

A CRITIQUE IS MORE THAN A CONVERSATION

10 CRITIQUE GUIDELINES

It's useful to remember when we make artwork and show it to others, we are bravely putting ourselves into the public world and in relationship to others. The moment we present work in this formalized way, we engage in wider conversation and a space of communal learning that is essential to our socialization as artists. Following this, our accountability to issues of our work outside of our selves (i.e. Audience) and sense of "resolved," more objective aesthetics (i.e. Success) increases.

A critique is more than a conversation. It exists somewhere in between a tribunal, a conversation and an exam. When we participate, we engage in multiple hierarchies, power dynamics, identities, languages of understanding and viewpoints. In fact, one could say a critique is a micro power structure that has the ability to subvert, maintain, question, affirm and reimagine many truths both communally and/or within pre-established hierarchies of understanding and authority.

Before the class moves forward in-conversation and further study about critiques, here are **10 Critique Guidelines** for negotiating first and second year experiences of "The Critique."

1. **Pre-formulated Feedback Please** aka *Think Before You Speak*
2. **Be Brief** aka *One Thing at a Time*
3. **Their Work, Not Yours** aka *This Is Not Your Show*
4. **Being Mean Is Not Authoritative** aka *Empathetic Language Is Useful and Powerful | Kindness facilitates openness*
5. **Good Art Is Usually Self Reflective** aka *Morality is not the point but Exclusivity, Voyeurism, Entitlement and Rudeness have Aesthetic and Community Consequences*
6. **Silence is Meaningful** aka *Let Work Sink In | Notice Who Is Speaking*
7. **Public vs. Private** aka *Some Feedback Is Better In Private or One-on-One*
8. **Slow Down** aka *Think About It, Write It Down, Wait*
9. **What's Good?** aka *Did You Remember To Say What's Working Here?*
10. **Listen** aka *Are you being heard? Are you listening without assumption or your own ego?*

"Listening is a practice that is learned: listen to understand, not to explain or defend.

If I listen, I can learn what others notice in a work.

I can notice what others miss in a work.

I can learn what people understand about a work.

I want to be open to but not dependent on the opinions of others.

After the critique, I have the power to choose if it should be changed or left as it is.

Successful crits leave everyone wanting to make more art." (Barrett, 2019)"

Reference: Barrett, Terry. CRITS: A Student Manual, London: Bloomsbury, 2019