

WORKSHOP SERIES AUGUST – APRIL 2022

Post Corona ReStart: **BODY TALKS + INSIGHT LABS**

In Search of the Role of the Body in Modern Society

The future is digital. Now we have to figure out how much body, how much physical closeness, how much movement and nature we – as human beings – actually need. We are launching an experimental workshop series called Body Talks + Insight Labs with the goal of understanding thinking in new ways, experiencing it physically and seeing which new ideas emerge.

Workshop Dates

I. Body & Society - Post-Pandemic

August 25th, 21 **Lab 1:** Touch – Why We Need Contact with Others
September 22nd, 21 **Lab 2:** Change – Dealing with Uncertainty
October 20th, 21 **Lab 3:** Breathing – Learning from Long Covid

II. Body & Knowledge – Past & Future

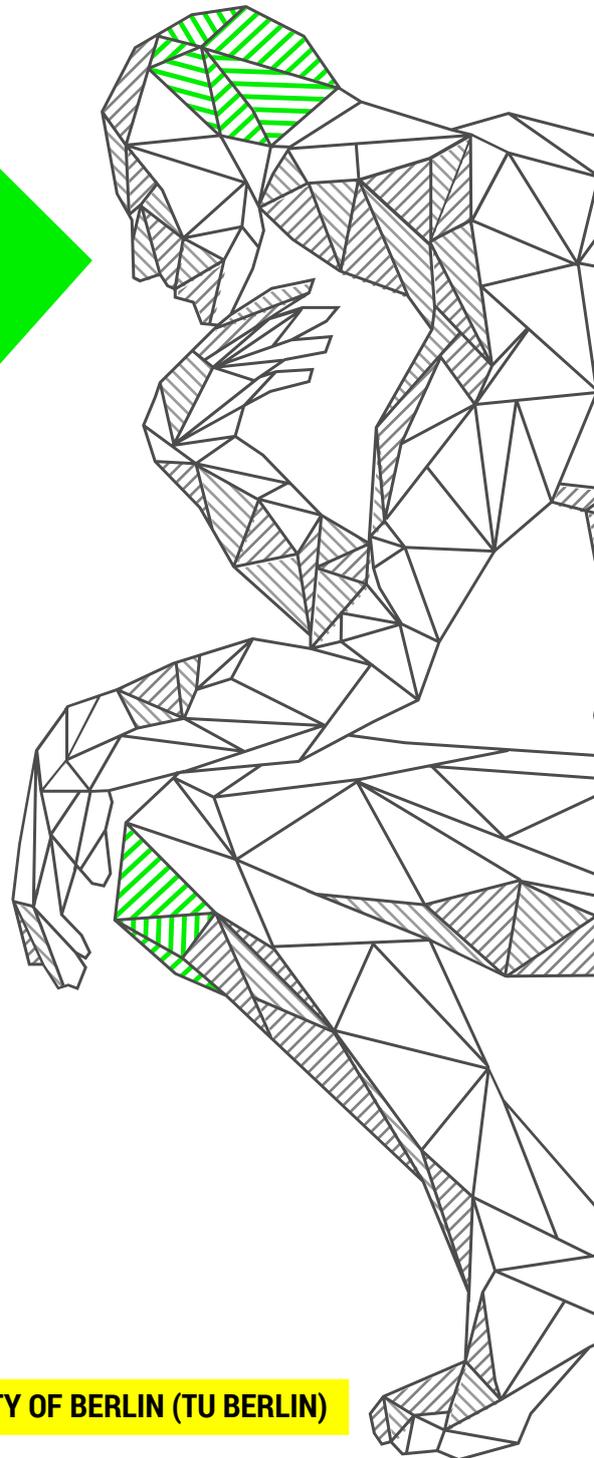
November 24th, 21 **Lab 4:** Crafts as Embodied Knowledge
January 26th, 22 **Lab 5:** AI - Knowledge without a Body
February 23rd, 22 **Lab 6:** Moving Education

III. Learning from Corona: The Future

March 23rd, 22 **Lab 7:** Mental Health – Protecting our Resources
April 20th, 22 **Lab 8:** Voice – Handling (Workplace) Discrimination
May 25th, 22 **Lab 9:** Creativity – Why Arts are Essential

■ **Wednesdays 16.30 – 18.00h on Zoom**

CONFERENCE IN SPRING 2022 AT THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN (TU BERLIN)



► **Post Corona ReStart: Impulses for Discourse**

Life after the pandemic won't be the same.

