The course first traces the status of deconstruction in the 20th century (after phenomenology and structuralism) and highlights its relevance for the present. The starting point for this is the three main philosophical works, which Jacques Derrida presented in 1967 and which can be read as the earliest practice of deconstructive readings of the most diverse traditions (De la gramma
tologie; La voix et le phénomène; L’écriture et la différence). We will closely follow the text to see what Derrida understands by differance and how the deconstructive program distinguishes itself from semiology, phenomenology and the tradition of critique since Kant. In the field of contemporary theory, our main concern will be to understand how deconstruction differs from critical theory and discourse analysis and how it stands up to more recent objections of "speculative realism".

The second session will focus on "methods, practices and procedures" in the arts. We will ask more specific questions about how deconstruction has been taken up and developed further and how deconstructive practices can be identified in the arts. We will use various comparisons as examples: from deconstruction and poetry (Hélène Cixous/Friedericke Mayröcker), deconstruction and architecture (Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi), deconstruction and drawing/painting (Derrida’s exhibition at the Louvre in 1991: Memoires d’aveugle. l’autoportrait et autres ruines), deconstruction and free jazz (Ornette Coleman) to Derrida’s attempt to describe the aesthetics of film as “hauntology”. At the end of the course we will watch Ken McMullen’s film Ghost Dance (1983).

Readings:

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