

MASTERSTUDIENGANG

RAUMSTRATEGIEN

MASTER OF ARTS

SPATIAL STRATEGIES

WINTER SEMESTER 2021/22 – SEMESTER PLAN

RAUMSTRATEGIEN / SPATIAL STRATEGIES

WINTER SEMESTER 2021/22

Semester period: 18 October 2021 – 18 February 2022

Winter break: 20 December 2021 - 02 January 2022

First Meeting: Monday, 18 October 2021, 17:00, Freilichtbühne

weißensee

weißensee

kunsthochschule berlin school of art
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THEORIE

Elena Agudio (EA) - 6 ECTS

Paz Guevara (PG) - 6 ECTS

Noa K. Ha (NH) 6 ECTS (Theorie aus Theorie-Praxis-Projekt)

Bonaventure Ndikung (BN) 6 ECTS (Theorie aus Theorie-Praxis-Projekt)

Monument Lab - 6 ECTS (Theorie oder Praxis)

PRAXIS

Anton Katz (AK) - 6 ECTS

Euna Kim (EK) - 6 ECTS

Nasan Tur (NT) + Marianna Loisi (ML) - 6/8 ECTS

Lerato Shadi (PO) - 6 ECTS

THEORIE-PRAXIS-PROJEKT (ODER HAUPTPROJEKT)

Noa Ha (NH) - 10 oder 16 ECTS

Bonaventure Ndikung (BN) + Sunette Viljoen (SV) - 10 oder 16 ECTS

MASTERARBEIT (PRAXIS UND THEORIE 30 ECTS)

Nasan Tur - Sprechstunde + Kolloquium

Noa K. Ha - Sprechstunde

Bonaventure Ndikung - Sprechstunde

Noa K. Ha - Sprechstunde

Elisa T. Bertuzzo - Sprechstunde

1. SEMESTER

Modul 1 / Anknüpfen und Reflektieren

- 1.1. Theorie-Praxis-Projekt 1: **NH (10 ECTS)**
oder Theorie-Praxis-Projekt **BN + SV (10 ECTS)**
- 1.2. Theorieseminar: **EA (6 ECTS)**
oder Theorie aus Theorie-Praxis-Projekt Kurs 1: **BN (6 ECTS)**
- 1.3. Praxisseminar: **NT + ML (6 ECTS)**
oder Praxisseminar **AK (6 ECTS)**
Monument Lab (6 ECTS)

Modul 2 / Einwenden und Formulieren

- 2.4. Praxisseminar: **LS (6 ECTS)**
oder Praxisseminar **EK (6 ECTS)**
- 2.5. Theorieseminar: **PG (6 ECTS)**
oder Theorie aus Theorie+Praxis-Projekt **BN (6 ECTS)**

2. SEMESTER

Modul 3 / Aufstellen und Begreifen

- 3.6. Theorie-Praxis-Projekt 2 : **NH (10 ECTS)**
oder Theorie-Praxis-Projekt **BN (10 ECTS)**
- 3.7. Theorieseminar: **EA (6 ECTS)**
oder Theorieseminar **PG (6 ECTS)**

Modul 4 / Experimentieren und Kooperieren

- 4.8. Praxisseminar: Künstlerische Methoden: **NT + ML (8 ECTS)**
oder Praxisseminar **LS (6 ECTS)**
- 4.9. Praxisseminar: Forschende Praxis: **EK (6 ECTS)**
oder Praxisseminar **AK (6 ECTS)**
Monument Lab (6 ECTS)

3. SEMESTER

Modul 5 / Vertiefen und Entwerfen

- 5. 10. Theorie-Praxis-Hauptprojekt: **NH (16 ECTS)**
oder Theorie-Praxis-Hauptprojekt: **BN + SV (16 ECTS)**
- 5. 11. Theorieseminar: **EA (6 ECTS)**
oder Theorie aus Theorie-Praxis-Projekt Kurs 1: **BN (6 ECTS)**
- 5.12. Wahlpflichtfach (4 ECTS)

4. SEMESTER

Modul 6 / Vergleichen und Neuerfinden

- 4.13. Masterarbeit mit Kolloquium (30 ECTS)

WEEKDAY	LECTURER / TIME	LECTURER / TIME	LECTURER / TIME
Monday	Lerato Shadi 10:00 - 13:00		
Tuesday	Noa K. Ha 10:00 - 13:00 Nasan Tur Personal meetings 09:00 - 13:00	Nasan Tur (with Marianna Liosi) 14:00 - 16:00 Praxis Seminar Noa K. Ha Personal Meetings 14:00 - 17:00	Nasan Tur Plenum - Kolloquium for students Open discussion (Open for presentations of all students from Raumstrategien) 16:30 - 19:00 By announcement approx. every 2 weeks
Wednesday	Bonaventure Ndikung (with Sunette L. Viljoen) 10:00 - 13:00	Bonaventure Ndikung Personal meetings 14:00 - 17:00	
Thursday	Elena Agudio 10:00 - 13:00		
Friday	Paz Guevara 10:00 - 13:00	Grace Euna Kim 14:00 -	
Block Sessions	Anton Katz: 6 Sessions: every Saturday in October and on two first Saturdays in November Monument Lab (DATES TO BE CONFIRMED)		

THEORIE-PRAXIS-PROJEKT (10 ECTS) (Hauptprojekt: 16 ECTS)

PROF. DR. BONAVENTURE NDIKUNG

(WITH SUNETTE L. VILJOEN)

Wednesdays 10:00 - 13:00

MEMORIES OF A DISTANT PRESENT: ON HERITAGE AND MEMORY

What about the half that's never been told?
Look how long it's been kept a big secret
Look how long it's been hid away
The half, the half, the half that's never been told
What is hidden from the wise and good
It shall reveal to babe and suckling
The half, the half, the half that's never been told
— Dennis Brown, *What about the Half*

We are constantly confronted with the gaps, sometimes yawning ones, between memory and historiography. This becomes quite evident at heritage sites and monuments, and other sites that officially or unofficially serve as pillars that carry or vessels that contain the histories of specific spaces, cultures and peoples.

