Of Bodies and Subjectivities
Call for Participation

Master Class Interdisziplinäres Forschungs- und Nachwuchsnetzwerk | IFN

Guest: Prof. Dr. Lisa Blackman (Media and Communications, Goldsmiths, University of London)
Organisation: Dr. Regine Maritz (Early Modern History, Bern)
Dr. Ivo Raband (Art History, Bern)
Dr. Claire Vionnet (Social Anthropology / Dance Studies, Bern)

Date: Friday, 12th October 2018, 10.15 – 18.00 pm
Room: tba
Application: We invite interested scholars to register their interest in participating in the masterclass with an email to michael.toggweiler@wbkolleg.unibe.ch along with a short statement of motivation by September 12.
ECTS: 1.5 (for members of the GSH who have been accepted upon application)

Content
Since the 1990’s bodily turn in social theory, there has been an exceptional rise in studies addressing bodies and corporeality from various points of view. Despite this, the lived experience of the body has at times been neglected (Williams and Bendelow 1998). In order to fit scientific criteria, bodies have been dissected, observed and analysed under the magnifying glass. As a consequence, we can ask whether they have not been extracted from life, treated as “a mechanic without interior” (Merleau-Ponty 1945) and denied (again!) their subjectivity. This assessment raises an epistemological question: what types of bodies figure in social theory? If the notion of body has become familiar, we can ask of its pertinence when it comes to grasp human experience as a lively and profound engagement with the world. Bodies cannot be contained as package (Ingold 2013), as they are entangled with the environment. Moreover, they are made of thoughts, affects, movements, memories, habits, situations, imagination, future projections, and continually connected with other bodies (Manning 2010). Since we aim to maintain the openness and the complexity of the body, its depth and plasticity, and aim to challenge the re-emerging body/mind dualism of late, how can we restore the lived dimension of bodies in academic research? One way of doing this might be to privilege the term subjectivity to stress the open-ended and dynamic processes associated with the body. Thus, we would like to discuss bodies in situations (e.g. in challenging circumstances such as during the artistic process or whilst in pain), in their liveliness, in interaction with the world and in the process of becoming. How is the process of subjectivity affected by these liminal moments (Turner 1996)?

The aim of this masterclass is to create space for the discussion of concepts and methodologies on this subject, whilst departing from our personal case studies and theoretical readings. This masterclass should be of interest to advanced doctoral researchers, postdocs, and established scholars with a wide variety of interests, whether they are engaged in the study and the analysis of historical primary sources, choreographies of dance, the visual and plastic arts, or literature.

Lisa Blackman is Professor in Media and Communications and Co-Head of the Department Media and Communications at Goldsmiths, University of London. She works at the intersection of body studies and media and cultural theory and is particularly interested in subjectivity, affect, the body and embodiment. She has published four books in this area. The most recent is Inmaterial Bodies: Affect, Embodiment, Mediation, (2012, Sage). Her work in the area of embodiment and voice hearing has been recognised and commended for its innovative approach to mental health research and it has been acclaimed by the Hearing Voices Network, Intervoice, and has been taken up in professional psychiatric contexts. She has also made a substantive contribution to the fields of critical psychology and body studies. In this context she co-edits the journal, Subjectivity (with Valerie Walkerdine, Palgrave) and edits the journal Body & Society (Sage). Her other books include Hearing Voices: Embodiment and Experience (2001, Free Association Books); Mass Hysteria: Critical Psychology and Media Studies (with Valerie Walkerdine; 2001, Palgrave); and The Body: The Key Concepts (2008, Berg). Lisa is also acts as a key advisor to the Hearing the Voice project, Durham University (funded by the Wellcome). She is currently working on a book length project, Haunted Data: Social Media, Weird Science and Archives of the Future.