

FA361 Hybrid Fictions: Opacity and Moving Image

Seminar Leaders: Lucy Beech & Asad Raza **Email:** l.beech@berlin.bard.edu / a.raza@berlin.bard.edu **Office Hours:** by appointment **Course Times:** Tuesdays, 10:00–13:15
Location: Eichenstraße 43, 13156 Berlin (The Factory)

Course Description

Taught by BCB's newly appointed Professors of Moving Image, artists Lucy Beech and Asad Raza, this seminar explores the aesthetic, artistic, and political potential of hybridity. The concept of hybridity first emerged in biology in the early nineteenth-century, before playing a role in twentieth-century theories of language, and more recently in postcolonial thought. Building on this trajectory, the hybrid moving image in this context refers to time-based artistic works that blur the boundaries between documentary and fiction, research and narrative or history and speculation, among other forms. Together, we explore hybridity as both a critical framework and a creative methodology, working across essay film, experimental documentary, reenactment, and non-narrative practices. Students develop a critical vocabulary for hybrid cinema, gain practical filmmaking experience, and learn to approach moving-image practice simultaneously as researchers, theorists, and makers.

The seminar moves from theory to practice through readings, screenings, discussions, and filmmaking. Students study contemporary hybrid filmmakers and artists, including Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, Jordan Lord, Riar Rizaldi, Tiffany Sia, and Cauleen Smith; engage with the concept of artistic research as a mode of inquiry; and read key theoretical texts by Karen Barad, Homi K. Bhabha, Édouard Glissant, and Rosi Braidotti.

Armed with both theory and visual precedent, students create their own two-minute hybrid films supported by technical skill-building in desktop documentary, editing, and sound design. As well as visiting Berlin-based artists in their studios, the course

concludes with an all-day group critique and public presentation of student work. By semester's end, students will have developed a sophisticated critical vocabulary, created original work grounded in rigorous thinking, and explored the possibilities of hybrid filmmaking.

While prior filming and editing experience is welcome, it is not required.

Requirements

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 us 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 is expected.
- More than one unexcused absence (that is, absence from one three-hour session) will significantly affect the participation grade for the course.
- Arriving more than 15 min after the start of the class will be considered an absence.
- Arriving late will be noted and after two late arrivals, the participation grade will be affected.
- Studio visits and the all-day group critique are regular class sessions and attendance at them is mandatory.

Please note that 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, 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 Assignments / Presentations

Assignments that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (Example: B+ becomes C+). The instructor is not obliged to accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late. Where the instructor 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. Students receive end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are also entitled and encouraged to make an appointment with the instructors to receive individual feedback on seminar participation and work, or may be asked to meet with the instructors at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Assessment

Your attendance & participation are key components of this course. This includes showing up on time, coming prepared with notes on the week's readings or viewings, and being ready to take part in class discussions and hands-on exercises. You will be assessed on your overall engagement, how you contribute to conversations, complete assignments on time, show responsibility in group or independent work.

Concretely, students are expected to:

- Attend all sessions punctually and for the full duration of class.
 - Engage actively in discussions, critiques, and collaborative work.
 - Complete assigned readings and viewings on time.
 - Deliver a research presentation on an assigned filmmaker
 - Create a two-minute hybrid film across the semester
 - Submit a 1000-word written essay reflecting on research and creative practice.
 - Maintain collaborative research documentation on Miro or are.na.
 - Participate in the all-day group critique (Weeks 14–15).
 - Attend the studio visits in Berlin
 - Turn off phones and practice respectful use of shared studio spaces.
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Assignments

15% Seminar Participation & Engagement

Participation in this seminar is understood as an ongoing process of engagement. This might mean coming to class with thoughts or questions about the readings and viewings, contributing to discussions, sharing ideas in progress, listening and responding to others, or offering feedback. Workshops, studio visits, and collaborative exercises are also opportunities to participate and learn. The emphasis is on curiosity, attentiveness, and a willingness to engage with the ideas and practices of the seminar.

