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**UNIVERSITÄT
BERN**

WBKOLLEG
WALTER BENJAMIN KOLLEG

GSAH | Friedrich Dürrenmatt
Gastprofessur für Weltliteratur

Textures and Spectres; Black Europe and the B-Side

A morning for doctoral students and interested parties with

Johny Pitts

23.05.2024, 10:15–13:00, Room 216, Mittelstrasse 43
Moderation: Prof. Dr. Oliver Lubrich, University of Bern



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23 May 2024

10:15–13:00
(incl. break)

Room:
Seminarraum 216
Mittelstrasse 43

1 ECTS

Language: English

Registration until
May 13 via KSL and
E-Mail to
melanie.sampayo@unibe.ch

Emerging from 15 years of research and documentary practice aiming to capture the nuances and complexities of Black Life in Europe, I'll explore deeper, more universal themes surrounding the subaltern. How is culture and community produced outside of or even despite realms of 'officialdom'? Taking a journey through the metaphorical underground via pirate radio stations, b-movies, cult novels and grassroots political movements, we will examine the textures, ghosts, and creativity produced by life at the figurative and literal periphery and, to paraphrase Toni Morrison, claim them as central. When work and movements emerge at odds with the demands of the market place and the initiatives of government institutions, how do we quantify its value? Should we quantify its value? We'll look at how, in the wake of various fractures across Europe, these subaltern works and networks produced by the people who often occupy The B-Side - immigrant communities and/or the working classes - are sustained, and offer an alternative history of Europe, that might be used to suggest an alternative future.

Johny Pitts

Recommended readings:

«Bad Taste» (2023) Nathalie Olah, «Afropean» (2019) Johny Pitts. «Roissy Express» (1994): Francois Maspéro & Anaik Frantz. «Exteriors» (1996) Annie Ernaux.

You are also welcome to attend Johny Pitts seminar with guest Nathalie Olah at the University on Tuesday the 7th of May (10:15-11:45h), Room 105, Hauptgebäude H4

In the spring semester of 2024, Johny Pitts holds the Friedrich Dürrenmatt Guest Professorship for World Literature at the University of Bern. Pitts is an essayist and photographer, he works as a curator, journalist and radio presenter. His highly acclaimed book *Afropean* (2019) was published in German under the title *Afropäisch: eine Reise durch das schwarze Europa* (2020) by Suhrkamp Verlag. On his journey to the black communities, Pitts observes the "Afropean" life experience in various countries. Pitts has received several awards for his communication of Afropean experiences, including the Leipzig Book Prize for European Understanding and the European Network against Racism.