We are proposing a seminar that revolves around the notions of memory, collective memory, material and immaterial memory, and non-humanocentric memory i.e. memory in space and non-living being, with heritage sites as a point of departure. The project will investigate what is remembered through heritage sites and other sites as mnemonic tools through history and historiography as opposed to what is in the memory of the people and the memory of the spaces in question.

Etymologically, heritage stems from the Latin *hērēditāre* and the French *iritage, eritage*, heritage mean heir, inheritance or ancestral estate, that which may be inherited or a condition or state transmitted from ancestors. The German term for heritage, *Erbe*, also stands for that which is inherited, while the contemporary French translation, *Patrimoine*, points at another, still important direction.

The questions thus arise, what is inherited besides the physicality of that which is inherited? Memory? And what are the politics of inheritance in heritage? *Patrimoine/Patrimony*?

Collective Memory: What is especially inherited with heritage is the collective memory of different times as embodied in people. Besides the histories that are written in books about certain spaces, the memories of these spaces actually lie both in collective bodies and in the material spaces. According to Laurent Licata and Aurélie Mercy in following the footsteps and thoughts of Maurice Halbwachs, “collective memories are shared representations of a group's past based on a common identity. Social psychological approaches of collective memory have addressed their antecedents and functions. Their formation is affected by cognitive and emotional factors, but it takes place in the context of human interactions with other humans or with cultural artifacts. They are shaped by, and transmitted through, narratives. Because they intervene in the definition, maintenance, and mobilization of social identities, they have a strong impact on intergroup relations. Collective memories influence the present, but they are also influenced by present psychological states and needs.” Which is to say that in thinking about heritage and other sites of historical significance one must factor in the cognitive and emotional factors of the society in relation to what is inherited. We know what we know about certain historical artefacts because we are told or because we develop knowledge about them based on our interactions with them. Memory is a living being that is malleable and adaptable to different times and psychological states. Collective memory, as a body of social knowledge, can also be constructed as it is passed on within a social group or from a generation to another, and the vessels of these memories, besides the human body, are cultural artefacts like images, stories, architecture and more. Masahiro Ogino points out in “Sociology of Collective Memory” that “according to Halbwachs, collective memory is different from history even if history influences the formation of collective memory, because collective memory holds only a part of the past that is still alive in the conscience of the group. On the contrary, history chooses important events and tries to give these events an order to simplify them for the didactic purpose.”

It is in this light that we are inviting students to encounter the sites through collective memory rather than history.

THEORIE-PRAXIS-PROJEKT (10 ECTS) (Hauptprojekt: 16 ECTS)

DR. NOA K. HA

Seminar: Tuesdays, 10:00 - 13:00

First meeting: Thursday 21 October at 14:00

Personal Meetings: Tuesdays 14:00 - 17:00

Regular days at KH Weissensee: Tuesdays and Thursdays

HERSTORYCITY AND THE COLONIALITY OF SPACEMAKING

What is space? Who produces space? Whose history is in space? How is space gendered – or racialized? How are we placed and displaced in and through space? How is the production of space to be understood as the production of urbanity? And who are the people to produce space or make the city? This broad range of questions will be addressed throughout the seminar to introduce some theoretical engagements with space, colonialism and his/herstory. Because city space and the history of urban space can be told from many angles and a deeper look into the urban can shed light to matters of representation and to processes of exclusion, too. In that vein this seminar consists of the reading, reflecting, and discussing selected texts. The reading and intellectual experience will be extended by further excursion to include the experience of the urban and its historycity as well. As all students are asked to engage with the reading, the discussion, and their own spatial experiences to set themselves in a broader perspective and scale from urban space to global space.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- El-Tayeb, Fatima (2012): 'Gays Who Cannot Properly Be Gay': Queer Muslims in the Neoliberal European City, in: *European Journal of Women's Studies* 19, S. 79–95.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1961. „On national culture“. *Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism*, 198–219.
- King, Anthony: *The Times and Spaces of Modernity*, S. 65-81
- Massey, Doreen B. (2004) *Space, place and gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Roy, Ananya. 2009. „The 21st-century metropolis: new geographies of theory“. *Regional Studies* 43 (6): 819–30.
- Simone, AbdouMalik. 2004. „People as infrastructure: intersecting fragments in Johannesburg“. *Public Culture* 16 (3): 407–29.
- Stoler, Ann Laura (2008): *Imperial debris: reflections on ruins and ruination*, in: *Cultural Anthropology* 23, S. 191–219.

PRAXIS (6/8 ECTS)

PROF. NASAN TUR

(WITH DR. MARIANNA LIOSI)

Tuesdays from 14:00, Seminarraum

REPERTOIRES, ENVIRONMENTAL TRACES, ENGAGED PUBLICS, AND OTHER PRACTICES THAT FORGE THE PUBLIC SPHERES

The rising of biocapitalism, new technologies and the internet have deeply contributed to blur the boundaries and the meanings of what is the private domain, or conversely, what belong the public spheres. During the pandemic, this process turned into extreme, when the strong limitations to attend public areas have globally transformed the function of highly intimate and protected spaces such as homes into either overpopulated work and learning spaces, or solitary theaters, bars, and clubs.