That's what everyone says. Yet there are few concrete ideas about what should actually change and how. Stop climate change, of course. Limits to growth, perhaps. Re-think our work lives. But beyond that? What comes after freedom, democracy and endlessly increasing prosperity through new trade agreements? Restrictions, regression, entropy? New systemic conflicts, a Cold War with China?

The pandemic has pushed these questions into the background. Instead, it has confronted us with something we have increasingly forgotten: the fact that we humans are bodies. Suddenly we're dealing with the fact that touch and closeness aren't only basic human needs, but also play a significant role in the function of our immune systems and our ability to think.

In a world where facial expressions and features disappear behind masks making it difficult to breathe, where we are forced to radically reduce touch and physical closeness or eliminate it altogether, where we have been catapulted into the brave new digital world of work, the medium has become the message: *The future is digital. Now we have to figure out how much body, how much physical closeness, how much movement and nature we – as human beings – actually need.*

Throughout the pandemic our knowledge society has proven to be surprisingly dysfunctional – too few caregivers and hospital beds, too few teachers and educators, and thinking beyond the pandemic, too few craftsmen. It's irritating that a society that has accumulated so much knowledge and made it available to everyone is less and less capable of solving practical problems. For instance, now we know more than ever about human developmental psychology, about what good education requires, about logistics and building functional systems, yet we often still fail precisely at these tasks.

The evolution of humankind is also the story of an increasingly differentiated, increasingly abstract form of intelligence. For a long time, this intelligence was believed to be located in the brain. In recent decades, however, various research disciplines including medicine, neuroscience, cognitive science, many areas of biology as well as psychology (from developmental psychology to psychotherapy), and finally, philosophy, art and AI research, have all come to the realization that we need to correct our understanding of human thinking.

The idea that sophisticated, abstract thought belongs exclusively to the brain, and that the brain is a super computer floating in a tank, is simply wrong. It turns out that the entire body is significantly involved in our thinking processes, and that in order to produce thought, our bodies are in constant motion. Philosopher Shaun Gallagher put it in a nutshell in his book title „How the Body Shapes the Mind“: how and what we think depends on our body and its movements.

Post Corona ReStart offers a framework to ask the following questions and more:

- Can new ideas for a society of the future be developed from the principles of embodied cognition, principles that include the physicality of our intelligence and perception?
- Can language and embodiment practice be combined in such a way that we arrive at new perspectives and come to new conclusions?
- How does our thinking change when we understand basic human needs as a part of our intellectual capacity, including emotion as information mediating between bodily perceptions and thought processes?
- How does the gender debate change when the bodily aspects of our thinking emerge more clearly? What happens when the body, including our perception of the body, but especially our perception through the body, are understood as part of our intellectual capacity?
- If we view thinking as a physical activity, what conclusions can we draw about the design of educational and working environments as well as our relationship to nature?
- What does embodied thinking mean for the AI debate, often heavily influenced by fear, and the shaping of our digital future?

► **Body Talks + Insight Labs**

For each **Body Talk** experts from the fields of embodiment, neuroscience, medicine, education, arts and social sciences will be invited to speak and share their expertise on the following question: *What role can embodied thinking play, both for individuals and in a society looking for new beginnings?* As a practical component, each **Body Talk** will be followed by a ca. 45-minute interactive **Insight Lab**, where simple physical exercises will be combined with thinking tasks and discussion relating to what we as individuals and as a society face both during and after Corona.

A symposium on the topic is currently being organized for Spring of 2022 by the Technical University of Berlin, the Institute for Vocational Training and Work Education, difgl- German Institute for Good Living, Embodiment at Work and other cooperation partners.

Project Initiators:

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