-)instructions, tasked-based performance art, and collaborative creation for both rehearsal and performance, students will be asked to develop a final performance in small groups, which will be presented at the end of the semester.

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 assignments) 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.

Assignments and Deadlines

- Performative presentation on a class reading (in small groups).
A performative presentation turns the core argument of a text into an artistically shaped experience for the class. Examples of performative presentations will be given at the beginning of the course.
- Written memos on performance visits (counts towards participation grade)
- Performance assignments by She She Pop
- Week 7: Midterm essay (1000-2000 words) by Wed, Oct 7, midnight
- Week 11, per final project group: submission of technical rider (counts towards participation grade)
- Week 12, 13, 14: rehearsal journal entries (ca. 200-500 words per rehearsal/entry)
- Week 14: Presentation of final performance project at The Performance Factory

Purchases

- Students will have to pay for 2-3 theatre ticket (ca. 8-15 Euros per ticket).

Requirements

Students are expected to:

- Prepare for each class (homework includes readings, rehearsals, and assignments).
- 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.

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 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.

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

30%

Grading criteria:

attendance, contributions to discussions and exercises, homework, collaboration with peers, communication with professor and other students, maintenance of all common and private spaces used for production/rehearsals.

Performative presentation on class reading

10%

Grading criteria:

Grading is based on a) the ability to turn a written argument of a reading into an artistic concept and embodied experience for the classroom in order to create an alternative insight and knowledge of the class reading, and b) the ability to verbally reflect on one's own artistic concept, choices, and outcome.

Midterm essay

20 %

Grading criteria

Relevance/originality of the subject and its relation to questions and/or methods discussed in class (according to essay prompt); language, style, terminology; structure and argumentation; conclusion.

Rehearsal Journal entries

10%

Grading criteria

Week 12, 13, 14: Rehearsals for your final project should be reflected individually in written form and submitted on Tuesdays before the next class. Each journal entry (ca. 200-500 words per rehearsal/entry) should include a summary of the rehearsal, a reflection of new insights and artistic decisions in relation to the overall artistic concept, notes on developments/challenges/ accomplishments in your artistic collaboration. Please be precise with your language, wording, style, terminology, and argumentation.

Final project

30 %

Grading criteria:

Overall artistic concept; relation to topics and/or artistic approaches experienced and discussed in class; devising process; artistic complexity; final presentation; ability to self-reflect on the project during class showings and feedback sessions.

Schedule

*** Please note: this schedule is subject to change due to upcoming theater programs and changing dates for end of semester presentations ***

*** Class times vary due to workshop sessions. Please check the schedule before each class! ***

Week 1: Introductions

Class: Wed, Sep 2, 2:00-5:15pm

Week 2: She She Pop's Autobiographical Performance-Theater

Class: Wed, Sep 9, 2:00-5:15pm

Homework due:

- reading: Ryan Claycomb: excerpts from chapter "Performative Lives, Performed Selves", in: *Lives in Play: Autobiography and Biography in the Feminist Stage*, Ann Arbor (University of Michigan Press) 2012, pp. 27-54.

- viewings: make yourself familiar with She She Pop's work on <https://sheshepop.de/>

In class

- warm-up
- performative presentation on reading (10 min) and discussion
- on-class performance examples by She She Pop: *Schubladen/Drawers*, *Testament*, *Rites of Spring*
- AV introduction

Week 3: She She Pop WORKSHOP 1 + performance visit

Class: Wed, Sep 16, 2:00-6:00pm (longer class time!)

Homework due:

- Viewing: Yoko Ono *Cut Piece* (1965): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWCywRKpkWY>

- Viewing: Martha Rosler *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuZympOIGC0>

- reading: Yoko Ono: *Grapefruit*, New York (Simon & Schuster) 1970.

Sat, Sep 12, Performance visit, meeting 7:30pm HAU1

[Sophia Süßmilch / HAU: Etwas Schreckliches wird passieren: Die Menschenfresserin](#)

Part of Berlin Art Week Berlin 26

Week 4: Politics of Touch and Vulnerability: Feminist Performance Art I

Class: Wed, Sep 23, 2:00-5:15pm

Homework due:

- performance practice: SSP assignment
- memo writing on Sophia Süßmilch/HAU
- Reading: Peggy Phelan: "The Returns of Touch: Feminist Performances, 1960-80", in: Cornelia Butler (ed): *Wrack! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, Cambridge Massachusetts (MIT Press) 2007, pp. 346-61.