Whereas the definition of public is “done for, made for, acting for, or being in the service of the community as a whole,” (WordReference Random House Learner's Dictionary of American English, 2021), the counterpart is that what is public needs individual and collective care. Also, public objects and places are unprotected contexts, terrains of censorship, or conversely, arena of dissent, multiplicity, creativity, and thus freedom. In her book *The Archive and the Repertoire. Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (2003), performance studies scholar Diana Taylor defines repertoire as embodied memory conveyed in gestures, the spoken word, movement, dance, song, performance and demonstrations, which take place in different public contexts and enable the forging of new histories.

The seminar will aim at (re)mapping and extending the notion of public sphere by exploring community and street actions as well as theater and online performance as political interventions. Within this frame, it will focus on observing the capacity and limits of traces such as artistic, architectural, urban and natural conformations, as well as

ephemeral embodied expressions to preserve or rewrite the cultural memory, transmit knowledge and thus redesign the public domain. The seminar will also question the role played by artists, especially performers and ordinary citizens as publics, and their responsibility in decolonizing, enacting site-specific reoccupations and renegotiation of the public spheres offline and online.

The seminar focuses specifically on praxis. Within this frame, students are strongly required to engage individually or in groups in explorations, walks and detournements across meaningful and anonymous neighborhoods in Berlin. Besides these explorations that will consider also the online domain, the class will be engaged in individual presentations of the students' works, collective discussions about and beyond the theoretical inputs proposed. During the seminar, students are strongly required to work on personal or group interventions in the public space that can take different and hybrid forms, such as sound or video installations, performance, sculptures, and beyond these definitions.

Through the presentation of cases-study and theoretical inputs, the seminar will unfold in the following sub-topics:

- 1) embodying transitory and invisible actions as tools of memory and resistance
- 2) public art that questions or conversely, winks at capitalism and the art market
- 3) break the boundaries of intimacy and privacy policies through theater, street and digital performance
- 4) hacking the system online and offline: on sabotage, imprisonments, and bots.

Encounters with international guest artists and curators will enrich the seminar program. In particular, the upcoming cooperation between Raumstrategien and HAU (Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin), and specifically HAU4 will pave the path for the development of in-progress new collaborations and projects.

PRAXIS (6 ECTS)

LERATO SHADI

Mondays, 10:00-13:00

NEW MEDIA AND PERFORMATIVITY

“History is not the past, it is the present.
We carry our history with us. We are our history”.
James Baldwin

“A discipline I have observed is an attitude of Love
and reverence to People”.
Bessie Head

This seminar centred around new media and performativity is a practice based course that is structured as a workshop/exhibition/reading-room, where we periodically present/share/engage with results, which are informed and built from cues generated in the class. The discussion/dialogue/sharing is designed in a way that allows for a continues flow. The focus of the seminar will be in fashioning an environment where we can be creative in how we learn/work/share. We will invent and build together a structure by which we can be co-creators in the learning-experience and co-practitioners in an unearthing process of knowledge production.

How can we connect and extract the breath of lived history that resides in our bodies and reverberates in our daily experience through the tools and media of sound/video/movement? The goal is to lean into constructing knowledge from a space of our subjective, partial and emotional perspectives. How do we use our theoretical capabilities in a way that connects to the knowledge laying within ourselves?

How can we collectively and individually find tools that allow us to imagine and actively form a future, that is informed by the present but is not constrained by it. We will analyse and try to challenge our capital and western centred way of relation, to not just the earth, but everything in on and above her. Indigenous knowledge systems have ways to understand and many thinkers and writers—Queer/Black/POC/etc. folk—point to the worlds out there, that *we were never told about*, what Sun Ra was singing of.

PRAXIS (6 ECTS)

GRACE EUNA KIM

Fridays from 14:00 (8 Weekly Sessions, 5 hrs / open-end)

12 Person limit

Prior-registration is required at graceeunakim@gmail.com

LANGUAGE AGAINST LANGUAGE: ENCOUNTER AND THE POLITICS OF PERCEPTION

"Language should be tortured to tell the truth.'⁽¹⁾ It should be twisted, denaturalized, extended, condensed, cut and reunited, made to work against itself. Language as the 'big Other' ⁽²⁾ is not an agent of wisdom to whose message we should attune ourselves, but a place of cruel indifference and stupidity.

What 'democratic materialism' furiously rejects is the notion that there can be an infinite universal Truth which cuts across this multitude of worlds – in politics, this means 'totalitarianism' which imposes its truth as universal.

Of course, the only way for us to articulate this truth is within language – by way of torturing language. As already Hegel knew it, when we think, we think in language against language. The violence of thinking . . . is a sprach-zerstörend, language-destroying twisting of language in order to enable a trans-symbolic real of a Truth to transpire in it.

There is a 'language' which is outside violence . . . It is not the language of peaceful communication among subjects, but [the] joyful study of multiplicities [antagonisms]. Should we still call it language?"

Slavoj Žižek, *Language, Violence and Non-violence*, 2008

"The letter kills."⁽³⁾ —As 'enunciated' beings who are structured/colonized by language and the socio-symbolic order, even the most emancipated subject is still embedded in the system that s/he inhabits. In devising lived encounters through our respective critical practices: how may we dismantle and liberate hegemonic structures and processes of meaning, without inadvertently reproducing the very power imaginaries that we are calling into question?

This seminar questions the politics of encounter as a semiotic problem/imperative of aesthetic practice, embodied meaning and knowledge production. While the course is oriented toward performance, interventionist and/or participatory approaches, the process is an open-form laboratory whereby our journey will be co-adapted toward students' research desires. Students of all disciplinary backgrounds are welcome to engage a dynamic collective exchange, which will encourage radical corporeal experimentation in both studio and public settings.

