

# Critique

Flow Visualization

Fall 2024

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Our critique method is adapted from

Lerman, Liz. *Critical Response Process: A Method for Getting Useful Feedback on Anything You Make, from Dance to Dessert*. EBook., 2002. [https://www.amazon.com/Liz-Lermans-Critical-Response-Process-](https://www.amazon.com/Liz-Lermans-Critical-Response-Process-ebook/dp/B00CF8MYD6/ref=sr_1_1?crid=33FL1ANVGPYPF&keywords=liz+lerman%27s+critical+response+process&qid=1565033305&s=gateway&sprefix=liz+lerman%2Caps%2C576&sr=8-1)

[ebook/dp/B00CF8MYD6/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=33FL1ANVGPYPF&keywords=liz+lerman%27s+critical+response+process&qid=1565033305&s=gateway&sprefix=liz+lerman%2Caps%2C576&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Liz-Lermans-Critical-Response-Process-ebook/dp/B00CF8MYD6/ref=sr_1_1?crid=33FL1ANVGPYPF&keywords=liz+lerman%27s+critical+response+process&qid=1565033305&s=gateway&sprefix=liz+lerman%2Caps%2C576&sr=8-1).

## The Steps

### Step 1: Statements of Meaning

What does this image/vid say about fluids? What is being shown?

What does this image/vid say about aesthetics? Does it strike you with beauty, power, destruction or oddness? Or some other aesthetic?

What does this image/vid say about imaging technique? Does it impress you, or inspire questions?

Are there other meanings in the image/vid?

If making a positive comment, BE HONEST and SPECIFIC. What did you like and why?

DO NOT JUST SAY 'good job' or 'I like it'

### Step 2: Artist as Questioner

The student presenting can ask for specific feedback to guide further development of the work: "What do you think of the way it is cropped? What about the color? Did you notice where the light pole was edited out" etc. Don't ask just 'what do you think', that's too vague. You'll get more useful answers if your question is focused.

### Step 3: Neutral questions from Responders (audience).

This is tough, to ask a question without embedding an opinion. It will take practice. For example, instead of "It's kind of dark" or "why is it so dark at the bottom" ask "what do you think about the balance of light and dark areas?". Be sure to ask about the physics "why does the drip coil like that?" or "why are those bubbles flattened?"

### Step 4: Permissioned Opinions

Responders name the topic of their opinion, then ask the artist for permission to state it. For example, "I have an opinion about the depth of field and the focus. Do you want to hear it?" The artist can answer yes or no. If you already know that the focus was bad and what to do, you can say "No thanks." If you are open to suggestions, then say "yes".

## In-Class Specifics

1. Log in to FlowVis.org
2. Gallery>2019 Fall Get Wet
3. **For each image, try to type or verbalize at least one substantive comment:**
  - a. **A statement of meaning** or
  - b. **A response to a question from the artist** or
  - c. **A neutral question** or
  - d. **Ask to offer an opinion.** Later the artist will respond; if yes, then add your opinion. OK to balance with suggestions for improvement.

It's easy to criticize, but being able to articulate the strengths of a colleague's work is an extremely valuable skill. Then instead of criticizing, ask about choices; why was it done like that? This is the "neutral question"

See Critique Suggestion sheet.

4. If you verbalize a comment, type it too.

## Suggestions on what to do at each stage if you are the

### ARTIST

#### Preparing for the Process

- ... invested in continuing to work on the piece you are showing and open to the possibility that you might change it.
- ... thinking about what you want to learn related to where you are in the process of developing the work you are showing.
- ... in an open frame of mind about what you will hear.
- ... learning as much as you can about the physics before you present to the class.

#### Step One: Statements of Meaning

- ... suspending the need to hear "this is the greatest thing I've ever seen."
- ... suspending the need to question the sincerity of positive comments.
- ... attending to your own internal reactions to the comments in terms of how they inform the steps to come:

- Are they answering the questions I have about the work?
  - Are they suggesting that I need to probe deeper on any subject?
  - Are they raising my sense of curiosity about something new?
  - Are they reflecting a consensus reaction or a diverse response?

#### Step Two: Artist Asks Questions

- ... building on the information you have heard in step one.
- ... refraining from long explanatory preambles.
- ... considering possibilities for two-part questions or general questions.
- ... ready to narrow questions down when they spill out in groups.
- ... ready to hear opinions, including negative ones, when they are in direct response to the question you have posed.

#### Step Three: Responders Ask Neutral Questions

- ... attentive to possibilities and issues that may not be prominent in your current thinking.