15% Research Presentation

In Week 1 you will be assigned, individually or in pairs, an artist or filmmaker from the course's constellation of hybrid practitioners. Over the following weeks you will research their practice in depth and present your findings to the group.

Using a shared framework of inquiry, presentations open up how the works form, materials, methods, and choices produce ways of knowing.

Frame work of enquiry and quirk questions :

- **Embedded Research:** How does research enter the work?
- **Material specificity:** What kinds of meaning emerge through the materials, techniques, or processes?
- **Genre mixing:** How does the work combine or disrupt genres (eg. documentary, fiction, reenactment, ethnography) and how does this shift between modes shape understanding.
- **Temporal experimentation:** How is time structured, stretched, looped, or withheld?
- **Ethics:** What are the ethical considerations and how did the artist deal with them.
- **The sensory:** how are the senses engaged?

Deliverables:

- Presentation (20–25 min) plus 2–3 questions to guide the group's discussion, delivered in Week 6 (October 07) or Week 7 (October 14) as assigned
- Presentation materials and supporting research uploaded to the shared Miro/are.na board by 2 pm on the Tuesday of your presentation

15% Collaborative Documentation (Miro / are.na)

The seminar maintains a shared research platform introduced in Week 1. This is a working archive, not a submission folder: it can hold notes, stills, clips, links, citations, test shots, and visibly develop over the semester. The board will become a talking point and a space for the 2 minute projects to develop. At the end of the semester you will share your research boards.

25% Essay

A central aspect of the course is a written, 1000-word essay exploring a central topic of the course and your own work. This can function as a critical essay or an artist statement, deepening your engagement with the core material and your own creative practice.

30% Two-Minute Hybrid Film

The central creative project is a two-minute hybrid film. Students are invited to combine materials, drawing on some of the methods we have encountered throughout the research presentations, for example: original footage, archival and found material, screen recording and desktop documentary, reenactment, performance, text, voice, sound design, generated or simulated imagery. What matters is that the work is grounded in your research on hybridity, and its form embodies its thinking rather than merely illustrating it.

Deliverables:

- **Concept note & material test** (one page describing the subject, research base, and methods, plus a short test footage, sound sketch, storyboard, or moodboard), due 2 pm, Tuesday, November 11
 - **Rough cut** for one-to-one tutorial, due 2 pm, Tuesday, November 25
 - **Final film (2 min)**, due 2 pm, Tuesday, December 01, for the group critique
 - **Revised final cut** (incorporating critique feedback), due 2 pm, Tuesday, December 08, for the public presentation
 - **Brief in-class introduction** (max. 3 min) at the critique, focusing on your conceptual and formal choices, plus 2–3 specific questions to guide the group's response
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Written Essay A 1000-word essay reflecting on the relationship between your research and your creative practice. Draw explicitly on **at least two course texts and one artist's practice** encountered in the seminar, using them to think through the ethical, material, sensory, and formal questions raised by your own methods.

Deliverable:

- Essay (1000 words), due 2 pm, Tuesday, December 15
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Grade Breakdown

- **15%** Seminar Participation & Engagement
- **15%** Research Presentation (Weeks 6–7)
- **15%** Collaborative Documentation (Miro / [are.na](#))
- **30 %** Two-Minute Hybrid Film (concept, execution, craft)
- **25%** Written Essay (critical thinking, theory engagement, reflection).

Note: This course involves time outside scheduled sessions for research, filming, editing, and writing. Students should anticipate spending 8–10 hours per week on coursework beyond class time. Class size is limited to ensure sufficient individual feedback and mentorship from instructors.