The course is a further development of the 'Acid Bodies' sociopolitical research framework, which was initiated in 2019 at ZK/U-Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik and since 2020 has been explored in experimental seminars at the Raumstrategien program. It is an evolving collective research methodology that deploys embodied processes of immersion and deconstruction to probe psycho-spatial mediations of ideology, desire, symbolic violence, and the body as a site of resistance in crisis. Students are co-immersed in phenomenological investigations that unpack an intimate critique of the constructs of performativity of everyday life, and the subliminal processes by which social fictions are negotiated, spatialized, embodied, reproduced, and normalized. Together we question emancipatory forms of resistance and renewal that derive from within the social context

of their realization—and the possibilities to thereby facilitate the transformation into a real event, from within the poetic structure of the encounter.

In this new manifestation for the Winter 2021-22 semester, the focus will be on symbolic violence, which we will co-examine in relation to the politics of perception, sense/semiotics, and encounter. In discourse with Slavoj Žižek, symbolic violence is considered in this regard as the invisible violence that is embedded behind the Status quo; the Commonly understood; the Ritualized; the Coded; the Nostalgic; the Reassuring; the Knowable; the Normal. It is about the violence that is hidden within the psycho-socio-symbolic order [what we'll broadly call 'language'] and how this produces covert forms of social domination, antagonism, and oppression that lead to the [actual, materialized] violence that we recognize as such, though in such a way that appears detached and even unknowable from its meta origins. Symbolic violence is in this sense "invisible since it sustains the very zero-level standard against which we perceive [and experience] something as [actually] violent. [It] is thus something like the notorious dark matter of physics." (4) It is everywhere and nowhere; and it is often where one least expects to find it.

Drawing from post-Lacanian psychoanalytic, philosophic and political thought, the seminar praxis investigations will therefore offer a living framework for students to personally question and work through what is at stake for them regarding these issues. Students will be encouraged to conceptualize and explore experimental propositions of 'impossible' encounters that investigate how, through radical gestures of dissensus, deconstruction, unlearning, negation, ethical antagonism, and subversion (among other possibilities)—one might transgress the limits of sense and representation, and thereby "crack open the unity of the given and the obviousness of the visible, in order to sketch a new topography of the possible."(5)

BIBLIOTHEK

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- Barthes, Roland. (1957)1972. *Mythologies*. New York: The Noonday Press
- Blau, Herbert. 1990. *The Audience*. London: The John Hopkins University Press Ltd.
- Butler, Judith. 1997. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press
- Foucault, Michel. 1977. '*Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*', *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp 139-164
- Lacan, Jacques. 2006. '*The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function*', *Écrits*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, pp 75-81
- Mouffe, Chantal. 2007. '*Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces*', *ART&RESEARCH: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods, Vol 1. No 2*
- Rancière, Jacques. 2004. *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*. London: Continuum
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- Žižek, Slavoj. 2008. *Violence*. New York: Picador
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- Zupančič, Alenka. 2018. '*The Apocalypse is (still) Disappointing*', *S: Journal of the Circle for Lacanian Ideology Critique*

NOTES

- (1) Jelinek, Elfriede. 1995. *Sturm und Zwang. Schreiben als Geschlechterkampf*. pp 73
- (2) Jacques Lacan's 'big Other' (Symbolic Order)—i.e. society's overarching socio-linguistic structures, unspoken rules, and imaginaries of authority, knowledge, and power
- (3) Lacan, Jacques. 1977. 'The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud', *Écrits*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company
- (4) Žižek, Slavoj. 2008. *Violence*. New York: Picador
- (5) Rancière, Jacques. 2009. 'Misadventures of Critical Thought', *The Emancipated Spectator*. London: Verso

PRAXIS (6 ECTS)

DR. ANTON KATS

6 Block Sessions

Every Saturday in October and 2 first Saturdays in November

Ra:Dio

Radio provocations and concrete listening sessions in 5 practice based block seminars.
Leading question: How can art practice respond to site-specific problems in the everyday?

The seminar explores radio and listening as a legitimate site of art practice and critical enquiry. The seminar will address and collectively develop inner-spatial and outer-spatial strategies articulating and exploring diverse methodologies of listening and radio in regard to its potential in the everyday.

Exploring institutional frameworks of public, private and liminal spaces the students will be encouraged to develop and conduct a series of experiments aiming to overcome the restrictions encountered through artistic experience in both, formal and informal environments, inside and outside of the art academy.

The seminar will question the spatial interdependence between transmission and reception and introduce the concept of “concrete listening”, which is concerned with solidarity, mutual support and action, and which allows for reflection on the possibilities of structural change that emerges through the action of every given project. Here, the notion of the concrete will point to problems that are simultaneously practical and theoretical, empirical and conceptual, literal and metaphorical, collective and individual. Exploring listening as a generative act, that carries the intention and the agency of the listener, radio practice will be considered an operational and ethical mode of receptivity to changing conditions and hence as a mode of responsiveness and “response ability” towards as-yet unknown and unforeseen possibilities that derive from acting together. Bridging pragmatic questions of access and infrastructure with those of culture and knowledge production radio and listening will be considered as an overarching sonic framework in which material and non-material human experience takes place.

The seminar process and evaluation are peer-reviewed. The assessment is purposefully rendered ambiguous in order to emphasise the complex interchangeability of situations, roles, interactions and experiments allowing the students to present and experience practice as it occurs, without manipulation, editing or qualitatively prioritising doing and producing over the state of being. Embracing poetic gestures and concrete proposals alike, the seminar assessment can include, yet are not limited to radio and listening interventions as a form of political action in the face of the manifested presence and unknown and unpredictable future.