... using the dialogue as an opportunity to advance your thinking about the work rather than to repeat what you already know.

... not working too hard to divine the opinion behind the question

#### **Step Four: Permissioned Opinions**

... listening to the content of permission requests as well as opinions.

... exercising the options of saying “yes” or “no” to a proposed opinion.

... considering how content of this and previous steps is informing your thinking about how you want to continue with the piece you are working on

#### **Wrap-up**

... consolidating the most useful information you’ve heard.

## **RESPONDER**

### **Preparing for the Process**

... invested in the potential for the artist to do his/her best work.

... thinking ahead to how you will participate in the steps of the Process as you observe the presentation of the artist’s work.

### **Step One: Statements of Meaning**

... making comments that add new perspectives to what has already been stated.

... limiting your response to one or two points when many responders are participating.

... if you have a strong opinion that you would eventually like to make, addressing a related aspect of the work in your step one statement.

... noting the meanings that others have found in the artwork, observing how those comments are expanding your own perception of the work.

... observing your own preferences and points of reference.

### **Step Two: Artist Asks Questions**

... keeping your answers honest and specific to the artist’s question.

... expressing opinions, even negative ones, IF they are in response to the artist’s question.

... listening carefully to the areas of interest and concern that are directed by the artist.

... staying interested in the conversation, even when it is about an aspect of the work about which you may not have a strong opinion.

### **Step Three: Responders Ask Neutral Questions**

... framing a neutral question about the area of your opinion.

... considering options from general to specific and the possible merits of posing a more general question before a specific one.

... listening to the artist’s response for indications that the opinion you have in mind may be either very valuable or irrelevant to the artist’s concerns.

... curious about aspects of the work that aren’t related to strong opinions (i.e., open to asking questions that are not opinion driven)

### **Step Four: Permissioned Opinions**

... always prefacing opinions by saying “I have an opinion about \_\_\_ would you like to hear it?” and waiting until artist consents.

... indicating, in your request to the artist, if your opinion contains a suggestion or fixit.

... not loading the content of your opinion into the permission request.

... engaging the artist directly rather than dialoguing with other responders.

### **Wrap-up**

...observing the quality of the contribution you and your fellow responders have made.

#### **Step Two: Artist Asks Questions**

... encouraging artists to limit their preambles to questions.

... encouraging the artist to phrase in more general or specific terms if the question isn't leading to a useful response.

... helping the artist refine very general questions, or sort through multiple questions that s/he may want to pose all at once.

... encouraging responders to respond to the question by being honest and specific, but staying on-topic with the question

... intervening when responses to questions contain fixits (suggestions for changes).

#### **Step Three: Responders Ask Neutral Questions**

... reminding responders about the discipline of framing questions neutrally

... discerning whether questions are neutral, and asking responders to rephrase neutrally when they are not.

... intervening to rephrase a question, or asking responder to refine question, when artist seems "stuck" in responding.

... intervening and refining the query if artist gives a long-winded "explanatory" response that sounds as though s/he is repeating information s/he has stated before.

#### **Step Four: Permissioned Opinions**

... reminding responders about the protocol of asking for the artist's consent to state a particular opinion.

... checking to see if artist wants to hear suggestions as well as opinions.

... asking responders to restate when their permission statements have the content of an opinion loaded into them.

... directing opinions to be stated to the artist, not as seconds or rebuttals to other responders.

... intervening when responders engage in a dialogue that does not include the artist or when they become sidetracked discussing something other than the artwork under consideration.

### **Wrap-up**

... asking the artist to say what his/her next steps are.

... checking to see if artist is open to hearing more from the responders outside the formal session.

... thanking all participants.

## Critique Topic Suggestions for Flow Visualization

Pull out strengths. Be SPECIFIC and honest. Then ask questions: why was choice made?  
What is happening? How was that done? Don't shy from hard questions.

### **Art:**

Intent was realized  
Satisfied an aesthetic  
Effective  
Impact  
Interesting  
Beautiful

Dramatic  
Feel/texture  
No distracting element,  
Framing/cropping enhances  
image  
good composition  
pleasing/effective colors

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### **Flow:**

Clearly illustrates  
phenomena  
Flow is understandable  
Physics revealed

Details visible  
Flow is reproducible  
Flow is controlled  
Creative flow or technique  
Publishable quality

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### **Photographic technique:**

Exposure: highlights detailed  
Exposure: shadows detailed  
Full contrast range

Focus  
Depth of field  
Time resolved  
Spatially resolved