It’s always been an interesting exchange: philosophy and poetry. Poets were kicked out of Plato’s cave, considered too unreliable. But the “rub” is always there, unstable, generative. Zizek, Agamben, Butler, and others open the cave to the rhizomic creative thought of poetry, but as poets we need to reclaim the torch. What is the pedagogy? Poetry is intuitive, philosophy is logical. How can we bring back the intuitive logopoeia? How can we disrupt the logic, meet it, diverge from it, create a discourse within it?

June 22–27

WHO AM I WHEN I DREAM?: Philo-poetics

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Who Am I When I Dream?: Philo-poetics

OMAR BERRADA & SARAH RIGGS:
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

Exploring this ancient question, we dive into the writing of movement and ideas. Films, dance, ninth-century Arabic philosophy, French and North American poetry collaborations, and hybrids of all sorts will be our matter. Al-Jahiz, Claire Denis, Jean-Luc Nancy, Maya Deren, John Cage, Stéphane Bouquet, and Aisha Sasha John will be among our intruders. Writers become the choreographers of their dreams. Bodies unapologetically enter our writing. Poetry is not alone.

OMAR BERRADA co-directs Dar al-Ma’mûn, a library and residency center for artists and writers in Marrakech. Previously, he hosted shows on French national radio and public programs at the Centre Pompidou, curated Tangier’s International Book Salon, and co-directed Dubai’s Global Art Forum. He has translated numerous texts of poetry and philosophy from English into French, by Avital Ronell, Joan Retallack, Kathleen Fraser, Stanley Cavell, Bob Glück, Jalal Toufic, and Jennifer Moxley, among others.

SARAH RIGGS’s feature-length film Six Lives: A Cinepoem plumbs the depths of understanding between film, the eye, and the body through the work of Virginia Woolf (excerpt at sarahriggs.org). Her most recent book of poetry is Pommé & Granite (1913 Press). She has translated or co-translated a half dozen books of contemporary French poetry into English. She is a member of Double (Changedoublechange.org) and directs Tamaas (tamaas.org).
CS GISCOMBE: Dreamscapes & Unreliable Narration.

We’ll start at the most basic point of departure—real world location, which is to say neighborhood with all its social boundaries and stratifications—and attempt from there to take seriously dream (see Brooks’s “Kitchenette Building”), the shapes of unreliable memory, and obsessive image. We’ll write for both page and stage; we’ll study the ghazal form, keep dream journals, take a field trip, etc.

CS Giscombe’s recent poetry books are Prairie Style and Giscombe Road. His prose books are Into and Out of Dislocation and Back Burner. Prairie Style was awarded a 2008 American Book Award by the Before Columbus Foundation; Giscombe is the 2010 recipient of the Stephen Henderson Award in poetry, given by the African-American Literature and Culture Society. He is a long-distance cyclist. He teaches poetry at the University of California, Berkeley.

JANET HAMILL: The Poet as Lucid Dreamer

As no man [woman], said Coleridge, was ever yet a great poet without being...a great philosopher, when poets muse they combine logic and thought music. They go under and become acquainted with that part of themselves not imprisoned in la cage raisonnable. Following Breton’s world view that the unconscious paints a truer picture of the individual than anything the waking life could “imagine,” this course will employ Surrealist techniques of lucid dreaming and automatic writing to create symbolic revelations made of sound, sense, emotion, and image.

Janet Hamill is the author of six books—five books of poetry and fiction (Troublante, The Temple, Nostalgia of the Infinite, Lost Ceilings, and Body of Water). In February 2014, she published her debut collection of short stories, Tales from the Eternal Café. In addition to books, she has released two CD’s in collaboration with the band Lost Ceilings—Flying Nowhere and Genie of the Alphabet. Her MFA in Creative Writing: Poetry is from New England College.

VINCENT KATZ: Theogonies—What Do Poets Do When They Write Gods?