The seminar incorporates transdisciplinary theoretical inputs along the way, yet does not require any particular theoretical background as a precondition for attending.

TIMETABLE

1st Movement: Warm Up: Listening and radio physiognomics. Learning and attentiveness.

Tuning In: Practical Listening Exercises / Mapping Exercises / Site-Specific Listening.

2nd Movement: Rearranging Networks and Meanings. Considering new relationships with space and each other. Developing project proposals: Sound investigations and sound responses. Individual and collective project consideration.

3rd Movement: Beyond the Radio Studio. Body transducers - Transmissions, Receptions, Voice. Developing a series of sound/radio/listening/performative experiments. Project development.

4th Movement: Institution of Sound – Becoming a sound orchestra. Project finalisation and presentation.

5th Movement: Cooling down. Meditation on Sound and Thoughts. Wrap-up.

RECOMMENDED READING

Tara Rodgers and Jonathan Sterne (2011); *The poetics of signal processing*.
Ultra Red (2012); *Five Protocols of Organised Listening*
Lukas Bessire and Daniel Fisher (2012); *Anthropology and wireless sound in the 21st Century*
Eleni Ikoniadou, Toby Heys, Steve Goodman (2019); AUDINT#Unsound:Undead
Salome Voeglin (2018) *The Political Possibility of Sound: Fragments of Listening*.
Salome Voeglin (2010) *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*.
Bertold Brecht (1932); *The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication*
Felix Guattari (1986); *Popular Free Radio*
Theodor W. Adorno (1966); *Education After Auschwitz*
Jacques Attali (2009); *Noise The Political Economy of Music*
Hazrat Inayat Khan (1923); *The Mysticism of Sound and Music*
The great liberation by hearing in the intermediate states (The Tibetan Book of the Dead)
Shaikh Abu-Saeed Abil-Kheir (2001); *Nobody Son of Nobody*
Mutabaruka (2005); *The next poems*
Victor Wooten (2006); *The Music Lesson*
Ram Dass (1971); *Be here now*
Sarvaiya N, Kothari V (2017); *Audible Sound in Form of Music Can Influence Microbial Growth*
Rupert Sheldrake (2009); *Morphic Resonance: The Nature of Formative Causation*
Steve Goodman (2019); AUDINT - Unsound:Undead

THEORIE (6 ECTS)

DR. ELENA AGUDIO

Thursdays 10:00 – 13:00

“I WOULD PREFER NOT TO” THE TAXONOMIES AND POETICS OF REFUSAL

“History is full of people who just didn’t.

They said *no thank you*, turned away, ran away to the desert,
stood on the streets in rags, lived in barrels,
burned down their own houses, walked barefoot through town,
killed their rapists, pushed away dinner, meditated into the light.”
(...)

“There is a lot of meaning-space inside a “no” spoken in the tremendous logic of a refused order of the world. Poetry’s no can protect a potential yes—or more precisely, poetry’s *no* is the one that can protect the hell yeah, or every hell yeah’s multiple variations. In this way, a poem against the police is also and always a guardian of love for the world.”

Anne Boyer, *No* (1)

refusal: a rejection of the status quo as livable and the creation of possibility in the face of negation
i.e. a refusal to recognize a system that renders you fundamentally illegible and unintelligible;
the decision to reject the terms of diminished subjecthood with which one is presented,
using negation as a generative and creative source of disorderly power
to embrace the possibility of living otherwise.

Tina Campt, *Black Visuality and The Practice Of Refusal* (2)

Saying ‘no’ or rather, not partaking, as the Practising Refusal Collective writes, represents “a generative rubric for understanding everyday practices of struggle, often obscured by an emphasis on collective acts of resistance.” (3)

For many oppressed subjects and communities, refusal is what is left to disrupt injustice and interrupt loops of domination, and to enact the imagination of the otherwise. Innumerable and various are the example of generative acts of negation, from Diogenes the cynic who closed himself in a barrel to say no to a corrupt and unworthy world, to Rosa Parks’ refusal to give up her seat to a white passenger on a segregated bus, (4) or the refusal of work practiced by autonomists and anarchists as “the daily action of withdrawal from exploitation, of rejection of the obligation to produce surplus value, and to increase the value of capital, reducing the value of life,” in Bifo’s. (5)

Refusing to participate in processes of normalization of life means to critically engage with the possibility to stop perpetuating injustice, but also to have the vision and strength of reimagining an existing order of things, actively undoing oppressive infrastructures, and exploding crystallized power structures. As Bonnie Honig argues in *A Feminist Theory of Refusal* (2021), a feminist politics of refusal is not one that simply declines the participation in the machinations of power, like Melville’s Bartleby and his infamous response: “I would prefer not to”. (6) Rather, a feminist politics of refusal further “aims at transformation and, ultimately, self-governance.”

Refusal represents furthermore a right to opacity, an unwillingness to accept the reduction of complexity and to the pinning down of subjects. In her seminal book *Mohawk Interruptus. Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (2014), Audra Simpson analyses and advocates for everyday acts of refusal of Mohawk Indigenous peoples. Yet, she also theorises a scholarly mode of anthropological inquiry and analysis that “acknowledges the asymmetrical power relations that inform the research and writing about native lives and politics”. (7) What she first called “ethnographic refusal” is a practice currently implemented by researchers and research participants together who decide not to disclose particular information for use within the academy, and instead uphold and recognise a community’s right to self-representation.” (8)

This seminar will focus on the theory and practice of feminist thinkers and activists embracing forms of ongoing and reflective refusal as forms of abolition, as means to invigorate discourse on civil and uncivil disobedience. Withdrawal from unjust political and economic systems, for these thinkers, is not surrendering or giving up but starting a new path.

A politics of refusal in fact operates both as critique and as knowledge production, as transformation. Analysing the work of writers and thinkers Tina Campt, Sadyia Hartman, Adriana Cavarero, Anne Boyer, Audra Simpson, AbdouMaliq Simone, among others, we will ask: *How do we write, think, perform, practice, visualize, engage, theorize, story, or enact a practice of refusal?*

In particular, along the echoes of AbdouMaliq Simone's *Improvised Lives* (2018), students will be asked to study and elaborate forms of spatial strategies and urban relationality, looking at 'rhythms of endurance' and 'politics of peripheral care', that might escape the attention of scholars since they defy "recognizable vernacular[s] of resistance/autonomy/freedom."

As such, the course relates feminist refusal to the spatial politics of urban normalization, highlighting ways in which the lived reality of hierarchies and hegemonies implies more often than not strategies of survival that do not leave visible, heroic, or machist traces, but have to be found in the interstices of the everyday.

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(<https://believermag.com/an-interview-with-anne-boyer/>)
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- Adriana Cavarero, Judith Butler, Bonnie Honig, *Toward a Feminist Ethics of Nonviolence*, Fordham University Press, 2021
- Natasha Ginwala, *Dissonant Agencies and Productive Refusal*, 2020
- Sadyia Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*, 2019
- Devonya N. Havis, "Now, How You Sound': Considering a Different Philosophical Praxis" in *Hypatia* 29 (1):237-252 (2014)
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NOTES

1. Anne Boyer, "No", in *A Handbook of Disappointed Fate*, Ugly Duckling Press, 2018. (Originally Published: April 13th, 2017)
2. Tina Campt, *Black visuality and the practice of refusal*, February 25, 2019: [womenandperformance.org/ampersand/29-1/campt](https://www.womenandperformance.org/ampersand/29-1/campt)
3. ibidem
4. which led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott
5. Franco Berardi Bifo, *What is the Meaning of Autonomy Today? Subjectivation, Social Composition, Refusal of Work*, March 2003, last accessed on 2 August 2021: <https://transversal.at/transversal/1203/berardi-aka-bifo/en>
„Refusal of work is actually generated by the complexity of social investments of desire. In this view autonomy means that social life does not depend only on the disciplinary regulation imposed by economic power, but also depends on the internal displacement, shiftings, settlings and dissolutions that are the process of the self-composition of living society. Struggle, withdrawal, alienation, sabotage, lines of flight from the capitalist system of domination. Autonomy is the independence of social time from the temporality of capitalism. This is the meaning of the expression refusal of work. Refusal of work means quite simply: I don't want to go to work because I prefer to sleep. But this laziness is the source of intelligence, of technology, of progress. Autonomy is the self-regulation of the social body in its independence and in its interaction with the disciplinary norm
6. Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street" in *Putnam's Magazine*, New York, 1853.
7. Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*, Duke University Press, 2014
8. "Its purpose is not to bury information, but to ensure that communities are able to respond to issues on their own terms." It is "intended to redirect academic analysis away from harmful pain-based narratives that obscure slow violence, and towards the structures and institutions that engender those narratives. It is a method centrally concerned with a community's right to self-representation".
See: Alex Zahara, „Refusal as Research Method“ in *Discard Studies*, 21 March 2016 <https://discardstudies.com/2016/03/21/refusal-as-research-method-in-discard-studies/>
9. Tina Campt, *Black visuality and the practice of refusal*, 25 February 2019 [womenandperformance.org/ampersand/29-1/campt](https://www.womenandperformance.org/ampersand/29-1/campt)
10. AbdouMaliq Simone, *Improvised Lives: Rhythms of Endurance in an Urban South*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019

THEORIE (6 ECTS)

PAZ GUEVARA

Fridays, 10:00 - 13:00

EXHIBITIONS HISTORIES III: CONVULSIONS AT LIBRARIES: STRATEGIES AGAINST THE GRAIN OF COLONIAL LIBRARIES

What do libraries perform? What models of knowledge and society do libraries put into play? What are the power structures that are enmeshed in libraries and in their spatial strategies? To what extent do libraries act as places of memory, but also as mechanisms of asymmetry, erasure and even of epistemicide? What are the critical library models that are able to reveal the colonial violence of the medium, to account on the *colonial library*, and what counter-strategies do they shape? What kind of models those *critical libraries* produce? What other perspectives, materialities and spatial strategies do they activate? And also, how do subjective experiences have the capacity to perform and intervene into the library, unsettling its model? To sum up, what strategies and energies are able to create convulsions in the library space?

Following the examination of exhibitions cases and histories undertaken in the previous semesters, the present seminar intends to continue to tackle the politics and aesthetics practices at exhibition spaces, dealing with an specific space: the library. Often at exhibitions and cultural spaces, the library is a recurring space that deals with the relation between knowledge and power, memory, archiving and community. Focusing on the political history of the library medium, considering the histories of oppression, colonialism and capitalism that traverse it, the seminar will discuss the different models and strategies that library projects set in motion.

The seminar departs by introducing V.Y. Mudimbe's concept of the "colonial library", an anti-colonial critique against the accumulation of knowledge amassed by the Western library model. Made up of the practices and writings of Western missionaries, explorers, philosophers, anthropologists and ethnologists, the Western colonial library produces an Eurocentric gaze, while overshadows the local agency, legitimation and

episteme of the collected knowledge and subjects (Mudimbe 1988). In turn, we will discuss Mudimbe's reflection on the existence of "critical libraries", and how they perform other ways of thinking, and other methods within the need to rearticulate epistemologies of Africa, South America and Asia on their own terms, as well as of first nations in the North and the diasporic communities.