Schedule

Week 1: September 01

- Welcome & introduction; course trajectory and objectives
- Introduction to the digital research platform (Miro)
- Assignment of research groups and artist films

Homework:

- Read: Édouard Glissant, "For Opacity"; Homi K. Bhabha, "The Third Space"; Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity" (available on the course platform)
- Set up your research board

Week 2: September 09

- "Opacity & Hybridity": Barad, Bhabha, Glissant
- Seminar discussion: hybridity as biological metaphor, linguistic theory, and postcolonial claim
- Introducing artistic research as a mode of inquiry

Homework:

- Begin research on your assigned artist; watch the assigned work
- Post first findings to the shared board

Week 3: September 15

- Technical workshop: camera and sound
- Hands-on exercise: shooting and recording in and around The Factory

Homework:

- Complete the short camera/sound exercise and post it to the board
- Read: Elizabeth Freeman, *Beside You in Time* (selection)

Week 4: September 22

- film screening Lucy Beech: *Flush*, 2023
- Introduction to framework of inquiry to apply to assigned artists

Homework:

- Apply the framework of inquiry to your assigned artist.
- Prepare your research presentation - load to the board
- Watch films ahead of next week

Week 5: September 29

- Student Research Presentation 1: Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, *May amnesia never kiss us on the mouth*
- Student Research Presentation 2: Tiffany Sia, *The Sojourn*

All presentations followed by group discussion

Homework:

- Prepare presentations for next week (presenters)
- Watch films for following week

Week 6: October 06

- Student Research Presentation 3 : Jordan Lord, *After After Access*; 2018
- Student Research Presentation 4 : Riar Rizaldi, *Kasiterit*, 2019

All presentations followed by group discussion

Homework:

- Prepare presentations for next week (presenters)
- Watch films for following week

Week 7: October 13

- Student Research Presentation 5: Cauleen Smith, *The Wanda Coleman Songbook*
- Student Research presentation 6: Manthia Diawara, *Édouard Glissant: One World in Relation*
- Intro to 2nd half of course, focusing on making our 2 minute films

All presentations followed by group discussion

Week of October 20

- Fall break, no classes

Fall break homework:

- Begin gathering / shooting material and research for your two-minute film
- Watch two minutes as form examples (Circa videos online)
- Write outline of two minute-film proposal

Week 8: October 27

- Present material tests shot over the fall break

- One to ones on directions for 2 min films

Homework:

- Finalise two minute-film proposal
- prepare material tests / gather materials as the basis of your storyboard for next week -

Week 9: November 03

- Working session two minute-film outline, storyboard and material tests
- Feedback and check in with technical staff

Homework:

- Shooting video / gathering found and archival material

Week 10: November 10

- Reading & discussion: James Lovelock, *Novacene*; Rosi Braidotti, *Met(r)amorphoses: Becoming Woman/Animal/Insect*
- Asad Raza, *Ge*

Homework:

- Shooting, gathering material
- Uploading materials to the board

Week 11: November 17

- Working session, looking at materials, discussing project development
- Logistics of compiling materials
- A chance to gain technical feedback

Homework:

- editing toward a rough cut and essay development
- Prepare a brief introduction (max. 3 min) to present your film, focusing on the core concept and methods
- 2–3 specific questions you would like feedback on

Week 12: November 24

- studio visit Berlin
- Group Lunch

Homework:

- Upload rough cut by 2 pm, Tuesday, November 25
- Upload final film (2 min) by 2 pm, Tuesday, December 01
- Prepare a brief introduction (max. 3 min)
- Prepare 2–3 specific questions you would like feedback on

Week 13: December 01

- All-day group critique of final projects, part 1 (double session)

Homework:

- Incorporate critique feedback; upload your revised final cut by 2 pm, Tuesday, December 08

Week 14: December 08

- Group critique of final projects, part 2, and public presentation of student work
- Group reflection & evaluations
- Selecting if/what you would like to share at Open Studios
- Setting up our final screening/exhibition

Homework:

- Submit your printed, 1000-word written essay by 2 pm, Tuesday, December 15
- Final documentation checkpoint on the shared board

Week 15: Completion Week

Note: the syllabus/schedule may change. The most recent version will be available on the course platform.

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. For security reasons, it is important that the doors (front & back) are always fully closed, never propped open.
 11. Contact the Studio art manager directly with any questions: j.park@berlin.bard.edu
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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**