In class:

- warm-up
- discussion on performance by Sophia Süßmilch/HAU
- Performative presentation on Peggy Phelan

- Discussion and performance examples: Atsuko Tanaka/Gutai-group, Marina Abramović, Valie Export, Ana Mendieta
- Short round on SSP assignment

Thu, Sep 24, Performance visit, meeting 5:30pm HAU2

[Gob Squad: Doppelgänger/Doppelganger](#)

Week 5: Shock, Risk, Confrontation: Feminist Performance Art II

Class: Wed, Sep 30, 2:00-5:15pm

Homework due:

- performance practice: SSP assignment
- memo writing on Gob Squad

In class:

- warm-up
- discussion on performance by Gob Squad
- lecture and discussion: Carolee Schneeman, Annie Sprinkle; examples by She She Pop: *BAD* (2002), *50 Grades of Shame* (2016), *Hexploitation* (2020)
- assignment SSP: showing + constructive feedback

Week 6: NO CLASS

Homework due:

- submission midterm essay *proposal*, Wed, Oct 7
- performance practice: SSP assignment

Week 7: Happenings and Instructions

Class: Wed, Oct 14, 2:00-5:15pm (**online class!**)

Homework due:

- **submission midterm essay: Wed, Oct 14, midnight**
- performance practice: SSP assignment
- reading: Richard Schechner: "Happenings", in: TDR, vol. 10, no. 2, 1965, pp. 229-232.
- reading: Allan Kaprow: "Performing Life" (1979), in: *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, Berkeley (University of California Press), p. 195-198.
- viewing: Allan Kaprow: [How To Make a Happening](#) (1968)

In class (**online!**)

- warm-up
- performative presentation and discussion on Kaprow and Schechner
- lecture and discussion: examples by John Cage, Allan Kaprow, Erwin Wurm, Eva Meyer-Keller, Antonia Baehr, Miranda July, Selina Thompson

***** FALL BREAK *****

Thu 22-24 Oct, voluntary performance visit at HAU2

[She She Pop: Alles Mögliche / Everything Possible](#)

Week 8: She She Pop WORKSHOP 2

Class: Wed, Oct 28, 2:00-6:00pm (longer class time!)

Homework due

- performance practice: SSP assignment

Week 9: She She Pop and Postdramatic Theatre

Class: Wed, Nov 4, 2:00-5:15pm

Homework due

- performance practice: Final project SSP assignment
- reading: Hans-Thies Lehmann: *Postdramatic Theatre*, London (Routledge) 2006, pp. 16-28.
- reading: Michael Kirby: "On Acting and Non-Acting", in: *TDR*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1972, pp. 3-15.

In class

- warm-up
- Performative presentations on readings
- examples of Postdramatic Theater: Robert Wilson, Einar Schlee, Merce Cunningham, Forced Entertainment, Rimini Protokoll

Week 10: She She Pop's Working Conditions:

Artistic Collaboration, Independency, Funding + Final Project

Class: Wed, Nov 11, 2:00-5:15pm

Homework due

- performance practice: Final project SSP assignment
- reading: Mieke Matzke: "Other Spaces for Production: On the Spaces of Independent Theater".
- reading: Lisa Lucassen: "Working Independently in a Collective – An Invitation".

In class

- warm-up
- discussion readings
- final project showing + constructive feedback
- techniques of productive collaboration

Week 11: She She Pop WORKSHOP 3 / Final Project

Class: Wed, Nov 18, 2:00-6:00pm (longer class time!)

Homework due

- performance practice: Final project SSP assignment
- submission technical rider

In class

- workshop with SSP + BCB open Q&A with SSP (bring your questions!)

Week 12: Final Project

Class: Wed, Nov 25, 2:00-5:15pm

Homework due

- performance practice: Final project SSP assignment

- rehearsal journal entry
- In class
- warm-up
 - showing and constructive feedback

Week 13: She She Pop WORKSHOP 4: Final Project Internal Showing

Class: Wed, Dec 2, 2:00-6:00pm (longer class time!)

Homework due

- performance practice: Final project SSP assignment
- rehearsal journal entry

Week 14: Final Project Dress Rehearsal

+ Public Presentation THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY

Note: exact dates for technical rehearsal and THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY tbc

Class: Wed, Dec 9, 2:00-5:15pm

Homework due

- performance practice: Final project SSP assignment
- rehearsal journal entry

In class

- showing and constructive feedback
- class wrap-up

Technical rehearsal with all performing arts classes, Dec 9, evening (tbc)

THE PERFORMANCE FACTORY, Dec 10 or Dec 11 (tbc)

Meeting at 4pm

Clean-up at 10pm

Week 15: Completion Week

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