On a second section, the seminar will continue to stimulate the theorization and analysis of cases of critical libraries that challenge, and find a way out, from the limits of categories, perspective and conceptual systems of the Western model. We will depart by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's practice and theory of the "epistemology of oral history" and the "reappropriation of bilingualism". By conceiving the Andean Oral History Workshop (Taller de Historia Oral Andina), forming a kind of bilingual oral library, Rivera Cusicanqui proposes the conditions to practice "deep layers of collective memory", within the prospect of "nurturing the vision of an autonomous historical process and the hope of regaining control over a historical destiny alienated by the colonial process" (Rivera Cusicanqui 1987). Among other models, we will continue to discuss cases of "radical librarianship" (Heide Hinrichs, Joy-ey Tang, Elizabeth Haines 2020) and of digital "shadow libraries" that confront the exclusion and privatization of knowledge in libraries and archives (Dubravka Sekulić 2018). In Berlin, we will visit and analyze in-situ models of critical libraries, such as SAVVY.doc, Archive Inventory, Each One Teach One (EOTO) library, Audream antiracist & feminist library, Baynatna - The Arabic library, Das feministische Archiv FFBI, the Collective Library and Poster Archive, and the Museum of American Art, a.o. (we will select together the visits according to the interest of the participants, and the visits will be possible according to the COVID guidelines).

Also, we will complete the inquiry of critical library models by analyzing performative interventions, including listening practices, haptic experiences, para-libraries, frictions and counter or speculative strategies, for instance by the WOCI Reading Group, Cecilia Vicuña, Voluspa Jarpa, Ruth Buchanan, Eloísa Cartonera and Meschac Gaba, respectively, among others. Cusicanqui's critique to the colonial regime of "oculcentrism", which ranks vision over other senses, will lead us to reflect and theorize "knowing as a bodily political practice", that is the performative dimension of bodies, gazes, writing and relation to archives beyond the limits of oculcentrism and within and through spatial strategies: "how we would decolonize Cartesian oculcentrism and reintegrate the body's gaze to the flow of inhabiting space-time, in what others call history" (Rivera Cusicanqui 2020). Within that critique, we will also situate and discuss how the performative intervention can be a force against the conditions of capitalism in which corporeal power has been transformed into labor, and reflect on Silvia Federici's

claim that “our struggle then must begin with the reappropriation of our body, the revaluation and rediscovery of its capacity for resistance, and expansion and celebration of its powers, individual and collective” and that “performance and dance is central to this reappropriation” (Federici 2020).

On a third section, the seminar will move on the larger context and discussion of archives of which libraries are part. How does one avoid committing the same violence of the archive in one's own narration from or about the archive? How to listen to the unsaid, translate misconstrued words, and transform disfigured lives at the archive? How can narrative embody life in words and at the same time respect what we cannot know from the archive? Is it possible to exceed or negotiate the constitutive limits of the archive? By discussing these questions, we will depart reflecting on Saidiya Hartman's writings and strategies to confront the “impossible goal” of telling a story and of claiming for the present the lives that are “archived” beyond the violence deposited in archives. We will discuss her writing method of “critical fabulation”, in which she combines archival research and speculative argumentation, writing a narrative with and against the archive. (Hartman 2008). We will continue to read and discuss Achille Mbembe's conceptualization on the archive and its limits, along the following questions related to the conditions of the archive: How is an archive produced? What are the rituals involved in forming an archive? What are the political conditions of the archive's foundation? On whose authority does it depend? How is the archive decoded and under which narrative and conditions is presented to the public? We will draw special attention on the spatio-temporal strategies, such as the operation of montage in which “A montage of fragments thus creates an illusion of totality and continuity. In this way, just like the architectural process, the time woven together by the archive is the product of a composition” (Mbembe 2002). Among other positions, we will discuss Jacques Derrida's deconstruction of the archiving practice, from his reflection on the “archival violence” in which archives are at once “instituted and conservative” to the contradictory drives of what he terms the “archive fever”, amid the desires of destruction and conservation, and the tension between the past and the future (Derrida 1995).

A final section will be dedicated to the city as library in which we will address on-going processes of re-naming, resignification and intervention of streets and monuments. If possible, we will engage in a walk around the Weißensee Kunsthochschule tackling colonial remains with a guest from Dekoloniale Berlin (according to the COVID guidelines).

The evaluation of the seminar is based on two theoretical-practices. First, it is the participation in the seminar sessions by reading, discussing the theoretical texts and analyzing cases. Second, it is a final assignment in which participants are invited to conceptualize a performative intervention in a library space (and by extension an archive or the city), or to conceptualize a model of critical library, both from the perspective of your own citizen engagement. The participants are also invited to rethink the format of writing the assignment, and instead of writing an essay try other formats and narratives to communicate your proposal in which you direct it to an addressee, such as: an invitation, a welcome speech, a call for celebration, an inter-generational letter, an exchange or reciprocity message, a thanks for a care practice, a report, an advertisement or a self-reflection (to one self), among others you would like to propose. We will further discuss and specify the assignment in the first session.

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THEORIE or PRAXIS (6 ECTS)

MONUMENT LAB

**6 workshops (introduction, 4 discussion sessions,
1 wrap-up/next steps session)**

Timeframe: Between 11.2021 - 02.2022

exact times to be confirmed

MONUMENTS OF THE FUTURE?