How did we get gods and who may they be in our Present Day? We will start by looking at Hesiod’s poem of the origin of the gods, with a glance towards the Epic of Gilgamesh to keep us culturally aware, then delve into Plato’s Republic, to find out why he banished poets, why the Ring of Gyges is a dangerous thrill, and what Ancient Greeks did for Television. Along the way, we will discuss our own views of the universe and will attempt to craft such beliefs, disbeliefs, doubts, investigations, divagations, and rebellions into verse, with an especial eye toward what makes epic.

Vincent Katz is the editor of Black Mountain College: Experiment in Art (MIT, 2002; reprinted 2013); the author of The Complete Elegies of Sextus Propertius (Princeton, 2004), winner of the 2005 National Translation Award from the American Literary Translators Association; and author of Swimming Home, a book of poems published in 2015 by Nightboat Books. He lives in New York City, where he curates Readings in Contemporary Poetry at Dia Art Foundation.

JOANNE KYGER: Writing in Dream Time

Dreams have a special sense of time. They provide a lookout on present action, and cast a view of the future. All with their own special, language, logic, and freedom. We will practice the art of dreaming poetry in daily writing; and also keep a dream journal for the week. Various texts will include Jack Kerouac’s Book of Dreams, Dream Yoga by Namkhai Norbu, and Dreams from Zinacantan, Chiapas, Mexico, where dreaming is to see one’s soul—“whoever sees, dreams well.”

Joanne Kyger, a poet from the coast north of San Francisco, is the author of more than thirty books and chapbooks of poetry. ON TIME from City Lights Books will be published in the spring of 2015. She has taught frequently at Naropa since it first opened in 1974.
KYOO LEE: Sleep Furiously, Dream Fabulously: On & On at Noon With & After Rimbaud

Wait, Stop/Start: We start with this “bewitching enigma,” Arthur Rimbaud’s decision to stop writing poetry at his peak, when he was more than capable of producing many other masterpieces; when, where, and how would a poet pause “to help man go somewhere, to be more than himself, to see more than he can see, to know what he cannot know. We will draw together such “lines” of philopoetic somnambulism while walking through the passages visited by a host of fellow, dreaming mind-bodies such as Gaston Bachelard, Lewis Carroll, Catherine Clément, Jacques Derrida, René Descartes, Emmanuel Levinas, Jean-François Lyotard, René Magritte, Jeffrey Yang, Zhuangzi … as well as the “American Dreamers,” now & then.

Kyo Lee is the author of Reading Descartes Otherwise: Blind, Mad, Dreamy, and Bad (2012), and co-editor of WSQ (Women’s Studies Quarterly) on “Safe” (2011) and CPR (Critical Philosophy of Race) on “Xenophobia & Racism” (2014), is a professor of philosophy at the City University of New York, where she teaches a wide range of courses at all levels.


Like an irritating couple, philosophy and poetry are always breaking up, and then before you know it, they’re back together. Using Roland Barthes’s concept of “coupling” (an intimate, interdependent, but non-sexual relationship), we’ll spend this week reading about and writing through the language of love, betrayal, and breaking up in and between philosophy and poetry. We’ll ask: is the threat of the break up a necessary precondition for love? For philosophy? For poetry? For us?

Jennifer Moxley is a poet, essayist, memoirist, and translator. She studied literature and writing at University of California, San Diego, and the University of Rhode Island and received her MFA from Brown in 1994. Her most recent books are The Open Secret, There Are Things We Live Among: Essays on the Object Word, and Clampdown, all from Flood Editions. She teaches poetry and poetics at the University of Maine.

Steve Evans is a scholar and critic who works on contemporary poetry and poetics, critical theory, modernism, and the avant-garde. He studied literature and philosophy at University of California, San Diego, and received his PhD from Brown in 2000. At present he is working on a book titled The Poetics of Phonotextuality: Timbre, Text, and Technology in Recorded Poetry. He teaches critical theory and poetics at the University of Maine.

EILEEN MYLES: Gender/Genre

This is a situation that will blur distinctions between male and female straight and gay poetry & prose. We are way post hybrid in all these regards. Be how you are = our room in which we will hopefully make a brilliant mess. Everyone must buy & read in advance Beatriz Preciado’s Testo Junkie & TC Tolbert’s Gephyromania and let’s aim to each write a total work, a long poem prose thing that whispers sings and shouts.

