Dear students and teachers,

I think too many critiques in art school happen without prior discussion about the format of the critique itself. I created this “menu” in 2016 for students to consider and then select the appropriate format for their learning and transformation. Before using this menu, I encourage you to read and discuss Judith Leemann’s chapter in *Beyond Critique Contemporary Art in Theory, Practice, and Instruction* (Bloomsburg, 2017) as well as her 2004 article. Move from dialog to action, adapting this menu in relationship to your own contexts. Please share your ideas and changes to the menu by email.

In cooperation,

Caroline Woolard

I request that all reviewers / critics (peers as well as guests) do the following:

[ check all that you want from reviewers / critics ]

In preparation (to be done separately as homework or together to start the critique):

__ read a 1-5 page text that I have written about the work
__ read a 1-5 page text by another person that provides context / vocabulary for the work
__ watch the work in advance (a 5-15 minute video, website, or virtual space that can be shared digitally)
__ watch a 5-15 minute video by another person that provides context / vocabulary for the work
__ share source imagery / references images that shape the work
__ require that reviewers go to a specific site / gallery / space in advance
__ other:

Group Agreements

__ Be on time!
__ Be on topic / no anecdotes that are not helpful
__ We will start with a short activity to become present together in the space.
Everyone will learn and use gender pronouns to refer to people: she/her, they/them, he/him.

No phones can be used (except for one timing device).

Reviewers / artists will engage in active listening.

If you are going to miss a class, there should be a collective solution about how to make up class.

Reviewers ask themselves, “Why am I talking?” / “Why am I not talking?” (step up or step back).

other:

Artist / Presenter Agreements

I will set up for the critique. I will think about the hour my peers are spending with me.

I will think about what I want to learn.

I will share my goals / intent for the experience and provide context about what you are focusing on.

I will tell you what I want feedback on / which work is relevant for the critique.

I will learn about the guest critic in advance and present my work in relationship to their interests.

Looking at the work:

take 5 minutes (or more) of collective silence to look at the work

take 5 minutes (or more) to make drawings of the work, together

take 5 minutes (or more) to write individually about the work

take 5 minutes to touch / know the materials used in the work (materials displayed as well as work)

other:

Describing the work:

take 5 minutes (or more) to describe the materials, media, and techniques used

take 5 minutes (or more) to describe the the formal qualities of the work (scale, axis, line, elements, palette, texture, etc.)

take 5 minutes (or more) to describe the presentation / mode of display / installation of the work

take 5 minutes (or more) to describe the audience / participant for this project?

other:

Analyzing / Interpreting the work:

What topics / issues / subject matter does the work aim to address?

What kind of local or community-specific knowledges does the work assume?

How do the materials / techniques connect to the topics / issues the work addresses?
Facilitation
__ I do not want to speak during the critique; I will take notes as I listen to what you see / say
__ I want to designate a notetaker, to help me keep track of comments
__ I want to designate a respondent, someone who will answer your questions for me
__ I will bring in someone to interview me about the work for the critique, we will both answer questions
__ I want all people to share their thoughts about the work (by speaking or writing)
__ other:

Feedback
__ I want reviewers to address:
  __ my growth over time (over the semester or year)
  __ more than one work
  __ one work
  __ other artists / research related to the work (I want this: written down OR spoken)
  __ open calls / grants / residencies / people interested in this topic (written OR spoken)
  __ other places where I could improve my technique (written OR spoken)
  __ ways that they would remake the work
  __ ways that they would make semi-related works
  __ the presentation / installation of the work
  __ other:

__ I am looking for feedback that is
  __ as critical as possible of the work
  __ kind, giving the work the benefit of the doubt
  __ firing squad (see Judith Leemann’s [article](#))
  __ don’t kill the baby (see Judith Leemann’s [article](#))
  __ creative response (see Judith Leemann’s [article](#))
  __ observe - describe - analyze (see Judith Leemann’s [article](#))
  __ other: