

## **ABOUT THE PROJECT**

Ways of access define not only current communities but also communities to come. Who has access today, who does not, and who determines the distribution? We dealt with these questions in the research seminar "ACCESS - Questions of Access" in the summer semester 2023, led by Prof. Dr. Violetta Splitter and Prof. Dr. Karin Deckner. Located in the Master's program in Social and Business Communication at the Faculty of Design of the Berlin University of the Arts, different perspectives on questions of access were examined transdisciplinarily and possible answers to these questions were discussed.

With our audio series, the round tour 2023 of the Berlin University of the Arts becomes a stage for contemporary discourses around access. Exemplary persons, objects or codes are presented, which distinguish the accessible from the inaccessible in science, culture and justice. The speakers here are people with different professional backgrounds and levels of education, giving us different perspectives on the respective topics. Despite this diversity, this audio series also provides only a limited insight into our research topic.

## **ABOUT THE AUDIO SERIES**

On the basis of the content-related discourses in the seminar (see context of origin), we derived three thematic fields for our auditory symposium. In this symposium, scholars and everyday experts will have their say in order to raise and answer central questions of access from their respective perspectives. Listening to (or reading) the contributions in their entirety, it becomes clear that ways of access across the thematic fields are often intertwined, mutually dependent, or even reinforcing, and may also have similar structural features. The audio contributions are to be heard and understood as exemplary approaches to these structures.

The access questions posed are on a thematically broad spectrum, ranging from science to culture to justice.

Thus, access to science is discussed, on the one hand for students applying to universities, on the other hand for recipients of science communication, which is sometimes difficult to understand and thus less accessible. Furthermore, administrative realities are discussed, which sometimes unnecessarily complicate the navigation in the university system for students, especially international students, but also for teachers. You will hear, among other things, a contribution from representatives of Common Ground (<https://commonground.berlin/>), a student initiative that supports foreign students in finding their way in the focal university system.

Under the topic of culture, our audio series addresses issues of access to cultural spaces, such as those of theater, opera, and clubs. For example, this series includes a contribution by a representative of the Berlin Club Commission, who talks about how clubs can be made more inclusive for all people. Moreover, we present another contribution with the literary scholar Prof. Dr. Tina Hartmann on issues of access in opera houses. Last but not least, the theater scholar Antonia Hänsch discusses the extent to which theater is elitist, and thus often denies access to people.

In another thematic field, questions of social justice were asked. Various contributions deal with questions of material heritage and cultural capital. There is, among others, a contribution by author Lucy Fricke, who talks about social mobility. Another contribution in the form of a fictional narrative deals with the "justice" of the current inheritance law and how it could be made fairer in the future. We also ask the creators of the podcast "Wir sind Klasse!" about the background of their approach to enable accessibility.

Our dialog partners answer question which were sent to them in advance. The answers

are in interview-form, in short monologues, or short texts read aloud.

These questions in our podcast are representative of many other questions that could and should be addressed in the context of access. Nevertheless, the goal of this project was to provide an accessible platform for access issues. In order to meet this requirement of providing as much accessibility as possible, we have transcribed the content and translated it into English. Thus, with the resources currently available to us, we hope to have made the content as accessible as possible.

It is not without reason that the audio series takes place within the framework of the tour of the Berlin University of the Arts. Because here, too, many questions of access arise.

In collaboration with a team from the University of Applied Sciences and Arts, we have developed stickers, tapes and posters that contain the QR codes leading visitors to our audio series.

## **ABOUT THE RESEARCH MODULE**

The seminar "ACCESS - Questions of Access", which took place in the summer semester 2023 with about 20 students, was led by Prof. Dr. Karin Deckner, and Prof. Dr. Violetta Splitter.

