

Learning to Critique

Critiques are a great way to help creatives improve their art and get a sense of what techniques are working. It's important to remember to be respectful and kind even when you are pointing out aspects of your peers' art that you feel are not working. Avoid giving commentary with the intention of turning a work of art into something that matches your sensibility/intention vs. what maker was trying to achieve. Additionally, be open to feedback from your peers; the sooner you accept challenges in your work, the better it will become.

Basic structure:

- 5-10 minutes– peer critique without response
 - 2 minutes for artist response
 - Answer any questions
 - Explain any challenges they had
 - Talk about what they would have done differently
 - Talk about what they like about the photo
 - Explain their process and intention
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ROSE, BUD, THORN: Rose, bud, thorn will be our basic structure for commenting on someone's work. Every comment you make must have a rose and a bud OR thorn.

ROSE:

Lead with a positive comment about what is working. Can you encourage the artist to build on this in their piece?

BUD:

Make connections to other artworks, historical moments, or pop culture.

THORN:

Offer additional suggestions about how the artist might change elements of their work to achieve their vision.

Use the guiding questions below to formulate a ROSE, BUD or THORN.

Because we'll be using this structure to critique other projects you'll be working on in the future, photography-specific questions are highlighted.

Where is the visual weight?

- Where are my eyes drawn?
- Where do my eyes go next?

Is there anything distracting about the artwork?

How is the exposure?

- Is the image too light or too dark?

How is the composition and balance?

- Do you think the photo should have been taken from a different angle?
- Is the subject of the photo right in the center?

What is going on in the background?

- Should the photographer adjust their depth of field?
- Is everything in focus?

What do you think the artist's intention is?

- Is the artist exploring interesting subject matter?