Eileen Myles moved to New York from Boston in 1974 to be a poet. She is the author of eighteen books including Snowflake /different streets (poems, 2012) and Inferno (a poet’s novel) (2010). Her new & selected poems I Must Be Living Twice will be published by Ecco in fall 2015. She lives in New York.

WE WAIT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS
WE HOPE IT IS NOT WAR OR SUFFERING
AND THAT THE WOMEN WILL SHAKE OFF THE VEIL
IN THE MYRIAD FUTURE OF OUR STILL
REVOLUTIONARY MUNIFICENT DREAMS. OUR LUST
FOR SURPRISE BENEFITING US LIKE THE SUN
LIKE THE SUPPLICATING WEATHER WE FEAR
MY SUDDENLY CHANGE FROM WHAT IT IS
TO ANOTHER ICE AGE BUT NOT BEFORE
THE CLIMATE WARMS UNDETECTABLY
FORCING US ALL TO MOVE TO THE MOON

Bernadette Mayer
JULIA SEKO: Emerging Texts: The Collaborative Process in Letterpress

Start by setting type letter by letter in a composing stick, working within the strictures of a mechanical art to push your writing into new spaces. Join in thoughtful collaboration to design and print a group project. We’ll discuss choices in typography, image making, materials, and structure to develop our visual vocabulary, and we’ll encourage the unexpected and serendipitous.

Julia Seko is a letterpress printer, book artist, and proprietor of P.S. Press. She is adjunct faculty at Naropa University, where she helped set up the letterpress studio, and her letterpress work is in university and private collections. Julia also co-founded the Book Arts League, a nonprofit letterpress and book arts organization.

ELENI SIKELIANOS: Hybridity/Between the Seams

We will work where structures rub up against each other, in the generative instability of forms, to handle hot material, focusing on the locavoric and its bleeds: family histories and homegrown reports, local bumps in human, animal, floral, and geologic sites. We’ll consider the page and the book as installations, seek intuitive logics in juxtaposition of text and image, and look at writers who have used hybrid forms to document ways of knowing and unknowing.

Eleni Sikelianos is the author of two hybrid memoirs (The Book of Jon and You Animal Machine) and seven books of poetry, most recently The Loving Detail of the Living & the Dead. A graduate of JKS, she has taught poetry in public schools, homeless shelters, and prisons, and collaborated with musicians (Philip Glass, etc.), filmmakers (Ed Bowes), and visual artists (Mel Chin, etc.). She teaches for the SWP, L’École de Littérature in France and Morocco, and the University of Denver.

SPECIAL GUESTS

MEI-MEI BERSSENBRUGGE was born in Beijing and grew up in Massachusetts. She is the author of twelve books of poetry, including Empathy, Four Year Old Girl, I Love Artists: New and Selected Poems, and Hello, the Roses. She has collaborated with many artists, including Kiki Smith and her husband, Richard Tuttle. She lives in northern New Mexico and New York City. Writer’s Chat: Thursday, June 25: 4:30–5:30 p.m. Reading: Thursday, June 25: 7:30 p.m.

RICHARD TUTTLE is an American postminimalist artist known for his small, subtle, intimate works. His art makes use of scale and line. His works span a range of media, from sculpture, painting, drawing, printmaking, and artist’s books, to installation and furniture. He lives and works in New York City, Abiquiú, New Mexico, and Mount Desert, Maine. Lecture: Thursday, June 25: 1:00–2:30 p.m., “What Sanskrit Means to Me”

JAMES SHERRY is the author of ten books of poetry and prose. He is editor of Roof Books and president of the Segue Foundation, Inc. in New York City. In 2011 he joined the Occupy Alternative Bank subgroup and remains active in that group. He lives in New York City with his wife, Deborah Thomas, publisher of Extra!, the magazine of Fairness And Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR). Reading: Thursday, June 25: 7:30 p.m.