

Masterclass

“Performance Beyond the Pale / Grenzüberschreitende Performance”

Mi, 15. Dezember und Do, 16. Dezember 2021 (je 13:00 bis 17:00 Uhr)

FIL (Future Interaction Lab) (PT 3.0.28)

Teil I: Vortrag von James Harding sowie Diskussion der zur Vorbereitung auf die Masterclass zu lesenden (kurzen) Texte

Teil II: Kurzpräsentation und Diskussion der Forschungsprojekte der Teilnehmer*innen im Plenum

Die Phrase „beyond the pale“ meinte im 17. Jahrhundert einen von einem Grenzzaun sicher umschlossenen Bereich und hat heute die idiomatische Bedeutung „grenzüberschreitend“, „inakzeptabel“, „unangemessen“ angenommen. Diese Doppelbedeutung dient als konzeptueller Rahmen der Masterclass, um politische Akte performativer Natur zu untersuchen, die jene Bereiche transgressiver Performancekunst, bei denen der Tabubruch von jeher zum guten Ton der Kritik an bürgerlichen Werten gehört, weit überschreiten. Der Fokus liegt auf zwei Beispielen: Aktivist*innen, die in psychiatrische Kliniken eingewiesen werden, weil ihre Ansichten und ihr Verhalten aus ebendiesen bestehenden Konventionen ausbrechen; und staatenlose Asylsuchende, die aufgrund ihrer politischen Ansichten zu Geflüchteten wurden.

This Masterclass derives its title from a 17th century phrase that originally referred to a realm outside of an area safely enclosed by a border fence. If “the pale” was the border, “beyond the pale” was a realm considered lawless and uncivilized into which those of good judgment would not venture.

This history underlies the phrase's idiomatic usage today as a description of acts that fall outside of the realms of good judgment, appropriate behavior or accepted moral conduct (“*grenzüberschreitend*”), and it is this contemporary usage that I will use as the conceptual frame for a consideration of political acts that are performative in nature but that also surpass what we might describe as the often-explored realms of transgressive performance art where the breaking of taboos challenges conventional bourgeois values.

Historically, “the pale” marked political boundaries, and “beyond the pale” was a dangerous frontier where life itself was threatened by a journey into it. Echoing that historical sensibility my project thus focuses on moments *in extremis*, i.e., at the point of death, where the threat of mortal harm is discounted against the pursuit of ostensibly higher political objectives and goals.

The Masterclass will focus on two particular examples of this larger concept: those who are committed to insane asylums because their politics go beyond established conventions: and, those who seek asylum and are stateless because politics have turned them into refugees.

James Harding

*Professor of Theatre
and Performance Studies*

University of Maryland



James M. Harding is an internationally known scholar whose work focuses on political activism and the arts, the history of experimental theatre, theatre in the 1960s, post 9/11 theatre and performance, the intersection of surveillance and performance, and on performance studies more generally. His most recent monograph is entitled *Performance, Transparency and the Cultures of Surveillance* (Michigan, 2018). He has co-edited five anthologies, the most recent of which is entitled *The Sixties, Center Stage: Mainstream and Popular Performances in a Turbulent Decade* (Michigan, 2017).

During the 2016-2017 academic year, he was a research fellow at the Freie Universität Berlin's International Research Center/ “Interweaving Performance Cultures” working on a new monograph tentatively entitled, *Performance Beyond the Pale: Radical Acts and Bodies in Extremis*.