The students approached the topics from a theoretical perspective as well as from the perspective of their own experiences or points of reference. Texts by Andreas Reckwitz and Pierre Bourdieu, among others, formed the basis for conceptual understanding, which was then used to discuss current issues and sociobiographical experiences. The experience was also expanded through literary texts, such as essays from the anthology "Class and Struggle", as well as through an examination of studies on the spatial organization of refugee camps, and an empirical study of class membership of CEOs in German companies. In this way, the students developed their own concepts of approaches that have found their way into this audio series. In detail, concepts from sociology were considered first, with a particular focus on Pierre Bourdieu's types of capital. In addition, access to family, usually taken for granted, was discussed with Sophie Hein of the Albert Schweitzer Children's Villages. In the follow-up session, texts from the anthology "Divas, Hackers, Speculators, Social Figures of the Present" were used to deepen the discussion.

These reflections were followed by the topic of class and social mobility. Among others, the text by Andreas Reckwitz "Von der nivellierten Mittelstandsgesellschaft zur Drei-Klassen-Gesellschaft: Neue Mittelklasse, alte Mittelklasse und prekäre Klasse" was presented and discussed. The following session focused on political, artistic and legal/activist approaches. The lawyer Sarah Imani (LL.M. at the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, in short ECCR <https://www.ecchr.eu/>) gave an insight into her work as a lawyer at the mentioned human rights organization. Interesting was also the interweaving of scientific and artistic methods, which she presented to us on the basis of the project-related cooperation between ECCHR and Forensic Architecture (<https://www.ecchr.eu/en/case/investigative-commons/>). Another way of looking at our seminar content was shown to us by the artist Johannes Büttner (<http://www.johannes-buettner.com/>) who talked to us about his engagement with the gig economy in his installations "The Factory" and "Platform".

The materiality of access was also discussed, which is particularly evident in the form of keys, doors, gates, but also, increasingly invisibly, in the form of access codes or chip cards. In addition, an attempt was made to introduce students to further theoretical considerations or approaches to phenomenological and anthropological research. The following session highlighted approaches through spatial organization, the starting point of which was a study on the construction of refugee camps. Again, students were

able to discuss their thoughts on the aforementioned study with co-author Tania Racker, and ask further questions. This was followed by a consideration of organizational approaches to the social demand for access, for which impressions of the text "Introduction: Critically interrogating inclusion in organizations" by Adamson and colleagues were described. By reading Patricia Hill Collin's "Black Feminist Thought" we engaged with intersectional issues of inclusion and exclusion.

Furthermore, the seminar exchanged ideas with Dominik van Aaken on his study "Differences between CEOs: A Social-Class Perspective on CEOs' Industry Affiliation in Germany" and, based on previous sessions, highlighted his empirical findings on class, habitus, affiliation and mobility.

## **ABOUT THE FORMAT AUDIOSYMPIOSIUM**

At the beginning of the research module, a symposium in live format was planned. Our greatest demand for this event was to make the content, in accordance with the topic, as accessible as possible. With this in mind, the course considered the location and structure of the format. The seminar also formulated the wish to integrate the event format into the tour and thus to make the course of studies in social and business communication more present at the Udk location Hardenbergstrae.

The conception of this format was challenging: When finding a date for a live event, not only all students, but also diverse speakers and the widest possible audience of interested people, who all have different work and life routines, have to be taken into account. This is how the idea of recording what was spoken came into play. Since this was a student project with a tight time frame of about three months and very limited financial resources, it had to be possible to implement it within this tightly defined framework. Recording a live event would not have been possible in a way that would ensure the qualitative demands. Considering the limited resources as well as the inclusion of the important parameter accessibility, we decided on an auditory format that could be easily integrated into the existing tour and furthermore be accessible, translated and further processed via the website.

## **THANKS**

We would like to thank all the speakers who took the time to share their views with us. Thanks also to all the experts who led a discussion with us in the seminar. In addition to the external supporters, we would also like to thank Anne-Marie Franz, Head of the Office for Non-Faculty Events at the Berlin University of the Arts, who supported us with her organizational expertise.

Behind the scenes at this point another huge "Chapeau!" and "We can't thank you enough" to Nico from the CSS team. Also: Thank you Team HAWK for accompanying us visually. A huge Merci to Mrs. Radke and Mrs. Fischer in the administration at ITPK, who supported us bureaucratically. And last but not least: Mille Grazie to Prof. Dr. Brigitte Weingart and Prof. Dr. Maren Hartmann, who generously supported us.

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