A TRANSATLANTIC EXCHANGE PROJECT ON MEMORY AND DESIGN PRACTICES

Through this partnership, we will explore:

- How to change perspectives: Who has the ability to concretize their memories? Who has been excluded? Who has the right to remember?
- The idea of an anti-monument: what could protest contribute to keeping collective memories alive?
- Can monuments remain in motion, in progress, and be process-based?
- What's the role of art & curatorial practice in this debate? Observer? Activists?

People rarely, if ever, remember the past of the communities they live in accurately and completely. The narratives they tell about the story of their community's past are selective and often self-serving. They are supported and maintained across generations by both material and non-material cultural artifacts. An increasing discomfort with the way different communities, especially nations, tell their story has led to struggles over the role that previously constructed artifacts, especially memorials, should continue to play in this narrative construction and, if their role is to be diminished, what kind of cultural artifacts should replace them. Memory activists, for instance, insist that nations face their complicity with state-sanctioned slavery, colonialism, and genocide. What, they ask, must

be done with the cultural artifacts glorifying these past transgressions? How should one construct a national narrative that both acknowledges these past transgressions and provides a path for growth and a positive self-image? What should the cultural artifacts—especially the monuments and memorials that might support this new narrative—look like? Who has the ability to define what is remembered collectively? Who has the right to remember?

Design can play an important role in addressing each of these questions. It can supply a language to critique current renderings of the past and uncover what has heretofore remained unspoken. Moreover, it can be a vehicle for the construction of new cultural artifacts that can reshape contested narrative.

With this program, five North American and German universities, and their respective design and history faculties, engage in a deep dialogue on the culture of remembrance and, in this context, address the handling of common and opposing memories, as well as racism, exclusion, and memory narratives beyond the mainstream. Students, their professors, and additional experts including designers, activists, and historians will meet regularly on a digital platform for presentations, workshops, and discussion. Through these simultaneous conversations across nations and borders, key questions, locationally-specific understandings, and global themes will inform a transatlantic discourse that has the potential to continue long after the project period ends. The exchange will result in a portable and participatory exhibition designed to engage young audiences across program participants' respective cities.

STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM

The following universities make up the *Monuments of the Future* (working title) team, led by Goethe-Institut North America in cooperation with the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung/bpb (Federal Agency for Civic Education): Harvard University (Prof. Vincent Brown); Parsons/the New School for Social Research (Prof. William Hirst); Ontario College of Art and Design University in Toronto (Prof. Dori Tunstall); Academy of Media Arts Cologne (Prof. Mischa Kuball); Berlin-Weißensee School of Art (Prof. Ulf Aminde, Prof. Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung and Prof. Nasan Tur). Together they form a new network that will pilot a two-semester program for advanced university students that considers memory culture from a transatlantic perspective.

The first semester includes a workshop that establishes the ways that design and design practices can influence the way societies deal with their past. Students will virtually meet their fellows from other universities, as well as renowned experts in the field.

A key element of the workshop will be collective work on a digital mind map, designed by the students, together with their professors and an agency that specializes in digital forms of interaction and content production.

Moreover, students will work on their own design drafts for specific locations. These, as well as the digital mind map, will culminate in the creation of "Memory Boxes," portable multilingual exhibitions that are easy to send and install, and that facilitate various forms of interaction with its subject matter. The "Memory Boxes" will be conceived and produced by students, with guidance from a curator and a design studio. They will be aimed at a young audience (aged between 16 and 30 years old), and will be designed for use in schools, universities, and other educational institutions, as well as at memorial sites and libraries.

If the on-going Covid-19 pandemic permits research trips will be offered to students during the second semester of the program (Spring 2022). Students will have the opportunity to learn about the culture of remembrance and the corresponding debates within another country's context through a two week exchange trip. Furthermore, identified core issues, different perspectives and points of view will be discussed in public during a workshop/conference with students and experts with practical and/or theoretical experience in the field of the culture of remembrance. (In this context, bpb could play a key part and bring in its experience in civic and cultural education as well as its network in Germany.) To make the results of the workshop/conference available for the general public also in other countries, it could be streamed live on YouTube, for instance. Students will apply at the end of the first semester with a specific research project. Those selected will be connected to partners and individuals of interest in the country they will visit.

While students from the North American universities are in Germany, a workshop with all students and other experts will be conducted to discuss and develop new approaches to cultural education by means of design processes. Location of the workshop tbd.

TIMEFRAME

Six (6) workshops with students from across the U.S., Canada, and Germany, including one introduction, four discussion sessions, and one wrap-up/next steps session, will take place between November 2021 - February 2022.

BENEFITS:

- Join a transnational network that includes select universities, students from around the world, Germany's Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb), and the Goethe-Institut.
- Participate in robust conversations led by students, university professors, and international experts in the field
- Funding for to bring international experts, scholars, and activists into online discussion sessions
- Eligibility for a research trip to Germany, the U.S. or Canada (selection takes part within the project) financed by the program
- Join a team that develops an interactive exhibition and Memory Boxes

REQUIREMENTS:

Current student at one of the universities mentioned above

- Strong interest in the topics of memory culture, design, monuments, and history.
- Participation in 5-6 online sessions of 1,5 hour each, individual work
- Connect with high school students
- Contribute between sessions to online conversations via Gather Town digital platform
- Together with classmates, design a "Memory Box"

PLENUM

PROF. NASAN TUR

16:00 - 19:00

PLENUM

Colloquium for presentations

(Open for all students and teachers from Raumstrategien)

From 19.00 - Seminarraum, if its allowed film screenings and music sessions